Participants sought for Japanese youth exchange

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Fairbanks, Alaska—Alaska youth who are interested in Japanese culture may participate in a 4-H exchange to Japan this coming July or host a Japanese teen in their home.

The 4-H youth program is accepting applications for its July 11-Aug. 9 exchange program to Japan and is also seeking host families for Japanese youth who are coming to Alaska with the program the same month.

Participants in the outbound exchange learn about Japanese culture before they travel, then enjoy a one-month homestay with a Japanese family, hosted by a boy or girl the same age and gender as themselves.

Applicants must be ages 13–18 and do not need to be a 4-H member, but they will be enrolled in 4-H through the program. Outbound exchange coordinator Jill Holmgren said that applicants do not have to speak Japanese because youth in Japan want to practice their English. She said parents of exchange participants report that their teens return from Japan with confidence, a global perspective and many new friends.

Host families are sought in the Anchorage, Kenai and Mat-Su areas for the incoming Japanese youth, who will be in Alaska July 21-Aug. 19. Each family must have a child ages 10-16 who is willing to be the host brother or sister. The family will be matched with a Japanese delegate of the same gender and similar age and interests as the hosting youth.

The exchange between 4-H and Japan has been ongoing for more than 40 years. For more information about the exchange, e-mail japanalaska@gmail.com or call Holmgren at 907-455-6987. For details about hosting a Japanese youth, contact your local 4-H office or Tony Nakazawa at atnakazawa@alaska.edu or 907-460-0825 or Marianne Kerr at mlkerr@alaska.edu. Exchange information is also available at www.uaf.edu/ces/4h/exchange.

4-H is a national youth development program administered in Alaska by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service.

ON THE WEB: www.uaf.edu/ces
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