

Professional Development Conference for Homestay Managers

November 28-29, 2019

Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre, 525 Bay Street, Toronto

AGENDA

Thursday

- 1 pm – 1:15 pm **Welcome and Introductions**
- 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm **Support Your Hosts to Ensure Retention**
It is sometimes hard to raise host compensation due to resistance from agents and parents. However, most hosts want more than money. They would like to be appreciated and supported in their work with students. This session will discuss ways to do this – and keep hosts for the long term.
Doug Ronson is a host parent and has spoken about host retention at several international education conferences.
- 2:15 pm – 3:45 pm **Ensuring Student Mental Health**
Mental health concerns are growing with the international student population. This session will consider how homestay staff and host families can be on the lookout for warning signs that a student may need professional help. In addition, the facilitator will discuss what to do in the interim to assist the student.
Christina Furtado, MACP, is a mental health counsellor with guard.me, working to break down the barriers and stigma around mental health.
- 3:45 pm – 4:15 pm **Coffee and Networking Break**
- 4:15 pm – 5:15 pm **Issues in Homestay: Group and Table Discussions**
Prior to the workshop, we will be reaching out to attendees to find out what challenges they face in their homestay programs. We will choose the top three concerns for the group to address.
- 5:30 pm - 7 pm **Networking Reception (Trios Restaurant on main floor)**

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FRIDAY

9 am – 10 am

Food: Can we keep both students and hosts happy?

The most common complaint students have about their homestays is about food – there isn't enough and some just don't like North American cooking. On the other hand, hosts worry that students eat too much and that food costs are soaring. In this session, we'll discuss ways to prepare students for this adjustment and help hosts with meal planning. In addition, there will be tips so that hosts can manage grocery budgets.

Doug Ronson is the author of The Essential Guide for Homestay Hosts. He loves to eat!

10 am – 10:30 am

Coffee Break and Networking

10:30 am – 12 noon

Difficult Conversations: Tools for Communicating

Homestay staff must manage difficult conversations regularly. It's not easy to tell a host that you are moving their student or to ask questions about inappropriate behaviour. This session will provide homestay staff with methodologies to approach these discussions and resolve conflicts.

Malvina Rapko is the former homestay coordinator with the Saskatoon International High School Program.

12 pm – 1 pm

Buffet Lunch

1 pm – 2:30 pm

Preparing Students and Agents for Cultural Differences

Students often arrive in North America with unrealistic expectations and unprepared to be immersed in another culture. Homestay staff can help students get ready and support them when they arrive. As well, agents can play a key role in ensuring that their students adjust quickly.

Malvina Rapko is the director of Cultural Bridges, which offers workshops on building Cultural Intelligence.

2:30 pm-2:45 pm

Coffee Break

2:45 pm – 3:45 pm

Case Studies of Challenging Homestay Scenarios at Tables

(separate tables for high schools, language schools and post-secondary)

3:45 pm – 4 pm

Key Takeaways and Wrap up