



Summer Miracles Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Summer Miracles Program?

Kidsave's Summer Miracles program brings orphaned children from foreign countries to the United States to enjoy a five-week summer visit with a family. These are older children, ages 8 to 15, who have little or no chance of finding adoptive parents in their own country. Summer Miracles provides these children the opportunity to:

- Experience life in a family
- Receive medical, dental, and/or psychological attention (as needed)
- Meet people who might be interested in adopting them

Who are the children who participate in the program?

- Children ages 8 to 15 who are currently living in orphanages or in foster care and are available for adoption
- Single children and sibling groups (up to 4 siblings)
- Children who may have emotional, medical and educational needs

How does Kidsave select the children who participate in the Summer Miracles program?

The majority of the children are selected based on recommendations by orphanage directors/staff and facilitators from adoption agencies who work with orphanage staff. Kidsave and the orphanages screen each child thoroughly to ensure that they have the ability to benefit from the experience and also have the ability to successfully adapt to family living. Much time is spent doing an objective analysis of the child and the child's behavior to screen out serious health and emotional issues.

How does the Summer Miracles Program work?

Children are referred to the program and assessed for participation by a committee of child welfare professionals and Kidsave staff. Once the children are approved for participation, they receive training about American culture, American family life and what to expect during their visit.

Once prospective host families complete hosting requirements they are matched with a child. Children arrive in the US in late June or early July, accompanied by a chaperone from their country. During the 5 week visit, host families and children get to know each other, and host families advocate for their host child(ren) to help find them an adoptive family by taking the child to planned Kidsave events, and by introducing the child to their circle of friends and others in the community. Many host families make the commitment to adopt the child themselves. Other families become life-long advocates for the child.

What will the children do while they are here?

Children participate in day-to-day family life with their host parents. Kidsave community volunteers plan weekend and weekday events designed to bring children and families together, and to give people who are interested in meeting the children a chance to interact with them.



Aside from providing a home for a child for five weeks what else will be expected of me?

Host families are expected to involve the children in an active, nurturing environment, and to provide them with the basic necessities while they are here. Most importantly, host families work with Kidsave to find the child an adoptive family. Hosts must attend weekend events that bring all host families, children and chaperones together. Host families are expected to advocate for their host child(ren) at these events and create other opportunities to enable the child to meet people who might be interested in adoption.

What kind of training and support will the host families receive?

After a family has attended an orientation session and sent in the application to host with the application fee, the next step is to meet with a licensed social worker and undergo criminal and child abuse record checks. At the point in time that a family sends in the application fee, they will be given a *Host Family Handbook*, which includes useful documents such as “The Profile of the Older Post-Institutionalized Child”, “How to Talk to My Host Child About Adoption – Not!”, a child talk language guide, and a recommended reading list so that they can learn more about the issues a post-institutionalized child may face.

Before the children arrive, the host parents are required to attend training sessions (up to 12 hours) where they can learn about the experiences of post-institutionalized children and the issues they may face when hosting. Local professionals who work with post-institutionalized children and families who have hosted older children will also be in attendance and available to speak with host parents at the training sessions. While the children are here for the summer, families have the support of their local social worker and Kidsave’s Family Support Social worker should any issues arise. Additionally, families have access to a local network of health and psychological professionals familiar with issues confronting older, institutionalized children.

What happens if a child becomes sick during the visit?

Each child is covered by a major medical insurance policy during their stay that will cover accidents and emergencies. This policy does not cover any pre-existing conditions the child may have, or dental or vision care. It often has a deductible of \$100. Visits to pediatricians for minor illnesses or medical care will be the responsibility of the host family. In some cities, health professionals provide pro-bono medical services that are not covered by the emergency medical policy.

What if a host family cannot keep the child for the entire five week visit?

Kidsave’s goal is to keep a child in the same home for the duration of the program and we ask host families to commit to hosting for the entire five week period. However, sometimes unexpected things happen within a family that will prohibit them from continuing to host the child. In these instances, Kidsave will move the child to another location.



Do host families have to speak the child’s language?

No. Translation support and resources are provided to assist families.

What happens to the children at the end of the Summer Miracles program?

At the end of the five-week visit, all children must return to their country with their chaperones. Kidsave will continue to be a liaison with country officials, partnering agencies and families, advocating for each child until they find an adoptive family either in the US or in their own country.

What if a family decides to adopt?

If a family decides they would like to adopt a child they have met through the Summer Miracles program, the family must inform their community coordinator of their decision. Kidsave provides a referral list of partner Hague accredited agencies that facilitate adoptions in the child’s country.

What kinds of volunteer opportunities are available to support Summer Miracles?

Volunteers are needed in many areas, including”

- Community Coordinators: Oversee local committees and are the main point of contact for their community.
- Community Volunteers: Assist in planning and implementation of the program in their community. Primary areas of support include host family recruitment, fundraising, events, and outreach/advocacy. Volunteers work in committees so that everyone can provide support to the program in whatever capacity their interests and schedule will allow.
- Translators: In 2009, Kidsave is seeking people who speak Spanish and can be on-call for host families and can provide language assistance in person at events and throughout the days and evenings by phone.

How can I start a Summer Miracles program in my community?

To start a Summer Miracles program in your community you need at least seven families who want to host children, a dedicated organizing committee, and a committed core of volunteers to help coordinate local efforts and raise funds. If you are interested in starting a program, contact Nancy Spence at 443-243-5291 or via email at nancy@kidsave.org