



JERICHO
FOUNDATION



Host Family Guidelines

U.S. Learning Experience

RESTORING HOPE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME
PO BOX 334 | OSHTEMO, MI 49077 | WWW.JERICHOFOUNDATION.ORG

SIGNATURES

Please sign below after you have read and agreed to the Host Family's expectations for the Summer U.S. Learning Experience Program.

Host Family Signature

Host Family Signature

Date

Date

A HOST FAMILY IS...

A vital part of the Jericho Foundation is the U.S. Learning Experience. The host family supports the students while they navigate a new place and work environment. While in the U.S., the students will be working full-time and participating in Jericho Foundation events: that's a lot of work! Your home will serve as a place of rest for our dedicated students. As the host family, you can walk alongside and support one of our students as they work to better their future and immerse them in various activities and new experiences. In return, you gain the opportunity to learn about a new culture from a young leader.

Hosting is a tremendous experience where you can share a young person's hopes and dreams and develop a lifelong connection with a student and family from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). It can be challenging to help a young person transition to a new culture and ease into surroundings, but the rewards are immeasurable.

The following information will help prepare host families to explore the challenges and triumphs of welcoming a BiH student into their home for a meaningful exchange.



Ehvan spent some time with his host family and friends

INTRODUCTION

The Jericho Foundation U.S. Learning Experience Program was developed to allow students to gain valuable work experience that has been shown to guarantee employment in BiH. Gaining this crucial work experience is **priority #1** while the student is visiting the US.

While our students are here working hard, you, as a host family, have the incredible opportunity to encourage, walk alongside, and do life with a remarkable, driven young leader. You are on the **front line** of ensuring our students get all they can from this experience and head home with the skills, certifications, and experience to get hired! Because of this, it is critical that the host family reinforces the Jericho Foundation message that while the student is in the U.S., their U.S. Learning Experience comes first.

This is also an excellent opportunity for our students to experience life in the U.S., so we invite you to show them around and allow them to experience new and exciting things during their stay. Our students look forward to getting to know you and your family as they dive into six weeks of work and life in the U.S. Thank you for partnering with us to provide this life-changing experience to Jericho Foundation scholars!

**ESTIMATED HOSTING DATES:
July 13, 2023- August 23, 2024**

If you are unable to commit to hosting for the duration of the student's visit but would still like to host or be involved, please email kellie@jerichofoundation.org

WORK HOURS FOR STUDENTS:
Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
(unless otherwise specified by the Job Shadowing site)

JERICHO FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP CONTACTS

Name:	Phone:	E-mail:
Kellie Simmons, Executive Director	(269)214-7196	kellie@jerichofoundation.org

GOALS OF THE U.S. LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Receive hands-on work experience
- Improve interpersonal and professional skills by doing or observing
- Enhance cross-cultural skills and develop cross-cultural competence, the ability to work well in different cultures and with people of different origins
- Understand company practices
- Develop strong networking/mentoring relationships

EXPECTATIONS OF HOST FAMILIES

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for developing trust and friendship between the student and your family.
- Provide room and board for the student.
 - All students must have their own beds.
 - If the student shares a room, it should be of the same gender and similar age.
- Provide and arrange transportation to and from work.
- Provide meals for the student (including those required during time at work).
- Support and make the student feel like a part of the family, with the same privileges and obligations as other family members.

ABOUT THE STUDENTS

Students will be assigned to host families after the background check has been cleared and travel arrangements have been made for the student. However, regardless of the student you host, you can be sure that your student:

- Has cleared a background check.
- Has passed a drug test.
- Has been in the Jericho Foundation scholarship program for 3+ years.
- Is in good academic standing.
- Has received training about how to interact with your family successfully.
- Have received training on how to interact with their co-workers.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Students are given a copy of these expectations, and we make sure they understand them before they arrive. If any confusion arises regarding these expectations, please contact a Jericho Foundation staff person.

Students:

- Are ambassadors of Jericho Foundation and are expected to represent themselves and us well at the workplace and throughout the stay.
- Students should be available and willing to speak on behalf of the Jericho Foundation to small local groups, churches, and Jericho Foundation gatherings and talk about BiH, Jericho Foundation, and their life experiences after receiving adequate preparation and coaching time.
- Will obey the regulations of the B1/B2 Exchange Visitor Visa and the U.S. State Department.
- Abide by the Federal, State, and local laws, including those about the consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone under the age of 21 and the use or possession of illegal drugs.
- Will recognize that Kalamazoo is a very diverse city and know they are expected to treat people of any racial or ethnic group with kindness and respect.
- Will not drive a motorized vehicle (automobile, motorcycle, boat, or any other vehicle requiring a driver's license).
- Will not get any new piercings or tattoos while in the U.S.
- Will face punishment up to early dismissal from the U.S. Learning Experience program if they publish any information on the Internet in any media or social format that violates program rules.
- Acknowledge that Jericho Foundation is NOT acting in the capacity of local parents for students and that their natural parents still retain all of their rights and obligations.

Jericho Foundation reserves the right to dismiss any student who fails to uphold all of the above rules. In the event that a student is dismissed from the program, the parent or natural guardians are responsible for all additional expenses incurred above those of the regular program costs. In the case of early dismissal, program fees will not be reimbursed.

BEFORE THE STUDENT ARRIVES: STEPS FOR PREPARATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

Be sure to read and understand all program guidelines as well as the expectations of our students as outlined in the Host Family Packet. It is imperative that Host Families have all contact information for Jericho Foundation leaders and community services in case of emergency.

Before your student arrives, try to learn as much as possible about the Bosnia and Herzegovina culture, which may help prevent misunderstandings. You may find helpful information from a simple Internet search. CulturalAtlas.com, Unesco, and WorldTravelGuide.net.

Also, think about which aspects of American culture you would like to share with the student, such as types of food, entertainment, and local places of interest. There are many books/materials that the Jericho Foundation can provide you for preparation free of charge.

Here are some ideas about more information to gather and share before their arrival:

1. Establish communication with the student and their parent(s) using the contact information on the student information sheet.
2. Please extend a welcome and begin telling them about your family.
3. Try, if possible, to set up at least one Skype or Zoom call, as it's always nice to connect face-to-face.
4. Send the student photos of your family, home, their room, pets, etc., so they can "see" you and their home away from home.
5. Tell the student about a normal week and the hobbies your family enjoys. Take this opportunity to ask about their hobbies and plan some time for their hobbies here.
6. Ask about food, what they like to eat, and what their meals at home are like. They may respond with a generic answer as they don't know what is available here, but knowing what they do not like is an excellent place to start. Mealtimes in their country are much different, so this is an area where they will have to be flexible.
7. Give the students information about types of clothing to bring and remind them of what they do not have to pack, as you will provide towels, lunch supplies, and personal care items such as shampoo and bedding. Upon arrival, the students are given a gift bag from the Jericho Foundation, which includes toothpaste, deodorant, toothbrush, lotion, and feminine products.
8. Understand that each student will be given \$200 spending money. Most often, the student will try to save the money to return to their family. For many of our students, that's more than their family earns monthly.

AFTER THE STUDENT ARRIVES: EASING THE TRANSITION

Once your student arrives, these tips can help ease the transition for the student and your family.

- Maintain and demonstrate an open mind to help create an environment for trust and friendship to develop between you and your student.
- Help your student know how to use ALL your communication devices and their cell phone to contact their support networks: the Jericho Foundation leaders, their job site, all your family members, all their family members, and friends.
- Be sure you and your student know how to access and use the student's travel insurance and medical insurance policies in case of emergency. Jericho Foundation will purchase these policies.
- Exercise supervisory and parental responsibility to ensure the student's well-being.

- Clearly communicate your expectations to the student, including boundaries and rules (household routines including meals, curfews, house keys, emergency procedures and contacts, snack and meal preparation, religious practices, inviting friends over, etc.)
- Gently encourage the student to learn and adopt most of the ways of your household, including meal times and other practices.
- Explain household behaviors to the student, such as appropriate shower usage (time limit), where they can get snacks or prepare a meal, limits on electronic use, etc.
- Talk to your student about your expectations and house rules about smoking. Michigan law states that smoking is prohibited in public buildings or outside within 15 feet of a public building.
- Discuss any dietary restrictions your student may have.
- Show your student how to use common household appliances (including laundry facilities).
- Create a safe environment where the student's religion and culture are respected.
- Engage with your student at the end of each workday by asking about their day: how it went, what worked on, and what they learned. If possible, have the student help with meal preparation.
- Students may experience homesickness due to cultural overload and daily use of a second language. As a result, they may exhibit signs of being quiet or withdrawn. However, it's important to remember that giving them some space will help them adjust within a day or two. Additionally, they may experience jet lag and have difficulty adapting to the change in time, but this should pass in a few days. One way to help your student connect with your family is to avoid spending time with each other during the first few weeks.
- If you have any concerns or questions regarding the student, please contact the Jericho Foundation's Executive Director, which includes serious homesickness, difficulty adapting to family life or work, or illness. An extensive discussion of issues your student might face is included in the Topics sections below: *Recognizing and Dealing With Challenges Students May Face*.

MAXIMIZING THE EXPERIENCE: IT'S GONNA BE A BLAST!!

Our students will be working hard during their time in the U.S., but there will be plenty of time for fun! Here are a few ideas to ensure our student gets all they can from this experience:

- Recognize the student's birthday and other special occasions.
- Encourage involvement in community life by introducing the student to neighbors, friends, and local groups.
- Teach the student about the local culture and learn about the student's culture.
- Expose the student to new things and experiences.

- Engage in recreational activities with your student (go to a park, play a game of tennis, kick the soccer ball around, etc.)

Michigan has a lot to do, and we are so thrilled that our host families try to show their students all they can. We never want a family to feel financially strained by hosting a student. Please know that engaging in these activities with your students is not a requirement of our host families. Our students appreciate the time they spend with their host family and the support and encouragement they receive from you. The Travel, Social Activities, and Recreational Events With Your Student section discusses this topic extensively below.

TOPICS (in alphabetical order, not the order of importance)

ABSENCES/MISSING WORK/ILLNESS/INJURY

We have built strong connections with local businesses to provide students with the necessary experience for their success. Therefore, it is imperative we maintain these relationships and ensure their availability for future students.

This U.S. Learning Experience program requires a lot of adaptability from our students. Traveling to a new place, engaging with a new culture, and diving into the U.S. workplace can be mentally and physically taxing. We want what is best for our students, and there will be times when a student is sick, and it is best for them to miss work.

If your student has to miss work, it is **their responsibility to contact Jericho Foundation and their U.S. Learning Experience site**. In the spirit of empowering our students, we ask that host families not contact the business host site on behalf of the student.

If your student misses more than one day of work, please get in touch with a Jericho Foundation staff person to address the issue with the student. If there is a serious medical matter, we want to be in your corner to help navigate caring for the student. We also want to do everything possible to ensure our students get all they can from this opportunity.

There are a few select dates where students are excused from their work for Jericho Foundation-sponsored events, including a group weekend trip, the Grand Rapids SIP Event, and the Student Luncheon. Jericho Foundation will communicate this and the dates of the events to the business host sites.

All students have medical coverage while in the U.S. A good rule of thumb is to treat a student's injury and illness as you would if it were your child. Because the students will not have an established Primary Care Physician (PCP), Urgent Care will likely be your first option if your student is sick. As you would with your child, in emergencies, please do not hesitate to bring your student to the ER or call an ambulance if needed. In any case, please inform the Jericho Foundation as soon as possible.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES (NOT FOOD) TO UNDERSTAND

1. In general, the cultures in BiH are more conservative.
2. It is not common for adult children to drink around their parents, except at something like a wedding. The students are all of legal drinking age, but they know if they drink alcohol, we expect them to drink conservatively.
3. In BiH, students are used to walking everywhere and will miss doing that in the U.S., so see if you can find opportunities to go for walks at night or on weekends.
4. Generally, people in BiH tend to be direct, blunt, and to the point. Students receive a lot of coaching about this, but you may find their direct manner of speaking occasionally surprising. For example, Jericho Foundation students have informed the Jericho Foundation director that she is aging and has gained weight, and she's learned not to take it personally.

FOOD/MEALS

This is a great conversation when beginning your relationship with the student. Strong communication is essential, and if you allow the student to express themselves about their food preferences and other likes and dislikes, you will better understand their preferences. They will feel comfortable expressing themselves with you about many different things, helping them have an enjoyable U.S. experience.

Talk about what types of food your student would like for their work lunches. Please show them where to find things around the kitchen and permit them to prepare food in your kitchen. You will purchase the supplies and foods they need to prepare their lunches, and we do encourage you to have the student prepare their lunches. The student will be provided with a lunch bag.

Consider taking your students grocery shopping so they can help pick out the foods kept in your home. They may even want to prepare some customary foods for your family! This will increase the student's independence and confidence and alleviate pressure on the family.

Eating issues may concern you.

1. Our students come from complex backgrounds, and it is possible that they have gone without or had very little food in their childhood.
2. Seeing the endless food supply in our refrigerators and cupboards, students might overeat when arriving.
3. Sometimes, supplying them with their drawer of snacks helps them feel in control.
4. Please refrain from drawing attention to how much they eat, and please contact Jericho Foundation leaders if you think there is a real problem.

Foods Common in BiH	Foods Not Found in BiH
Coffee, Coke, milk, green/herbal teas	Diet pop
Milk products, cheese, cream, cheese, eggs	Casseroles (foods mixed together)
Chicken, turkey, hamburger, salami	No pork for Muslim students
Bagels, bread, cereal (Corn Flakes)	Asian food
Rice, potatoes	Ice in drinks
Vegetables, fruit	
Vegetable salads such as cucumber/tomato salad	
Hamburgers	
Pizza	
Chocolate (every day!)	

LANGUAGE CHALLENGES

Language challenges are expected, and you may sometimes believe your student does not seem to understand you. Remember, all the students understand and speak English at different levels. People in the U.S. talk TOO FAST and use slang and colloquialisms often, so try to remember to slow down when speaking, especially the first week they are here. It's natural to talk louder when experiencing language barriers, but remember, they are not hard to hear. When slowing down, try enunciating even more clearly than usual.

Remind the students that asking you to repeat something is ok if they don't understand. If the look in their eyes tells you they are not following, ask them if they need you to say that again or differently. They may hesitate to ask because they don't want you to think they are not smart.

MONEY/GIFTS

STUDENT SPENDING MONEY

Upon arrival, students receive \$200 of spending money to be used as they please (shopping, souvenirs, etc.) This is more than their families make in a month for many students. For this reason, students will often choose to save money and bring it back home to their families. Other times, students will get extra money from family and friends back home who ask them to bring back various items unavailable in Bosnia. This money is not to be used for food. **The host family's responsibility is to provide ALL meals for the students during their stay here in the U.S.**

COSTS/EXPENSES YOUR FAMILY WILL INCUR

Food: Along with providing a place to stay for the student, the host family will pay for all meals, including meals eaten at home, at restaurants, and packed lunches for work.

Transportation: The family will provide and pay for all transportation to and from the host business site. Transportation can also be provided by trusted friends, family, and co-workers.

Outings: If you invite a student to participate in activities with your family, please cover any associated costs. These items might include getting ice cream/frozen yogurt, golfing, visiting a museum, going to the movies, eating at a restaurant, etc. Your family is not required to do these events; however, many families have enjoyed occasional sightseeing, visiting local attractions, and doing other activities with their students.

Please refrain from giving your student extra spending money or paying for activities organized by the student (not by your family), such as getting coffee or going for a meal with a coworker, friend, or other students. **Please do not send money home with your students because we want all students to be treated fairly.**

BUYING YOUR STUDENT GIFTS AND TAKING THEM SHOPPING

It is a beautiful thing to be able to bless a student with gifts! If you choose to give your student a gift, we ask that you adhere to Jericho Foundation's policy that gifts given to students do not exceed \$50 in value per item. Multiple gifts are acceptable, but no gift can be more than \$50.

If a host family brings a student to a store and wants to purchase something, they may give the student a set amount to spend. Some examples include \$30 at a resale clothing store, \$15 at a dollar store, or \$50 for something at Target. It is always fun to send our students back with souvenirs or memorabilia by which to remember their trip!

We do not want any student to feel less valued based on what gifts they were given compared to another student or any student's family back in BiH being offended by excessive money spent. We ask that host families use their best judgment when navigating these situations. If you have any questions, please contact Jericho Foundation leadership for guidance.

The best way to give a game-changing, meaningful gift to the student you are hosting is by sponsoring them as they pursue their college education! Help us cover the cost of books, room and board, or even a full year of tuition! Visit jerichofoundation.org for more information.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

You may wonder if you can invite your student to attend religious services with your family. Absolutely! We explain to the students that they are NOT required to attend. Still, we ask them to be open-minded and consider attending because host families like introducing the students to their friends and including them in important activities. Many students choose to attend! However, we ask that you not pressure the student if they are uncomfortable and prefer not to attend

TRAVEL, SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, AND RECREATIONAL EVENTS WITH YOUR STUDENT

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

While the students are excited to do activities and travel on the weekends (Chicago, Detroit, Lake Michigan), they are more accustomed to a much slower pace during the week. Bosnia is a very relational culture, so they don't run errands or work on projects when the workday is done, unlike many in the U.S. They enjoy spending quality time with friends and family, sipping coffee, and playing cards for hours on the porch or deck.

After the workday, especially the first couple weeks, spend as much time interacting with your students in the evenings as possible. Save up your busy times for active weekends, including traveling or introducing them to family and friends.

We never want a family to feel financially strained by hosting a student. However, when deciding to become a host family, we hope there is a general understanding of the financial commitment involved. When you invite the student to participate in activities with your family, we ask that you pay for any associated costs such as movie tickets, entrance fees to a museum or venue, dining, admission costs, etc. Remember that many of the student's parents are unemployed, so they won't have a lot of disposable income to spend while in the U.S.

No special activities need to be planned; however, many families enjoy occasional sightseeing activities at local attractions and landmarks.

Here are some ideas of what some students have enjoyed in the past:

LOCALLY:

1. Frozen yogurt: This will be new for them, and getting to pick their toppings is a big deal.
2. Dollar store: It might sound funny, but there is nothing like it in BiH. They love to get small things to bring back home.
3. Target: Same thing. There is nothing like it in BiH.
4. Al-Bos Restaurant, 2930 Shaffer, Kentwood, MI: A Bosnian restaurant, which is a nice trip ½ through their time in the US.
5. Downtown festivals
6. Movies
7. Bagels: not available in BiH.
8. Eating at ethnic restaurants: If they are open to it, take them to Mexican, Italian, or Chinese restaurants. These types of food are not offered and are not common in BiH.
9. Farmer's markets
10. Putt-Putt golf
11. Nature walks
12. Coffee shops
13. Physical and recreational activities: Get active and creative! Try taking them on a bike ride, kayaking, or to a local park.

REGIONALLY/OUT OF TOWN:

We completely understand that activities outside of your town require more planning; if your family is interested, here are some additional activities students have enjoyed in the past:

1. A day or weekend trip to Chicago or Detroit
2. Lake Michigan: many students haven't seen a beach like that!
3. Zoo
4. Mackinac Island/Up North
5. Camping
6. Bowling
7. Baseball games at any level
8. Theme parks include Cedar Point, Michigan's Adventure, Henry Ford Village, etc.
9. Get creative: try something new for everyone, including your family! You may find new traditions such as county fairs, concerts, flea markets, Amish country, antiques, etc.

If you have any questions, contact a Jericho Foundation staff member. Be creative, have patience, and enjoy getting to know your Jericho Foundation student!

RECOGNIZING & DEALING WITH CHALLENGES STUDENTS MAY FACE

If your student seems to need help, talk to the student about the signs you are seeing. Ask open-ended questions, allowing the student to speak freely about what's going on. Depending on the situation, offer advice and help. Encourage the student to contact the Jericho Foundation Executive Director and/or the BiH staff to share their feelings and experiences.

Homesickness: Calling home frequently or spending too much time online. Offer to help find fun activities to become involved and encourage their involvement.

- **Language difficulty:** Spoken English is not improving. Offer to locate additional language assistance.
- **Culture shock:** Avoiding new experiences. Contact the Jericho Foundation for advice.
- **Trouble making new friends:** The student does not talk about new friends or have any social interactions outside your family. Contact the Jericho Foundation for advice.
- **Difficulty interpreting culture-specific social cues:** The student shows poor judgment in interpersonal interactions based on U.S. cultural expectations. Contact the Jericho Foundation for specific advice.
- **Confusion about different rules and expectations compared to their own home:** See item above.
- **Various emotional difficulties:** Spending excessive time alone or becoming introverted or unusually quiet. Do not minimize the seriousness of what may be happening to the student. Contact the Jericho Foundation to discuss what's happening and for help.

AFTER YOUR STUDENT RETURNS HOME, CONTINUED COMMUNICATION

We love that our students and host families develop such meaningful bonds during their time together, and we are sure you will want to keep in contact after your student has headed home.

Below are guidelines for communicating with the students once they return to BiH. These guidelines were developed from our experiences since 1995, serving, training, and learning from locals with a deep investment and understanding of the culture. *These guidelines are applied to communication with any student or child met through a Jericho

Foundation-sponsored function such as a U.S. Learning Experience, Project Hope Trips, Scholarship Program, or other event.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR STUDENT

The best ways to keep in touch with a students after they've returned home are through Facebook, Email, or Zoom. Our students are looking forward to your ongoing contact, and we ask that you respond to them within two weeks of receiving their emails or requests for communication. Not all students have regular access to the internet. Please expect students to take up to two weeks to respond to an email. If at any time a student is contacting you too often or you believe you need to take a break from corresponding or communicating, please let us know right away.

VISITING A STUDENT

You can visit a student by joining us on a Jericho Foundation-sponsored trip. Many supporters have had the opportunity to build a deeper relationship with students by meeting them and their families and seeing where they live. We require that Jericho Foundation's BiH mentor or team leader be present during visits, so please let us know before scheduling a trip.

Occasionally, it can be arranged during a Jericho Foundation-sponsored trip to visit a student's home and family (home visits will depend on geographic location and family situation).