

On Hosting Exchange Students: A Conversation with a Host Mom

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "It started in 2008, when our daughter was a freshman in high school."

Helen, an [Education](#), Travel & Culture (ETC) host mom living in Oregon, believes in sharing the American dream with exchange students. Over the years Helen has hosted students from France, Korea, Japan, Brazil, Spain, Mexico, Germany and a student from Costa Rica. One of the best parts about hosting an international teen, according to Helen, is their willing to explore American culture. "They don't take it for granted. Think about it, to leave your family for six months to a year, it takes a lot of guts. Their willingness to go and explore American culture makes them more focused".



The Heller Family with Exchange Student

ETC students have a reputation for being studious. They are thoroughly screened for English proficiency, maturity, and overall readiness to leave their friends and family for an extended amount of time. ETC students who study abroad are persistent, brave and have had a life-long dream of studying in America. "All the kids that come here are very smart."

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ETC Host Mom Helen Heller

Helen's past experience with international studies has enabled her to be an empathetic support for her students. This has made it possible for her to create strong bonds with her exchange students that last over the years, long after the

students enter and exit the study abroad program. "I hosted a French boy four years ago, he was here for seven months and went back home. I told him he can come back anytime and visit. You have an American Family now. Because we've hosted so many students, I have friends and kids all over the world!"

This connection to a global community through hosting has invigorated a desire to travel internationally for Helen, especially to visit her kids. "I tell my husband, we have to go to Paris, we can see Bastian, or let's go to Thailand, we can see 'Bob' or Brazil, we can see Louisa'."

Helen knows firsthand what it takes to host an exchange student. She offers some advice for prospective [host parents](#): "Have fun with the kids and be patient with them. We are learning from them and they are learning from us. Before they arrive, I will find some small familiar items for them,

like food. Sometimes when they get homesick, they will look for familiar products, and food is always a comfort for them. So, having a familiar product is a way of saying, 'we are welcoming you'. Anything beyond that, treat them like your own kids".

About Education, Travel & Culture:

Education Travel & Culture is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] educational exchange organization. Its purpose is to promote international understanding and goodwill by providing high quality educational and cultural exchange programs in the United States and abroad. ETC provides inbound program opportunities for high school students throughout the world to study in an American high school and live with an American family.

For more information, FAQs or to apply to become a host family visit www.edutrav.org or email Field Director, Brenda Ferland at bferland@edutrav.org

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