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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kentucky Family Named National Host Family of the Year for Fostering Global Connection

STAMFORD, Conn., May 14, 2025 – Academic Year in America (AYA), a high school exchange program, is proud to name the Edwards family of Trenton, Kentucky, as its 2024-2025 Host Family of the Year. Since hosting their first exchange student in 2022, Joyce and Paul Edwards have made a lasting impact — not only on the students they've welcomed into their home, but on families and students throughout their local area.

The Edwards family has hosted four high school exchange students through AYA, most recently Amira, a spring semester student from Malaysia. Amira shares:

> "*My host family is very open-minded and caring. They show interest in my culture by participating in some of my celebrations during my stay here, which allowed me to actually feel the moments of cultural exchange. They also planned all sorts of activities to make sure I got the full experience being an exchange student.*"

Local Coordinator Ashley Frederickson, who supports AYA participants and host families in the Trenton area, praised the Edwards family for their outstanding dedication:

> "*Joyce and Paul have truly been the heart of the AYA exchange community in our area. Whether they've hosted a student for a year, a semester, or just a weekend, they've shown so much love and care to each one. They're always there with support and advice—not just for their own students, but for other host families and students too. The flags that have flown in their front yard, each one representing a student's home country, are such a meaningful reminder of the global family they've created and the lasting impact they've made.*"

AYA is honored to recognize the Edwards family for their compassion, generosity, and commitment to cultural exchange. They exemplify what it means to be an exceptional host family: welcoming, supportive, and deeply engaged in the mission of building cross-cultural understanding.



Bring the World to Your Home and Community: Host a High School Exchange Student!

AYA is currently seeking host families across the United States for the upcoming school year. Families who open their homes and hearts to international students, like the Edwards family, help shape a more connected and compassionate world.

Learn More About Hosting with AYA

For more information, please contact Ana Wright (aifsmedia@aifs.com).

About Academic Year in America (AYA)

AYA is a non-profit organization sponsored by the American Institute For Foreign Study Foundation that facilitates high school exchange programs in the U.S. It is designated by the U.S. Department of State to offer J-1 cultural exchange visas to international high school students. For over 40 years, AYA has helped thousands of international students and U.S. host families participate in high school exchange, allowing them to share their cultures and build lifelong friendships.