

Perfect Match

By the Chader Family from Old Westbury, NY

When my wife and I were preparing to have our son, Liam, we had many things to worry about: picking a name, picking a hospital, picking colors for his room, how to childproof the house, etc. However, chief among our concerns was: who would take care of Liam during the

making spreadsheets and pro/con lists, we narrowed the choice down to several candidates. We feared that we would never be able to pick an Au Pair from our list of well-qualified candidates who all looked great on paper, however, after interviewing our top choices

immediately. My wife and I can be a bit overprotective and we were afraid that we would not be able to trust a relative stranger to take care of our three month old son, especially since we both had to return to work just one week after she arrived, but Gulsah soon put those fears to rest: after seeing how great she was with Liam during that first week, we had no hesitations about leaving her alone with him.

Since the day she arrived, Gulsah has exceeded every expectation we had. She follows every instruction precisely and when there is any doubt, she always asks for clarification: we never have to worry that she didn't understand what we want her to do. Taking care of a young child is very hard work, but she is more than up for the job. She is patient and caring and we trust her completely. She is just as protective of Liam as we are. There has not been a single time when she has failed to follow our instructions perfectly or done anything wrong, and we have never had to admonish her for anything. She is always ready to start work in the morning, and is reluctant to stop taking care of Liam when we return home. The only thing we have to be careful of is that she doesn't work more than the maximum 45 hours, because if she had her choice, she would be working far more than that (although she doesn't consider it work).

We see Gulsah not as an employee, but as a close friend and a member of the family. She loves Liam and we can tell that he loves her too. He always smiles and laughs when he sees her (and it's not easy to make a teething child smile). She is better with Liam than we could have ever hoped. In fact, I fear that she is even better at making him happy than we are. We truly love Gulsah and we wish that she could stay with us forever.

Thank you Chader Family for sharing with us your experience with Gulsah. We wish you many more happy years hosting Au Pairs!



Au Pair Gulsah from Turkey with her host brother Liam

day? We both work full time with fairly long hours and we have no relatives in the area to rely on. We considered hiring a full time live-in nanny, but that is quite expensive in the area we live and their qualifications and experience were difficult to verify. Furthermore, as a fairly young family, we were not sure that we would be comfortable hiring someone, who would likely be many decades older than us, to work full time, in our house. We worried that, being older than us, they would assume that they knew best and might not adhere to our instructions. After countless hours of research, the answer became clear: we needed an Au Pair.

At first, picking an Au Pair was not nearly as easy as we expected. There were many prospective Au Pairs to choose from and we were very worried about making the wrong choice. After countless hours of browsing through profiles, checking qualifications, and

via Skype, my wife and I found that the choice wasn't hard at all: we both wanted Gulsah.

Gulsah's arrival went about as well as can be expected. There was a bit of confusion, initially, because she was dropped off at a different terminal than we had been told, and communication was a bit difficult as she did not yet have cell service. Luckily, she was smart enough to use the airport's wifi to contact me through WhatsApp. Once those barriers were overcome, we managed to find each other without too much trouble. My wife and I were touched that Gulsah had brought us many gifts from Turkey.

The first few days with Gulsah went great. We expected her to be tired and to want to spend the first few days resting, unpacking, and setting up her new room, but that couldn't be further from the truth. As soon as we arrived at the house, Gulsah was eager to meet Liam and wanted to start working

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About Us...

EurAuPair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges".

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EurAupair Photos



Community Counselor Nancy from Garrett, IN met her Au Pairs at the DeBrand Fine Chocolates factory in Fort Wayne, IN for their orientation.

From left to right: Au Pair Leticia from Brazil, Community Counselor Nancy, and Au Pair Anne from Germany



Left to right: Au Pair Wanqi from China, Ozge from Turkey and Community Counselor Tracy from Milwaukee, WI at Baker Square for lunch.



Host dad Rick Norris from Pecatonica, IL welcomed a baby daughter and his daughter Hannah (3) welcomed a new little sister!



The Robertson family from Wichita, KS went to visit their previous Au Pair Lupita in her hometown of Monterrey in Mexico and brought with them their current Au Pair Kelly from Colombia. The host family's children, Scarlett, Penelope and Xander were thrilled to see Lupita once again!

From left to right: Au Pair Kelly from Colombia, former Au Pair Lupita from Mexico, twin sisters Scarlett and Penelope (4) and their brother Xander (6)



Community Counselor Elizabeth from Colorado Springs, CO took her Au Pairs for a hike at the Manitou Springs Incline.

From left to right: Au Pair Elif from Turkey, Pang from Thailand, Community Counselor Elizabeth and Au Pair Lisa from Germany.



Au Pair Nilufer from Turkey sits in one of the glass boxes at the Skydeck in Chicago, IL.



August is always a great time for a boat tour on Lake Michigan. Community Counselor Dawn from Round Lake, IL and Community Counselor Nancy's husband Kevin and his granddaughter from Bolingbrook, IL took their Au Pairs (past and present) on a boat tour on Lake Michigan. All enjoyed a sunny day!



Community Counselor Carmen from Del Mar, CA met with her Au Pairs at a water park and had a blast!

From left to right: Community Counselor Carmen's baby Aki, Community Counselor Carmen, Exchange Student Frederieke from Germany, Au Pairs Luisa from Colombia and Fatma from Turkey



Au Pair Ayanda from South Africa sent us this message a few days before her departure. "Thank you for the best 24 months of my life EurAupair!! From Hawaii, Georgia and finally Florida, I have had the best experience!! To the Aho and Lambrou families, I will always love you guys. My time has finally come to an end it's been amazing, thank you EurAupair!"

EurAupair Photos (continued)



Au Pair Aleyna from Turkey with her 2 host brothers Dustin (4) and Easton (8) fishing in Alaska.



From left to right: Community Counselor Linne from Anchorage, AK and Area Coordinator Cynthia



Au Pairs Caroleigh from Namibia and Nea from Finland having fun at BJs in the Columbus, OH area.



From left to right: Community Counselor Aferdita from Troy, MI and Au Pair Nilufer from Turkey at the Cranbrook Institute of Science Museum in Bloomfield Hills, MI.



Community Counselor Nancy, from Bolingbrook, IL helped explain to the Au Pairs how to bet on the horses. It was cute to see how the girls were afraid of betting \$2. Area Coordinator Vivi's \$2 turned in to \$3.60.

In the left photo, from left to right: Au Pairs Daniella and Larissa from Brazil, Anja from Denmark, Chirre from South Africa, Vanessa from Germany, Karla from South Africa and Kira from Colombia at the Arlington Race Track in Arlington Heights, IL

In the right photo: Area Coordinator Vivi with her beautiful granddaughter Anna!



Every time when an Au Pair is about to finish her program, Community Counselor Katarzyna from Stratford, CT lets them pick what they want to do for the monthly meeting. This time it was Au Pair Dulandi's turn, she picked Roosevelt Island in NYC. She is from South Africa and she has been in the US for two years with her host family in Fairfield, CT and had an amazing time!

From left to right: Au Pair Dulandi from South Africa, Amira from Venezuela, Laura from Brazil, Meagan from South Africa, Community Counselor Katarzyna, originally from Poland, Carla from South Africa and JohanMary from Venezuela



Community Counselor Cheryl from Grand Rapids, MI met with her Au Pairs at Chinoak Pier in Grand Haven, MI. From there, they took a trolley tour around town.

From left to right: Au Pairs Maria from Venezuela, Janeth from Colombia, Adriana from Colombia and Maria from Brazil



Community Counselor Nancy from Garrett, IN met her Au Pairs and a couple of friends at Pathway Community Church for their Summerfest celebration. The church provided free hot dogs and chips and family games followed by fireworks. We talked about the reason for celebrating the 4th of July.

From left to right: Community Counselor Nancy, friend Savannah from the US, Au Pair Leticia from Brazil, friend Emma from Sweden, Au Pair Annika from Germany and Au Pair Ines from Spain

Our Amazing Au Pair Diana

By the Peacock/Soto-Ruiz Family from Houston, TX

Diana is an amazing Au Pair, beyond our wildest expectations. We can't imagine a better partner to live in our house and be a part of our family.

We first met Diana over computers, using Skype. We were all a little nervous, as we weren't sure what to expect. But she seemed nice and sweet, and had a little fluffy white dog, just like ours. Diana arrived about 4 months after our first son, named Colt was born. She rapidly hit it off with him, and has developed into what we affectionately call "The Colt Whisperer". Just like the movie "The Horse Whisperer", Diana has a magical power over the ability to soothe our son when he is upset and even when we can't get him to be at peace. We are still not sure how she does it, but if we could bottle it, we could sell it to every first-time parent on the planet. In fact, our friends with kids are asking how to get their own Diana.

Diana has been outstanding in her willingness and flexibility to try new things. For example, she was not an experienced traveler when we met. In fact, her first plane

flight was to New York City, for the Au Pair orientation. We weren't certain that she would be comfortable in all the traveling our family does, sometimes overnights, multiple time zones, both for work and vacation; much less the challenges of traveling with an infant. But we just got back from a week in Hawaii (while Frank worked), straight to the snowy mountains of Colorado (where both Frank and Karina had to work). Besides the 90° temperature change, the 5 hour jet lag was onerous. But we powered through without a glitch (even when Colt had a poop blowout in the back of the plane, and it took all 3 of us to get that managed).

Diana has also taught us about Colombian food. She makes Arepa (Colombian pancakes) almost every day, and we have learned about Agua de Panela. Although when she asked us to pick up panela at the grocery store, she gave us a really funny look when we brought it home and it turns out the US version of panela is cheese (which is not at all what goes in the Colombian drink). We got that straightened out, and a bunch of other dietary education, the next

time at the grocery store when we all went together.

And we have introduced Diana to our food (TexMex, complete with queso, we eat a lot of sushi, and BBQ). Then she carved her first pumpkin at Halloween, and we made pumpkin soup (although she politely later told us that it was not her favorite). And she seems to like going out to brunch.

As for language, we have what we suspect are the usual challenges and hilarious gaffs. We cook and eat dinner every night as a family, so have lots of time for English conversation and practice, complete with a fair amount of laughter and giggling. And we really love the fact that she sings to Colt in Spanish, and we really want Colt to know both Spanish and English.

So Diana has become an integral member of our family. While the Au Pair terminology is co-sibling, we actually consider Diana more as a co-parent, who will put Colt's interests above her own, and one with whom we simply would not want to live without. I think we will be very sad, and both Colt and Diana will be heartbroken, when

the time comes for her return to Colombia (and so will Chica, our little fluffy white dog). We suspect we will be friends for life, and we might just have to go to Colombia to meet all the folks we see in Diana's WhatsApp calls home to Colombia.



Au Pair Diana and her host brother Colt

Culture Shock

By Community Counselor, Viktoriya Samsonova
from Seattle, WA, originally from Belarus

In one of the most warm and bright mornings that June brought to Seattle this year, I was on my way to the local coffee shop planning to spend another half an hour getting myself ready for the orientation session with a new Au Pair. A week before, she landed at the local airport to meet her first ever host parents and two sweet boys she would have a chance to get to know closely during the following year.

I remember how after the welcome call, when my imagination did its job connecting the picture from the video in the Au Pair's profile with the tender, silvery voice I had heard through the phone, my mind went further trying to guess what this 19 year old girl might feel having arrived to a foreign country where she was to live without her parents, friends and all the things she got used to as a child. Did she feel excited about opportunities she chose to take? Was she full of energy to dive into a new life driven by an urge to explore, learn, and have fun? Or did she rather feel lonely and uncertain when having to face the numerous changes once at a time? And most importantly, would she

even be able to recognize what she felt despite the mess of emotions, impressions, and thoughts that is inevitable to experience when you do something for the very first time?

Having started my role as a Community Counselor at EurAupair just a couple months earlier, at some sense, I was a newcomer myself. So intending to make sure that the message I was going to convey was clear and of value, I decided to briefly outline the meeting's agenda while referring to the Community Counselor Guide.

A few minutes after I had opened the Au Pair Orientation chapter and scanned the explanations of what the cultural differences meant, I reached the passage telling about possible causes for culture shock and what symptoms commonly indicate it. Here, I slowed my reading pace to the lowest possible speed trying to comprehend the fact that I had been impacted by each cause listed on this page and experienced every single of the given symptoms after I moved to the US 4 years ago. Despite my knowledge in Psychology, which has always been my hobby and which I studied at the local college, I had

never explained my feelings after the relocation by a culture shock. Interestingly, I have never had any problems making practical use of what I knew to help friends or family members. However, when it came to finding out the root cause of my own condition, my knowledge did nothing but confused me even more



From left to right: Au Pair Tana from South Africa, Community Counselor Viktoriya and Au Pair Sarah from South Africa

because I could explain the problem by so many ways that none of these would eventually make any sense to me. And as a result, I just allowed myself to hang out at the emotional swamp for quite a while until the symptoms of a culture shock faded gradually with time.

Having finished reading the chapter, instead of working on the notes for the future meeting, I found myself writing an email to Cynthia Vickers, my Area Coordinator, who helped me take my first steps as a volunteer for EurAupair and who is still kindly offering her support each time I need it. I would like to thank Cynthia for the insightful moment I had experienced and also for the opportunity to volunteer in the program where I have a chance to contribute to the well-being of others by sharing my own experience that also made me capable of understanding how one may feel when dealing with culture shock.

That morning I left the coffee shop feeling more prepared, confident, and involved than any orientation handbook could ever make me feel, if it wasn't that surprisingly matching with my own experience.

Thank you Viktoriya for sharing your experience and supporting our Au Pairs and Host Families!