

## Sister School Exchange

**About the program:** Through a grant from the United States Department of Education, under the Alaska Native Education Equity Act, the Alaska Humanities Forum offers the **Sister School Exchange** (SSE). The Sister School Exchange aims to strengthen relationships between urban and rural Alaskans by building mutual respect and understanding, and fostering a statewide sense of community. To build these connections, this program offers a rare opportunity to many Alaskans — the chance to experience different Alaskan cultures first hand.

The Sister School Exchange creates cross-cultural exchanges between urban and rural middle and high school students and teachers. Students use digital storytelling to reflect upon their experiences in order to realize and appreciate commonalities and differences between Alaska's diverse urban and rural communities.

This year Steller is participating in this program, with our team made up of Leigh Anne as the teacher leader and five students. These students will complete pre-travel activities, travel to Nelson Island School in Toksook Bay, and then host students from the school when they travel to Anchorage. While in Toksook Bay we will be attending classes at their school for part of the day, going on field trips and explorations to learn about their community and culture, completing learning tasks, and staying at the school and with host families (depending on availability). When we return, we will share what we learned with the Steller Community. Then in May we will host five students from Toksook Bay and participate in activities with them that will introduce them to our community.

### **What you need to know before you apply:**

Expected dates of travel and hosting: Travel to Toksook Bay from March 17th-24th; host students from May 3rd-10th.

Requirements: You must complete an application, be in good academic standing, responsible and respectful of others, willing to complete the required activities, and to host a student and participate in all activities. Five students will be chosen from the group of applicants based on the above criteria. **Applications are due Tuesday, January 6th.**

Hosting: Part of the program is to host students while they are visiting in Anchorage. Host families are required to meet certain criteria, such as background checks for all members over the age of 18. Host families are required to provide three meals for their exchange student and provide them with their own bed. Families are given \$150 stipend to help with the cost of feeding the student. Host families are encouraged to participate in Exchange activities.

Cost for students: This program is paid for by Alaska Humanities Forum and they provide transportation and food stipends, so students do not need to pay for their trip.

Need more information: Email Leigh Anne with questions at [bonney\\_leigh@asdk12.org](mailto:bonney_leigh@asdk12.org) or go to the program website at <http://destinationlog.akhf.org/>. You can also stop by the school or call at 242-1329 to talk with Leigh Anne directly.

Once students are chosen, additional forms and meetings will be held.

**Sister School Application-Due Tuesday January 6th**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student questions:

Have you traveled to rural Alaska (outside of the road system in Alaska-Fairbanks, Anchorage, Valdez, Seward, and Homer)? If so, where and how old were you?

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Why do you think you would be a good cultural ambassador for Steller for this program? What would make you a good host?

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What would you hope to gain from participating in this program?

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What do you think are the most important things in representing your community, both as a host and as a guest?

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The food that you may be given to eat might be different than you are used to eating. Are you willing to be polite and at least try what you are given? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to commit to completing the required assignments, even if you have to meet at lunch to do so? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please have your parents complete the following section:**

Parents' Names \_\_\_\_\_

As a host family, you will be expected to fulfill the following obligations/requirements:

- Welcome a rural student into your home as a member of your family and include them in family activities.
- Provide your host student with an individual bed (students may share a room with another person of the same gender and can sleep on a blow up mattress or pad)
- Provide three meals a day and appropriate parental supervision. (Stipends are available)
- Program policy-Families hosting a female student must have an adult female present during the stay during sleeping hours)

- All individuals 18 and over must go through and pass a background check. This includes parents, other adults in the home, and even senior or college students.

\_\_\_\_\_ We acknowledge the above criteria and meet the requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_ We are willing to host a student.

We can host a (boy, girl, either, more than one student) \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you like your son/daughter to participate in the program?

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What do you see as your role as a host family/parent in the exchange?

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My son/daughter has my/our permission to participate in the Sister School Exchange and travel from March 17th to 24th to Toksook Bay.

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Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

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Signature of Parent/Guardian Date