

Memo

To: Ms. Ruscio

From: Mr. Van Etten



Date: 27 March 2012

Foreign Exchange Program Approval for AFS-USA

I have received information from Maryann Marr, local coordinator for AFS-USA seeking district recognition of this group for the purposes of placing foreign exchange students with the district. I have reviewed the packet of information provided. I am placing it with this memo so that you or others will have the information to review.

I requested information from schools that had recently participated in an exchange with AFS-USA. I spoke with Mrs. Karen Denny, principal at South Jefferson High School, Mr. Eric Schnabl, principal at Cazenovia High School, and Mr. Donald Stankavage, principal at Frankfort-Schuyler High School. Each principal described positive interactions with the AFS-USA. They indicated that concerns with the placed students were addressed. Mrs. Denny has also reported that she has hosted an AFS-USA student, acting in the role as host mom. She reports AFS-USA to be thoughtful in their placements and found Mrs. Marr to be supportive for her and the student she hosted.

Based on the references and information provided, I would recommend the district add AFS-USA to the list of agencies we are willing to accept foreign exchange students from.

Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance.

Governmental standards:

AFS-USA has been a trusted leader in intercultural high school student exchange for more than 60 years. Accredited by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), more than 5,000 trained AFS Volunteers live in communities where we place our students. AFS works in partnership with educators to support their community in defying borders. AFS USA operates under the supervision of the US Department of State, which conducts annual audits to assure that the organization at the local level complies with very strict standards concerning placement and support of students being hosted, their schools and the hosting families.

Student selection:

AFS welcomes more than 2,500 international high school students to the U.S. from 90 countries annually. Our students:

- Are seen as role models and leaders in their home communities;
- Must be accepted by an AFS office in their home country, as well by AFS-USA on the basis of academic achievement and motivation to study abroad;
- Are required make an effort to do their best regardless of whether grades transfer home;
- Have a tested level of proficiency in English and strive to increase language skills; and
- Are truly ambassadors for their countries and provide invaluable opportunities for global learning.

Locally, students are selected by local volunteers in cooperation with potential host families by the following process:

-families must complete the AFS application which includes personal references and background checks, as well as an in home interview including all family members

-local volunteers and regional AFS staff search incoming student applications to identify students who meet our criteria: language proficiency, academic average of B or better, boy/girl/nationality choice of family, student who indicates adaptability and openness to change, student who is comfortable with rural or small town placement.

Placement Process:

1. Local family expresses interest in hosting.
2. AFS volunteer (or family) contacts school to receive permission to make a placement.
3. Local family begins the application process and reviews student bios; student is chosen with guidance from AFS volunteer.
4. Student application is forwarded to school for acceptance. Application includes basic personal data, academic transcript, health forms, SLEP scores and English Language Recommendation Form, including writing sample.
5. School official accepts student and signs Placement Acceptance Form.

Students are informed that a New York State diploma will not be granted under normal circumstances, but they may ask the school to provide academic transcripts before departure.

Support:

Each host family and student is assigned a liaison from the community who is the first line of support. The liaison is required to make monthly contacts with the student and the host family, including checking on academic performance, and provide a summary of those contacts to AFS USA. The liaison also contacts the student's school directly a minimum of three times per year.

School References:

Mr. Eric Schnabl, HS Principal
Cazenovia High School
315-655-1370

Mrs. Karen Denny, HS Principal
South Jefferson High School
315-232-4531

Mr. Donald Stankavage, HS Principal
Frankfort-Schuyler High School
315-895-7461

Personal References for Maryanne Marr:

Mrs. Barbara Barnes
Homer School Staff Member
315-852-9829

Dr. Paul Dorward, Superintendent
Berne-Knox-Westerlo Schools
(518) 872-1293