



## ICES Blog Index

*Our blog is chock-full of all kinds of fascinating information related to youth exchange. Grab a cup of coffee and dive right in!*

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We've got the scoop for you right here!*

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## **STUDENT & HOST FAMILY SUPPORT**

*Already hosting? Here's some great information to help you have the experience you're hoping for.*

[8 Things To Remind Your Exchange Student to Pack](#)

[10 Fun Ideas for Sharing Spring with Your Exchange Student](#)

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[Starting on the Right Track](#)

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[The Key to a Great Exchange](#)

[Three Tips for New Host Families](#)

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[What You Should Know About Receiving Your Exchange Student](#)

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[When Hosting an Exchange Student Doesn't Work Out...](#)

[Why Exchange Students Should Try New Things](#)

## **ALL ABOUT CULTURE**

*Lots of fascinating information here to enrich your mind, your family, & your life!*

[8 End of Year Activities for Exchange Students to Enjoy](#)

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[10 American Idioms to Teach Your Exchange Student](#)

[10 Awesome Ideas for Family Fun in 2024](#)

[10 Comfort Foods from Around the World](#)

[10 Culture Shocks in the USA](#)

[10 Fun Facts about America to Share with Your Exchange Student](#)

[12 Ways to Prepare Your Family for Sharing Your Culture with an Exchange Student](#)

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[American High School Life: School, Spirit, Sports, and Slang](#)

[American Values that Intrigue, Baffle, or Shock the World](#)

[Americans do the Strangest Things](#)

[Americans Love Sports](#)

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[Falling in Love with Autumn from Coast to Coast](#)

[From Dreamer to Performer: the Life-Changing Possibilities and the People Who Made it Possible](#)

[Having Fun Exploring Cultural Norms](#)

[How are American Traditions Influenced by Global Culture](#)

[How Hosting an Exchange Student Fosters Empathy](#)

[How to Handle Cultural Misunderstandings as a Host Family](#)

[How to Master a Language \(the fun, fascinating way\)](#)

[How Spring Cleaning Differs Around the World](#)



[Make a Friend in Italy](#)

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[Snow Days: An American Experience](#)

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[Top 10 American Slang Terms to Teach Your Exchange Student](#)

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[What is it like to be a Teenager in Italy?](#)

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[What Surprises Polish Students in the USA?](#)

[What Surprises Students from France in the USA?](#)

[What Surprises Students from Hong Kong?](#)

[What Surprises Students from Thailand in the USA?](#)

[What Your Exchange Student Should Know About U.S. Etiquette](#)

[Why Americans Go Crazy for Pumpkin Spice: A Fun Fall Tradition to Share with Your Exchange Student](#)

[Why Your Exchange Student Should Keep a Journal \(And How You Can Help\)](#)

## **HOST FAMILY STORIES**

*True stories from real-life host families*

[A Trip Down Memory Lane](#)

[Host Family Spotlight: The Bairds](#)

[Host Family Spotlight: The Boohers](#)

[Host Family Spotlight: The Nordlanders](#)

[Host Families' First Impressions](#)

[Host Mom Sees Life Anew](#)

[Hosting an Exchange Student Leads to Happily Ever After](#)

[Hosting the Whole Family](#)

[Road Trip! Kicking off the Exchange Year with a Cross-country Adventure](#)

[Take Two: Hosting after a Storm](#)

## **STUDENT STORIES**

*Current and past participants share their experience as an exchange student*

[A Lifetime Experience](#) (Marie Langer, France)

[Bringing Hope to Hospice](#) (Benedetta Pasquinuzzi, Italy & Allana Greaff, Brazil)

[Exchange Prepared Me for Independence](#) (Issy Rushton, Australia)

[From France to Illinois: A Day in the Life of an Exchange Student](#)

[How Youth Exchange Changed My Destiny](#) (Luca Brambilla, Italy)

[They're Here! First Impressions of the U.S.](#)



## STUDENT OF THE MONTH

*These people raise the bar of what it means to be an exchange student*

### 2022-23

[May](#), Anna Zavatta, Italy (2023)

[April](#), Marc Barbera-Baltran (Spain) & Nicola Spiga (Italy)(2023)

[Families Share Why They Love Hosting Exchange Students](#)

[March](#), Lucia Nombela-Fierros, Spain (2023)

[February](#), Yago Sureda Sanchez, Spain (2023)

[January](#), Giada Lucioli, Italy (2023)

[December](#), Beatrice Patti, Italy (2022)

[November](#), Seoyun Choi, South Korea (2022)

[October](#), Monica Serrano Aguilar, Spain (2022)

### 2021-22

[May](#), Maria Salatini (Italy) & Myriam Ajmia (France)

[April](#), Paula Martinez Martinez, Spain (2022)

[March](#), Rafael Hormaechea, Spain (2022)

[February](#), Matilde Eleonori, Italy (2022)

[January](#), Olivis Ganbat, Sweden (2022)

[November](#), Leonie Laffitte, France (2021)

### 2020-21

[May](#), Chihok Gauy, Cambodia (2021)

[April](#), Ivona Vanekova, Slovakia (2021)

[March](#), Jaime Barea Velez, Spain (2021)

[February](#), Jana Dieckmann, Germany (2021)

[January](#), Thomas Schaper, Germany (2021)

[December](#), Cailin Valtink, Germany (2020)

[November](#), Ettore Sabbatini, Italy (2020)

[October](#), Eliska Loubrova, Czech Republic (2020)

### 2019-20

[May](#), Maria, Spain (2020)

[April](#), Tuva, Norway (2020)

[March](#), Francesca, Italy (2020)

[February](#), Lina, Germany (2020)

[January](#), Ricky, Italy (2020)

[December Student of the Month](#) Elvira, Sweden (2019)

[November Student of the Month](#) Camilla, Italy (2019)

## STUDY ABROAD & GLOBAL AMBASSADOR

*American teens bring cultures together*

[7 Things I Learned on Exchange That Prepared Me for College](#)

[American Students Changing the World](#)

[Feeling Nervous About Studying Abroad? Here's How to Handle It](#)

[How Study Abroad Changed My Life](#)

[How Study Abroad Experiences Landed Me My First Job](#)

[Language Learning Through Immersion](#)

[Preparing for Study Abroad: Tips for a Smooth Transition](#)

[Study Abroad: From Minnesota to Norway](#)

[Study Abroad Increases Employability](#)

[Study Abroad: Semester or Academic Year?](#)

[The Ultimate Study Abroad Packing List](#)

[What's It Really Like to Live With a Host Family?](#)

[What is it like to be a teenager in Spain?](#)



## CONTESTS

*So many deserving winners here!*

[2024 Bridging Cultures Scholarship Winners](#) (2024)

[2023 Bridging Cultures Scholarship Winners](#) (2023)

[What I Love About My Host State Valentine's Contest Winners](#) (2023)

[New Things Photo Contest Winners](#) (2022)

[2022 Bridging Cultures Scholarship Winners](#) (2022)

[Our Very American Photo Contest Winners](#) (2022)

[Share the Love Winners](#) (Valentine's 2022)

[Pictures of Gratitude](#) (Thanksgiving 2021)

[ICES Video Contest Winners](#) (2021)

[Meet Our Scholarship Winners](#) (2021)

[Conflict, Peace, and Societal Maturity](#) (Scholarship Winner 2020)

[Giving Thanks: Photo Contest Winners](#) (Thanksgiving 2020)

[ICES Video Contest Winners](#) (2020)

## HOLIDAYS

*Celebrations around the world!*

[8 Fun Ways to Celebrate Thanksgiving with Your Exchange Student](#)

[8 Ways to Celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with Your Exchange Student from Afar](#)

[8 Ways to Integrate Your Exchange Student's Culture into Holiday Celebrations](#)

[10 Creative Ways to Celebrate Christmas with Your Exchange Student](#)

[10 Facts About Chinese New Year](#)

[12 Christmas Traditions to Share With Your Exchange Student](#)

[25 New Year's Resolutions for a More Peaceful \(and Fun!\) 2025](#)

[American Easter is a Sweet Treat for Exchange Students](#)

[Celebrate Freedom by Sharing It](#)

[Celebrating the Unsung Heroes: The Magic of Host Moms](#)

[Christmas Around the World](#)

[Decking the Halls with a Global Twist: Holiday Decorating with your Exchange Student](#)

[European Gift-Giving Customs](#)

[Exchange Students Celebrate Their Host Moms](#)

[Exchange Students Embrace the Ugly Sweater Crazy](#)

[Five-star Gift Ideas for Your Exchange Student](#)

[Here's What Makes the Holidays Unforgettable for Exchange Students](#)

[Holiday Homesickness: How Can You Help?](#)

[Host Dad Heroes: Father's Day Edition](#)

[How to Have an International Christmas!](#)

[Including Your Exchange Student in the Holidays](#)

[The 4th of July: Top 6 Ways to Celebrate](#)

[Thanksgiving Around the World: A Global Tapestry of Gratitude Celebrations](#)

[Top 10 Fall Favorites in the U.S.](#)

[Why Americans Celebrate Thanksgiving](#)



## **WORKING WITH ICES**

*We're making a difference—join our team!*

[Educators & Youth Exchange Fit Like a Glove](#)

[Hangin' Loose in Hawaii](#)

[How Local Coordinators are Changing the World](#)

[My Yes! To Becoming a Local Coordinator](#)

[The Road to Success: ICES Conference 2023](#)