



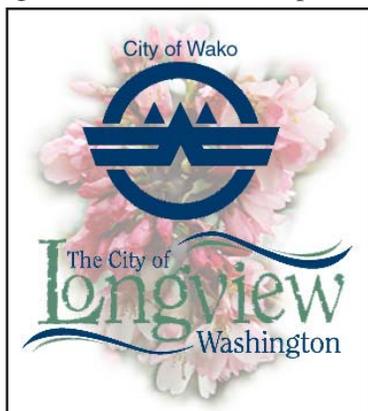
Q&A

about becoming a host family for Wako, Japan Sister City Visitors

What is Longview's relationship with Wako, Japan?

Our relationship with Wako, Japan began in the early 80s when teaching delegations first visited Longview. Through a developing friendship with Grant Hendrickson, former Superintendent of Longview Public Schools, and former mayor Shigeru Tanaka of Wako City, the idea for creating a sister city relationship began to take shape.

Longview's sister city relationship was formalized through joint resolutions on October 1, 1999 by special dignitaries from Wako, Japan and the City of Longview. Since that time over eight different delegations of students and adults have visited our community.



What does the delegation typically do when they visit Longview?

A delegation of 10-16 students and three adult chaperones traditionally visits Longview in early August each year. During their short time in our community, the delegation experiences a very special "Thursday" tour of Longview including such things as:

- ◆ A trip to the Longview Public Library to gift books to the library's Japanese collection. Students love the library's Ginkgo tree and the Nutty Narrows bridge, and always enjoy having their picture taken with the giant squirrel!
- ◆ Driving range privileges at the Mint Valley Golf Course.
- ◆ Spectacular photo ops of Longview at the viewing area on the Rainier hill.
- ◆ A visit to City Hall where visitors meet the mayor, local teens, and other interested citizens. It is also a chance for the kids to meet their host families and begin to get acquainted.
- ◆ Special tours of the police and fire departments with awesome hands-on experiences at both locations.
- ◆ Special tours of local schools (schools are closed during their visit).

What is the time commitment for being a host family?

Longview's sister city host commitment is for a weekend only. Even though the visit is short, you will be amazed at the close bonds you will experience in that time. Your host weekend begins on Friday morning at 9 a.m. and continues through early Monday morning when students are dropped off for their return trip home. Students will hold a very brief "ceremony" for host families at the hotel just before they depart with you for the weekend. They are very eager to begin experiencing life with an American family. Students are dropped off at the hotel early on Monday morning for their return trip home.

What is required to be a host family?

Following an application process that may include a home visit by a Commission member, the biggest requirement for being a host family is simply the desire to share our culture with another. When students visit, they hope to experience what life is like in a "typical" American family setting.

A home stay is usually two boys or two girls of junior high school age matched up with a host family. The students are usually paired up so that at least one of the students can speak a little English. However, we have found over the years that you do not necessarily have to speak the language to understand each other!

Host families need to make sure the kids have a safe, clean place to sleep and three meals a day (kids cook one meal for your family). It is not necessary that each child have a separate sleeping room, and kids are willing to sleep on cots, couches or share a double or larger bed if necessary (girls are usually great with this, boys will do fine if that is their only option). Their desire is to spend time with you and your family.

What kinds of activities can we do with our students?

What each host family does with their students is totally up to them. Because the kids want to experience life in an American household, we strongly encourage you to do those things that you would typically do over a weekend. If you go to church, take them with you; if you have a family picnic, take them with you; if your child or grandchild has baseball practice, take them with you.

Activities that past host families have found that are big hits with the kids include:

- ◆ Cowlitz County Fair & Rodeo. The kids love coming at this time of year in hopes that they will get to see the rodeo.
- ◆ Visit to the soap factory store.
- ◆ Shopping, shopping, shopping. They love the Dollar Store, Wal-Mart, Portland Market and the Terry-Taylor Garage Sale.
- ◆ Taking in a baseball game...Portland Beavers, Mariners, local little league...they enjoy it all.
- ◆ The beach or anything water related.
- ◆ Touring various types of houses (homes tend to be much smaller in Japan).
- ◆ Making homemade ice cream.

Just remember, the kids want to spend time with you. Be creative and have fun!



How will I communicate with the students?

You will find that language is not as much of an issue as you might imagine. Most kids have translation computers that they bring with them that helps quite a bit, and students are paired so that at least one of them can speak some English if at all possible. As a host, we will also provide you with some information about basic communication that should help.

What do I do if I have an emergency?

The chaperones accompanying the students will be reachable at the hotel any time, or through the cell phone of sister city coordinator Susie Meyers at 430.7011. Students bring insurance papers with them in case of a medical emergency. Make sure you connect with them as soon as possible so you know where that information is located.

What do I need to do to qualify as a host family?

Our first priority is to make sure that students who come to visit have a memorable and safe visit. To ensure that safety, we ask host families to complete a background check application for every person 18 years or older living in the host home. A Commission member may do an informal home visit. Once the background check has been cleared, you are officially qualified to serve as a host family. If you would like to become a host family, please fill out an application and return it to:

Sister City Host Coordinator
City of Longview
PO Box 128
Longview, WA 98632
360.442.5022

Visit us online at www.mylongview.com and click on Sister City under the "Community" tab.

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Become a Host Family for Wako, Japan Sister City Visitors



Sharing your culture with another creates bonds of friendship that unite people of all ages and backgrounds and surmount barriers of distance, culture, language and political differences. It adds richness to the tapestry of our lives.

Longview Sister City Commission



A cultural opportunity from the City of Longview