

HOST Matters

Welcoming International Students

Issue No 31 Autumn 2016

HO-HO-HOST



Ayaka Maeda, Japan, enjoys the festivities with the Silcock Family, Herefordshire

It's that time of year again, where some start counting down the days to the festivities, and others try to ignore the Christmas cards in the shops until a later date.

HOST has now opened its doors to Festive applications, which means that there will be hundreds of students applying in the next few weeks hoping to experience the holidays in a friendly home, rather than on a drab university campus. It's not too early to let your Regional Organiser know that you would like to offer a Festive invitation, so do get in touch. If you're not sure of your plans yet, just let your Organiser know as soon as you can.

If you don't celebrate Christmas, you can still offer an invitation around this time of year. With darker nights and winter weather, a HOST visit can really help uplift a student, and you, whatever you do together.

HOST Gatherings

Would you like to meet hosts in your local area? Why not get in touch with your Regional Organiser and offer to host a regional gathering? Several have taken place across the country so far this year, and all attendees agree they have been a wonderful social event, and a good opportunity to meet others.

Only by listening to and talking with people from all parts of the world can we hope to counter the rise of xenophobia. We cease to see the 'other' and see the similarities instead. **Anne Hopkinson, Northumberland**

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A Special Thanks, by Waqar Syed, Pakistan

I am Waqar Syed, a student at University of Glasgow, and a Chevening Scholar from Pakistan. Through HOST UK, I have been connected with a wonderful Host named Mr. John Brewster, living near Glasgow. After my HOST visit, me and my host have had many other meetings and get together events. He bought tickets for musical concerts, we visited sheltered houses, explored Edinburgh, and much, much more.

Recently, I was invited by Mr. Brewster for a visit to the House of Commons to attend a historic session where David Cameron spoke for the last time as Prime Minister of the UK. I was with my host in the gallery area and witnessed the PMQs and his goodbye words. These were remarkable moments for me.

I want to say a special thanks to HOST UK for connecting me as international student to my Host. This connection enabled me to learn in detail about the Scottish/British culture, their traditions, and their way of life. I found Scottish people very humble, loving, and friendly.

In the end I must say with utmost confidence that this would not be possible if I had not been connected to a wonderful person with the support of HOST UK. Therefore a big THANK YOU!



Waqar Syed, Pakistan, displays the Royal Standard of Scotland whilst in traditional Scottish dress.

HOST TIPS

“Google the students’ country so you know something about it before they come. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and make mistakes; you will and they will. Build up trust by ensuring that your students know what to do in your house from the beginning. Don’t be surprised if the first thing they ask for when they come through your door is your Wi-Fi key! Get them to FaceTime or Skype home whilst they are with you. It is lovely to see their family too. **Dawn Pallant, Somerset**

“As an older, single woman, I was a bit nervous about being able to interest a young student, and it was helpful for me to involve friends that I knew would be open and interested in an overseas student.” **Rebecca MacNair, London**

Do you have a top tip to share with other hosts? Let us know by using the contact details at the front of this newsletter.

CHINESE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Are you sometimes baffled when your student guest – who is here to study an academic subject at undergrad or postgrad level – seems to have so much difficulty communicating in English?

A particularly articulate Chinese student recently explained this to one of our regional organisers.

‘Although most Chinese students start to learn English from middle school, our education system emphasize too much on grammar rather than on communication. That is why so many Chinese students still couldn't express themselves well in English though they may have studied the language for several years. They are much better at reading than speaking and writing.’

Many international students get to know very few, if any, British students, and for them, a HOST visit is probably their best chance ever to spend time in conversation with native English speakers. So, although communication may be hard work, it is a huge help for students to improve their listening and speaking skills with their kind and patient hosts.

One little tip: if a student really cannot seem to understand you (or vice versa), try writing it down!



You Ting Koo, Malaysia, Jieling He, China, and Judith and Richard Stradling enjoy some ice cream in Devon

THE THINGS THEY SAY

“This is the most amazing experience. To make friends and to provide the little comforts that a home provides to people from another country, culture, and custom is of paramount importance. Our home life is balanced with the comings and goings of people from all nations enriching our lives. We just need a flag of all nations to fly from the roof.”

Sally-Jane Emm, Dorset

“It is wonderful to have informal time with a family, and this is not an experience I have had during my stay in the UK.” **Jennifer Jackson, Canada**

“I can't thank HOST enough for your outstanding contributions in promoting peace and security across the globe through cultural awareness! The programme brings different cultures and peoples together, and creates understanding and appreciation among them. These are the foundations for building global peace in this troubled and turbulent world.” **Yonas Adeto, Ethiopia**

HOST Matters is made to be enjoyed by everyone and anyone interested in international friendship and cultural exchange. Why not pass on the newsletter to someone who you think would like a read?



Yan Shao, China, snuggles up with 'Skippy' the alpaca.

SHARING THE HOST EXPERIENCE

"There was a lovely moment when my guests, Sheri and Annabelle, asked my 84-year-old, spinster friend how to let an English boy know you are interested in him. Her reply was "I wish I knew." I had complaints from the ladies of my church because I had no one for Easter. It has become a tradition that they help to dress the Cross with flowers. It was nice that people were genuinely disappointed not to be able to welcome anyone.

I've also met up a few times with another student, Rachel, who originally came for a day visit. She invited me to go with her to the Inner Temple when she was called to the Bar. What an experience! And all thanks to HOST UK." **Thelma Battersby, West Midlands**

How you can help

Friend of HOST

Become a Friend of HOST and give a regular donation. Find out more on the [HOST website](#).

Gift Aid

If you are a tax payer, gift aid your donation and increase its value by 25% at no extra cost to you.

One-off Donation

Make a one-off donation at [HOST's Big Give page](#), or by sending a cheque to HOST's office.

Legacies

Make a gift to HOST in your will to help the work continue. [Contact HOST](#) to find out more.

Challenge Yourself

Raise money while completing a challenge. Set up a fundraising page with [Virgin Money Giving](#), or contact HOST for an offline sponsorship form.

Host

HOST's work would be impossible without its wonderful volunteers. If you haven't hosted in a while, please contact your Regional Organiser, and do encourage your friends to host, too!

THANK YOU

Thank you for helping to make the world a friendlier place by supporting HOST.