2015 Host Family Orientation

Mark Mains, MS
Extension Specialist for Teen & International Programs
University of Kentucky
What Do You Have?

- Host Family Guidebook
- Konnichiwa Phrase Book & CD
- Family Scrapbook/Journal
- Cultural Information
- Insurance Card
- School Packet (if requested)
- Two Informational Letters
• Kentucky 4-H has been participating in exchange programs with Japan since the 1970’s.

• Our main partner is the LABO Program who operates primarily in Japan.

• LABO is a club program for kids in K-12\textsuperscript{th} grade to learn about American customs, language and culture.

• Most but not all participate in an exchange trip to the US.

• Several months are spent preparing for this trip. They practice overnight stays, make a journal, and create a project or story.
The host families and delegate are NOT allowed to contact the Natural Family during the homestay. No exceptions, please!
The LABO Philosophy

• “International travel strengthens the individual”
• Japanese Youth Aged 12-15
• Low to “ok” English Skills
• Cultural Exchange NOT a language exchange or vacation
• Selected from LABO clubs in Japan
• Japanese parents begin saving from 9 years
Cultural Differences

- Japanese society is a group oriented society where harmony over personal preference is emphasized. The good of the group outweights the good of the individual.

- Japanese parents value hardworking kids who are respectful and don’t complain. A good child is one who perseveres, without complaint or comment, in the face of adversity.

- Saying “no” is unheard of in Japan. Evasion is much more common. An example of this is the child saying “they are not allowed to dive off a diving board”. This is not true, they are allowed but probably don’t want to dive (so they tell a “white lie” to avoid a no).

- In Japan, the “white lie” is an acceptable method of keeping harmony. Your child may offer a white lie to avoid saying no or to keep the peace.
The Host Sibling Relationship

• The Japanese youth come with the idea they are to bond with their “assigned” sibling. They will tend to gravitate toward this person over the other family members (sometimes).

• They will expect to go with their host sibling everywhere. While this may get tedious at times, it’s only for four weeks so please be good sports about it.

• While they will spend a majority of their time with the host sibling(s), it’s normal for there to be “fatigue”. Consider scheduling some alone time for your child.
• LABO Pick Up
  – July 25, 2015 at 12:00 pm EST/11:00 am CST
  – Lexington, KY (ES Goodbarn, UK Campus)
  – We will have short presentation and you will be on your way! Your LABO delegates WILL NOT have eaten lunch.

• LABO Drop Off
  – August 20, 2015 between 12 pm – 4 pm
  – Louisville, KY (LaQuinta Inn by Airport)
  – Additional information will be sent at about week 2-3 of homestay.
The Rules

• Animals – most have little experience with large animals. Please be sensitive to this and help them get used to family pets or be around farm animals.

• Appliances – provide an orientation to the household. Many traditional Japanese homes do not have ovens or microwaves.

• Bikes – they may ride bicycles with appropriate safety gear and instruction/supervision.

• Boats – they may ride in boats with appropriate safety care and instruction/supervision.

• Farm Equipment, Planes, ATV’s, Lawnmowers, Guns/Play Guns, Fireworks, High Risk Activities, Hunting, Driving – NO
Host parents are asked to use their own best judgment when considering what games will be played while they are hosting international delegates. It is important to avoid games which could be considered insulting to other cultures. In particular, please do not allow host siblings and delegates to play first person shooter games set in WWII. It’s ok to use electronics but try to limit them. We want them to experience American outside the home!

Here is a list of the most common 1st Person Shooter game series based on WWII:

- Hidden and Dangerous
- Commandos
- Wolfenstein
- Medal of Honor
- Deadly Dozen
- Brothers in Arms
- Day of Defeat
- Call of Duty
- Battlefield
- Red Orchestra

For additional resources regarding video games set in WWII which may be inappropriate please see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_II_video_games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_II_video_games)
Traveling During the Homestay

• Overnight trips are allowed with notification
• Day trips are allowed outside and inside state
• Long Vacations are discouraged
• For Trips
  – Contact me and provide a basic itinerary and emergency contact information
  – The child is part of the family, additional trip expenses are incurred by the family
• Families are encouraged to go about their normal routine but schedule family activities as your time allows.

• Take your delegate to fairs, farmers markets, shopping, hiking, parks, local or state locations of interest.

• Take your delegate to church, school groups, etc. We want them to have as much exposure to other families and kids as possible.

• Idea: Call the county tourist board or chamber of commerce to find things to do locally and regionally. Discover what your county has to offer along with your delegate!
• Having a non-English speaker middle school student in your home for 30 days can be exhausting! Take care of yourself and your family.

• Schedule blocks of quiet time where EVERYONE gets a chance to do their own thing for a while.

• Be careful of overscheduling...take time to enjoy the experience and relax!
• VERY IMPORTANT
  
  – With the delegate find a safe place for it in the home
  
  – Upon arrival at departure site we will confirm the passport FIRST THING!
• Delegates are allowed ONE CARRY-ON and ONE CHECKED bag only. Please help them adhere to this during their return.
• Monitor items in carry on...don’t include restricted items
• Delegate cannot return with
  – Meat (dried or fresh), Vegetables, Fruits, Weapons, Liquor or Tobacco
• If the Japanese youth wishes to mail items to their home this is at their own expense!
• A standard paper box costs around $75 - $100 to ship
• This is discouraged due to expense and inconvenience to the host family
• This book is your “how to” for all aspects of the exchange program. It covers most of the necessary information about your role as a hosting family. I will highlight some sections:

• **Delegate/Family Communication:** Communication will be a barrier. However, it’s one that can be overcome with non-verbal gestures, expressions, writing and your phrasebooks. By the end of the homestay you will be communicating (in some way) easily.
• **Food:**
  Don’t worry about the food you will have for your delegate. They will eat most of what you offer them and are told to try a “courtesy” bite of everything to see if they like it. Part of a going to a new country is experiencing the food!

• Suggestion: Set a “snack basket” of fruit, granola bars, fruit snacks, snack cakes, etc on the counter and encourage your delegate to “help themselves”

• Your delegate may want to cook a meal for you. Ask them this early in their homestay so you can arrange to go to the grocery with them. Make sure YOU and YOUR FAMILY try a “courtesy bite” of everything!

• IDEA! Host a themed holiday meal for them...how about Thanksgiving or Easter in July? This is a way to expose them to more American culture.
Japanese culture places a high importance on giving gifts. Your delegate will be expected to bring back several larger gifts and dozens of smaller gifts for their family, friends and teachers. Plan on working with them to visit places where they can buy KENTUCKY gifts (not UK).

They will probably have several gifts for your family. You are welcome to give return gifts but don’t feel you have to “keep up”. The best gifts are homemade or unique ones that it’s impossible for them to find in Japan.

Idea: Create a scrapbook or photo album of their stay. Send a framed family picture back with them. Make a gift together for a great memory!
• When in doubt take them to doctor. Call me first (if possible). Use your regular family physician as the first step and urgent care or ER only if needed.

• You have parental authority for them in the case of life threatening/serious issues.

• Carry your Waiver/Release with you. Make several copies for purse, car, etc.

• Keep me informed as much as possible and as quickly as possible.
Support

• Families are encouraged to share emails and ask each other for help
• 24/7 Access to State Coordinator or Assistant Coordinators during the home stay
• In-State Chaperones who call youth at 2 weeks and receive post cards from youth at 1 and 3 weeks
• Support Materials and Orientation (language book, language CD, orientation book, feelings poster, pocket dictionary, etc)
• Take lots of pictures! I would love a copy of your families pictures to use for future promotion of this program (with your permission).

• Each year, S4-HIEP runs a contest for promotional videos and pictures. Each family is asked to get 2-3 great pictures that capture the experience of hosting from the Japanese and/or American perspective. Action shots of 2-3 people are great!

• Idea: Plan a video! Work with your family to plan a time/place/event where you can take a video about the experience of hosting!
Everyone is asked to take a “courtesy bite”!
Make them a part of your family and give them chores! They might not like them at first but imagine how proud they will feel to have contributed to your home life!
Tell your family and friends about this program! Most people take part after a personal recommendation from someone they know and trust. This is a great program that allows youth from both countries to develop valuable life skills and international competencies!
Questions??