



# IAPA Au Pair of the Year Award 2009 Finalist



## **Au Pair**

Name of au pair: Ricardo Silva de Araujo .....

Nationality of au pair: Brazilian .....

Age of au pair: 24 years old .....

Start date of au pair placement: November 16, 2007 .....

Finish date of au pair placement (if applicable)\*: November 16, 2009 .....

\* Contact details if you are no longer with your host family after 01 March 2009

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Telephone: .....

Email:.....

I confirm that I will be able to attend the IAPA 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, 25—27 March 2009, in Vienna, Austria. If I am still placed with my Host Family during these dates I confirm that I have received the necessary permission from my Host Family to attend the Conference.  (please tick).

## **Host Family**

Name of host family: Boyer .....

Address: .....

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Telephone:.....

Email:.....

## **IAPA Member**

Name of IAPA Member Agency (please circle: Sending/Receiving): Cultural Care .....

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Country: Brazil .....



## *IAPA Au Pair of the Year Award 2009 Finalist*

Each finalist must write in their own words a short essay detailing his/her own au pair experience. The essay must be in English.

When I decided to be an au pair, I never expected to live so many great experiences. I decided to accept taking care of Taylor, today 17 years old, because I like challenges. He was born normal and healthy. But, when he was six months old, Taylor had a bad allergic reaction from DPT immunization. The life of his family and his own life has changed since that morning, February 7, 1992.

I confess: the first weeks weren't easy. I arrived two weeks before Taylor's only sister's wedding. There was so much excitement and confusion happening at that time. The patience and support of John and Kim Boyer, my host parents, was so important to show me how to work with Taylor. As a result of this allergic reaction, he has difficulty to walk, has seizures, he is non-verbal and his cognitive age is like a two years old baby.

He is not able to talk, but he is able to feel. His feelings are pure as an angel. His happiness smile is the best way to say thank you. We are good friends, best buddies. I try to make Taylor happier doing stuff with him, hanging out, taking walks at the mall and parks, feeding ducks and fish, and his favorite pastime: teasing the girls and hugging them. He is a gallant young man. My goal is to socialize him, showing himself and society that people with disabilities can be happy and enjoy the life with their limits. My friends are Taylor's friends as well. Together, we have a lot of fun. During the summer we got for walks and enjoy the swimming pool, he loves it. I want to make him as happy as I am, and give to Taylor good moments by my side.

I don't have words enough to thank Jesus for this great experience in my life. Also, Cultural Care, this is a really remarkable moment to me. To share my know-how, to learn English, and to know and make new friends from different parts of the world. No money can buy it. I learned the real meaning of love, patience and respect. The real love does not come in phrases like: "I love you". This is easy to say and difficult to feel sometimes. I love Taylor and know he loves me back. I can feel it.

The past month was so difficult in our lives. Taylor became critically sick and spent three weeks at the ICU in a coma. When you have someone who you love in a hard time, this breaks your heart. Today he is so much better, smiling and getting well. Ready to hang out with me again.

I would like to thank John and Kim Boyer for everything they did and do every single day to make me feel at home. They are so special to me and I am glad having them as my host parents. To Taylor I give my best, this is the way to thank him for all that he taught me. Our friendship will be forever. His disability it is not an obstacle for his happiness, this makes me feel good. I came to America as an au pair, I will leave like a better human. Special needs are not a excuse to not to find the happiness, the real meaning of life.