

HOSTING A BUDDY: SUCHARITAA OF TOS HOSTS SHAMEERAA OF RIVERSIDE!



The day we got to know that we are one of the hosting families for a Riverside student, I was thrilled! From that very moment until the time the Riverside buddy departed back home, I was living moments filled with a mix of various kinds of pleasant emotions.

I was excited and anxious to meet my new buddy, Shameeraa from Riverside, Ahmadabad. Being part of a connected world, I started exchanging notes instantly with her, through Hangouts and Whatsapp, and gradually got to know more about her before even she actually arrived. However, I was very eager to meet her in person.

Shameeraa greeted me and my parents with a beautiful smile. As soon as she entered our home, she sought my Grandmother's blessings, which was very respectful and sweet of her. In addition, she had carried some goodies from her mom to be given to us. I was impressed with her behavior.

On the first day itself, I got very attached to her and found a good friend in her. Our likes and dislikes were more or less similar. I found Shameeraa to be a very sensitive and a very affectionate person. I found her very independent as well.

During her stay with us, we exchanged views and had many a conversation, shared a laugh, created our own fun time, played with my friends and most of all, got to know her more and more as we shopped, went for outing and played games.

Having come to our place during *Navaratri*, my parents took the opportunity to take her to some South Indian friends' homes to show how this is celebrated by us. It was a good exchange of cultural practices. I lent her one of my festive dresses. She looked very pretty in that dress!

As every sweet-thing comes to an end, I felt a little low when it was time for her to depart. I am eagerly looking forward to meeting her & her family at Ahmadabad in the New Year, on January 11, 2016!!

GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

I think hosting a student from Riverside has left me with several learning experiences to walk away with. Taking responsibility for another human being has taught me how to be mature and accountable for my own actions. It has also taught me to be independent. Despite knowing the procedure, I could not tie my shoes. I somehow managed to tie my laces for the first time, in the presence of my buddy. At times, I felt as if I was the guest staying at someone else's house.

I also learnt a lot about modesty from my buddy, who refrained from boasting and even mentioning the luxuries he had at home. Cool, calm and constantly telling me to chill, I think staying calm and composed was something major I learnt from Sandesh. One old value which was reinforced was the importance of family. Sandesh has a vast extended family, and is on good terms with them all. Seeing the benefits of having so many relatives such as entertainment, support and contacts has made me rethink how I am with my relatives.

Despite having nothing in common, I still enjoyed the experience of hosting Sandesh. It taught me how to be adaptive and to deal with any situation. Even though he had no interest in topics that interested me, Sandy had a keen business sense and could top a street smartness exam, unlike me.

By

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