



**Questions and Answers for YFU volunteers and host families supporting YES Program students:**

**What is the YES program?**

The Youth Exchange and Study program (YES) is an initiative by the US Department of State to foster better relations between the US and predominantly Muslim countries through youth exchange.

**How many YES students are there?**

Approximately 375 YES students will participate in the 2008-2009 program year. YFU USA is hosting 30 students in 10 cluster areas around the USA.

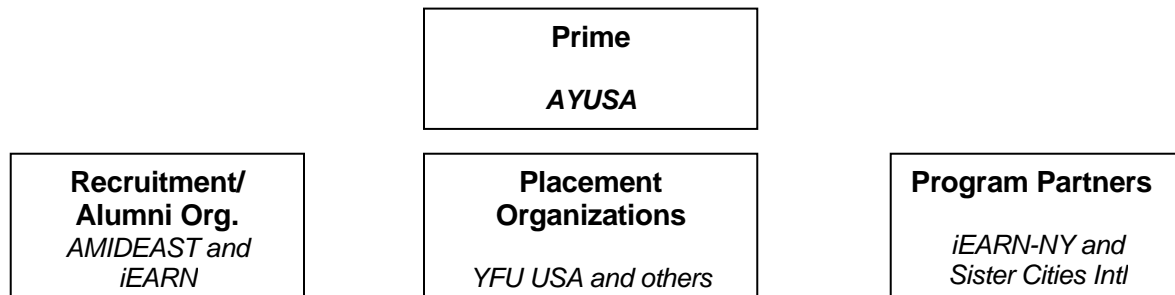
**What is YFU's role in the structure of the YES program?**

YFU is a placement organization. **Placement Organizations** secure host family and school placements, provide support and monitoring to students, and provide programming while students are in the USA.

Another exchange organization, **AYUSA** in California, is the **Prime Grantee** and has overall responsibility for coordinating the **YES** program.

**Recruitment/Alumni Organizations** recruit and select students, give pre-departure orientation and manage natural family communication while students are on-program, as well as alumni-programming when students return;

**Program Partners** coordinate some of the required activities such as the Youth Leadership Summit for YES students (a competitive application process), the Cyber-diaries project, and also maintain alumni-database.



**Are there YES-specific considerations for Placement in host families and schools?**

YFU has placed students according to the **Cluster model**. This means 2-4 YES students are placed within a 120 mile radius of each other to facilitate coming together for their enhancement activities and orientations. It also provides a support network of other YES families and volunteers who will receive special assistance and training to work with YES students. There are some other specific considerations which differ from typical YFU selection criteria for families and schools:

**Single people:** No placements with single adults can be made unless there are children living at home or if the single person is hosting two exchange students. Exceptions can be requested from the natural parents and Recruitment/Alumni Organization.

**Female students:** Prior approval from the Recruitment/Alumni Organization is needed if there is a



	host brother(s) age 13 or older.
<b>English language:</b>	English must be the primary language spoken at home by the host family.
<b>Sharing a Room:</b>	Is permitted if the age difference between a student and sibling roommate is not more than 4 years.
<b>Host Parent Age:</b>	At least one of the host parents must be 26 years of age or older, and the other host parent must be at least 21 years old upon student arrival.
<b>Private Schools:</b>	Placements at private schools (including faith-based, religious schools) may be made only with approval by Recruitment/Alumni Organization, U.S. Embassy and natural parents in country.
<b>Host Family Religion:</b>	Religious tolerance is necessary on the part of the host family. YES students may not be compelled to practice the religion of their host family.
<b>Double Placement:</b>	If two students speak different languages (i.e., Arabic and Urdu) double-placement is allowed if all required parties agree (Recruitment/Alumni Organization, U.S. Embassy and natural parents in country)

### ***How is Pre-departure Orientation arranged for students and host families?***

**Recruitment/Alumni Organizations** conduct pre-departure orientations for students and their parents and distributed orientation packets from YFU USA, which included the ***Passport to the USA*** student handbook and YFU Welcome Letter.

### ***What happens during the arrival orientation in Washington, DC?***

YES students will take part in an orientation organized by AYUSA and Close-Up Foundation to be held in the Washington, DC area from August 6-August 9, 2008. The orientation covers the following topics:

- Cross cultural training
- YES program activities organized by program partners such as "Cyber Diaries"
- Leadership Skills
- US politics and culture

### ***Who arranges the students' international travel?***

Recruitment/Alumni Organizations book international arrival and departure tickets from home country to Washington, DC, and manage all costs associated with the international portion of the participants' arrival and departure. YFU does not receive detailed itineraries of this travel component.

### ***Who arranges the students' domestic travel?***

AYUSA books domestic legs (i.e. Washington, DC to/from U.S. host community).

### ***When do the students arrive in the US and in their host community?***

Students will arrive in the DC area on August 5 or August 6, depending upon their country of origin.

### **August 9                      Travel out to host communities from Washington, DC**

AYUSA will provide YFU's 1-800 travel emergency number to students so that they can communicate routine



changes/delays to YFU directly. YFU will communicate these to host families on day of travel. The YFU travel number is **1-800-705-9510**.

***When do the students depart the US and their host community at the end of the program?***

- 1 May 2009** Recruitment/Alumni Organizations will confirm return flight information.
- 7 June 2009** Departure from host community to departure orientation (**not yet finalized**).
- 13 June 2009** Departure from Washington, DC to home country (**not yet finalized**).

Students must travel with their country group whenever possible; independent student arrivals and departures are not permitted.

***Do YES students receive an allowance?***

Yes. The scholarship provides for a monthly allowance and money for incidentals.

**A. \$125 Monthly Allowance:** This allowance is to be used for the personal and incidental expenses of the student, such as going out with friends, paying phone bills, taking school trips, and other items that are supposed to be the student responsibility (see HF Handbook page 31). Please help your student set up a bank account in order to deposit these checks, and work with the student to budget the money. We have been told that YES students may try to save the money to bring back home, or spend it too quickly. The money is meant to be spent so that they can have a typical teenage experience. The YFU area rep will check in with you and the student during their monthly support call specifically to monitor allowance issues.

**How?** YFU USA will issue and mail five checks to students on the following schedule:

August 6, 2008	\$250
October 1, 2008	\$250
December 2, 2008	\$250
February 4, 2009	\$250
April 1, 2009	\$375

**B. \$300 Incidental allowance:** This allowance is to be used for mandatory public school fees (including sports or other activities fees), school supplies, and seasonal clothing purchases.

**How?** Students and their host families must submit a YFU-YES Incidental Allowance reimbursement report with original receipts **by December 15, 2008** to the YFU national office at:

**YFU USA  
Programs and Contracts  
6400 Goldsboro Rd, Suite 100  
Bethesda, MD 20817**

***Will YFU pay for my YES student's transportation to school?***

Funds are available from the grant to reimburse transportation to and from school if all students from the student's neighborhood incur such costs, and other transportation is unavailable and/or would cause hardship.

***Will my student be involved in any YES- specific activities?***

YES students have multiple YES-specific program requirements to complete. A booklet will be provided that explains these in detail. Brief descriptions are provided below:



**1. Enhancement activity each quarter:**

These will vary on a cluster basis and are organized by the volunteers, field director and host families. Enhancement activities are intended to give students opportunities for leadership skill development, learning about civic education, and to give service back to the community and school which is hosting them. Examples: school and community service projects, government day, civic education day, food bank volunteering, social service agency or church outreach, presentations about the home country at elementary or middle schools, visits to state capital or local offices of legislative representatives. Some students were already involved in disaster relief, Special Olympics and other international service and could continue such activities in the US.

**2. Leadership mentoring project:**

This project links students with adult professionals in the host community (i.e. government official/teacher/ doctor/lawyer) interested in the YES program and countries. All YES students are required to meet with a mentor at least once a month during the stay in the United States to learn about the mentor's work and about their local community. Students will be provided a **mentor letter** to help contact a potential mentors and a **mentor log** to record sessions with mentors. These logs must be filled out and returned to the YFU area representative or field director every quarter. Host family assistance and networking to help the student find a suitable mentor is appreciated.

**3. Participation in International Education Week (Nov 17-21, 2008) and Global Youth Service Day (April 24-26, 2009)**

YES students and their local YFU representatives are strongly urged to participate in International Education Week (see <http://iew.state.gov>) and Global Youth Service Day (<http://www.gysd.net/involve>) activities. Again, the specific activity will be developed appropriate to the cluster area and coordinated by the YFU representative. The websites will give you ideas, and linking with other initiatives in your area is permitted and encouraged!

**4. YES Youth Leadership Summit (competitive application) – only a few YFU students will be selected**

YES students will be invited to apply to participate in a Youth Leadership Summit program administered by AYUSA. Out of 375 students, approximately 50 will be selected. More information will be distributed when available.

**5. Better Understanding for a Better World (competitive application) – up to 50% of YFU students may qualify**

YFU will have an internal competition for our YES students to apply to participate in the Better Understanding for a Better World conference in Orlando, FL during February or Baltimore, MD during April. YES cluster leaders will have the opportunity to apply to be selected to participate (one per seminar) as chaperones.

**6. Cyber-diaries project**

YES program partner iEARN has organized this online forum for students to share resources and connect with fellow YES students during their time in the US. The internet link is <http://www.iearn.org>. Using the "Interactive Forums" tab students will be able to log-in. Students receive a briefing on this requirement at their arrival orientation. Students are asked to post



occasional entries on blog, every 2 weeks or so.

**7. Other activities:**

Students are encouraged to participate in academic contests and other opportunities. This activity should be shared with the YFU cluster leader (area rep or field director) and publicized appropriately. The Department of State may from time to time ask students to participate in surveys or other reports about the exchange.

***Can YES students travel outside the host community?***

**Individual student travel is not allowed.**

YES students **may travel with prior approval of YFU USA:**

- with their host family or on organized group trips or
- with local YFU groups, according to the usual YFU Permission to Travel procedures.

After 1 January 2009 of the program year YFU USA can permit an individual travel exception for students in good standing and who comply with the following:

- Obtain host family and YFU USA approval;
- Prove that an adult is meeting them at their final destination; and
- Provide pertinent information (dates of travel, address, contact person, plans) prior to departure to YFU USA and host family.

***What type of medical/liability insurance is provided YES students?***

All YFU YES students will be covered by the same policy as other YFU international students for the 08-09 program year.

This policy is provided by AVI International and is in effect from the dates of arrival through departure home. ID cards, claim forms, and a policy handbook will be mailed to the students and host families upon the student's arrival, and information is also available at [www.yfu-usa.org](http://www.yfu-usa.org) or on the host family lounge at <http://my.yfu.org>.

***Who are the support resources for my YES student?***

Every YES student and host family has several sources of support:

- the YFU area representative
- the YFU field director or YES cluster leader
- the support services manager in the district office

***Is there a resource for cross cultural questions relating to Islam?***

Yes, **AYUSA** has informed us that cultural resource knowledge about Muslim activities in the US and helping students with their adjustment. If the student is having difficulty adapting to your community or your home or you just have questions about your experience, you and your student are invited to please feel free to call YFU USA at 1-866-493-8872 and ask the support services manager to refer you to the resource. Once we have confirmation of the resource, we will send an update.