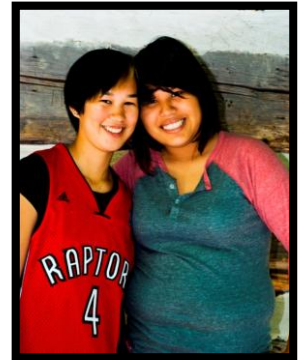


HOST FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Northern Youth Abroad (NYA) depends on a large network of volunteers across the country. One key group of volunteers are the Host Families who play an essential role in making the Canadian Program placements happen. NYA participants travel, in pairs, to communities across Canada to live with a host family and to volunteer at a work placement for five weeks (early July to mid August). The host family is the foundation of this experience and provides the participants with a home away from home.



Being a Northern Youth Abroad Host Family:

- ❖ NYA offers two separate but related programs: the NYA Canadian Program (Phase I) and the NYA International Program (Phase II). Each phase spans a 10-month period and includes work in the Participants' home communities as well as a summer placement away from home. Participants travel to communities across southern Canada as part of the Canadian Program and to Botswana, Africa as part of the International Program.

- ❖ The placement will take place from **July 3rd to August 8th 2012.**

- ❖ NYA Canadian Program participants are youth from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, ages 15-20, who have applied to the program and have gone through a competitive selection process to be chosen. This year, over 180 youth applied to our 2012 Canadian Program, competing for 38 spots.

- ❖ Northern Youth Abroad seeks to foster cross-cultural awareness, individual career goals, and international citizenship in northern youth. In addition to promoting leadership development, the program aims to strengthen the self-identity and personal cultural understanding of its participants. NYA enables the youth to acquire professional skills and training, hands on work experience, and high school credits through a cross cultural work and learning experience in southern Canada and abroad. The program has proven to provide life-changing and life-directing experiences for many of its alumni by meeting the needs and aspirations of northern youth.



- ❖ NYA host families come from a variety of backgrounds and arrangements. From single individuals, to mature couples, to families that include young children, older children or no children at all. Participants need to be provided with their own personal space within the house, although both participants can share a bedroom if necessary. NYA looks for families who are clear but not necessarily rigid in their expectations of the youth and are patient with them during their adaptation to a 'southern' lifestyle. A police background check is required for all family members over 18 once you have been selected.



- ❖ For the comfort of our participants, NYA ideally places youth in host communities that have a population of 100,000 or less. Rural placements have been used often and are quite successful for some participants, however, host families in rural areas need to be aware that this may require additional commitment on your part to provide transportation to and from work placements and for various outings, should public transit be unavailable.
- ❖ The participants will spend their days (usually Monday to Friday) volunteering at a predetermined work placement. The hours of volunteering depends on the specific arrangement with the workplace supervisor, but is usually around 35 hours/week. They will probably not work on the weekend and the participants are encouraged to get involved in the town or cities summer activities like touring, summer festivals, etc.
- ❖ Northern youth are not usually accustomed to leaving their family and home community for extended periods of time therefore it is quite likely they will experience some homesickness.



We have found that pairing youth to live together with each host family provides a great deal of comfort to them when dealing with homesickness. Host families should help make the two youth a part of your family; try to provide them with the opportunity to share in the same aspects of family life experienced by most teenagers in your area. Try to care for the youth as a member of your family and not as a guest.

- ❖ The host family must support the behaviour guidelines that the participants are required to follow. As part of this, participants agree to not to use drugs or consume alcohol at any time of the program, even if they are of legal drinking age in the host community.
- ❖ The family will be paid a stipend of \$250.00 per pair, per week for the five weeks. Participants will arrive with a series of post-dated cheques from the program for their host parent(s).
- ❖ Participants are given a \$40 weekly allowance from the program, by post-dated cheque. Allowance is for the discretionary use of each participant to allow them to buy souvenirs, treats, see movies, etc. and is not to cover living costs or work expenses. Should extraordinary living or work related expenses be encountered, the host family may request additional support from NYA.
- ❖ Summer support is always readily accessible! NYA program staff will be available during office hours all summer (10am-9pm EST, Monday-Thursday, 10am-5pm EST Friday). In an emergency, an on-call staff member can also be reached after hours. A staff member normally visits each community to check in with the participants and families during their stay. If time allows, they will also attempt to meet with the work place supervisors.



- ❖ Program details can be found online www.nya.ca. Additional information on hosting is available by request. A Northern Youth Abroad host family manual with more details is provided to selected host families before the summer.

Thank you for your interest!

For more information contact Naomi Schatz, NYA Program Officer
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