

Questions Families Frequently Ask About Hosting

Who can be a host family?

Single people, retired couples, single and dual parent families. Anyone can be a host; however, it works best when host families have children or neighborhood children to play with.

What will my Mississippi child be like?

He or she will be like any other child. They like to play games, sing songs, laugh, and talk. Despite desegregation in the public school system, many of the children have limited experience with white adults. Like all children, they are in need of compassion and understanding.

How do I entertain my child?

Don't entertain your child! Let your child be a member of your family. Do all the normal things you do on a daily basis. Let your child help. Treat your child just like your own children. Your children or neighborhood children will find plenty of activities to do with each other.

How many Mississippi children come to Wisconsin each summer?

It varies from year to year, but on average, around 75 children.

Why are most trips about 2 weeks long?

Throughout PSA's history, we have found that two weeks is usually the minimum it takes for child and family to really get to know one another. Other week-long programs failed because people were able to put on a front that was not truly themselves. After two weeks, there is no way any of us can keep up an act. We must relax and be ourselves and form a normal child/family relationship. It also often takes a while for a Mississippi child to relax and get accustomed to such a dramatic change in cultures. Some host families have said that it wasn't until the second year that we really felt that we had bonded and made the child a part of our lives.

How does PSA choose the child for me?

Host families fill out the application form, which asks about your family, including desired sex and age range of the child you would like to host. Mississippi children also fill out a form and we try to find a child who will fit into your family.

How do the children get picked to come to Wisconsin?

Mississippi coordinators pick children based on four criteria: the child's general good behavior, willingness to come, how well he or she fits the age and sex requests of Wisconsin families, and children who most *need* the experience.

Is there an application deadline?

ASAP. The earlier you return your application, the more likely you are to receive information on your child in time to write to him or her before he or she arrives in Wisconsin.

Will I need to provide "letters of reference?"

No, PSA will contact your references. A police record check is also done.

What else is required of me to become a host?

All first year host families are encouraged to attend an orientation meeting. These are usually held in May.

How long does it take to get approval on my application form?

Approval time varies depending on completeness and accuracy of your form, how quickly references and police records reply back and a variety of other variables. Most applications are approved within four

weeks. You will be notified when your application is approved.

What is the dollar cost to my family?

PSA asks for a \$50 tax-deductible donation per child to cover transportation and insurance. The actual cost is almost double that, so PSA is always in need of individuals, churches, civic groups, and businesses to donate money.

I'm sure I want to host a child this summer, what do I do next?

Read all the information and discuss it with your spouse and your children. Encourage them to read it also. Make this a "family decision" to host a child. Next, fill out the application form. Pay close attention to details and follow directions completely. Return the application as soon as possible to the address indicated with your check for \$50.

What happens if my child is hurt while in my care?

Seek medical attention. PSA has their own insurance policy. The children are insured from the moment they step on the bus to the moment they step off the bus in Mississippi. Call Ann Neumann, 262-626-2936 to receive an insurance form.

Do you always have enough host families?

No, we always have more children wanting to come than host families. On average, almost twice as many families request girls as boys. We normally have an over abundance of boys, ages 11-14 and a shortage of girls, ages 6-9, although it does vary from year to year. It is rare for a family whose application is approved not to receive a child.

How many bus trips are there each summer?

Refer to the Bus Schedule.

If we want to host again next summer, can we host the same child?

Of course, building lasting friendships is what PSA is all about!

I still have questions. Who do I contact? Call Ann Neumann 262-626-2936(Home) 262-353-5719(Cell); Patti Piaskowski 920-901-1555(Cell); Myron Geiser 920-759-9923(Home) 920-562-3459(Cell).

What other opportunities are there other than hosting?

You may wish to volunteer to drive bus for a summer trip, contact Mike Miller at 920-732-3840 or chaperone a trip, contact Ann Neumann 262-626-2936(Home) 262-353-5719(Cell) or Patti Piaskowski 920-901-1555(Cell).