



Meeker - New Zealand  
Student Exchange Program



## 2010-2011 Ambassador Program Frequently Asked Questions

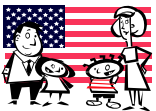
Thank you for your interest in the program. Some of you have been involved before with your siblings or cousins, or hosted previously. For some of you this will be your first experience with the program. After you've read through our frequently asked questions, we will be happy to assist you with any additional questions you may have.

### **What is the ambassador program?**

The ambassador program gives students a chance to interact with citizens of New Zealand and learn about a whole new culture. The group will be traveling to James Hargest College, Junior Campus in Invercargill, New Zealand, which is located at the southern tip of the South Island. The group will consist of 1 lead teacher, 1 assistant teacher, approximately 16 students, and approximately 3 adult chaperones. The trip is typically the first or second week of February through the first week of March. Students will miss approximately 3 ½ weeks of school. The group also typically spends a few days in the capital city of Wellington before traveling further south to Invercargill.

### **What will we do in New Zealand?**

While in New Zealand, you will attend school a couple of days and go on educational field trips most days and sometimes on the weekend. You will be visiting farms, museums, and caves. You'll be rappelling, flying up and down rivers on jet boats, and eating chocolate. Most of these trips will be taken just by the Meeker group along with a few New Zealand chaperones. But in your down time you'll be making friends with your hosts and having fun with their families.



### **What are the time commitments for ambassadors and their families?**

Monthly family meetings will begin in June to begin planning the trip. You and your parents/guardians are expected to be present at all monthly meetings. If you cannot attend, you must notify the ambassador coordinators ahead of time. Starting in the fall, students will begin an additional meeting after school one afternoon a week to discuss what is expected of them as representatives of Meeker Middle School and the United States. They will begin to work on their group performance and individual projects they will take with them to James Hargest College, Junior Campus. When they return to the US they may be expected to give a report on New Zealand to some of their classes. Students will be expected to keep a journal with a format of the teachers' choosing while in NZ and must complete all make-up work upon returning. Also, students will complete a final project/trip report approximately a month after return. Families will be expected to participate in the fundraising activities as well as serve on a committee.



### **How much will the trip cost?**

Listed below are approximate expenses:

Airfare	\$2500
Deposit	\$300
Gifts	\$60
Passport	\$90
Uniforms	\$200
Spending money	\$350 (actual amount depends on each family)

### **What is the \$300 administrative fee and is it refundable?**

The fee covers administrative costs that will be incurred during the duration of the program. The program has and will always be self-supporting. It does not receive any funding from the district; even postage is paid for by the program. The \$300 is non-refundable. The total fee is due no later than the July meeting.

### **How and when do I pay for my airfare?**

For the ambassadors, half the airfare is due at the September meeting and half is due at the October meeting. All payments will need to be made by check since we cannot accept cash or credit cards at this time.

### **Do I have to raise funds?**

In order to reach our goal each ambassador and their family are expected to support and participate in fundraising activities. These funds will be used to pay for the field trips in New Zealand, the teachers' airfare, the cost of substitute teachers, etc. Without everyone's help, the field trips may have to be reduced and in extreme cases the entire trip cancelled. But our families have always worked together and raised enough money to provide educational and exciting trips for the ambassadors.



### **Who is eligible to apply for the program?**

Students who

- have a Grade Point Average 2.5 or higher
- have an Honor Level 1 or 2
- will be in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Meeker Middle School for the 2010 -2011 school year
- display courteous, mature, and respectful behavior
- are excited to travel halfway around the world and learn new things about themselves and others

### **What happens if I fall below the minimum grade point average or honor level after being selected?**

An ambassador may be expelled from the exchange program if the ambassador breaks any rules of conduct that have been established by the board. Students accepted into the program along with their parents/guardians must sign the Student Behavior Contract. This document outlines the expectations we have of our ambassadors and reasons for the consequences for not fulfilling the Student Behavior Contract.

### **What is the application process?**

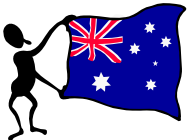
Applicants for the ambassador program must submit an application packet consisting of a **completed** Ambassador Application Form, three Reference Forms completed by adults, a student essay, and the completed Parent Application Form. At least one of the references must be completed by a teacher. You may not use relatives or members of your household as a reference. The Reference Forms may be submitted separately from the rest of the packet. All items must be returned to Meeker Middle School office by **3:00PM, Wednesday May 5th, 2010**. Qualified applicants will be invited for interviews. Upon completion of interviews, all applicants will be notified of decisions by mail.

### **Do I have to host in order to become an ambassador?**

No and you do not have to become an ambassador in order to be selected to host. The hosting and ambassador programs are treated individually during the selection process.

### **If I applied last year and wasn't selected, may I apply again this year?**

Absolutely, some years there are many more qualified applicants than there are available spaces. Therefore, you are encouraged to keep trying!



### **Who is eligible to be a chaperone?**

The application process is open to all adults that meet the following criteria:

- 1) Any parent or guardian of a student who has been accepted into the exchange program.
- 2) Any staff member of Meeker Middle School, Crescent Heights Elementary, Browns Point Elementary and NE Tacoma Elementary.
- 3) Other adults may be considered if there are not enough other qualified applicants.

### **Who pays for chaperone expenses?**

All chaperones are responsible for their own expenses, including airfare. The first half of chaperone airfare is due in November and the second half due in December. There is only one \$300 administration fee per family.

Thanks for your interest. Check out our website at [www.meekernz.net](http://www.meekernz.net)

If you have any further questions please contact

[inforequest@meekernz.net](mailto:inforequest@meekernz.net)