The Philippine Youth Leadership Program is a project funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
Homestay Handbook

During the course of this 4-week training program, you have the opportunity to live with an American host family for 12 days.

Living with an American host family is part of the Philippine Youth Leadership Program’s goals to promote a better understanding of the United States and to help you gain greater perspective of American people, culture, values and social customs. It is one of the best ways to totally immerse yourself in another culture.

This PYLP Homestay Handbook will help you prepare for your homestay experience. It contains information, guidelines, and helpful tips on how to make living with your American host family the best possible experience.

Checklist for a successful homestay visit.

Do:

- Give your daily schedule to your host family and agree on a time for your pick-up. Make sure you are there on time. If there is a change in the schedule, notify your host family immediately so that they are not waiting for you. Do not assume they know your schedule.
- Specify your preferences directly when asked by your host family, and if you don’t know something, be sure to ask!
- Wake up and be ready early for departure.
- Sit in the front passenger’s seat if the seat is open.
- If you are the last one out the door to the outside, remember to close it behind you.
- Ask if you may have rice for dinner and offer to show them how you prepare it.
- Offer to help in household chores and be sure your room is always neat and clean.
- Ask permission before you use the washing machine, iron, kitchen appliances, home computer, or other electrical appliances in the house.
- Ask permission before adjusting the room temperature. Do not open windows to cool a room.
- Put away/turn off all forms of electronic communication, for example iPad, cell phone, tablet, when interacting with your family. It is RUDE to use devices while you are visiting with your family, especially at meals. Limit your technology time.
- Share your program and learning experiences, discuss any concerns you may have, and socialize with your family.
- Ask for their opinions/assistance on your action plan.
- Present a small gift typical of your region as a gesture of appreciation for the hospitality of your host family. These gifts do not need to be fancy or expensive.
- Submit a family photo of you, your buddy, and your family, secretly to Tita Leslie. We will frame it as a gift for them.
- Call your family a day after your homestay experience to say “thank you” and send a Thank You card, too.
It is important to sit down with your host family to discuss their house rules as soon as you are able and once you have settled into their home. The following are some sample questions that you may use to begin the discussion:

- What would you like me to call you? “Mom,” “Dad,” by your first name, or something else?
- What are my daily responsibilities while I am living in your home?
- What is the telephone number here?
- What is the best way for me to contact you?
- May I use the phone to make telephone calls?
- Remember to always use a phone card and let your host family know that you are using a phone card when you are calling the Philippines.
- May my parents call me here? What time?
- May I receive phone calls from my fellow PYLP participants?
- Up until what time may my friends call me?
- What is the procedure to do laundry?
- Where may I keep my dirty clothes until they are ready to be washed?
- When are mealtimes?
- May I use the kitchen appliances such as the microwave, dishwasher, or stove?
- When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
- May I use the stereo, TV, and computer?
- What are the rules about access to the Internet and e-mail?
- What are your expectations for me in regard to attending religious services with the family?
- When would be a good time for me to prepare a Filipino food for the family?

Homestays provide a unique opportunity to observe daily life and learn the customs and culture of American people. For years, homestays have been popular in promoting greater cultural understanding and building international friendships among people from all over the world.

The American families participating in the PYLP project are opening their hearts and their homes by hosting you and sharing their lives with you. They are eager to share their culture with you. At the same time, they also want to learn about you, your family, and your homeland.

When you begin your homestay, please remember that the home your host family is providing is more than just a place to stay and eat. They hope that, through this experience, you will come to see yourself as part of their family.
What is at “typical” host family? Every host family is different. Some are casual and some are formal. Some have many kids, others won’t have any. Some have relaxed home rules while some have rigid rules. The important thing to remember is each family is different. It is important to NOT compare your host family with other host families. Enjoy the lifestyle of your host family as one type of American family lifestyle.

To help you ease your transition into your new family, here are some tips and suggestions to consider:

**Communication is the KEY to a successful homestay.**

It is important that you communicate with your host family clearly and consistently so that they are aware of your needs and concerns. We challenge you to be direct in your communications as part of the learning experience of PYLP. Remember, your host family wants you to be comfortable, safe, and happy while you are staying with them. If you feel you are having trouble communicating with your host family, you can always go to Tita Lina, or any staff member to help resolve any miscommunication.

Communicate any changes to the program schedule as soon as possible to the host family. This will assist them in adjusting their busy schedules.

**Be respectful of your host family at all times**

- Know, respect, and abide by the rules of your host family.
- Pick up after yourself.
- Do not leave your personal belongings lying around.
- Offer to help around the house. For example with meal preparation, dish clearing and washing, sweeping.
- Keep your room clean and well organized.
- Keep the bathroom tidy. Goal of the shower curtain is to keep the floor dry. Ask how to operate the shower and faucets, hot and cold water.
- Use a phone card when making calls using your host family’s telephone. Be sure to ask permission to use the phone.
- **Ask permission** before you use items in the home.
- Limit your Facebook/electronics time so that you can enjoy real face to face time with your American family.
- NEVER bring a cell phone or tablet to the dinner table! Understand and respect that your host family’s lifestyle is different in many ways from your family in the Philippines.

**Share**

The homestay experience is an opportunity for cultural exchange and understanding. It is important to share the stories of your life in the Philippines. Share photographs of your family, friends, your school, places you like to go to when you are home. Your family wants to know about you as much as you want to know about them.