



Global Hospitality Host FAQ

GH Policies

What is the mission statement of GH?

- Our mission is two-fold: To connect Willow Creek members with international guests in need of accommodation during conference times, and to help minimize guests international travel costs, thereby making a greater impact their conference experience.

Why do we allow guests to stay for 8 days in host homes when sometimes the conference only last 3 days?

- The “official hosting dates” are made available to all guests regardless of their plans around the official conference dates. This allows guests to recover from jetlag, obtain the best possible airfare, experience WC weekend and midweek services, see other ministry organizations, and incorporate some sightseeing. Some groups use the time before and after the conference for team building activities.

Why do returning guests need to go through the official GH process, instead of simply dealing with me?

- This supports the integrity of the process, such that GH knows where international guests are staying, and how host homes are being utilized.

Do guests have to pay for GH?

- There is a nominal administrative fee, which shows a commitment on the part of the guest.

Does GH serve domestic guests?

- GH is not able to serve in this way. We do not have the infrastructure available to accommodate the number of requests that would be received.

Can I take a break from hosting for a while?

- Certainly. Communicate your availability to your Placement Coordinator (PC).

What is the minimum age of a guest?

- Some conferences, notably Student Ministries, attract many young people/teenagers, who are served by GH. Teenagers would typically be under the supervision of an adult group leader, although they may be placed in different host homes.

Placement Timeline/Process

How do guests request housing?

- Guests fill out a housing application, and submit it to the WCA Affiliate office in their country or region. In 2004, there are 12 such offices around the globe. The Affiliate offices then forward the requests to WCA in Barrington, where they are processed.

Are guests guaranteed housing?

- Guests are told they will be given housing, subject to availability of host homes. To date, we have never turned away any international guest who has requested housing before the deadline. There are some conferences which are high demand, and this has created many stories of how God provides at the eleventh hour.

How can the guest request a specific host?

- The guest may make this request on the guest housing application. GH will contact the host before confirming such an assignment. This is called a “Private Placement”.
- This is the statement given to guests on Private Placements: “The WCA Global Hospitality ministry is pleased to see relationships develop between Hosts and Guests, including the “private placement” where guests request to stay with specific hosts. Private placement requests will be honored as long as the host is available. Please be aware that WCCC serves a large geographical area. Our host homes are spread across a large region. If you requested “private placement” and are part of a carpool, your carpool may experience significantly longer drive times since we can not guarantee others in your carpool will be placed in the same geographic area. You might consider renting your own car.”

Why must I RSVP if I am not available for a specific conference?

- It gives positive indication of what host homes the PC has to work with for a particular conference. It is also confirmation that your email address used by the PC is correct.

Why does it take 2 weeks between RSVP date and date we receive guest names?

- It is a manual process to make the best possible matches of guests into host homes. This is split up amongst PC’s responsible for geographic sectors around WCCC. There are many considerations that go into putting the puzzle pieces together, such as allergies, bed availability, carpools and private placements.

Why can't we contact our guests as soon as we receive our assignments?

- The Affiliate offices need time to inform the guests of their host home assignments. This allows the guest to be prepared for hearing from a host.

Why is our contact date so close to guests arrival date? (can cause missed communications, if guest or host is out of town before conference.)

- The entire GH process runs on a timeline. Key point is the need for guest travel information (due 5 weeks before your contact date). Some guests need to wait for visas before making travel arrangements.

Why don't I know exactly when my guest is arriving?

- Sometimes guest travel plans change without GH being informed. It is important that hosts communicate with their guests directly to confirm travel plans.

How do guests receive assignments?

- When the process in Barrington is completed, information is forwarded to the Affiliate offices around the globe, who then disseminate the information to the guests.

Can I request guests from a specific country?

- Due to the number of aspects considered in placing so many guests, it is difficult to accommodate this type of request.

What is a PC?

- A “PC” is a Personal Computer.
- A “PC” is a Volunteer Placement Coordinator, responsible for placing guests and handling GH issues within a given geographic sector.

What do “sectors” mean?

- GH territory is broken down into 8 geographic sectors, each overseen by a volunteer Placement Coordinator (PC)
- This is a geographic grouping, which allows us to better serve groups of guests traveling together.

How is GH information communicated to hosts?

- Email is the most common and preferred method. Please remember to update your PC if your email address changes.

Accommodations

Should I be serving meals to my guests?

- We do not expect Host Families to provide meals for their guests. However, if you are inclined to serve anything it is at your own discretion; and is always welcomed by the guest.

Can I offer an extended housing invitation?

- Yes, at your discretion.

How should I handle my guest making phone calls?

- You may allow your guest to use your phone at your discretion; an option is that guests may purchase a pre-paid phone card at Seeds, or area stores.

Travel

How does guest transportation work (to/from airport and conference)?

- Guests are responsible for their own transportation. They are given car rental information. While GH does not arrange carpools for guests; they will often travel in carpools of their own choosing. The guest and host need to communicate regarding directions to the house, before the guest leaves home.

Why must my guest drive so far – long carpools?

- We try to put carpools as close together as possible. Some factors that contribute to long drives include “private placements”, pet allergies, and bed availability. There are many considerations involved in placing all of our guests.

Miscellaneous

How do I handle medical emergencies?

- Call 911 if appropriate.
- Call Stephanie Walsh (224-512-1201) or Merideth Cook (224-512-1370) of the International Department of the WCA.
- Stephanie/Merideth will then call the WCA's medical doctor/liaison and inform him of the situation. They will direct you further.

What do I do if an unexpected circumstance occurs, and I don't know how to handle it?

- Contact your PC. If you are unable to contact your PC, call another PC (or Karen Frisella during business hours). The PC list is located in the GH Host Guidelines.

How can we meet other hosts/guests? Guest/host get-togethers?

- Get-togethers can be initiated by either guests or hosts.
- Gatherings can be large, including all guests/hosts for a particular country, or can focus on smaller groups at a restaurant or a host home.

How many host homes are there?

- Nearly 300 homes in 8 geographic sectors.

How many guests are served each year?

- In 2003, we served approximately 800 international guests.

What area information would be helpful for me to supply to my guest?

- List of area restaurants (with price range indication is especially helpful).
- Train schedule (to Chicago) – don't forget to describe how to pay parking at the train station!
- Recommended tourist destinations in the Chicago area.
- Guests can obtain additional information at the Conference Information Center (CIT) at WCCC.

What is "Off-Conference Hosting?"

- GH occasionally provides housing to guests outside of conference situations. The visit must be directly related to ministry purposes associated with WCCC or the WCA. Guests requesting off-conference accommodation are approved on an individual basis according to their ministry purpose.

Where/how do I get more information?

- Refer to the Host Guidelines and Guest Guidelines documents.
- Contact your Placement Coordinator, who will be happy to discuss your questions.