

**Gastonia Sister Cities
Surco, Peru Exchange
Interview Review**

How much?

- The total cost last year was \$2,100 that included airfare, trip to Cusco/Machu Picchu, train ride to and from Machu Picchu, hotel while there, etc. Once they are with their host families everything else should be covered unless they want to buy extra gifts and food. We also provide insurance which runs around \$50. All expenses paid are non-refundable.
- Other costs include: \$250 class fee, around \$150 for passport, spending money
Unless there are extenuating circumstances students should not have more money than the recommended amount, \$25 per day.
- Students will be sent home at their own expense should behavior warrant this drastic measure.

Dates?

- We will leave either June 11th (Sunday) and be gone for 2 weeks

Student Selection

- Students must have a minimum of a “B” average in Spanish and be above average in their other courses.
- Must be currently enrolled or signed up for Spanish 1 prior to the trips departure.
- Each student will be interviewed, if the interview reveals attitude and behavior that does not reflect the necessary maturity for the class and for the exchange trip, the students will be asked to apply the following year.

Program Participation

- Attendance for the Peruvian Cultural class is mandatory. Unless the instructor excuses absences, three absences will be reason for dismissal. Classes will typically meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from November – May from 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- If you are unable to attend class for any reason contact the teacher or Juliann.
- Inappropriate behavior of any kind in the Peruvian Cultural Classroom will be reason for dismissal based upon recommendation of the instructor.

Host families? Are they safe?

Yes, they are all from the same private school and are upper-middle class citizens of Peru...we have been partnered with them for over 11 years and have had no host family issues. Your child may not want to come home because they will most likely have a maid and the family will treat them like royalty!

Is Peru safe?

- Safety is always a big question...things can happen in Charlotte or any big city...you need to ensure that your child is aware of their surroundings and chaperones do the best they can to prepare your child for the trip but wallets get stolen when you are not watching yourself.
- We suggest they drink bottled water or the host family usually has a water filtration device which they will show them to use instead of drinking out of the faucet.

What do they do each day?

While in Cusco and Machu Picchu they will be true tourists on their own with the chaperones exploring the city and history and visiting a 7th Wonder of the World. While in Lima they'll go to museums, churches, learn about Peruvian history, live the life of a Peruvian! That's the best part about our program...other programs you can travel somewhere and stay in a hotel but our program provides a unique home stay that really allows the students to live life like a Peruvian teenager.

Exchange Information

- This is an equal exchange program, so the student who hosts your child will come and stay with you. This is a crucial piece of the Sister Cities exchange puzzle. We need families who are willing to reciprocate and host a student and families who are not willing to host may not be accepted into the program. Whomever your child stays with will then stay with you for two weeks, usually they come in September/October. Sister Cities will “entertain” them during the day and you provide them room and board and I’m sure the group will have nightly plans to keep them entertained as well.
- While abroad, students should try their best to adapt to the customs, schedules, and lifestyles of their host family.
- When your host student visits Gastonia you will do your best to receive your guest with warmth and friendliness, and do your best to make him/her feel welcome at your home.

What to review at home as a family after this interview?

- Can we afford this trip? Upfront costs include a passport which must be applied for after being accepted but not later than January 1st. Class fee is also an upfront cost of \$250. Student will need spending money while on the trip. Scholarships won’t be announced until after January.
- The student will need a suitcase, spending money, clothes, etc.
- Can we afford to host a student at our house for 2 weeks? Do we have the space available in our house? Do we have the time to get them to the Garland Center each morning and pick up every afternoon? We will have to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for the host student. What will we do on the weekend with them?

If chosen, what’s next?

- You will need to apply for your passport, ASAP. This can be completed at the main post office branch on Main Street, Gastonia. I will send a link for the application. Once it arrives we will need a copy.
- Provide Sister Cities with a copy of your primary insurance card.
- Complete a liability/medical waiver
- Complete a health form