

HOST Matters

Welcoming International Students

Issue No 32 Spring 2017



Hosts Catherine and Paul Barnes with guest Alaa Aldubush from Syria

My opening question to my first HOST guest was 'What music do you like?' and we never stopped from there.

Al was adorable: easy-going, said what he wanted with a charming smile, he ate everything, tried everything (marmite was a one-off!), chatted to all, didn't mind being teased, fell about laughing, loved music, and helped in many little ways.

I wanted to ask him a lot more about the situation in Syria but when he said he hadn't been able to get back for four years and his family were scattered about now I just thought, he needs a little holiday, and we will make this one.

Al and I are Facebook friends now and if his parents can't get over we will be at his graduation and take the photos. He won't be alone.

Paul and I have learned a lot in so many ways, listening to our young guest gently explaining every day, astonishing, facts of life back home. We have made a new friend through this HOST visit.

Catherine Barnes, West Sussex

HOST: GOOD PRACTICE

ProtectED, the 'gold standard' for assessing how well universities look after their students' safety and wellbeing, has named HOST as an example of Good Practice for positively impacting student well-being. For more information, see the [ProtectEd website](http://www.protected.org.uk).

My experience with my host family was unlike any other traveling experience I've had while abroad. Thanks to my host family, I was immersed in Scottish culture in a unique way. **Grace Ricks, Chile**

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Make Yourself at Home, by Bailea Pakkebier , USA

Through HOST, I was placed with a lovely lady called Daphne. She hosted a girl from South Korea named Kiyun at the same time. We all became very close friends and had a fantastic weekend. I had the chance to...

Live like an English person: I slept with a duvet and showered in a half wall tub using a hand held shower head.

Attend an English church: It was nice to be able to participate in a church service with some familiar songs and prayers.

Make connections with new people: I had the chance to meet a number of different people from England, Korea, and Russia. I think it is important to take the time to meet new people from all over the world because it brings the world closer together. I am realising that we are all more alike than we are different.

Play new games: On Saturday evening we had a chance to play games. Kiyun suggested Monopoly. I opened the box, started to set up the board, and noticed that the titles of all the properties were different!

Things I have learned about myself...

I like tea: I have had the more tea this weekend than the whole rest of my life, but I enjoyed every sip and the conversations that came with it.

I am outdoorsy: I haven't really realized how much I have missed natural wide open spaces.

I can live without Wi Fi: Daphne did not have Wi Fi and I survived the whole weekend. It was nice to take a minute to put technology aside.

I want to live the lifestyle that Daphne lives: She is neighbourly, environmentally friendly, buys local produce, walks where she can, and turns everything positive.

I have lived a privileged life: I have experienced more things in my life up to this point than some people will ever dream of doing.

It was nice to feel like I was at home again with a nice bed and home cooked meals. I am very grateful that I made the choice back in January to step outside my comfort zone and sign up to do a homestay. It was a life changing experience.

Read more from Bailea on [her blog](#).

HOST TIPS

"Ask about the student's family and friends, their home, their studies. Ask for comparisons between your countries in study, politics, religion, food, and for their thoughts on current problems like ecology, conservation, recycling, etc." **Maggie Roberts, North Yorkshire**

"Speak slowly, observe, and never assume that your student has understood everything you have said. They are not always ready to admit (because of their own culture) that they haven't understood and it can lead to hilarious - or embarrassing! - misunderstandings!" **Caroline Jackson, Oxfordshire**

Do you have any tips to share with other hosts? Let us know by using the contact details at the front of this newsletter.

HOST AND THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

Host Anne Hopkinson, of Northumberland, was asked to write about her HOST experiences for the United Nations Association's (UNA) magazine.

My family has always had an interest in learning about other cultures and meeting people from around the world. For many years, we hosted foreign students while they spent a year studying in the local high school. We had always said that we couldn't afford to take our children round the world, so instead we brought the world to them!

Once our children left home we changed from hosting high school students to hosting university students through the HOST scheme. HOST is a charity which promotes international friendship and cultural exchange by arranging for adult international students to spend a day, weekend, or a few days at Christmas in the homes of volunteers across the UK. We have loved meeting students from all over the world, of all ages and all types of personality. Many have kept in touch, some have made return visits, and we hope to continue hosting, learning and making new friends for many years to come.

Read the full article on the [UNA Website](#).



Jean-li Lim, a Queen Mary, University of London student from Malaysia, with host Joan Grover on a chilly beach in West Sussex.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

Like many students in my situation, coming into a strange land you are apprehensive about the future. Being a guest was much more than I could explain with words right now. It felt like home away from home. The talks, the smiles, the laughter, the jokes, the meals, the differences and similarities in viewpoints. I'm so grateful.

**Caleb Nwongbouwoh
Muefong, Cameroon**

There is a big world out there and an excellent way to learn more about it is to hear it from people who live there! **Ian
Derbyshire, Devon**

Our student from Inner Mongolia was a very intelligent, interesting person and was cheerful and good fun. It couldn't have gone any better. This is one of the most enriching and enjoyable experiences we have had as a family. Our children are leaning about different lives in different countries and it allows us to try different foods and share some of our culture. **Kirsteen
Coupar, Surrey**

HOST Matters is made to be enjoyed by everyone and anyone interested in international friendship and cultural exchange. Why not pass on the newsletter to someone who you think would like a read?



John and Marion Wright, hosts in Pembrokeshire, enjoyed this Christmas with a married couple they first hosted in 1996. Minnie and Jingran, from China, were also joined by their two sons.

#NEWPOUNDCOIN

On the 28th of March a new pound coin went into circulation and, from the 15th of October, the old pound coin (the 'round pound') will no longer be legal tender.

The #PoundForPound scheme is a way for you to get rid of your old coins and, at the same time, help charities raise extra funds. Every time you receive a new, twelve-sided pound coin, why not donate an old pound coin to HOST? Your friends and family can join in, too!

Once you have collected your old pound coins, you can deposit them in your bank account and send a cheque to HOST UK or donate the amount online via our [Big Give page](#).

Celebrate your good deed and be a part of the bigger conversation on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram by using the hashtags #PoundForPound and #NewPoundCoin.

How you can help

Friend of HOST

Become a Friend of HOST and give a regular donation. Find out more on the [HOST website](#).

Gift Aid

If you are a tax payer, gift aid your donation and increase its value by 25% at no extra cost to you.

One-off Donation

Make a one-off donation at [HOST's Big Give page](#), or by sending a cheque to HOST's office.

Legacies

Make a gift to HOST in your will to help the work continue. [Contact HOST](#) to find out more.

Challenge Yourself

Raise money while completing a challenge. Set up a fundraising page with [Virgin Money Giving](#), or contact HOST for an offline sponsorship form.

Host

HOST's work would be impossible without its wonderful volunteers. If you haven't hosted in a while, please contact your Regional Organiser, and do encourage your friends to host, too!

THANK YOU

Thank you for helping to make the world a friendlier place by supporting HOST.