

Having a Host Family

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I am very grateful for the kindness I have received from my host family. I cannot express my gratitude adequately. The Iwamoto family has made the transition of leaving my home, family, friends and familiarity much easier. They have helped me to understand the culture that I am living in. They have taught me about different aspects of Japanese life like family, holidays, food, and entertainment. Learning about the culture makes it easier for me to live here, and it enables me to understand the people that I interact with everyday.

Not only has the Iwamoto family been fantastic teachers but they have made me feel very welcome. At times, it can be hard for me to be so far away from my family back in Illinois. My host family has made it much easier for me. They have invited me to come to their house every week and I get to eat delicious home cooked dinners and spend time with a family. My host mother has even taught me how to cook some Japanese food; this has been helpful for cooking for myself at home. They have dressed me up in kimono so now I know what it actually takes to put one on and what it feels like to wear one. (a bit uncomfortable but they are so beautiful it's worth it) I am able to get more out of my experience because of my host family.

Finally, since I cannot read or speak Japanese having a host family is extremely helpful. They have taught me to speak some Japanese and I can practice speaking with them. Fortunately they all can speak better English than I can Japanese so we can communicate fairly well. One drawback to not being able to read is that I cannot identify or find things as easily. My host family has shown me clothing stores, noodle shops, where to buy tabi socks, and even the difference between baking flour and tempura flour. All of these things have made the quality of my life better. I don't think I would enjoy living in Ashikaga as much as I do if it weren't for my host family.