

Professional Development Conference for Homestay Managers

November 16-17, 2017

Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel
525 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario

Thursday

1 pm – 1:15 pm

Welcome and Introductions

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Recruiting great host families in competition with other programs and Airbnb

Demand for host families continues to grow, especially during peak periods. Students are arriving soon and you need more families – what do you do? This session will look at ways to recruit families even while some are turning to services like Airbnb to earn more income.

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

Cross-cultural communication for homestay programs

There can be vast differences between North Americans and students from other cultures. These can include attitudes about family, money, the individual and expectations. Throw in English proficiency challenges and it's a recipe for conflict. This session will consider how you can improve communication between hosts and students of various cultures to ensure that both parties have a great experience.

3:15 pm – 3:45 pm

Coffee Break and Networking

3:45 pm – 4:45 pm

Preventing homestay coordinator burnout

Homestay managers and coordinators have a challenging job and are often on duty 24-7. As a result, you are under a lot of stress and risk burnout. This session will look at ways to stay fresh and manage difficult situations.

6 pm – 7:30 pm

Networking Reception

Friday

- 9 am – 10 am **Orientation: Preparing students, agents and natural parents**
- Successful homestays depend on managing expectations and making sure that students are prepared to be immersed in North American culture. This session will discuss how to work with agents, the natural parents and the students themselves.
- 10 am – 10:30 am Coffee Break and Networking
- 10:30 am – 12 noon **Mental Health: Changing marijuana laws and the use of medical marijuana**
- Laws around the recreational use of marijuana are changing in both Canada and the United States. There is also increasing use of marijuana for medical purposes. Homestay programs will need to consider the use of the drug by both hosts and students.
- 12 noon – 1 pm **Buffet Lunch**
- 1 pm – 2 pm **Case studies of challenging homestay scenarios at tables
(separate tables for high schools, language schools and post-secondary programs)**
- 2 pm – 2:30 pm Coffee Break and Networking
- 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm **Legal issues in homestays**
- In homestays, there are many legal issues to be addressed. Host and student agreements must comply with the law while covering all of the necessary elements. Criminal record checks are required for prospective hosts. As well, programs must follow privacy legislation regarding information about hosts and students.
- 3:30 pm – 4 pm **Key Takeaways and Wrap up**