

Peoria Sister Cities



This exchange made me realize just how much we, as Americans, have to be proud of and how much we take for granted.

Jake Jelinek
2011 Young Ambassador

Young Ambassador Program



Sister City Background

- ▶ Sister City concept promoted by President Eisenhower in 1956 as a way to improve international relations with other nations
- ▶ Over 1,200 American cities in 50 states have affiliated with 2,100 cities in 125 countries
- ▶ After two years of searching for a sister city, City of Peoria established a Sister City Partnership in 2002 with Ards, Northern Ireland



Peoria Sister City Mission

The mission of our Sister City partnership is to increase cultural, civic, and commercial ties between Peoria and Ards, Northern Ireland

“We also had the chance to see and experience the way people live.”

Daniel Buonagurio; Liberty High School student; 2008 Young Ambassador



Purpose of Exchange Program

- ▶ Provide an experience for Peoria youth and their families that increases awareness of different cultures
- ▶ Help improve international relations by breaking down stereotypes and perceptions about other cultures and nations
- ▶ Develop long-term relationships that strengthen the bond between Peoria and Ards, Northern Ireland



Purpose of Exchange Program

Help achieve sister city business plan objective of creating opportunities that expand Peoria's cultural ties abroad

"Our family's lives are changed for the good and we now have a Northern Ireland daughter."

Dr. Kayla Carter, mother of Peoria Young Ambassador Malynda Carter on the return home to Northern Ireland of their exchange visitor, Ashleigh Robinson.



About the Exchange Program

- ▶ A four-week exchange in summer of 2012
- ▶ Four Peoria high school-aged youth and four Ards high school will participate in the summer exchange
- ▶ Adults who work with, sponsor, or lead youth activities are encouraged to refer appropriate candidates
- ▶ Local high school principals will be asked to refer at least two students to apply for consideration
- ▶ Peoria ambassadors stay with a family in Ards, Northern Ireland
- ▶ Peoria ambassadors and their families host their Ards peer in their home
- ▶ City of Peoria pays for airfare



Role of City

The role of the City is to be responsible for all aspects of the student exchange program:

- ▶ Develop marketing and application materials
 - ▶ Coordinate recruitment and selection process
 - ▶ Initiate meetings with youth and their families
 - ▶ Hold orientation with students and parents
 - ▶ Coordinate exchange activities
 - ▶ Make travel arrangements
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Youth Exchange Program Requirements

The program requirements for the program are as follows:

- ▶ Be a **resident** of the City of Peoria
- ▶ At least 15 yrs. old at time of travel; not yet a high school senior
- ▶ Hold or be prepared to apply for a passport within the next two months
- ▶ GPA of 3.0 or higher
- ▶ Be in good health
- ▶ Proof of health insurance coverage (supplemental coverage required – if selected, information will be provided at orientation meeting)
- ▶ Promote and support program and talk about experience



Youth Exchange Program Requirements

The program requirements for parents are:



- ▶ Give consent for participation in the program
- ▶ Serve as a host family for Ards youth
- ▶ At least one parent must have a current passport
- ▶ Participate in select sister city activities
- ▶ Support an additional young person during the cultural exchange



Peoria Young Ambassador Contact

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