

NEWS RELEASE**Topic: Ohio 4-H International Opportunities for Hosting and Traveling****CONTACT PERSON:**Mary Lynn Thalheimer, Ohio 4-H International Program Director, thalheimer.1@osu.eduPhone: 614-247-8162. www.ohio4h.org/youth/international**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****EXPERIENCE THE WORLD OF 4-H!**

Open Your World! Ohio 4-H International Exchange Programs are among the largest and most successful in the country. Ohio families host visitors from around the world, and Ohio youth & adults travel abroad to live with families in a variety of countries. Host Families & Youth Travelers are not required to be current 4-H members ~ rather, they automatically become part of the organization through participation. The program's primary purpose is to promote global awareness through friendship and cultural exchange.

Host Family Opportunities

Don't have the time and money to travel? Enjoy the exposure to different cultures which traveling brings? Looking for a low-cost project or experience in which the whole family can participate and grow together? The Ohio 4-H International Program allows families to gain the benefits of international travel right here at home, as they welcome a new son, daughter, brother or sister from another country into their homes. Host families are responsible for lodging, meals, family activities and an opportunity for visitors to experience daily life in Ohio. Exchange visitors bring personal spending money, and 4-H provides medical/accident insurance. Host families are asked to "live their everyday life," and to simply treat their visitor as a member of the family, with the same responsibilities and privileges as other members. Families hosting a Youth must have their own child of the same gender and approximate age. Families hosting Adult chaperones are not required to have children in the home. Application deadlines are Feb. 28th for first-choice placements, but are accepted until all visitors are placed, which is usually March for girls and April for boys.

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Traveling Opportunities

4-H also sends Ohio youth abroad to live with host families in various countries around the world. Travelers need not initially be 4-H members to participate, but become 4-H members by through their selection for the program. Travelers benefit from language learning, cultural exploration and personal growth. Adult chaperones accompany each group beginning at the gateway U.S. city. Homestay programs currently travel for one-month visits to Australia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Finland, Norway and Japan. Dates vary, but all programs operate during the summer months of mid-June to mid-August. Currently scholarships of appx. \$1,000 - \$1,500 are awarded to all selected youth who are 4-H members. Youth cannot be in college & must be willing to learn basic foreign language skills.

Both hosting and traveling are tremendously exciting, memorable experiences for both exchangees and families. If you have an open mind, a desire to learn and are willing to try new adventures, consider the Ohio 4-H International Exchange Program. For more information, contact your county Extension office at **[county 4-H professional's full name]** of **[county name]** County Extension at **[county phone number]** _____ or contact Mary Lynn Thalheimer at the State 4-H Office at thalheimer.1@osu.edu or visit www.ohio4h.org/youth/international.

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