

“Welcome Home to Hampton”



Guide for Host Families

Forward

THE “WELCOME HOME TO HAMPTON” PROGRAM

The Welcome Home to Hampton Program, a collaboration between Joint Base Langley-Eustis and the City of Hampton, connects selected community members and families with young Airmen to provide a home-away-from-home during their first enlistment in the military. It also offers individuals and families a unique opportunity to support and bond with our fine Air Force men and women, the air and space leaders of tomorrow. If you have the desire and commitment to make a difference in a young Airman’s life, this is the program for you.

This brochure has been designed not only to encourage your participation in the program, but to aid you as a host family. It provides valuable information on three major areas: Section I outlines the philosophy surrounding the Welcome Home to Hampton (WH2) program; Section II provides insight into Airman life and responsibilities here at JBLE; Section III provides information on your responsibility as a host family and suggestions for building a relationship with your Airman.

On behalf of Joint Base Langley-Eustis, we thank you for your interest and involvement in the Welcome Home to Hampton (WH2) program. Not only will you play a significant role in the life of an Airman, but you could also find that relationship to be one of your life’s most rewarding experiences.



Section I

THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

The Welcome Home to Hampton program is designed to provide Airmen with an avenue to form new friendships in the local community and gather support beyond the formal work environment. If you can remember when you first left behind the comfort and security of your parents' home, then you will understand the needs of the young men and women in the Welcome Home to Hampton program. Rigorous military standards can tax even the most robust of spirits, producing feelings of great stress to make the grade in some Airmen; and in others, moments of loneliness, homesickness and doubt. As a host family, you provide a home-away-from-home during an Airman's first years at Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE). You serve as the Airman's mentor, friend, and advisor, providing a caring environment to relax, away from the pressures of work and future deployments. You are also in the position to serve as a positive adult role model in helping Airmen understand their role as career Air Force Airmen and reinforcing positive social values.

The Welcome Home to Hampton program office attempts to match host families with Airmen who share the same basic interests and characteristics, whether it be sports, outdoors, religion, and other activities with which they identify. Airmen can request host families "by name," and families may do the same for Airmen. When two Airmen request the same family, both requests might be honored, dependent upon the desires of that family. When two families request the same Airman, the program intends to honor the wishes of the Airman.

The relationship established through the program can, and typically will, last for the full duration of time the Airman resides in the JBLE dormitories, unless one of the parties chooses to terminate the relationship prior to that time and notifies the Community Liaison. If all parties so desire, they can also continue the relationship they have formed for a lifetime.

HOST FAMILY APPLICANTS

Call the Welcome Home to Hampton office, at 757-727-6102 or email bsturk@hampton.gov for details regarding the application process.



SECTION II

AIRMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

THE USAF CORE VALUES

In addition to the academic, physical, and military responsibilities the Airmen assume, they are also charged with stringent moral responsibilities. Airmen accept and live by the Air Force Core Values, which are --

Integrity First

Service Before Self

Excellence In All We Do

These values are ingrained into the individuals during Basic Training. They are based upon the traditional concept that an Airman's word is a bond and that Airmen must be uncompromisingly honorable, forthright, and honest in all activities throughout life.

WHY IS THE MILITARY SO DEMANDING?

The defense of the US and the concept of deterring war rely heavily upon the ability of the Air Force to discharge its mission properly. In our modern world, we need Airmen of great ability, skill, judgment and integrity.

The Air Force Airmen whom you will be encouraging and advising today are the leaders of tomorrow.

The self-discipline, mental toughness, knowledge and leadership skills that our country needs dictate intensive and demanding training.

Your efforts and concern as a caring participant can make a big difference in assisting an Airman who may need an occasional retreat from the dormitory-living environment. Your willingness to give Airmen your time, to listen sympathetically and to show your genuine concern will one day bear fruit far beyond the smiles you will earn from them today. In short, your involvement is vital to the Airman's experience and the shaping of the air and space leaders of tomorrow.

DAILY AIRMAN LIFE

From overviews on academic requirements to survival training, it will be evident how vital your role as a host family is in the development of an Airman through the off-duty support you provide. The following section is designed to acquaint you with the daily life of an Airman.

Academics – The First Term Airmen are required to study and pass a variety of courses that strengthen their knowledge in the profession of arms as well as their core specialty.

Fitness – Athletic participation is required of all Airmen. All Airmen complete a physical fitness test every six months. Failure to meet standards may result in removal from the military. All Airmen participate in Squadron and individual physical fitness programs. In addition, base intramural sports are available for those who are interested.

Workdays – Not all Airmen work Monday-Friday; nor do all work 7:30am-4:30pm. Rather, some work shifts and some work weekends on a regular basis. This will require some flexibility on your part to meet the needs of your Airman. In addition, Airmen sometimes deploy on short-notice taskings. Please be understanding if your Airman has to cancel plans with only a few days' notice (or less).

Deployments – You can expect that your Airman will probably deploy during their first year or two at JBLE. On average deployments typically last 4-6 months.



SECTION III

YOUR ROLE AS A HOST FAMILY

Airmen from JBLE are held to a very high standard as professionals who, in some cases, are responsible for multi-million dollar pieces of equipment. It is imperative that you understand these standards and help set the Airmen up for success. While the Airmen you interact with will typically be the age of an average college student, their responsibilities are generally far greater. Failure to live up to their professional responsibilities will have the potential to injure fellow Airmen seriously and can have career-ending effects.

ALCOHOL AND THE AIRMEN

Alcohol use as it relates to Airmen will be in accordance with Virginia Laws; the individual must be 21 years of age or older to buy or consume alcohol. While those over the age of 21 may drink alcoholic beverages, it is not encouraged. We strongly request that no alcohol be involved with the program, or offered to Airmen.

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Airmen do not expect to be entertained or taken out to expensive meals or events. On the contrary, they are looking for the warmth and friendship of your family in their home-away-from-home. Letting them become a part of your family is the greatest gift you can give. They may want to use your phone to call parents or friends, but you are not required to extend yourself financially. Ultimately, the freedom to make a sandwich, drink a soda, sleep, watch TV, or just “hang out,” combined with your willingness to listen and your concern for them as individuals are the most precious gifts Airmen can receive.

AIRMAN/HOST FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Airmen will strive to please you by good behavior to earn a return invitation. They are expected to be courteous guests and to express their gratitude. While airmen are taught to address military superiors and their elders as “Sir” or “Ma’am,” relations between host family and Airmen need not be excessively formal and we rely on your good judgment in this area. However, if you experience problems with your Airman, please contact the First Sergeant immediately.

HOST FAMILY DIVIDENDS

Aside from the personal satisfaction you receive in hosting an Airman, you may be asking yourself what you get in return. Airmen might well invite you to events as their guest, and to traditionally military events such as promotions ceremonies, to show their appreciation. They will also volunteer to help you with tasks or projects as they are genuinely grateful for your caring and seek to find ways to demonstrate their gratitude. While the Welcome Home to Hampton program provides many dividends, participants often gain their most satisfying moments merely by interacting with their Airman. By sharing a family atmosphere, these family ties can continue for years.

AIRMEN AND CARS

While many Airmen have their own cars, this is not the case with all of them. Lending your vehicle is not a responsibility or a requirement. If you choose to do so, you must realize that you do so at your own risk with possible negative outcomes in terms of damage to property belonging to others. Safe alternatives to borrowing are commercial transportation, carpooling, and prior coordination of rides with host families. Any host family member may pick up the Airman. Host families who do not have regular access to JBLE, will be placed on the Entry Access List for vetting through Security Forces, or be provided a sponsor pass to allow access as required.

THE HOST FAMILY'S ROLE IN GUIDING AIRMAN BEHAVIOR

Airmen need to learn from their mistakes... that is part of their training. Overlooking an error or mistake will only encourage them to continue the behavior. One experienced host family recommends establishing house rules for Airmen visiting your home. They further added that it is unfair to expect Airmen to follow your rules if you don't tell them what the rules are.

Suggested house rules you may want to address include the following:

- We each have a right to our own opinions and the right to disagree with the opinions of others.
- If I request a phone call to let me know if you are coming over for the weekend, then please call me early, so I may adjust plans accordingly.
- If you are unable to visit for an extended length of time, a courtesy call or email from time to time is something I would appreciate to let me know how you are doing.

Other areas you may want to address from the start include --

- Your policy on bringing additional Airmen to your home
- Cleaning up after themselves while visiting your home
- Putting things back where they were found
- Address your feeling on picking up the Airman at the base and how you feel about last minute changes
- Your policy on the Airman arriving unexpectedly for a meal or inviting a friend over for a meal

HELPFUL HINTS

- Be "a sounding board"
- Communicate your house rules and regulations
- Give Airmen responsibilities as a family member
- Expect the same courtesy from an Airman as you would a family member
- If possible, have an open house to meet the Airman's family if they visit
- Enjoy your time together; Airmen feel host families are influential and positively impact their future
- Take pictures for the Airman's family and future reunions

