



TGS
EUROGROUP
since 1968

NEWS LETTER

Happy Christmas from TGS!

by Alessandra Granziero

Happy Christmas, dear TGS Friends! We hope the Festive Season has already knocked at your door bringing joy and happiness. Being that time of the year, we are also knocking at your email account to deliver our best wishes for Christmas.

Along with our greetings, you will find a piece of good news we look forward to sharing with our family, wherever you are. Let's go straight to the point... friends in the U.K... get ready... TGS Eurogroup is coming back to England! In summer 2025 we will be managing three different groups: Malta will welcome the youngest TGS students, Ireland will still host TGS students aged 14-15 and Reading will greet students aged 16-18. Accommodation in Reading will be given by local families willing to get in touch with foreign students, while Malta and Ireland will still provide hostel or college accommodation. A local associate in Reading is at work to get in touch with potential



host families. As many of you already know, homestay had long been a distinctive feature of TGS Eurogroup summer courses, which we had to put aside right after the pandemic. However, after a few years of college accommodation, we reckon it is time to bring the traditional experience back and offer this great chance to the oldest students of ours.

Clearly a way to expand one's worldview, accommodation in families has many pros for both sides, guests and host families. To list some, we cannot deny that meeting different cultures is a good way to know how life is in the countries one hasn't had the chance to visit yet or has visited as a tourist. No doubts, welcoming a foreign student is a way to share one's culture with someone else, as well as to learn about another one; it exposes people to new traditions and gives new perspectives. At the same time, it gives host families the chance to look inwards at their own culture, and when it comes to share one's tradition and ways of life, students feel encouraged to ask questions. In turn, students also share aspects of their culture, thus asking both sides to interact, improving communicative

«Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people»
Fr. Ángel Fernández Artine, Rector Major of the Salesians



Wishing You a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
TGS Eurogroup Students, Volunteers and Committee



skills, and expanding the students' vocabulary. Having dinner together, talking about the students' family, hobbies in Italy, likes and dislikes – compatibly with one's daily schedule – as well as organizing a BBQ or taking the students to local events or to a local place of interest, certainly help students know more about the history of the place as well as feel a welcoming environment. Surely, opening homes to different cultures allows to support the family budget. At the same time, it can be more rewarding than just this. It creates a bond between the student and the host family, which can last for years after the students are back home. We have several examples at TGS Eurogroup with (now grown up) previous students still in touch with their UK host families – and they still invite each other to major celebrations of each other's family. Improving communicative skills is also no exceptions. It can be rather challenging at first. Although students can be fluent in English, they may not be that accurate in understanding some shades of meaning or new vocabulary. Speaking about daily plans, subjects like homework or the weather are always a good way to get to know each other, and make guests feel confident in their use of the foreign language until it makes the use of English more familiar. Host families will use alternative ways for interacting such as non-verbal communication or pointing gestures, as a compromise to overcome language barriers. When there are children in a host family, welcoming foreign students can provide them with an educational opportunity to get to know a culture that is different from their own, thus broadening their cultural experiences from an early age. By creating a welcoming and safe environment, anyone can't but stay in the memories of their guests. Students will always keep in their hearts memories of the time spent with host families. Furthermore, such an experience will certainly

contribute not only to enhance their away from home time, but will also help young guests shape the men and the women they will be as adults.

Doubtlessly, allowing a student from another culture into a local family, requires open minds. Even between similar cultures, there will be many differences in the daily routines or simply different ways to react to situations. When the environment and the exchange between the host family and the guest is genuine, it is an excellent opportunity to learn new things. Despite differences in traditions, languages, and hobbies, we are all capable of building new rewarding relationships. Have you experienced anything like this as a student or allowing foreign people in your house? Let us know. By contributing, you will give us another perspective on the topic and improve the support we give to our students and host families.

On another note, do not forget we are working for next year Su e Zo per i Ponti, 45th edition on 6th April. Please, consider yourselves invited as of now, and do get in touch if we can be of any help in organizing your visit to Venice on that occasion. Finally, don't forget to like us on the social media to stay up to date on our activities and events!

Merry Christmas from each of us to each of you!



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