Wellesley College Hostess Program: Hostess Guide 2017

Thank you for participating in the Hostess Program. Inside this guide you will find general information about the program, answers to frequently asked questions, and tips on how to make the Hostess Program experience successful.

What is the Hostess Program?

The International Student Hostess Program is jointly coordinated by the Wellesley College Alumnae Clubs and the Slater International Center. It is designed to match Wellesley alumnae, faculty, staff, and Wellesley students’ families with incoming international students for cultural exchange, support and community building. The Hostess Program is not a “live-in” program although it does offer incoming international students and scholars the opportunity to arrive early and stay with a hostess for one or two nights before the International Student Orientation Program. Hostesses and international students often develop close relationships and remain connected throughout the students’ time at Wellesley and beyond.
How Does the Hostess Program Work?

If you are interested in being a hostess you must complete the online International Student Hostess Application by June 30th, 2017.

Over the Summer
The hostess matching process begins in the summer.

- You will receive a student match letter by the end of July. This letter will let you know who your students are and how to contact them.

- Contact your students as soon as possible to introduce yourself. Please stress the need for your students to provide you with exact arrival information when they can, and to keep you updated with any changes.

- Tell your students a little bit about yourself and your family, your occupation and hobbies, and if you have children or pets. Communication over the summer will help you to start to form a relationship with your students even before their arrival.

- Send your students a photo of yourself. This will help them recognize you when you pick them up at the airport.

Arrival
Your students will be eager and excited to meet you.

- Confirm your students’ arrival plans and ask them how they will let you know of any last minute changes.

- Make arrangements to pick them up at the airport or bus/train station. If you cannot meet them, make arrangements with another hostess to carpool. To arrange a carpool, you can contact Amy Rindskopf, the Hostess Program Alumnae Coordinator by email at slaterhostessprogram@wellesley.edu, or by phone at 617-818-3793.

Note: Students are aware that hostesses can accommodate only students in their homes. Students who arrive with their families have been asked to find other accommodations for their family members.
First Days

While hosting international students in your home, please consider the following:

- Many students are traveling from far away and may suffer from jet-lag upon arrival. Because of this, they may require additional time to rest and to recuperate.

- Getting in touch with other local hostesses and planning activities together for newly arrived students is a great way to have fun with students and meet other new international students.

- Consider joining our Wellesley College Hostess Program Facebook Group to connect with other local Hostesses: https://www.facebook.com/groups/wellesleycollegehostessprogram/

Maintaining Your Connection Throughout the School Year

In order to maintain and develop your relationship with your students during their time at Wellesley, you could:

- Contact them during the semester. They may hesitate to initiate a phone call, but a day or evening with your family may be especially helpful in their transition.

- Attend Wellesley College events with them during the academic year.
  - Wellesley College Family Weekend - September
  - Slater Culture Show - October
  - Slater Spring Festival- April
  - Hostess Program Dinner & Coffeehouse- November & March

- Keep in mind that traditional U.S. American holidays are excellent opportunities to connect with students and share your culture.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is my role as a Hostess?

A: After welcoming your students upon their arrival, you can continue to support them during their adjustment to the U.S. and to Wellesley College. Additional support might include attending Wellesley College events together, inviting them on a day trip or excursion, or inviting them to your home to celebrate a U.S. holiday. You and your students are free to form the type of relationship that best suits you both.

Q: Should I take my students shopping for room furnishings and/or bedding linens?

A: The choice is at your discretion; however, it is not necessary to take students shopping. A shopping trip is planned during Orientation. In addition, there will be a sustainability sale during Orientation where students can purchase slightly used items inexpensively. Also, the Student Aid Society will provide four year degree students who have been awarded financial aid, Exchange Students, and Language Assistants with bed linens, blankets, towels, and a laundry basket.

If you do go shopping, remember that students are responsible for their own expenses. Please be mindful of some student’s limited financial resources when making suggestions for purchases.

Q: How do I know which residence hall to bring my students to?

A: Your students should have been notified of their housing assignment on the MyWellesley New Student Portal at my.wellesley.edu. If in the excitement of arriving, students have forgotten the name of their Residence Hall, please direct them to my.wellesley.edu. For any technical difficulties regarding MyWellesley, your students should call the Help Desk at 781-283-7777.

Q: My students have asked me a question that I cannot answer. Where should I direct them for further information?

A: Instruct your students to contact the Slater International Center at 781-283-2082 with any questions or concerns. And if we cannot answer their question directly, we will refer them to the appropriate resource.

Q: How will my student know what to bring with them to the U.S.?

A: Incoming students have access to a lot of information through their MyWellesley portal, including a list of what to pack and what is included in their room: http://www.wellesley.edu/reslife/first_year_students/what_should_ibring_for_my_room
Tips & Best Practices

• When reaching out to your students, ask them about their preferred name and pronouns if they haven’t already shared this information and provide your own.

• Check with students to see if they have any dietary restrictions or food allergies so that you can offer them appropriate food choices.

• In preparing your students’ sleeping spaces, you may want to place a note or trinket near their pillow. This will help them feel welcome in your home and designate the area where they should settle in.

• Bring a sign with you to the airport with the Wellesley College logo and students’ name in large letters so your students can easily identify you at the arrival gate or luggage claim area.

• Be clear about the schedule of events in your household. Let your students know when meal times will be, when they should begin preparing for bed, and what time to wake up in the morning. Although it seems hospitable to allow the guests to choose meal times etc., students may feel hesitant about making these decisions for fear of disrupting the normal family routine.

• Ask about their family. This will most likely spark a spirited conversation where you can create a bond with students by sharing your favorite family traditions and stories about humorous family members. Talking about the home they just left may help lessen homesickness.

• Allow your students to connect to the internet or help them use a calling card soon after their arrival. They may want to send word to their family that they have arrived safely and are settling in comfortably.

• Talk about Wellesley! Sharing your favorite Wellesley memories and traditions will increase their excitement, and will open up a forum for them to ask you questions or express apprehensions about their upcoming transition.