

AFS ECUADOR COMMUNITY PLACEMENTS (YPscNH08)

DATE: June 12, 2008

TO: All Partner Offices Sending on YPscNH08 ECU

Dear AFS Partner Office,

Although we haven't confirmed a family placement for all your participants yet, an AFS Local Chapter has accepted each and every application, and the local volunteers are actively looking for suitable host families. It is even possible that some participants are already placed, but that the host family information has not reached our office yet. We expect to transmit placement information via Global Link for all participants on this program on or before our August 1st deadline.

But, because we want to maximize our placement potential, by early placing as many participants as possible, we are not communicating any "community placements" in advance this year. Rather, a host community will be announced at the same time as a host family placement is confirmed and transmitted. This allows us to pull an application from a hosting chapter that may be experiencing challenges in its family finding, and place that participant in another chapter, where a host family may be ready.

On the reverse side of this sheet, you will find a very brief description of all the Ecuadorian communities hosting AFS participants on the Year Program. We ask you to please share this information with your participants at the time of placement confirmation, since it will help them to further prepare for their stay in Ecuador, and to encourage them to start finding out more about their host community in Ecuador, through the Internet or their local library, or maybe even through a recent AFS participant from your country to Ecuador, as you deem appropriate.

This is a link to the official site of Ecuador's Ministry of Tourism, where ample information –both in Spanish and English– on our different provinces can be found:



<http://www.vivecuador.com/>

At this point, we'd like to remind you of the following:

- Beginning June 16, we will send to your office --by courier-- the visa petition letters and the supporting documentation necessary for your participants to obtain a 12-VIII visa.
- Since May 13, as announced on the *In Box Announcements* database, our *Safety Tips* and other preparation materials are housed on the Lotus Notes *Warehouse* database.
- Our schools require the physical presence of our students for registration, so school information will only be available a few weeks after they arrive in Ecuador.

YPscNH08 ECU HOST COMMUNITIES

Towns are listed in alphabetical order, followed by the name of the province. An asterisk (*) indicates placement in the coastal region, where local high schools observe an April-January calendar. Students placed in those communities will have a school vacation of two months or so in the middle of their program. On the other hand, students placed elsewhere (in the mountains region) will have a regular school year, from September to June.

COMMUNITY	SHORT DESCRIPTION
Ambato, Tungurahua	App. 120,000 pop. Central mountains. 8°C – 25°C. Destroyed by an earthquake in 1949 and rebuilt thereafter, it lacks the Spanish colonial flavor of most Andean towns. Close to high peaks and an important National Park.
Cuenca, Azuay	App. 300,000 pop. Southern mountains. 8°C – 25°C. Noted for architecture and handicrafts. Offers most urban facilities/amusements. Close to large natural reserve.
Esmeraldas, Esmeraldas (*)	App. 130,000 pop. Coast. 24°C – 40°C. Located by the Pacific Ocean, some of the most visited Ecuadorian beaches are less than 30 minutes away. Most of Ecuador's Afro-American population lives here. Being home to the country's largest oil refinery has brought economic prosperity, but has also widened the socio-economic gap.
Guaranda, Bolivar	App. 20,000 pop. Central mountains. 8°C – 25°C. Picturesque colonial architecture, completely surrounded by mountains. Has received very little or no outside influence.
Guayaquil, Guayas (*)	App. 2.5 million pop. Largest Ecuadorian city. Coast. 24°C – 40°C. Noisy and bustling. Marked socio-economic differences. Offers most modern conveniences, but also has typical problems of major urban areas. Although surrounded by water (Ecuador's longest and widest river to the East and a large estuary to the West), it is not by the ocean. In the past five years, Guayaquil has undergone a major urban renewal project as well as several projects to preserve its many natural reserves.
Ibarra, Imbabura	App. 50,000 pop. Northern mountains. 8°C – 25°C. Slow-paced and orderly. Capital of the province with the most touristic attractions: lakes and canyons, rich folklore, nice climate. Some of the placements are in Otavalo , Atuntaqui and Cotacachi , small tourist centers where some of the best Ecuadorian handicrafts are produced.
Latacunga, Cotopaxi	App. 30,000 pop. Central mountains. 8°C – 25°C. Part of an area rich in agriculture and cattle farmland. A crown of Andean peaks surrounds this 2700m-high town. A few placements are in Salcedo , a much smaller town about 15 minutes away by car.
Machala, El Oro (*)	App. 200,000 pop. Coast. 24°C – 40°C. Rapidly growing urban center whose economy is dependent on the banana export and shrimp farming businesses. Close to unspoiled beach resorts, and third port in importance on the Ecuadorian coast.
Piñas, El Oro (*)	App. 50,000 pop. Coast. 14°C – 25°C. Small, picturesque city that hasn't changed much since the Spaniards founded it centuries ago. Although located in one of the coastal provinces, it enjoys a climate more typical of our mountain areas.
Quito, Pichincha	App. 1.5 million pop. Central mountains. 8°C – 28°C. Capital of the country and very cosmopolitan city. Noted for its historic center, filled with Spanish colonial architecture. Some students are placed in the adjoining valleys of Los Chillos and Tumbaco, both within a short distance of the city limits, which include the townships of Conocoto , San Rafael , Sangolqui , Tumbaco and Cumbaya .
Riobamba, Chimborazo	App. 100,000 pop. Central mountains. 6°C – 24°C. Quintessential Andean city, tranquil and relatively tourist-free. Cobblestone streets weave in and out of picturesque plazas and parks. Breathtaking views of nearby volcanoes.