



# WELCOME A YES EXCHANGE STUDENT BECOME A CITIZEN DIPLOMAT

In the past few years, our world has witnessed a series of citizen campaigns calling for democracy and freedom. The international community has offered solidarity to many of these populations in nearly every corner of the globe. Recent events have highlighted a gap in public diplomacy and have initiated the building of bridges for citizen diplomats between the United States and countries with significant Muslim populations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Southeastern Europe.

**One such initiative, known as the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) proves that diplomacy is not just in the hands of politicians. U.S. families of all shapes and sizes can play a role in changing the world, through the mere act of sharing their home with a high school student from one of these countries.** Students on the YES program live in the U.S. with their host families, attend local high schools, and engage in activities to learn about American society, values, and leadership skills, while simultaneously helping to educate Americans about their own countries and cultures. Additionally, this scholarship program is approved and funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).



## QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE YES PROGRAM

- 4% of the students who apply to the YES Program are accepted
- 6,800+ students have participated since 2003
- 40+ Nations participate in the YES program

## YES COUNTRIES

Albania, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Egypt, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank and Yemen



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## Culture to Culture - C2C - Medallion Program for US High Schools

The US Department of State publicly recognizes U.S. high schools that enroll YES scholars as partners for global diplomacy.



### RAMADAN AND ITS RELEVANCE TO GLOBAL DIPLOMACY:

- Be an ambassador just by being yourself. By hosting a YES student, you play an integral role in dispelling harmful stereotypes and enriching the world. Such a mission could not be more relevant, particularly during this period of empathy and community, known to Muslims around the world as the holy month of Ramadan.
- Imam Mohamad Bashir Arafat, of the Muslim Community Center in Baltimore, Maryland describes Ramadan in America as the month of outreach, during which American Muslims invite their non-Muslim community members to experience Iftar with them. He believes that the simple act of sharing a meal with someone emphasizes our common humanity and strengthens our bonds with one another. This message of building bridges and opening new avenues of dialogue resonates with the founding mission of YFU and purpose of the YES program.
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- If you decide to host one of the YES students arriving in August, you will find that the end-of-Ramadan Eid celebrations on July 17th-18th have just concluded. Jumpstart the process of dialogue and cultural exchange with your international YFU student as they will be eager to share their experiences of Ramadan and the Eid with you.



Visit our website at [yfuusa.org](https://yfuusa.org) to learn more about what YFU YES scholars take from their experiences in America.



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