



"In this era of globalization, we need to know that the world doesn't just revolve around ourselves. The world beyond borders is coming so fast that we cannot afford to narrow our mind to what is going on just within the community, but to explore every possibility of extending our network as far as the river may flow, and as high as the sky can be."

— Jessica Kan, AFS Exchange Student, Malaysia to the U.S., 2005

As we prepare to celebrate one of our most traditional American holidays, I want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all AFS Host Families for hosting an AFS Exchange Student. AFS Host Families are sharing the greatest gifts a person has—time, family, and home.

Perhaps you've heard the saying, "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." I often think of how well this describes the compassion and commitment demonstrated every day by host families throughout the world. Host families are peace in action. They make it possible for people from different cultures to meet and understand one another. What begins in a host family will spread through a community, and other families will follow these footsteps.

I know hosting is not always easy. While growing up in New York, I shared my parents, siblings, and home with a total of 16 exchange students through the years. My parents did not travel much, but doors to the world opened to all of us with each student's arrival and now we have exchange brothers and sisters around the world. Today, I am more grateful than ever for the generosity of my parents and am only starting to realize the enormous effect it had on my life. Similarly, please know that the contributions host families are making now will be appreciated in different ways by their hosted student and their own family in the years that lie ahead.

As host families celebrate a very special Thanksgiving this year, I wish everyone wonderful memories to treasure always. One of my most memorable Thanksgivings took place in Indonesia where I worked as a teacher after graduating from college. Wanting to celebrate our students' first Thanksgiving, my colleagues and I prepared an American feast using recipes we found on Garrison Keillor's broadcasts. Not only did we cook for 375 students, we only had a single Bunsen burner! Every year regardless of where or how I celebrate Thanksgiving, I smile when I think of those 375 Indonesians who might be recounting their first Thanksgiving experience with others.

On behalf of everyone at AFS, we'd like to thank our host families nationwide for all that they do every day. Their work is more critical than ever as together we prepare the leaders of tomorrow who will help to create a World of Difference.

With warm regards and best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Crotty', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Margaret Crotty
President & CEO
AFS Intercultural Programs/USA