

# SEF International Intern

## ***BUDDY FAMILY GUIDE BOOK***

Thank you for volunteering to be a Buddy Family for the Spanish Education Fund (SEF) International Intern Program in the Eden Prairie School District. We are very happy to have you and your family as part of our program!

SEF interns have 1-2 Host Families and 2 Buddy Families each to help them experience life in America. These are the expectations of being a Buddy Family. For the most part, your relationship with your intern will be developed as you get to know one another and they become part of your family. The following items guide you through this process and help our program function efficiently with minimal contact from coordinators. Please contact the Buddy Family Coordinator with any questions or issues that come up throughout the year.

These are the headlines, with additional details on the following pages:

- Email your intern prior to their arrival in the U.S. with a letter of welcome and introduction of your family.
  - Include your children's names and grade level as well as your family's interests and hobbies.
  - A picture or two is also a great to include along with your contact information.
- Attend the Host and Buddy Family get-together that will be organized by your intern's host family.
- Contact your intern via phone/text or email during the first day or two of school to see how they are doing and if they need anything or need to go anywhere for supplies.
- Invite your intern to an activity with you and your family during the first month they are here. Note: if you are not prepared to pay for your intern's activity or meal, you should specify that upfront.
- After the first month, contact your intern at least twice a month with one of those contacts being in person (an activity, event, ride, outing, meal, etc.).
- Give a ride home to a group of interns from their weekly team meeting. You will be assigned a date for this ride and can switch if necessary. Contact the Transportation Coordinator with any issues.
- Give a ride to your intern, other interns that live near you or interns that work in your child's class. You can sign up on the SEF Intern Transportation website's Monthly Driving Schedule tab at <https://sites.google.com/site/sefinterntransportation/>. Signing up for 1-2 slots per month is encouraged for all buddy families. The slots are set up in 3-5 hour increments but you can always note if you have only partial availability. Please note that signing up does not mean you'll be called but helps interns know when there are drivers available.
- HAVE FUN and ENJOY your time!

### **Expectations of a Buddy Family**

Once you receive your intern contact information and have met your intern's Host and other Buddy Families, we ask that you send an email of welcome and introduce your family to your intern. It is nice to also include a picture of all of your family members. Your intern will likely email you back and will be excited for their adventure in the U.S.

Interns will be arriving in the U.S. before school starts for their job orientation and will be met by their Host Families. Your intern's Host Family will arrange an event shortly after your intern has arrived and has had time to adjust, with all of their Buddy Families to get together and meet. After this event, you may contact your intern directly to schedule outings and do not need to involve the Host Family.

As a Buddy Family, it is expected that you support the Host Family and any transportation needs whenever possible.

We suggest you contact your intern weekly for the first month (phone, text, email or in person) and then 2 times per month after that.

Interns should be considered more like a member of the family than a guest and should be included in your family routines when possible. The host family may reach out directly to you for some support, for example for rides or intern lodging during a family vacation.

*Don't:*

- Invite your intern over and then leave them alone with your children.
- Invite them out and expect them to pay without discussing the costs ahead of time and allowing them to choose whether they can go or not based on the cost.

If you are not able to fulfill your role as a Buddy Family, please contact the Buddy Family Coordinator and we can help out. We want this to be a positive experience for all involved.

**Issues**

- There will be issues with you and your intern! Because we are from different cultures, misunderstandings will likely occur. Please make sure you are understanding and clear with each other especially in the first couple of months. You may need to try multiple forms of communication (email, text, Facebook, etc.).
- Communication is the key to making this a positive experience for both parties. Try not to assume the intern knows what you want or what you are thinking and vice versa. Most previous problems have been based on not talking things out and setting clear expectations.
- Interns are adults yet many have lived only with their family, not on their own. They sometimes have a hard time finding their place within your family's structure. Many of them have come here to learn how to be more independent, so you can help by treating them like the adults that they are.
- If any issue arises that you need help with, please feel free to contact the Buddy Family Coordinator. Odds are whatever is happening has happened before and we can help you though what is going on!

**Money**

- Interns receive a \$275.00 stipend at the beginning of each month for the previous month's work.
- Please do not offer to sign on a loan or make offers to your intern financially.
- ATMs: make sure your intern uses one that is in the Wells Fargo network to avoid charges.
- If you invite your intern to go with you to a movie, eat out, see a play, concert or other event, please let them know in advance if your expectation is for them to pay their own way, how much you expect

them to pay, or if you will be paying for them. If you expect them to pay, consider your invitation optional for them due to their limited funds.

### **J-1 Visa Regulations**

- **Employment Restrictions** – Any employment in addition to the contracted Amity internship is not permitted per visa regulations. Interns may not take another job and earn money beyond their intern program stipend, especially that would involve a 1099 or W-2 filing. Occasional babysitting is allowed but should be discussed and mutually agreed to in advance. You should not expect the intern to function like an au pair. If you are going out and would normally hire a babysitter, then you should find an appropriate way to compensate the intern.
- **30-day Grace Period** – Interns may not receive help staying in the U.S. after the 30-day grace period at the end of their assignment. Interns know before they arrive that the program is temporary and they must return home at the end. The goal of the Amity Intern Program is for interns to return home and share what they have learned and experienced. Therefore, it is very important for both the host school and host & buddy families to encourage interns to return to their home countries at the end of their assignments.

### **Clothing**

The SEF will provide winter coats, boots and some other warm clothes for your intern to use while they are here. You are welcome to let them borrow items you might have. If you are going on an outing (including walking outside from a car to a venue) remember that the interns come from warm climates, so teach them how to layer and remind them to dress for Minnesota weather.

### **Medical**

Your intern has medical insurance during their time here in the USA. You may help transport them to/from any necessary care and help with translation needs. Do not sign any of the medical agreements for your intern. You do not want to be responsible for any medical costs they may incur.

### **Vacation**

Interns must have Principal approval for vacation days. They are allowed 2 paid vacation days per semester and vacation must be used by January 24, 2016 (fall) and May 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 (spring). If you are taking your intern with you and they are using vacation days, please confirm that they have followed the approval process. International travel is allowed with some restrictions by certain countries, however the intern must follow the Amity Educational Internship Handbook travel policy.

### **Social**

All of the interns are over the age of 21, so it is your decision whether you will allow them to drink alcohol in your home.

### **Transportation**

Aside from short-term car rentals for those who have an international license, interns are not able to drive during their stay. The majority of interns do not have a license to drive in their home country, and are accustomed to using public transportation. Being a Buddy Family does include providing transportation for the interns. Host families have many responsibilities, so sharing the burden for intern transportation is important.

Transportation requests fall into the following two categories:

- Weekly Meeting Transportation - Interns have a weekly after school meeting with Kory Zauhar, the Intern Program Coordinator. Each Buddy Family will be assigned 1-2 weeks per semester to transport Interns in their quadrant home from EHSI. A reminder email will be sent one week prior to the week scheduled. Buddy Families are expected to switch or find a sub if they are not able to do their assigned week.
- Individual Intern Requested Transportation - Each intern will have individual transportation needs that their host families are not able to fulfill. The interns are asked to first check the Monthly Driving Schedule on the SEF Intern Transportation website at <https://sites.google.com/site/sefinterntransportation/>. If no one is signed up for that shift, they will then contact their Buddy Families to help fulfill these needs. If their Buddy Families are not able to help, they can send a request to individuals listed on the Volunteer Drivers tab, which includes all the Buddy Families and Transportation Volunteers. Requests may come in text and email format and a reply to sender only of YES or NO is helpful.

Interns will have information on other forms of transportations such as taxi services and Southwest Transit options.

### **Activity Ideas**

- A regular weekly event (i.e. Taco Tuesday with Tony) - Ride the bus home, stay for dinner, cook together, take home.
- Rides to places you are already going (Target, Bank, Gym, Community Center, Coffee Shop) - Tell your intern you are going and see if they would like a ride.
- Take them to an all-purpose store (Target, Cub, Costco, etc.) and have them pick out 4 things that will make their life easier - snacks for backpack, shampoo, toiletries, books, clothes and purchase it for them. Sometimes they want to try new things so buy a sample size to let them try it.
- Time together with Buddy Family at holidays - Interns are missing family and friends during this time. Include any traditions during the season (carve pumpkins, decorate the Christmas Tree, make a gingerbread house).
- Outdoor activities- fishing, ice skating, skiing, tubing and snowboarding.
- Your children's activities - soccer games, baseball games, swimming lessons, piano recitals, dance performances, etc. This can be social time for them to see lots of kids and families.
- Family gatherings like BBQs, Open Houses, Birthday Parties, etc.
- Vikings, Timberwolves, Twins, Wild, U of M, EPHS games, etc.
- Black Friday – No other country has a similar event.
- Movie Night at home or at the theatre.
- Plays at Children's/Stages/Guthrie Theatres (could be high school plays too).

- Go to see live music such as concerts, the symphony, orchestra or bands at small or large venues.
- Video or board game night with the kids – or with the parents after the kids go to bed.
- Slumber party, short-term coverage for host family, and/or an overnight trip somewhere (Duluth, Iowa, Wisconsin Dells, Chicago) - These are a great option for those considering hosting to see how it works.
- Representative Minnesota Places (unique to Minnesota):
  - Minneapolis Sculpture Garden
  - Science Museum of Minnesota
  - Fort Snelling
  - Mill City Museum
  - Mall of America
  - Minnehaha Falls
  - The State Fair
  - The Foshay Tower
  - The Walker Art Center
  - Minneapolis Institute of Arts
  - Renaissance Festival
  - Canterbury Park
  - Minnesota Zoo or Como Zoo
  - St Paul Winter Carnival
  - Stone Arch Bridge
  - Lake Calhoun/Lake of the Isles/Lake Harriet
  - Minnesota History Center
  - ValleyFair/Nickelodeon Universe
  - Wabasha Street Caves
- Dinner out at restaurants
  - Buffalo Wild Wings
  - EP Food Court - Chinese!
  - Rey Azteca
  - Kona Grill
  - Aurelia's
  - Champps
  - Lion's Tap
- Other things interns enjoyed doing:
  - Coming over to play Wii
  - Going to Orchards, Lakes
  - Staying downtown overnight
  - Going to the Mall of America

For a comprehensive list of activities, including some of those mentioned above, please visit the SEF Intern Transportation website: <https://sites.google.com/site/sefinterntransportation/helpful-links/activity-ideas>.

Thank you for making this commitment to the SEF International Intern Program. We hope you enjoy your Buddy Family experience! If you have other questions or thoughts please email Kelly Caruth, Buddy Family Coordinator.

### **Intern Committee Contact Information**

Kelly Caruth, Buddy Family Coordinator/Co-Transportation Coordinator, [kellycaruth@gmail.com](mailto:kellycaruth@gmail.com)

Jim Stromberg, Co-Transportation Coordinator, [edenprairiesef@gmail.com](mailto:edenprairiesef@gmail.com)

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