

Angel Missions Haiti Host Family Requirements & Policies

Angel Missions Haiti is in need of host families to care for these children in the U.S. while they recover from their surgeries. Due to U.S. immigration laws it is extremely difficult for the parents to obtain a visa for travel to the U.S. therefore the children need loving families in the U.S. to care for them as their own for the duration of their stay. Medical training or expertise is not necessary.

Requirements:

Host families come in all shapes and sizes but the basic requirements are as follows:

- All host families must complete the application process and submit all required documentation. Families must also submit a background check to AMH prior to being approved to host.
- Must have the ability to care for the child in your home for approximately 3-6 months depending on the type of surgery required. This includes providing for all of the child's basic needs such as food, clothing and diapers.
- Host families must be willing to be flexible regarding the child's arrival, medical condition and length of stay. AMH works to gather all information available about the children & the medical care they require. We also arrange for the visa paperwork and travel to & from Haiti. Occasionally, this process is delayed or moves more quickly than expected.
- If both host parents work full-time you must have childcare (approved by Angel Missions Haiti) available for the child.
- Must be available to travel and stay with the child while he/she is in the hospital for surgery and arrange for and accompany the child to follow-up visits.
- Must be married or, under special circumstances, a single woman. Applications from single men are not being accepted at this time.
- Must own or have access to the appropriate baby equipment, i.e. car seat, crib, etc. These will not be provided by AMH.
- Families must be willing to care for their host child as their own for the length of their stay. It is difficult to say goodbye when their stay is over; however, it is vital that host families remember that the child has a Haitian family anxious for their return. As a condition of their medical visa, all children will return to Haiti once they are medically cleared by their physician.

Policies:

- Angel Missions Haiti will screen all host families and respite families prior to a child's arrival. All documentation will be maintained by AMH and is good for one year from time of submittal.
- Angel Missions Haiti will provide the host family with photos and background information prior to the family agreeing to host. AMH will obtain as much information as possible about the child, including testing each child for HIV, Hepatitis B & TB; however, host families must realize that we are not necessarily able to provide answers to all their questions. *As a matter of policy, AMH agrees with the medical profession and recommends that all host families practice universal precautions while caring for the children. This is just good health practice and does not in any way mean that the children have some sort of communicable disease.* Haiti is unlike the US in that communication is not always reliable and medical tests and screenings are not as thorough as they would be here. Host families must accept that occasionally children may have additional medical conditions not known to us prior to their arrival. In this event, AMH will work to secure any medical care the child may need. If this situation arises, host families will be given the option to decline hosting the child.
- Angel Missions Haiti maintains legal custody and Power of Attorney for all children in our program. Host families are given a temporary, limited Power of Attorney to assist them in taking care of the child and assisting with the medical care that AMH has arranged. As Angel Missions Haiti is legally responsible for these children, all medical care must be pre-approved by AMH.
- Host families are asked to check with their regular pediatricians to ask if they would donate routine care for such things as ear infections, upper respiratory infections and other normal childhood conditions. If your pediatrician is unable to provide these services free of charge, please let us know so that we can work with you to arrange such care if it becomes necessary. In addition, we ask host families to check with their local health department to learn if they are willing to vaccinate the child prior to his/her return to Haiti. Childhood immunizations are not generally available in Haiti so we hope to vaccinate the children during their stay in the US, if this is possible.
- Host families must provide bi-monthly updates and photos to AMH to share with the child's family in Haiti. These updates should be sent via email to the host family coordinator, Fran Johnson at fran@angelmissionshaiti.org. This information and the photos will also be shared on the AMH blog.
- Angel Missions Haiti will maintain communication with medical care providers and with the host family. AMH will share any pertinent information with both so to ensure that the child receives the best care possible.

- Host families may use respite care that has been approved by AMH. We understand that families will need to use babysitters during the child's stay. Except in an emergency situation, any stay lasting overnight (or longer) must be pre-approved by AMH. Respite providers can apply to AMH by contacting Fran Johnson. If the host family has an emergency and needs alternative care arrangements for the child, they should contact AMH as quickly as possible.
- Host families are secured for a time period of no longer than six (6) months, except in situations previously arranged by the board. Most children receiving care in our program will return to Haiti within that time frame. Rarely, we do have children who require additional or on-going care who may need to stay longer. In these cases, AMH staff will discuss with the host family moving the child to another host home for the remainder of his/her stay. If a host family wishes to continue to care for the child beyond the six month time frame, they may make such a request. AMH staff will make the decision whether or not to make other arrangements. Host families should consider carefully whether continuing to host a child beyond six months is what they would truly wish to do. It is often increasingly difficult for a host family to release the child the longer they care for him/her. Goodbyes are often very hard, but you will be left with the knowledge that you made a difference in that one precious, little life.
- Host families must understand that the child they are caring for will be returning to Haiti when he/she is medically cleared by the primary physician. The majority of children participating in this program have loving parents waiting anxiously for their return to Haiti. **The children are not available for adoption.** Angel Missions Haiti is not an adoption agency and our primary concern is for the child's medical condition. As a condition of their visas, (even if a child is an orphan or is available to be adopted) the children **will** return to Haiti once they are medically cleared to travel. Please know that there are many children in Haiti who are available for adoption. If your family is interested in adoption, you will need to go through the normal adoption channels with an approved agency.
- Angel Missions Haiti makes all necessary arrangements for the children to return home to their families in Haiti. Once cleared to travel, the child will be escorted back to Haiti by a staff member or an escort arranged by AMH. Host families are welcome to send photos, clothes, formula and mementos home with the child. These must be limited to one suitcase. If you have any questions about items you wish to send, please contact us. Some families ask to be informed about their host child's progress once they are back with their Haitian families. If your family is interested in this information, please let the AMH staff know.