AMIGOS Youth Ambassadors Program: 2014

The Youth Ambassadors Program is one of the many exchanges sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The Youth Ambassadors Program brings together high school students and adult mentors from 25 countries across the Americas to promote mutual understanding, increase leadership skills, and prepare youth to make a difference in their communities. The three-week exchanges are focused on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development.

**Youth Participants** are competitively selected high school students who have demonstrated leadership aptitude and an interest in community service; exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness; have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants; and will attend at least one more semester of secondary school after the exchange program.

**Adult Participants** are teachers, trainers, school administrators or community leaders who work with youth. They have the role of exchange participant, chaperon and post-exchange mentor.

Amigos de las Américas (AMIGOS) administers the Youth Ambassadors Program in Paraguay, Uruguay and the San Francisco Bay Area. AMIGOS is currently recruiting youth and adults from the San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties) to apply for the 2014 Youth Ambassadors Program. The 13 selected youth and 2 selected adults will receive a full scholarship to participate in 3-week training and exchange in Uruguay during June and July, 2014.

**Program Contact Information**

yap@amigoslink.org
(713) 782-5290 extensions: 132, 134, 156

**Program Structure**

During the international training and exchange, participants live with host families and participate in workshops on youth leadership and service, community site visits, project planning exercises, presentations, visits to high schools, local cultural activities with other teenagers, and civic education programming in the capital city of the host country.

Following the exchange, youth participants apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired by implementing service projects in their home communities. Adult participants serve as mentors in the project planning and implementation process.

**Program Objectives**

*Learn and Experience:* Youth Ambassadors study community development, civic engagement, and leadership theories and practice through a three-week training program abroad.

*Interact:* Youth Ambassadors engage with Uruguayan culture through host family life, interactions with Uruguayan peers, and visits to important cultural and government sites throughout Uruguay.

*Implement:* Youth Ambassadors gain hands-on experience in the design and implementation of a community based initiative in their home community.

*Empower:* Youth Ambassadors develop leadership skills to become civic activists in their home communities and support other youth in developing these skills.
Program Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 4, 2014</td>
<td>Orientation Meeting for selected participants and parents of youth participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 16-18, 2014</td>
<td>Dates for Pre-Trip Training Workshop for participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2014 - January 2015</td>
<td>Participants return home and participate in follow-on trainings. Each participant works to carry out a community-based initiative. Final presentations of projects are made in January.</td>
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Application and Selection Process

The Youth Ambassador Application for Youth Applicants and Adult Applicants can be accessed online at: http://www.amigoslink.org/apply-yap

The deadline for the submission of the online application, required documents, and recommendation forms is **Friday, March 7, 2014** for Adult Applicants and **Sunday, March 23, 2014** for Youth Applicants. Applications should be submitted online, required documents should be scanned and uploaded as attachments to the online application, and recommendation forms should be filled out online by the Recommenders.

Finalists will be invited to an in-person interview in San Francisco. Interviews for adult candidates will be held during the last week of March. Interviews for youth candidates will be held on **Saturday, April 12, 2014**. Selected participants will be notified on or before **Friday, April 18, 2014**. A mandatory meeting for selected candidates and their parents will be held **Sunday, May 4, 2014**.

Minimum Requirements to participate in the selection process

**Adult Applicants:**
- Be at least 21 years old
- Be currently employed or active in the fields of education and/or youth development
- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Live and work in the San Francisco Bay Area
- Demonstrate advanced Spanish skills
- Be willing and able to commit to participating in all follow-on activities following the international training and exchange (August 2014-January 2015)

*Adult applicants who have participated in another international exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State within the last two years are not eligible to apply.*

**Youth Applicants:**
- Be between the ages 15-18 at time of travel
- Be enrolled in high school with at least one year remaining after the international training and exchange (students graduating from high school this year are not eligible to apply)
- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Live and go to school in the SF Bay Area
- Demonstrate academic excellence
- Have studied 2 years of high school Spanish or the equivalent
- Demonstrate commitment to community service

**Preference will be given to youth applicants who have not previously participated in an international exchange program.**
Required documents- should be uploaded & submitted with the online application

**Adult Applicants**- 1 copy of current resume

**Youth Applicants**- 1 copy of most recent report card

**Recommendation Forms- should be submitted online by the Recommenders**

**Adult Applicants**- should request recommendations from two professional contacts. Adult Applicants should share the following link with their Recommenders ([http://www.amigoslink.org/mentor-recommender-instructions](http://www.amigoslink.org/mentor-recommender-instructions)) and Recommenders should follow the instructions provided.

Youth Applicants- should request one recommendation from a current teacher or school advisor and one recommendation from a community service site representative. Youth Applicants should share the following link with their Recommenders ([http://www.amigoslink.org/youth-recommender-instructions](http://www.amigoslink.org/youth-recommender-instructions)) and Recommenders should follow the instructions provided.

For more information about program, please consult our web pages:

[http://exchanges.state.gov/youth](http://exchanges.state.gov/youth)

[www.amigoslink.org/yap](http://www.amigoslink.org/yap)