PBSCA Youth Exchange Program 2020-2021
Reciprocal Cultural Exchange Between Families in Portland and Bologna

The Portland Bologna Sister City Association (PBSCA) Youth Exchange is a small, reciprocal program where teens from Portland and Bologna go to each other’s cities in alternating years, staying with host families for two weeks in early summer. The program started in 2008 with an initial visit to Portland by eight teens from Bologna.

Our Mission is to provide an authentic, affordable cultural exchange opportunity to a cohort of young teens from Portland and Bologna, building lasting relationships and a cultural bridge between our two sister cities. Through the generosity of PBSCA supporters, board fundraising efforts and many volunteers and hours, we have been able to keep costs low and host family program engagement high. With our reciprocal model, our youth participants have the opportunity to host and travel, giving them the double exchange experience of sharing their American lives and experiencing another culture.

Our Portland participants are Sister City Youth Ambassadors and as such, should expect to be available to support our Sister City efforts during the 2-year program cycle, and we hope for longer. Participants typically come together as a group 4-8 times a year outside of the 2-week host/travel periods for occasions such as parent-student meetings, Youth activities and language classes, PBSCA events, and Rose Festival activities. The 2-year cycle will culminate in a Final Project they present to their peers and PBSCA supporters after returning from Italy.

Who qualifies?

- Current Freshmen and Sophomores (15-16 years old) from each Sister City metropolitan area interested in being active participants in this exchange and who can commit to being involved as Sister City Youth Ambassadors for the 2-year cycle.
- Families available to host a student from Bologna in July 2020 and excited participate, along with their child, in executing a successful exchange with PBSCA (approximate hosting dates: July 1-15).
- Portland teens who would like to travel to Bologna in June 2021 to represent our city as Youth Ambassadors, and (most-likely) stay with the same students’ families they hosted in Portland the summer prior (approximate travel dates: June 15-30).
- Teens who have postmarked a completed application by the deadline: March 1, 2020. Applications will be vetted on a rolling basis. We encourage early application!

Priority consideration will be given to ongoing supporters of the Portland Bologna Sister City Association. We seek to find a balanced representation of Youth Ambassadors (boys and girls, a range of area high schools, interests, backgrounds, etc.)

Studying abroad can be an enriching experience as well as a physically and mentally challenging one. Mild or pre-existing health conditions can become serious for some students as they transition into an unfamiliar culture and environment. For this reason, we encourage all students to fully disclose their health history so that we can prepare properly for their experience, make arrangements for special accommodation when possible, and in some cases assess if there may be reason an applicant should consider another program.

PBSCA does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation or national origin. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all participants, board members, contractors, and volunteers.
What to Expect?

- Hosting for Bologna students is managed by PBSCA; hosting for Portland students is contracted through the City of Bologna. In all cases, each organization is committed to do its best in matching hosts and guests, and in soliciting input from each other, but ultimately, the responsibility for placement lies with the local hosting entities.

Hosting in Portland, Summer 2020:

- 2-week homestay, usually the first two weeks of July. As hosts, you are responsible for your Italian guest, and agree to provide a safe home, meals and transportation as you would for your own family.
- Weekdays include a balance of mandatory activities and optional ones. PBSCA Board member volunteers will meet with our host families to develop a schedule of activities that will include some host family participation and organization for certain events. We encourage all families to provide ideas and energy to support the exchange. Each exchange is as unique as each new cohort of students and families; we all work together with the common goal of fostering great opportunities for our teens to share and experience each other, and Portland, while they are here together.
- Weekend schedules are left to the discretion of individual families. We encourage families to plan simple trips in/outside of town over weekends (Forest Park, Coast, Gorge, Mt. Hood, etc.). Usually the Portland Youth Exchange falls over 4th of July weekend, a wonderful chance to share our customs and traditions with visitors.

Hosting Costs:
- One-time Administrative Fee of $250 due to PBSCA at acceptance (due by April 2020). Fee covers a portion of our liability insurance and background checks for all adult members of each household.
- Your exchange student will be part of your family for two weeks - all food, transportation and other recreation expenses are provided by your family, to your host student. The same treatment is granted to our students when they travel to Bologna and stay with their Italian family. Plan to take care of your Italian student as you would your own family.

Travel to Bologna, Summer 2021:

- 2-week trip, typically the last two weeks in June. Please note: this timeline differs slightly from the hosting period, due to the scholastic testing schedule in Bologna.
- Homestay with an Italian family; placement arranged by the City of Bologna (most often with the same student you hosted, but occasionally different) *PBSCA cannot guarantee availability of host families for any Portland students, but will go to great lengths to find families for all participants.
- Weekday museum visits, trips and excursions in/outside of Bologna, organized and paid for by the City of Bologna.
- All train and bus transport will be provided to your student by the city of Bologna, and/or their host family. The trip typically includes full-day excursions to Italian cities like Venice and/or Florence.
- Weekends are spent with host families; e.g., day excursions to the sea, neighboring towns or cities.
- Final project proposals are due at the conclusion of the trip. Final draft and oral presentation will be given at PBSCA’s Summer Social, upon return (July/Aug 2021). Mayor’s Award will be presented to one exceptional student project at the 2021 Sagra Fundraiser that Fall; criteria and prize money TBA.

Travel Cost:
- Your exchange student will be part of their Italian family for two weeks - all food, transportation and other recreation expenses are provided by the Italian host family to your student. As you will have done as a host, the Italian family will take care of your student as they would their own family. *please be specific about dietary needs on your application.
- You are responsible for round-trip airfare. Our volunteers work hard to find the best possible fare; typically, costs have been between $1500-$2000 per ticket, and we highly recommend purchasing trip insurance. The group will travel accompanied by a PBSCA Board member/volunteer Chaperone, who will also be hosted by a family in Bologna, during the 2-week stay.
**2020-2021 PBSCA YOUTH EXCHANGE**

- Out-of-pocket expenses (snacks, souvenirs, etc.). Estimate about $250-500 for this (more if your student desires more extensive shopping). We have seen students spend less than $100, and more than $1,000. We encourage students to purchase supplies needed to make a special American dinner for their family or buy their host sibling an ice cream from time to time. It is best to come prepared with a chip-compatible ATM card.
- PBSCA offers scholarships on the basis of initiative and merit, offsetting ticket cost and out-of-pocket expense. For those wanting more information on the scholarship, please check the appropriate box on the application.

**2-year Cycle Timeline and Final Project:**

- Participants can expect to come together as a group throughout the year, outside of the 2-week host/travel periods.
  - March 1, 2020: Deadline for submitting application.
  - March 1-15: Scheduled home visits to occur, as part of admissions process.
  - April 1, 2020: Admittance packet sent via USPS.
  - April 19, 2020: Mandatory **New Family meeting** (Sunday afternoon, 2-4pm); Deadline to sign and return Admittance forms with $250 program Admin fee.
  - May 2020: **Youth gathering** (movie, ice cream, pizza, bowling, etc.).
  - May 17, 2020: **Family Planning Meeting** to finalize Itinerary and plan for the Italian’s arrival (Sunday afternoon, 2-4pm).
  - June 2020: **Youth gathering** (Pizza and intro Italian language class).
  - July 1-15, 2020 (approximately): **HOSTING**: Typically, the first 2 weeks of July.
  - July 12, 2020: PBSCA’s **Summer Social** (typically last Sunday of exchange; family attendance strongly encouraged! You will want to be there).
  - September 25, 2020: **SAGRA** Fundraising Event, to support Youth Exchange Program (family attendance strongly encouraged).
  - Fall-Winter 2020: **Youth gatherings** (Italian language class at Scuola Italiana, house gatherings, movies, other cultural activities).
  - March 2021: Mandatory **Family Travel Meeting** (planning, paperwork and passports)
  - Spring 2021: **Youth gatherings** - Italian language class, packing class and Trip Preparation meeting (2-3 meetings, organized by PBSCA volunteers and Youth Participants).
  - June 15-30, 2021 (approximately): **TRAVEL**: Typically, the last 2 weeks of June *(note: travel takes place 2 weeks earlier than hosting!)*.
  - July-August 2021: PBSCA **Summer Social** – Presentations of Final Projects *(family attendance strongly encouraged)*.
  - September-October 2021: **SAGRA** Fundraising Event: Conclusion of PBSCA’s 2020-21 Youth Exchange - Mayor’s Award Recipient announced *(family attendance strongly encouraged)*.

**Final Project:**

The Portland-Bologna Youth Exchange is integral to our cross-cultural mission and by far our largest program. It is an important vehicle for communicating the work of the Association, and effectively communicating the value of Portland connections to Bologna. For this reason, we ask that participants agree to help us spread the word about the program and our sister city after their return. There are a variety of ways for participants to do this and we welcome creative ideas. We ask each student to commit to one idea and give their project the time required to make it valuable to its audience.

Student Ambassadors are tasked with developing a tangible project that captures their exchange experience that they will present upon their return from Bologna at the 2021 Summer Social. This project will also be shared with our Bologna colleagues (past projects have included, but are not limited to, compilation videos of program highlights and or themes from the student’s reflection on their experience, essays incorporating recipes and photos, landscape portraits, stand-up comedy, art projects such as paintings of photos or
collage/scrapbook compilations). We encourage unique and creative ideas and expect a thoughtful level of effort reflective of both hosting and traveling.

Mayor’s Award Recipient will be selected by a PBSCA Board member committee after a review of projects turned over at the Summer Social (2021). Prize money and certificate will be presented to winner at PBSCA’s Sagra fundraising event in September-October 2021, where student will present the project again one final time.

Ambassadorial Internship Opportunity:

**Internship Description:** Upon completion of PBSCA’s Youth Exchange program, past participants are encouraged to apply for YE outreach internship positions. The interns are tasked with developing and implementing a plan to identify 20 potential YE participants for the 2022-2023 YE cycle, from Portland Area high schools for follow up by the Outreach Advisor(s).

- **Required outcomes:**
  
  1. Developing the initial plan for approval by the Outreach advisor, components to include:
     
     - Developing a flier for electronic and paper distribution, with the pertinent information
     - Enlisting Students/Parents from as many schools as possible to post this information on the school's parents' listserv or other means of electronic communications at the high schools. For schools where there hasn’t been a recent participant, reach out to former participants’ parents or friends or faculty at other schools, to ensure the majority of area schools have this information.

  2. Developing a short video or power point about your experience to use at high school/other presentations. Contact appropriate school administrators about hosting an information session to present to prospective students.

  3. Creating and maintaining a shared google document to track all activities, school contacts, dates, contact information for anyone expressing interest for the Outreach Advisor to follow up with and any auxiliary notes helpful to the Outreach Advisor.

**Timeline:**
Planning and preparation: August-November 2021
Plan Proposal due late August at steering committee meeting
Outreach advisor(s) to make recommendations for adjustment and implementation.
Sagra 2021: Outreach interns will canvas project at Sagra, to educate supporters, start recruitment and share their YE experience.
November 2021-February 2022, outreach interns to execute plan and bring project plan successfully to conclusion.

**Benefits:**
Upon successful completion of the internship, a letter of recommendation by the PBSCA Board, summarizing outcomes and highlighting skills, for potential employers and/or curriculum vitae/resume, and college applications. Recognition of student interns will occur 2021 Sagra.

*For additional information, please direct all queries to PBSCA Executive Director Mandy Maggadino: bologna@pdx.edu*
HOST FAMILY APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

There are two parts to this application; one that is to be completed by the student and one to be completed by a parent. If selected, this information will be shared with your Italian host sibling prior to hosting them Summer 2020.

PART 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HOST STUDENT
[This section to be filled out by the participant, not the parent]

Student Personal Information

Name:_________________________________________ Nickname(s)_____________________

Primary Address:___________________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________________

home cell phone

Birthdate: _____________________________ Preferred Pronouns:_____________________

Email: _________________________________________________________________

School: _____________________________ Grade: __________________________ GPA: _________

Foreign Language(s): _____________________________ Years studied:__________________

Do you intend to Host this summer (2020) and Travel to Bologna summer 2021?

_____ Yes    _____ No    If not, please explain: ______________________________________

Would you be willing to share an Italian student/host family with another Portland family, if circumstances necessitated this?

_____ Yes    _____ No    Comments: _____________________________________________

Would your host sibling have a private room?

_____ Yes    _____ No    Please explain: __________________________________________

Would you prefer an identifying male or female guest?  __ Female    __ Male    __ No preference

If we are unable to match you with your preferred gender, would you still like to participate?

_____ Yes    _____ No
Why are you interested in participating in PBSCA’s reciprocal youth exchange program?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

How would you describe your personality?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Do you know anyone else applying? _____ Yes _____ No

If so, who? what school?

____________________________________________________________________________________

ESSAY

Tell us a little about yourself. What do you and your family like to do? Have you been to Italy, or travelled elsewhere? Since you will be meeting your host sibling for the first time, tell them what they might expect to do during their visit to Portland, while staying with your family. For example, are you a soccer player, a video gamer or a movie lover? Does your family like to hike in the mountains, visit museums, go to the beach...? Do you love to shop, hang out with friends, travel? What would you like to know about your Italian family, before visiting - your host sibling will likely have the same curiosities about you and your family before their trip next summer!

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

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PART II: TO BE COMPLETED BY A HOST PARENT

Family Information

Parent 1 Name(s): ____________________________  ____________________________

Cell phone  ______________________________________________________________

email  ______________________________________________________________

Address:  ________________________________________________________________

Parent 2 Name(s): ____________________________  ____________________________

Cell phone  ______________________________________________________________

email  ______________________________________________________________

Address (if different):  ______________________________________________________

Who is the preferred **primary** adult contact?

Mother, Father, another Adult – or Both parents

Siblings and anyone else living in your house(s):

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Pets: ______________________________________ (indoor or outdoor?)

_______________________________________ (easy-going, rowdy, what are they like?)
Does anyone in your family smoke?  _____ Yes  _____ No

Do you prefer that your guest not smoke?  _____ Yes  _____ No  _____ No preference

How would your student and guest get around while they are here? Check all that apply:

_____ Student drives  _____ Parent(s) drive  _____ Bus/MAX  _____ Bicycle  _____ Walk

Any health issues or dietary restrictions in your family that your visitor should know about? Please attach additional student health information you believe PBSCA should know.

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Are you interested in learning more about our scholarship?

_____ Yes  _____ No

As part of the application process, we will be scheduling home visits the first 2 weeks in March. Are there any date or time options you’d like to request? All members should be home.

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Please provide us with names and contact information for two family references – these can be friends, colleagues, or neighbors who know you well; please don’t list relatives.

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Please be aware that we will require background checks on anyone living at Host’s home over the age of 18. We are also required to visit you in your home as part of the selection process.

______________________________________________

Signature of Student

Date __________________________

__________________________________________

Signature of Parent(s)

Date __________________________

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Many thanks for your interest in our 2020-2021 Youth Exchange Program!

Special thanks go to our supporters, without whom none of this would be possible. For more information on supporting PBSCA, please visit our webpage:

www.portland-bologna.org

To hear about our activities and events, please follow us on Facebook & Instagram:

www.facebook.com/PBSCA/
https://www.instagram.com/portland_bologna_sister_city/

Additional Disclosures:

We strive to make safe and appropriate host family placements. Full written disclosure of important needs and accommodations is critical to making a proper placement. Sometimes students have particular needs that require extra effort on our part to find an appropriate match in a host family. We need to know all conditions, needs, or requirements of the student before we make any match. For example, if the student has dietary restrictions or needs or if the student has potential medical concerns that could require the attention of the host family. Access to medical care and pharmacies in Italy is generally good, but when it comes to filling prescriptions sometimes additional paperwork and authorizations are required, and in certain cases what might be a legal medication for a minor to take in the United States is not legal in Italy. In addition, some/most of the host families live in old, sometimes ancient residences. If a student has mobility, accessibility or other physical concerns we need to know in order to make an appropriate placement.

PBSCA will make our best effort possible to secure a placement for each student accepted to the program, however, PBSCA cannot guarantee any host family placements. It is possible that for reasons beyond our control, a safe and appropriate placement cannot be made. For example, a host family could cancel due to family illness or other unforeseen issue. In very rare cases, we simply cannot find enough appropriate host families for all the students we accept into the program. In the event of a host cancellation or in the event that we cannot find a sufficient number of suitable student host families in Bologna, PBSCA is committed to making our best effort in finding a safe and appropriate alternate placement for affected students. The Association’s goal is to provide affected students with as close to typical an experience in the program as reasonably possible under the given circumstances. However, in the unlikely event that we cannot find an appropriate host family or appropriate alternative arrangement, it may be the case that a student participating in the program will need to defer travel to another exchange date or cancel their participation in the exchange program altogether. In this event, PBSCA will give priority host family placement to the affected student in the next round of student exchange.