



Meeker - New Zealand
Student Exchange Program

2010 Hosting Program Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest in the Hosting Program. Some of you have been involved before with your older children or have hosted previously. For some of you this will be your first experience with the program. As you read through this document you will see the term 'Kiwi', used to refer to our New Zealand friends. This widely used term comes from the Kiwi bird which is native to New Zealand.



If you are applying to host a NZ student, the hosting applicant from Meeker must read this document and complete the attached application.

What is the Hosting Program?

For approximately 3½ weeks in late September and early October of each year, students and adults from James Hargest College, Junior Campus, travel from Invercargill, New Zealand to live with Meeker Middle School host families to experience American culture, to see what it is like to live as an American and to share pieces of their Kiwi culture with their host families. The students are all year 8 students (equivalent to our 7th grade students), ages 12-13.



Who is eligible to host a guest from New Zealand?

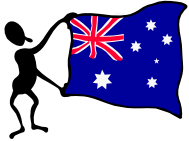
Students entering 6th, 7th, or 8th grade at Meeker Middle School for the 2009-2010 school year are eligible to apply to host a guest from New Zealand. Students must maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher and maintain Honor Level One or Two status. They must also demonstrate mature, courteous and respectful behavior and complete and return the application by the due date, 3 p.m., Friday April 30, 2010.

How many families will be selected to host a guest from New Zealand?

22 New Zealand guests will be visiting in the fall of 2010. There will be 17 students (7 female and 10 male) and 5 adults (2 female teachers, 3 parent chaperones – 2 male and 1 female). The selection of host families does depend on the make-up of the New Zealand students selected to come on the trip each year since female New Zealand students will be matched with female Meeker Middle School students, and male New Zealand students will be matched with male Meeker Middle School students. Teachers and chaperones may be placed with selected families that desire to host an adult.

Do American adults need to complete any paperwork?

Any adult (any one over the age of 18) who will have supervisory responsibilities or be left alone with a New Zealand student shall complete a Tacoma public schools (TPS) volunteer background check form. This includes parents, older adult-age siblings, grandparents, babysitters, carpool drivers, etc.



What do the New Zealand guests do during their visit?

The New Zealand students will spend one or two days with their host student at school, but will spend most days on field trips around the area. These group field trips consist of fun, cultural, and educational activities such as the Museum of Flight, Tillicum Village, Seattle tours, Tacoma sites, etc. They will spend weekends and most evenings with their assigned host family to gain their own unique experience in America apart from the New Zealand group. However, they do have a few overnight (week day) field trips – and you will be surprised at how empty your home feels when they are away for the night.

Are host students invited to attend the Kiwi daily field trips?

No, the host students will be invited and excused from school to attend one pre-selected field trip with the Kiwi students as approved by Mr. Ikeda. All other field trips are strictly for the New Zealand students.

What are the time commitments for host students and their parents/guardians before the Kiwis arrive?

Starting in June and ending in October, there will be monthly meetings to begin planning for the arrival of the Kiwis. All students and parents/guardians need to be present at all monthly meetings. There are committees that will be formed to plan events such as the welcome dinner, Kiwi field trip transportation, social activities, farewell dinner, etc. All families will be expected to serve on a committee. There will also be fundraisers this summer that all families are expected to participate in to support the Hosting Program. Host students will be assigned NZ studies homework at the June, July and August monthly meetings. This must be completed to attend the selected field trip with the kiwis.



What are the time commitments for host students and their families while the Kiwis are here?

American host chaperones and drivers are needed for daily field trips. Families will have evenings and weekends to spend with their New Zealand guest. There will be a few planned group activities that families are required to attend, such as a Mariners game, and the Welcome and Farewell Dinners. Families will be responsible for dropping off or picking up their guest from daily field trips – often at different times from the Meeker Middle School schedule and at locations other than Meeker Middle School which leads to additional driving time. You are welcome to carpool with other host families as long as it is clear to both the US and NZ adults what the arrangements are.



What is the role of US chaperones if the Kiwis have their own chaperones?

In order to help the New Zealand group navigate their way around, it is necessary for two American adult hosts to accompany them on each daily field trip. Therefore, each family is expected to have an adult chaperone attend at least two daily field trips. Tickets, entrance fees, etc, if applicable depending on the event, are paid by the Kiwis for up to two American chaperones. Some meals and all gas expenses would be the responsibility of the American chaperone. In addition, multiple drivers are needed to transport Kiwis to at least four of their field trips. Younger children of the American adult chaperones may not attend the daily field trips so alternate arrangements will need to be made as necessary.

Are the commitments different for hosting a student vs. an adult?

No, all commitments are the same. Families hosting adults are expected to attend all functions required of families hosting students. While it is a different experience to host a student vs. an adult, both are very rewarding.

What should we do with our guest on evenings and weekends?

Your main responsibility is to welcome your guest into your home and your daily life. While it is fun to try and show your guest as much as possible in the short time they are visiting, they will also enjoy participating in your normal daily activities, such as sports practices, games, family events, trips to the grocery store, or other social activities your family normally participates in. Don't forget that they are also seeing many of the local sights on their field trips during the week. It is fun to take your guest away for a weekend trip, but this is neither required nor expected. Simple activities, such as visiting a pumpkin patch, a day at the beach, or an afternoon of shopping can all be great fun with the Kiwis. You will have the opportunity to get to know your guest via email before they arrive to find out what their interests are as well.



What is the financial commitment to host?

Listed below are approximate expenses and estimated per host family:

Lunches or lunch	\$ 75
Welcome & farewell dinners	\$ 85
Mariners game for family	\$ 80
Meals with your family	\$100
Gas & transportation	\$ 80
Group arrival & departure gifts	\$ 30
Group activities (laser tag, field trip)	<u>\$ 45</u>
Sub-total	\$495 +
Weekend activities	"reasonable" family discretion
Individual gifts from your family	"reasonable" family discretion

Fundraisers help pay for the administrative program costs. After payment of administrative costs, any remaining funds may be used to help defer some of the above costs such as group gifts. The more successful we are with our fundraising efforts, the lower our out of pocket costs. 😊

What is the application process?

Complete and return the application by the due date, April 30th. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an in home family interview. Interviews will be conducted May 3rd – May 14th. Upon completion of interviews, notification letters will be mailed to all applicants (tentatively) on May 18th.

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

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

Thank you for your interest in the exchange program!

If you have any questions regarding the hosting program, please contact:

inforequest@meekernz.net

Check out our website for photos, blogs, sample schedules and more! www.meekernz.net

