



FAQs ABOUT HOSTING

How are host family placements assigned? Do I have a say in who I host?

Each Host Family Committee, made up of prior host families, works closely with the Site Directors and Regional Managers to facilitate the placement process. In the online application, potential host families are asked many questions about preferences and dietary accommodations to help us make informed placement decisions.

What are some of the main responsibilities of a host family?

First and foremost, home safety is paramount. Participants will need their own bed and privacy. Fostering an environment that is warm, open, tolerant, communicative, and respectful is key.

Host families are also responsible for providing:

- Breakfast for 19 days
- Dinner when evening activities are not scheduled.
- Some participants and staff will require special diets; Hands of Peace will provide guidance and support if that is the case.
- Daily driving and/or arranging carpools to and from the program site.
- Laundry facilities
- Meals and transportation on free days (2 - 3 days)

What sort of training/preparation is available to host families before the Summer Program?

The Site Directors will provide a minimum of two (2) mandatory **orientation sessions** for both host families and parents of local participants. These sessions provide detailed information on logistics, health and safety, cross-cultural understanding, the dialogue process, and an overview of the Summer Program schedule. Host families and participant parents also receive a comprehensive **Orientation Manual** with detailed information about all participants. Host families are encouraged to set up Zoom meetings with their participants and families prior to the Summer Program to meet each other virtually.

What support systems are in place to help young participants and host families thrive together?

Our staff, Host Family Committee, and seasoned volunteers are all here to support you! Read more about our staff [here](#). In addition, we work closely with volunteer doctors and mental health specialists to support the health and well-being of participants and their hosts.

Are host families invited to any events during the Summer Program?

Yes. Host families are encouraged to join us for Culture Night, an evening of food, music, and cultural performances prepared by the participants. Host families are also invited to attend religious services when we visit a church, mosque and synagogue. You are welcome at host family gatherings and the Farewell Celebration at the close of the Summer Program. Additionally, two or three days in the schedule will be Host Family Days, where no programming is planned. Host families spend these special days with their participants, showing them around San Diego or Chicago.

How is Hands of Peace prepared to protect participants and host families from COVID-19 during the Summer Program?

To support the well-being of our participants, host families, and staff, Hands of Peace has developed doctor-monitored policies to address COVID-19. All participants, host families, staff, and volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated with a U.S. approved vaccine. Participants flying from Israel or Palestine are required to take a PCR test prior to getting on the airplane. Masking and social distancing requirements will follow current local, state, and federal guidelines at the time of the program. Tests and PPE will be made available, and advanced cleaning will take place at both Chicago and San Diego program sites.

Are there other opportunities for host families to volunteer in the Hands of Peace summer program?

Yes! Volunteers are the heart of Hands of Peace. We need volunteers to help with driving, donate lunches, plan the Farewell Celebration, host social gatherings, and so much more. Visit our [**Volunteer page**](#) to get involved or contact your Site Director (below).

Questions? Please contact Melanie Stanek, San Diego Site Director at [**mstanek@handsofpeace.org**](mailto:mstanek@handsofpeace.org) or Emily Kenward, Chicago Site Director, at [**ekenward@handsofpeace.org**](mailto:ekenward@handsofpeace.org).