

# An Amazing Story of How Incredible Hosting an Exchange Student Is

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[EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- My story began when I was 8 years old. I was fascinated with other languages and I was going to learn Italian. I went to the library and checked out a tape and proceeded to learn probably 3 words and I was convinced I was fluent. I would always sign up to have pen pals from other countries and we would send each other letters and coins (I still have some of those coins – pre Euro)! Fast forward to jr. high. I remember being so excited because I could finally take french. I had an awesome french teacher and took it for both years I was there. I continued French all through high school, along with Spanish and German.

10th grade is when I met my first exchange students. Maria from France, Eike from Germany, and Rolof from the Netherlands. I was immediately drawn to them and attempted to be their friend, whether they wanted to be or not. LOL. I ended up keeping in touch with Rolof after he left an even making one really expensive phone call to him back in the Netherlands. I remember going to talk to my counselor because I wanted to be an exchange student in France, but unfortunately just wasn't possible for me at the time! All through



adulthood, I always wanted to travel to Europe and also host an exchange student. Travel was too expensive and there was never a good situation in which I could host. Years go by, and we are now living in Eugene, OR. As I was scanning through facebook, I see a post about some students that need a host family. I immediately spoke to my husband, and after little convincing and some back and forth, he was on board! Well, we were going to try being just a temporary "Welcome family". What if she doesn't like our family, what if we don't get along, what if...."

About two weeks later, we headed up to Portland to meet our new Spanish daughter! Celia was her name and she had bright red, curly hair. After about a few weeks with us, we decided that we would like to have her stay for the entire school year! There was a learning process to having a teen in the house, but overall, hosting Celia was life-changing! My kids now had an older Spanish sister. We learned more about the Spanish culture than I ever knew there was to know about.

We even got to meet her parents at the end of her program. To this day, we are in touch with Celia and we are hoping to visit her this fall!

This past September, we welcomed two boys into our home! Aris, from Italy, and Wilhelm from Germany. My kids have bonded immensely with these two boys and even though Aris has already returned home, they still ask about him and clearly miss him. The thought of Will leaving in June brings my kids to tears. I also had the amazing opportunity this past fall to meet both of their parents while I was in Germany and Italy. Aris's mom took me on a tour of Rome in the rain and I stayed at her house. I would like to think that we are friends and I am looking forward to seeing her and Aris again this fall in Italy!

It was during Celia's stay that I decided to become a local coordinator with ETC! How cool to be able to match families and students and meet all these amazing kids from all over the world! It took awhile for me to get my feet off the ground, but I am now a field manager and oversee 12 local coordinators in 3 states and 18 students in those 3 states. I have traveled more than I ever have in my life, within the US and abroad. This has been the best decision I've made and I feel like this could be my best year yet!

Hosting exchange students is not always perfect. But it is an experience that I will always cherish and feel that I have gained new family members from all over the world. My kids have now have international siblings and have been exposed to people that have different cultures and ways of life.

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