

Posted Online: Aug. 09, 2012, 9:50 am

Moline area families can make an Olympic-sized difference

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Press release submitted by AIFS Foundation

Moline, IL – August 9, 2012 – As London plays host to the world during the Summer Olympics, Academic Year in America (AYA) is looking for Moline area families to play host to the world by welcoming an exchange student into their home for 4 to 6 weeks.

This year, AYA is bringing hundreds of high school students age 15 to 18½ to the United States. With AYA's tailored matching system, families have the unique opportunity to find a student who will be the perfect fit for their household. Students come from more than 30 countries such as Germany, China, Brazil, and Italy and have a multitude of diverse talents and interests.

Bringing an international student into your home is an excellent way to give your family a "world view" of a different culture, according to host dad Tim McMahon, whose family has hosted five AYA students.

"The result is that my children have made friends and traveled around the globe," McMahon said. "My children have visited several of our students on their own and have made extremely close and personal friendships. In fact, our entire family has visited the families of two of our exchange students and developed close friendships between the families."

There are several key elements to the hosting experience. For five or 10 months, host families must provide their student with two meals a day and a place to sleep and study. Most importantly, they must welcome their student into their home as if they were a son or daughter. To help facilitate the exchange experience, host families will receive full support from an AYA Local Coordinator located in their community.

AYA is a not-for-profit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to offer J-1 visas to international students. AYA is sponsored by the American Institute For Foreign Study Foundation, which was founded with the assistance of the late Robert F. Kennedy.

To learn more about hosting an exchange student with AYA, call Stella at (800) 322-4678, ext. 5164 or e-mail aya.info@aifs.org. Visit AYA on the web at www.academicyear.org.

AYA is one of the largest and most respected high school/homestay programs in the United States. AYA was founded in 1981 and has offered more than 30,000 students and host families the rewarding experience of learning about another culture and language and making a new lifelong friend.