



*IAPA Au Pair of the Year Award
2009*



NOMINATION FORM

Host Family

Name of host family member submitting nomination: Kimberly Boyer

Name/s and age/s of other family members: John, 50, Kimberly, 49, Katey, 24, Dawson, 23, Caleb, 19, Taylor, 16

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

IAPA Member

Name of IAPA Member Agency: Cultural Care Au Pair

Country: United States of America

Au Pair

Name of au pair: Ricardo Silva De Araujo

Nationality of au pair: Brazilian

Age of au pair: 24

Start date of au pair: November 12, 2007

Finish date of au pair (if applicable): November 11, 2009



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The host family essay should be 500 to 850 words (approximately 1 page, single spaced), written in English, and should describe the characteristics that make your au pair exceptional and why he/she should be considered for the 2009 "IAPA Au Pair of the Year" award.

Ricardo joined our family in November, 2007. At the time our daughter was still living at home, 2 sons were at college and Taylor, who has significant special needs. He arrived 2 weeks before our only daughter's wedding. You can imagine the chaos 2 weeks before a wedding with 300 guests invited and also becoming an au pair for a multi-handicapped child. Ricardo immediately acquainted himself with Taylor and all his special needs; and also plunged into any errands we needed regarding the wedding. Ours is a busy household even without a wedding. I am a nurse and my husband is in medical sales. We do not have regular hours or schedules. They are crazy at times but Ricardo has "rolled with the punches" so to speak. He sought additional education for emergent treatment for seizures which plague Taylor on a frequent basis.

Taylor is non-verbal and Ricardo has been able to establish a real understanding of his likes and dislikes, preferences, and interests through patient observation and perseverance. He has treated Taylor like a normal 16 year old, often taking him to the mall and out for rides in the car. Ricardo often includes him when he visits his own friends or goes to the park to meet other au pairs. He quickly realized more than me that Taylor loves to go as much as teenagers go and as much as his disabilities allow. It became apparent that Ricardo was an exceptional young man, full of compassion, patience, gentleness, and a desire to see the disabled enjoy a life like yours and mine as much as possible. He never tires of encouraging Taylor to meet his challenges and reach beyond them whenever possible. The friendship that has developed between the two of them is loyal and enduring.

Often Ricardo must rescue Taylor when he has a seizure during bath time and really any time of the day. He is alert always to the occurrence of seizures as they happen at the most unlikely times. When seizures occur, successively, he has become competent at administering his emergency rescue medication. Taylor's situation can be rather depressing on a daily basis but Ricardo has exhibited fortitude beyond anything imagined. As a nurse myself, I have been amazed by his ability to learn and implement care giving techniques and strategies. He has truly enhanced Taylor's life in a way I never thought possible; and in a way I will forever be grateful. You can imagine how ecstatic I was when he said he would like to extend a second year.

As I write this essay and Ricardo has started his second year, Taylor is in a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in septic shock. He became suddenly ill last week-end and is being supported by a ventilator and numerous IV drips to maintain blood pressure and sedation. He is critically ill at this time. Ricardo is right by our side as we desperately hope and pray for his recovery. He is helping the nurses bathe and comfort Taylor when he awakens and he is a tremendous emotional support to my husband and me. He is managing the household, organizing meals that come in, and helping me get through each day. This is not easy; in fact it is very devastating and sad to him as well. He is the main constant in Taylor's life most days. Ricardo has truly shown flexibility, adaptability, and a caring heart symbolic of the best in mankind and the spirit of Cultural Care. It is this reason I proudly nominate him as your Au Pair of the Year. I fervently ask that you consider this gifted young man. Not many individuals enter an unknown culture, are immediately immersed in the chaos of a wedding, adapt to a significantly impaired teenager, and prove to be above and beyond all expectations. Ricardo is an excellent example of all that one would hope for in a child care provider but also all that one would enjoy as a precious "son" and dear friend. He is truly the spirit of Cultural Care and the best in mankind. He will forever be our au pair of the year but I respectfully request he be considered by Cultural Care. He will surely remain a part of our family long after he returns to Brazil.