



COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Developing a Relationship with Your Student

COMMUNICATION

Cross-cultural communication is difficult and requires a commitment by all parties to be open and honest, to communicate frustration or embarrassment, and to define appropriate boundaries. Remember that you and your host student have volunteered to take part in this program, so while getting to know new people with different religious, cultural, and political views may be awkward at first, taking the time to get to know each other will break down some of the initial barriers.

Community Connections families are not expected to provide housing over breaks, or transportation to the airport or bus station, though may do so as desired. Families have no financial responsibility for students. Asking for or lending money is not encouraged. However, if a family invites a student to join an activity that requires money, for instance a museum entrance fee, lunch, etc, it may be appropriate for the host to treat the student.

At times students may need to vent their emotions or may have questions regarding legal or immigration advice. Families are not expected to provide “counseling” services. If at any time, a family feels that an issue is beyond their scope, or requires professional guidance, please direct the student to Dianne Clendaniel, coordinator of International Student Services (207-8015673 or dclendaniel@coa.edu) who can connect the student with the appropriate resources.



GET-TOGETHERS

Either the family or the student can initiate a get-together. Either can decline, as well. There is no specific time-commitment. Time spent together varies widely and is up to the participants to determine, and always remember that just as you likely have a busy schedule, so does your student.

Common initial activities may center around food—inviting your student for dinner, meeting for coffee, etc. Other popular activities might involve outdoor recreation, inviting students to come for family gatherings, going to a movie and discussing it afterwards, going to local sporting events, spending an evening looking at photos or doing holiday activities together. Nice gestures might include calling your student on occasion to see how they are doing, sending “care packages,” or sending cards and letters.

If your relationship with your student doesn't seem to be working out after all efforts have been made, please contact Dianne Clendaniel, coordinator of International Student Services at 207-801-5673, dclendaniel@coa.edu or Karen Collins, Community Connections volunteer coordinator at kcollins@coa.edu.