

What is the YES Program?

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, provides full scholarships for high school students (generally ages 15-17) from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend one academic year in the United States. Students live with host families, attend high school, engage in activities to learn about American society and values, acquire leadership skills, and help educate Americans about their countries and cultures.

YES students undergo an extremely competitive and rigorous merit-based selection process. They are provided with comprehensive orientations to prepare them for the exchange and receive small monthly stipends to pay for social activities and incidental needs while in the United States. The YES program seeks to reach students who might not otherwise have the means to take part in an exchange program.

The Kennedy-Lugar YES program was created after September 11, 2001 at the request of the U.S. Congress. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. exchange community recognize the value of public diplomacy in youth exchange to build bridges of understanding between citizens of the United States and about forty countries with significant Muslim populations around the world.

**Host a YES student.
Learn more:**



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India

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**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs**



**Building
Bridges of
Understanding**



The YES program provides international students with more than the experience of living in another country. **Students develop a sense of global citizenship as well as leadership skills during their exchange year.**

Through participation in community service and volunteer activities, giving presentations in classrooms and clubs, and everyday interactions, students become ambassadors of their country, develop leadership skills that they put into action to contribute to their communities, and **form relationships that last a lifetime.**

YES Program Goals

While living with an American family and attending a U.S. high school, YES students...

- Acquire an understanding of important elements of a civil society, including concepts such as volunteerism, civic responsibility and respect for the rule of law.
- Develop an appreciation for American culture, an increased respect for diversity, and appreciation for others with differing views, beliefs and practices.
- Interact with Americans and generate enduring ties.
- Teach Americans about the people and cultures of their home countries.
- Gain leadership capacity that will enable them as alumni to initiate and support community service and development projects in their home countries.



YES in Your Home and Community

Many people ask what they can do to make life better for themselves, their children, their communities, and the world. **By volunteering to share your home and heart with a YES student, you will make a difference.** What begins as an exchange of kindness, customs, and culture within a family extends throughout a high school and community to touch thousands of lives.

Hosting is a rich, rewarding experience for all kinds of families, and all kinds of families are needed to host. Families provide a bed, meals, and guidance and support as they would to their own child.

