

Professional Development Conference for Homestay Managers

March 30-31, 2017

Sheraton Wall Centre Hotel

1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver, British Columbia

Thursday

1 pm – 1:15 pm

Welcome and Introductions

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Host Orientation: Make sure your hosts are ready
Jeremy Snyder, Edmonds Community College

Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood, Washington, offers one of the most extensive homestay orientations in North America. In this session, Jeremy will discuss how the college recruits, screens and trains families. Attendees will have the opportunity at their table to discuss ideas for ongoing host orientation.

Jeremy Snyder is responsible for homestay placements for Edmonds' short-term program and helped to build the International Mentor Program, which provides support for homestay students. He holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Policy.

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

Protocols when you need to move a student
Doug Ronson, ESQ Educational Services

Sometimes homestays just don't work out. And sometimes students need to be moved urgently. We will discuss situations in which students must be moved to a new homestay. As well, we will consider protocols for moving students with minimal disruption and helping them adjust to their new homestay.

Doug Ronson is the author of The Essential Guide for Host Families. He has been facilitating at homestay conferences for the past three years.

3:15 pm – 3:45 pm

Coffee Break and Networking

3:45 pm – 4:45 pm

Difficult Conversations: How to talk with hosts, students, parents and agents
Jennifer Wilson, Canada Homestay Network

Homestay coordinators must have difficult conversations almost every day. Unfortunately, such conversations involve delivering a message - which can often make both parties feel awkward. In this workshop, Jennifer will explore what makes conversations difficult, how to avoid awkwardness, and what it means to have a "learning conversation" instead.

Jennifer Wilson is the Managing Director for the Canada Homestay Network. Over the last eleven years at CHN, Jennifer has been a homestay coordinator, Chief Technology Officer, Human Resources Officer, and Regional Director. In her current role, Jennifer's responsibilities include overall client satisfaction, risk management, quality assurance, employee professional development, and corporate policy.

7 pm – 9 pm Networking Reception

Friday

9 am – 10 am **Protecting Homestay Students**
Constable Alan Mah, Vancouver Police Department

Alan brings a unique perspective to homestay. As a homestay parent, he is used to running “a tight ship” with his international students. As a police officer, he serves as a school liaison officer, providing safety education to students.

In this presentation, he will discuss how to screen host families and protect students from potentially dangerous situations, including domestic violence, sexual assault and drug and alcohol abuse.

Alan Mah has been with the Vancouver Police for 17 years, serving in many units including financial crimes and marine patrol. He is now a school liaison officer.

10 am – 10:30 am Coffee Break and Networking

10:30 am – 12 noon **Mental Health Presentation and Case Studies**
Dr. Jennifer Russel, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Dr. Jennifer Russel will discuss four key mental health concerns – psychosis, anxiety, depression and substance abuse. She is familiar with homestays, having consulted with international education programs in the past. As part of the session, attendees will have the opportunity to discuss prepared case studies of homestay students with mental health challenges.

Dr. Russel is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of British Columbia. She is also the Medical Director of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit at BC Children’s Hospital.

12 noon – 1 pm 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 **Leveraging technology to improve services and make your job easier**

Doug Ronson, ESQ Educational Services

Thomas Christensen, Vital English

Homestay managers and coordinators are very busy, with many demands on their time. This session will discuss ways to use technology to recruit hosts, keep in touch and manage your program. The goal is to increase your efficiency and save you time.

Doug Ronson works with a variety of organizations, developing communications plans and managing newsletters and social media.

Thomas Christensen of Vital English offers a range of technology tools to help homestay programs, students and teachers.

3:30 pm – 4 pm **Key Takeaways and Wrap up**