

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the ShinShinim program in Greater Orlando?

The ShinShinim program is a partnership between the Shalom Orlando and the Jewish Agency for Israel. The program seeks to bring contemporary Israeli life to the Orlando Jewish community by bringing post-high school young adults to Orlando for a year of service to the community.

Who are the ShinShinim and how were they selected?

ShinShinim are 18-Year old young Israeli leaders who defer their army service for one year to volunteer in communities around the globe. Our new ShinShinim, Avia and Gil, will arrive in Orlando in August 2022 for their year of service. They were carefully chosen from hundreds of candidates after a lengthy and thorough selection process which evaluated candidates' personality traits, creativity, interpersonal skills, knowledge of Israeli culture, fluency in English, and much more.

What will the ShinShinim be doing?

The ShinShinim will serve as informal educators and facilitators at The Roth Family JCC, synagogues and day schools, for youth movements, supplementary schools, other Jewish agencies and organizations in our community. Depending on where they are working, they will share about Israel and Israeli culture, about Jewish identity, Jewish celebrations, and life in Israel in general. In addition, they will help create community wide programs about Israel. The ShinShinim will be a living bridge between our Orlando community and Israel.

What are the benefits of becoming a host family?

Many of our past host families have shared that hosting a ShinShin was the highlight for the family and for their relationship with Israel. They not only feel they have gained a new family member, but also feel they have gained a whole new understanding of what it's like to be an Israeli. Host families play a vital role in the success of the ShinShinim program. Host parents and siblings provide a great deal of support to ShinShinim and help them transition to living and working in our community.

Do I need to provide them with rides/transportation?

No. The ShinShinim will have two cars and car insurance paid for by the Jewish Federation. The four ShinShinim will work out a plan to share the cars. The Jewish Federation will also arrange for the ShinShinim to receive driving lessons to familiarize them with NYS laws and driving conditions. Whenever possible, rides are always appreciated, particularly during the winter months but not expected.

Will they have health insurance? What happens if they need a doctor or dentist?

The ShinShinim will have health insurance coverage through David Shield, arranged by the Jewish Agency. If your ShinShin needs a doctor or dentist, you can take them to your own, if that is ok with your doctor/dentist. If not, the Jewish Federation will have a list of doctors and dentists who are willing to provide the ShinShinim services when needed. You and the ShinShinim will be provided with this list.

Can they live in my basement?

Maybe. The emissaries need to have a bedroom with easy access to an exit, which most basements do not have. Before you can be approved to host an emissary, a member of the ShinShinim Host Family committee will come by and take a look at your house. They will make sure the bedroom is safe for the emissary, and will also answer any questions you may have about the program. home so they can get in touch with anyone at any time.

How often will they be home for dinner?

While the ShinShinim do their best to be home as often as possible, they do have very busy schedules and as such, will not be able to join you for dinner every evening. We recommend you sit down with your ShinShin on a weekly basis to discuss his/her calendar. Friday nights are typically spent with the host family, but there will be times when they may have to accept other invitations from members of the community.

What should I do if they are not home for dinner?

Please ensure that there is food for him/her to eat and that he/she is comfortable preparing the food him/herself.

Who does their laundry?

It is up to the host family who does the laundry. Please discuss with your ShinShin and ensure that they know how to do laundry and work the machines in your home. If a housekeeper is doing laundry for other members of the family, it would be recommended that the ShinShin's laundry is done for him/her as well. We encourage families to treat the ShinShinim as another member of their family.

Do the ShinShinim have a curfew?

The ShinShinim do not have a curfew, however, they are told that they must be respectful of the house rules and may need occasional reminders to be considerate of their families' schedules. Please note that there are evenings when the ShinShinim will be working late at their institutions or with their partners.

Are they allowed to babysit?

The ShinShinim are here to volunteer, and their visas do not allow them to work for pay. They are not allowed to babysit or tutor for pay. Beyond that, the ShinShinim will have very busy schedules volunteering in our community, and any available free time that they have should be time for them to relax and recharge.

Who makes lunch for the ShinShinim?

It is up to the host family to discuss with the ShinShinim who will be making lunches. If your kids make their own lunches, feel free to let the ShinShin make their own lunch, provided you are supplying them with food. Make sure they feel comfortable making it. Again, treat the ShinShinim the same as your own children. If a parent or a housekeeper makes lunches for your children, have them do the same for the ShinShin.

What is the best way to stay in touch with the ShinShinim while they're here?

Each ShinShin will receive a SIM Card and phone plan to be used with their own cell phone. So please ensure that you have that phone number. It is a good idea to give your ShinShin a list of phone numbers for everyone in your home so they can get in touch with anyone at any time.

What happens if/when our family goes on vacation?

It is entirely up to each host family to decide if they wish to take their ShinShin along, and only if it has been approved by all of their site supervisors and by Ronny Shisgal of Shevet Agam Tzofim Orlando. The ShinShin is not permitted to stay alone in your home, therefore will need to make arrangements in advance if you are going on vacation without them.

Can the ShinShin stay alone in the house overnight?

No, the ShinShin should not stay alone in the house overnight. Please make prior arrangements in coordination with Ronny Shisgal of Shevet Agam Tzofim Orlando.

Should I know where our ShinShin is at all times?

While you do not need to constantly keep tabs on them, host families should always know where their ShinShin is and when they are expected home. Be sure to keep the lines of communication open.

Who provides the ShinShinim with toiletries?

The ShinShinim receive a monthly stipend from the Jewish Federation. It is recommended that the host family provide basic toiletries (soap, toothpaste, shampoo, toilet paper), and we encourage you to discuss this with your ShinShin when they arrive.

Do we need to give the ShinShin a key to our house?

As the ShinShin is part of your family, they will need a key to your house (or a code to have access) and the code to the alarm.

Your question not addressed? Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to providing you the best information for creating a positive experience for you and your family.

B'Shalom,

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