

# Prospective Host Family Brochure



**HOME**

**ABILENE**

**AWAY FROM HOME**



**Abilene Home Away From Home (AHAFH)  
Prospective Host Family Brochure**

The Abilene Home Away From Home (AHAFH) Program offers select local families a unique and rewarding opportunity to provide Airmen a “Home-Away-From-Home” during their first enlistment in the military. It also offers local families the opportunity to meet first-hand our fine young Air Force men and women of Dyess Air Force Base (DAFB), the air and space leaders of tomorrow. If you have the desire and commitment to make a difference in a young Airman's life, this is the program for you!

This brochure has been designed to encourage your participation in the program. It provides background and basic information on the AHAFH Program and the minimum obligations for participation.

On behalf of DAFB, we wish to express our appreciation to you for your interest in the AHAFH Program. As a partner in caring, not only will you play a significant role in the life of an Airman, but you may also find it to be one of life's most rewarding experiences.

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President, Abilene Home Away From Home, Inc.

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## **HISTORY**

The AHAFH Program was founded in 2017 to offer mentorship and family style companionship to the youngest service men and women living in DAFB dormitories during their first enlistment.

A joint effort by local civilian community partners and the 7<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing created a program modeled after the Department of Defense's service academies where civilian partners could be paired with the base's Airmen to provide off-base, off-duty interactions which fill an emotional void that the base's agencies are unable to fill.

AHAFH initially began with six families hosting twelve Airmen. Within a year, it had expanded to include more than 30 families hosting 57 Airmen. We hope to continue to grow the program so every first term airman has a local family to call home.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to assist first-term Airmen at DAFB who are just out of basic training and/or technical training, by pairing these young heroes with Abilene host families. These families will introduce the airmen to the local area and help alleviate the anxieties of being away from home – many of them for the first time. Host families provide a welcoming place to relax, have home cooked meals and offer opportunities to learn more about West Texas. Host families can provide fun and a getaway from the stress and day-to-day requirements of life in the Air Force. The goal of our program is to provide all eligible, first-term Airmen with a **“Home Away From Home”**.

## **VISION**

To provide alternative free time experiences for at least 50% of the unmarried, first-term Airmen who live in the dormitories at DAFB.

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### **ABOUT AHAFH**

The AHAFH is an incorporated, 501(c)3 foundation and is a private organization. It is not a part of the Department of Defense or any of its components and it has no Governmental status.

The program is managed by a fifteen-member voting Board of Directors consisting of a President, Co-Coordinators, Secretary/Treasurer and two non-voting ex-officio members. Most decisions require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. All positions are voluntary and unpaid.

Constitution and By-Laws are available upon request.

Income is generated through private donations and philanthropic organizations. The Corporation and the Board fully supports the anti-discrimination policies promulgated by the Department of Defense. No military member or Host Family will be denied participation in the AHAFH program based on race, color, religion, gender, or sexual preference and will comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws governing corporation activities.

Background checks shall be performed on all adults living in the home of a host family applicant. The background checks shall include, but not limited to, an individual's criminal history, the sexual offense registry, and the violent offense registry. The cost of the background checks will be assumed by the organization.

### **THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE**

The AHAFH Program is designed to provide Airmen with an avenue to form friendships and gather support beyond the formal work environment. If you can remember leaving behind the comfort and security of your parents' home, then you will understand the needs of the young men and women in the AHAFH Program. Rigorous military standards can tax even the best of spirits, producing feelings of great stress to make the grade in some members, and in others, moments of loneliness, homesickness and doubt. As a host family, you provide a home-away from-home during an Airman's first years at DAFB. You serve as their mentor, friend, and advisor, providing a caring environment to relax away from the pressures of work and future deployments. You are also in the position to serve as a positive adult role model helping them understand their role as a member of the armed services and reinforcing positive social values.

The AHAFH Program Office attempts to match host families with Airmen who share the same basic characteristics. Airmen can request "by name" host families. When two families request the same Airman, we honor the wishes of the Airman.

Once matched with an Airman, the minimum requirement is to meet with them at least once a month and contact them at least one other time during the month by phone, text or email. There is no requirement to spend money on these Airmen or house them for any length of

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time. The main purpose of the program is to bring them into your home to join your family for events like game nights, cookouts or sporting activities. You can also assist them in finding local businesses when they need an oil change, dry cleaning service, etc. As a host family you may also act as a mentor and provide advice on life or health matters. Always work within your comfort zone and remind them of their unit leadership if matters are beyond your expertise.

**Workdays** - Not all Airmen work Monday-Friday nor do all work from 7:30am-4:30pm. Some work shifts and some work weekends on a regular basis. This will require flexibility on your part to meet the needs of your Airman. In addition, DAFB often supports short-notice taskings. Please be understanding if your Airman must cancel plans with only a few days' notice (or less).

**Deployments** - You can expect that your Airmen will probably deploy during their first year or two at DAFB. Deployments typically last 4-6 months. This is a great opportunity for you to support them while they are down range by sending care packages and letters to keep their spirits up. We also know sometimes matches may not work for one reason or another. In these instances, the Airman or host family can request a new match.

The **“official”** relationship lasts for the duration of time that the Airmen resides in the DAFB Dormitories (dorms).

Questions specific to the AHAFH Program may be addressed to the Program Office at 325-669-2741.

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### **Host family Activities**

Airmen do not expect to be entertained or taken out to expensive meals or events. On the contrary, they are looking for the warmth and friendship of your family in their home away-from-home. Letting them become part of your family is the greatest gift you can give. They may want to use your phone to call parents or friends, but you are not required to overextend yourself financially. If the Airmen does not have a cell phone, you should suggest that Airmen acquire a calling card in order to pay their own bills. Ultimately, the freedom to make a sandwich, drink a soda, sleep, watch TV, or just hang out combined with your willingness to listen and your concern for them as individuals are the most precious gifts these service members can receive.

### **Airman-Host family Relationships**

Airmen will strive to please you by good behavior to earn a return invitation. They are expected to be courteous guests and to express their gratitude. They are taught to address military superiors and their elders as "Sir" or "Ma'am". Relations between host family and Airmen need not be excessively formal and we rely on your good judgment in this area. However, if you experience problems with your Airman, please contact the First Sergeant Immediately (phone numbers are available in the handbook you will receive once accepted as a host family).

### **Host Family Dividends**

Aside from the personal satisfaction you receive in hosting an Airman, you may be asking yourself what you get in return. Airmen will normally invite you to events as their guest. Traditional military events such as promotion ceremonies show their appreciation for you hosting them. They will also volunteer to help you with tasks or projects as they are genuinely grateful for your caring and seek to find ways to demonstrate their gratitude. While the AHAFH Program provides many dividends, participants often gain their most satisfying moments merely by interacting with their Airman. By sharing a family atmosphere, these family ties can continue for years.

### **HOST FAMILY APPLICATIONS**

Call the AHAFH Program Coordinator at 325-669-2741 or email [myabihome@gmail.com](mailto:myabihome@gmail.com) for details regarding the application process. Please ensure that you also have a Liability Waiver on file.