

Welcome to Hometown USA

Welcome to the eighth summer of Hometown USA, part of the nearly 50 year history of Concordia Language Villages.

The purpose of Hometown USA is to learn English, whether just starting out or refining advanced English skills. To maximize the amount of English your child learns, we ask that you familiarize yourself with this guide before this summer's session.

To ensure a superior learning experience, we strive to create the safest summer program experience possible. Safety priorities include transportation to and from the site and creating a respectful community once the program starts. Once a safe environment is ensured, staff can focus on maximizing the quality and amount of interaction in English for each and every villager. Your assistance before and during the program, by informing yourself about the few guidelines listed here, is a tremendous help. Thank you.

We know that one truly learns a language when one must use the language to communicate in real situations. To create real situations, we at Hometown USA manufacture opportunities to communicate in English from the moment villagers awake in the morning until they fall asleep at night. Through ongoing simulations, sports, crafts, and projects, we create a focus on English through constant English use.

Your satisfaction with your villager's experience is our number one goal.

Thank you! We're looking forward to a terrific summer.

Sincerely,

Hometown USA Staff

ABOUT CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

A Brief History of Concordia Language Villages

In 1960, Gerhard Haukebo, Ph.D., a Concordia College faculty member, suggested the college initiate an experimental program using immersion techniques to teach language. The intent of the program was to teach young people about other languages and cultures, while giving Concordia students the opportunity to gain practical teaching experience.

Concordia College sponsored the project in the summer of 1961. The college rented Luther Crest Bible Camp, north of Alexandria, Minn., for the first two-week German session. "Camp Waldsee," which was limited to 72 campers aged 9-12, was a resounding success.

Languages Added

Interest in the program increased steadily and more "Villages" were organized. In addition to German (1961), French (1962) was added the second year. Spanish and Norwegian (1963) followed. Russian (1966) was a bold addition during the height of the Cold War. The Villages concentrated on building and maintaining the infrastructure that had been started.

The Nordic languages grew when Swedish (1975), Finnish (1978), and Danish (1982) were added. Soon a focus on Asian language learning developed into Villages for Chinese (1984), Japanese (1988) and Korean (1999). Then we took what we knew about children and foreign language learning and applied it to our own language and culture with the addition of English (1999). Italian (2003) and Arabic (2006) and Portuguese, added in 2008, are the newest Villages.

Constructing Year-Round Villages

After leasing facilities and converting them into Villages each summer, a grand idea to construct permanent, architecturally authentic Village sites was conceived. In 1964, the Board of Development Advisors was created. Communities located in the Minnesota lakes region were contacted in search of a large wooded site with relative privacy and lake frontage on a lake suitable for swimming and water sports. It was a tall order.

In the end, property on Turtle River Lake near Bemidji, Minn., was procured. The 800-acre site was purchased for \$50,000 and included nearly four miles of shoreline on two beautiful lakes with rolling hills, birch forests and a university town (Bemidji) nearby. It was a dream come true!

Construction of the first architecturally authentic year-round site on Turtle River Lake began in 1969 with Skogfjorden, the Norwegian Language Village. Waldsee, the German Language Village, began to take shape in 1978, and construction of Lac du Bois, the French Language Village, began in 1988. Salolampi, the Finnish Language Village, began construction in 1993. In 2004, construction of the fifth year-round site, El Lago del Bosque, the Spanish Language Village, was finished. In 2006, we inaugurated Lesnoe Ozero, the Russian Language Village to its permanent site on Turtle River Lake!

Even with the construction of the Turtle River Lake sites, the need for adequate facilities each summer continues to grow. Camps, retreat facilities and resorts around Minnesota are leased for the summer and converted into Villages, just as the first Camp Waldsee was!

Notable Visitors

Over the years, numerous dignitaries and supporters have visited Concordia Language Villages including Germany's Ambassadors Peter Hermes (1983), Gunther Van Well (1987), Jürgen Chrobog (1998), Wolfgang Ischinger (2003), and Klaus Scharioth (2007). Other ambassadors have included Finnish Ambassador Jaakko Laajava (1998), Austrian Ambassador Peter Moser (2002), Ambassador of Norway to the United States

Knut Vollebæk, (2003), Finnish Ambassador Jukka Valtasaari (2004), and Ambassador of the Principality of Liechtenstein Claudia Fritsche (2004). Other countries have sent representatives from their consulates or other key Embassy officials. In the early 90s Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton visited the Villages, and both had children attend as villagers.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Concordia Language Villages is to prepare young people for responsible citizenship in our global community.

A responsible world citizen:

- ★ understands and appreciates cultural diversity;
- ★ communicates with confidence and cultural sensitivity in more than one language;
- ★ responds creatively and critically to issues which transcend national boundaries;
- ★ expresses empathy for neighbors in the global village; and
- ★ promotes a worldview of peace, justice and sustainability for all.

Concordia Language Villages promotes individual responsibility for the world and its people by intentionally creating a supportive environment for people of all creeds, classes and nationalities. The leadership, counseling staff and young people enrolled in the programs reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the world.

Because language education alone does not lead to the formation of world citizens, we teach language in cultural and global contexts. We draw on geography, history, political science, world religions, natural sciences, arts and international relations. We challenge participants to use language as a tool for understanding the complexities of the world around them and for regarding differences as opportunities for enrichment, not reasons for alienation.

Concordia Language Villages is a program of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Read more about Concordia College on line at www.ConcordiaCollege.edu. A brief history of Concordia Language Villages is available on line at <http://www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org/newsite/about1.php>.

ACCREDITATIONS

Concordia Language Villages is fully accredited as a special function school with the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCACASI) and with the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA). Concordia Language Villages is also an accredited Confucius Institute Class room.

HOW WILL A PARTICIPANT LEARN ANOTHER LANGUAGE?

It is often said that the best way to learn a country's language is to go there. That's not necessarily true, unless, of course, you can go there and be surrounded by language teachers. In other words, language learning is optimal when immersion in a foreign language is supported by individuals who not only speak the language but are also invested in teaching the language. Our immersion approach to language teaching provides villagers with a variety of natural opportunities to hear and speak a lot.

Concordia Language Villages creates a community of learners in which opportunities to interact in a second language and experience other cultures permeates the entire day. The ultimate goal of all programming is an immersion experience in language and culture that motivates participants to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens in our global community.

Curriculum

The mission and goals of Concordia Language Villages (CLV) mirror the U.S. National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. In a residential setting, we provide an environment of language and culture immersion. The "formal" language curriculum aligns with the National Standards and follows best teaching practices. A thematic approach to instruction allows simultaneous development of cultural knowledge and language proficiency.

Curriculum differs slightly year to year, based on the expertise and interests of staff, relevance of activities to world events, and villager requests. However, basic elements of cultural instruction include traditions, holidays, ethnic crafts, sports, historic events, current events, drama, dances and music.

Simulations are a key component of experiential learning. As participants, the villagers experience some of the difficulties and compromises that real-world situations demand and how another culture may perceive an issue differently from the villager's own culture.

Learn About

- ★ American Food: dining etiquette and new foods
- ★ Celebrations: favorite U.S. holidays like Halloween, Mardi Gras and Valentine's Day
- ★ Sports and games: card games, ball games and fun competitions
- ★ Music: sing and dance to jazz, blues, country and American popular music
- ★ Interest Groups: reporting for the Village newspaper, managing the Village café, acting in the Village theater or working at the Village store.
- ★ "SimTown" : A chance to elect town officials and create your own Village government complete with mayor, sheriff, treasurer and committees like Park and Recreation, the Arts Council, or even the Tax Collectors!

Learning Methods

Because language education alone does not lead to the formation of world citizens, we teach language and culture in global contexts. Geography, history, political science and international relations are drawn on, creating learning situations that challenge participants to use language as a tool for understanding the complexities of the world around them.

Experience-based learning is emphasized in every aspect of the curriculum. The educational objectives of Concordia Language Villages are reinforced through the living, learning, social and recreational dimensions of Village life.

All of the Villages work to model environmentally responsible behaviors, including reducing, reusing and recycling; developing respect for nature and property; and learning outdoor skills. We believe that's how global citizens should act. At Concordia Language Villages, we are committed to helping our participants reconnect with the natural world. To help guide these efforts, the Language Villages employs a full-time environmental education specialist who has cataloged and developed many of the natural settings of our Turtle River Lake sites and who consults with staff at our leased sites.

Immersion Learning

It is often said that the best way to learn a country's language is to go there. That's not necessarily true, unless, of course, you can go there and be surrounded by language teachers. In other words, a stay in a foreign country, although surrounding the visitor with input, will produce little actual learning if hardly any of the language is understood.

The Concordia Language Villages language learning philosophy is to create a community of learners in which opportunities to interact in a second language and experience other cultures permeate life at the Villages. The ultimate goal of all programming is an immersion experience in language and culture that motivates participants to be life-long learners and responsible citizens in a global community.

At Concordia Language Villages, our immersion approach to language teaching provides villagers with a culturally authentic setting—similar to what you might find in that foreign country—but filled with carefully designed opportunities and well trained language teachers who will help you understand what you hear, learn how to respond and converse, and practice your new skills all day, every day.

Adjusting to an Immersion Setting

Because immersion learning is different than most classroom learning situations that villagers might be used to, participants often find our programs to be intense, fun, perplexing, rewarding, and definitely unique—and sometimes, all of those things, all at the same time! It's a new style of teaching, and while it's fun and energizing, if you find that it makes you a little tired sometimes, you're not alone.

But just remember that it's a good kind of tired—your brain is working really hard to put lots of new things into your long term memory. Sometimes, you won't even realize how much you've learned until you go home and have a moment to think about what you knew when you started, and how all those games and activities and songs really did seep into your brain with new vocabulary and cultural knowledge.

The best way to adjust to this new immersion learning experience is to

- ★ practice good listening skills
- ★ have an open mind
- ★ make sure you're well rested
- ★ have a lot of fun

How do villagers learn the language when counselors speak only in English?

Speaking English to villagers, is a hallmark of immersion language learning. Counselors help villagers understand English in many ways: gestures, pictures, pointing, facial expressions, actual objects, mime, repetition, examples, demonstrations, use of themselves or villagers as models – to name a few!

Although providing a translation is one way to support understanding of another language, it's not one we use very often. This follows immersion philosophy, current beliefs about the best language teaching, and our own experiences since 1961.

Context is important! Everything is grounded in daily life in the Villages, and that helps language learners to understand: If the meal is finished, it's logical to clear the table, so that's what the counselor must be talking

about. If counselors and villagers gather in the cabin during the day, with brooms and garbage bags, then villagers understand that it's time to clean and that they will hear directions. Another example of the usefulness of context is all the activities in which villagers participate, from karate to going to the bank to an ethnic art project, the counselor is talking about the activity in which they are participating.

We make deliberate use of routines. Villagers hear some of the same, exact language before every meal. During each meal, certain key phrases are used over and over. Announcements after a meal may follow a particular order. The waterfront manager uses similar phrases each day to announce open hours at the beach.

We have lots of counselors to assist understanding, about one staff member for every five villagers.

Levels of Learning

The BEGINNING language learner

Beginning language learners do a lot of listening; just like babies listen to their native language for months before they begin saying words. The process works more quickly with children and youth, of course, but understanding language still precedes speaking it. Beginning language learners will learn some key phrases (greetings, asking how someone is feeling, politely asking for things, such as food at the table or money at the bank).

They also learn single words and short phrases, often related to a particular activity (folk dance, baking) or area of the Village (cafe, cabin) or theme (a city or region of a country where the language is spoken, describing themselves). And they learn songs and chants! While beginning learners can participate in a conversation, the other speaker does most of the speaking, and the beginning learner will respond with single words and short phrases.

Beginning learners participate in presentations with phrases they have memorized. Overall, parents will likely find that their beginning language learners will understand the language used daily within the Village. They will be able to respond to questions or cues that were used in various places like the dining hall or store. They are not ready to start a conversation yet or respond to "How do you say..." questions from family and friends.

The INTERMEDIATE language learner

"Intermediate" is a wide range, with several phases of development, and a villager is likely to be an intermediate language learner for a number of summers, as he/she advances through the various stages of the "middle years."

Intermediate language learners increase their ability to understand or interpret the language they are hearing. They increase their listening skills from understanding language that is accompanied by lots of pictures, gestures, actions, to understanding language without visual support. This is a gradual process.

Intermediate learners are able to carry on longer conversations. They move from understanding familiar questions and replying with short and often memorized phrases to understanding both familiar and unexpected questions and to providing longer responses, asking questions to keep the discussion going, and being more creative with language. These villagers can present language to an audience in an increasingly sophisticated way. They move from short phrases to longer phrases and sentences. Ultimately they are able to tell a story and describe something they did or something that happened. They move from using memorized language to being able to put their own thoughts into words and sentences and stories.

The ADVANCED language learner

Villagers who speak the language of the Village quite fluently, whether they come from speaking the language at home, an immersion school, or living abroad, and villagers who have had several language learning

experiences (Villages, school, travel) can develop, expand, and refine their language skills in the Village.

Often advanced learners expand their language skills “sideways,” increasing the number of topics they can discuss with ease, and “in depth” rather than “forward.” They make strides in sophistication of expression, add vocabulary choices and become more precise in their conversation. They polish and refine the skills they have, become increasingly accurate, and use language more and more as a native speaker would. This is similar to the way in which high school students (or college students or graduate students) continue to develop and refine their first or native language, as compared to primary school students.

These villagers use language in more intellectually challenging ways, such as persuading someone or developing an argument. (Beginning language learners may have these skills in their native language but they don’t have the linguistic skills in the new language.) They gain skills through the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the language from a variety of regions or countries. Advanced learners often reinforce their own skills and make them stronger through assisting other villagers. (This can happen with intermediate learners, too.) For those villagers coming from an immersion school, they can gain social, non-academic language that may be less emphasized in their school setting.

Self-Assessment

The Concordia Language Visa (CLVisa) is a self-assessment tool designed to help villagers document their experiences learning languages and their encounters with other cultures.

The CLVisa identifies four broad levels of language proficiency and then lists characteristics (what a villager can do) for each level. Using these “can-do” statements, along with conversations with language group leaders, the villagers can assess themselves on their language learning abilities. They can also set goals for themselves related to what they want to be able to understand and communicate.

The CLVisa also documents villagers’ interactions with other cultures. There is also space for villagers to document their experiences at the Language Village. They can write down their favorite foods, favorite songs, and favorite sayings. They can comment on the evening programs and what they learned during those programs. There is also space for journaling about each day’s experiences.

The CLVisa helps villagers take ownership for their learning and reflect on the experiences that are particularly helpful to them as they grow in their language and cultural knowledge.

Villager-Centered Learning

The program stresses villager-centered programming, encouraging villagers to take active roles in the Village. This level of involvement with learning increases motivation, the quality of material processed by each individual, and retention of the target language.

Villager-Created Portfolios

Language portfolios are examples of the villagers’ work, compiled by the villagers with the help of staff. Parents and teachers find that portfolios provide an invaluable window into the language learning at Concordia Language Villages.

Adjusting to a Unique Teaching Style

Villagers, especially those new to the program, will be experiencing what may be an entirely new style of teaching and learning. Adjusting to a new situation usually takes a little time, and many of the villagers’ unquestioned assumptions about education may be challenged for the first time.

CLV-Unplugged!

Villagers’ school-year days are filled with noise and distraction. They are wired and complex. A goal of our

program is to slow down, listen, tune-in, and connect. To affect the full quality of an immersion program, we ask our villagers and our staff to be in the Language Village moment. We will guarantee weeks of great and “learnful” moments if you will allow us your villager’s attention. Please speak with your villager about the importance of stepping up to participate 100 percent in the program. A Language Villages experience hinges on full-sensory learning and full presence in the program. As a parent or guardian, you have made an investment in our expertise; please help your villager understand that our regulation of cell phones and other electronic devices is well-rounded and supports the overall learning experience. We require that all electronic devices be left at home or checked into the Village office for the entire session.

Program Benefits

We expect each student to become a better and more responsible global citizen by:

- ★ progressing in English speaking and learning,
- ★ increasing cultural knowledge and understanding, and
- ★ developing social and community living skills and personal growth.

A TYPICAL DAY

Friendly staff members will make sure you feel welcome as you go through “customs” and enter a new English zone. You’ll choose a English name, exchange your money for American dollars, and meet your new friends. Your days are full of fun activities, delicious food, a mix of structured and free time, music and sports, choices of activities—and of course, complete immersion in the English language and in English-speaking cultures.

A sample day at Hometown:

7:45 Rise and Shine

Wake up call

8:00 Breakfast

Breakfast time & song

9:15-10:10 Brain Train

We divide into language level groups studying subjects such as American culture, immigration into the U.S. and the underground railroad.

10:15-11:25 Locomotion

Physical activities such as American football, shipbuilding, map & compass, yoga, constructing forts and drama just to mention a few.

11:30-12:20 Rock & Roll

The name says it all, this is where we spend our time singing, rocking and rolling.

12:10 KP

KP = Kitchen Patrol, every day a different group of villagers is in charge of setting the tables for lunch and dinner.

12:30-1:15 Lunch

The second meal of the day features “message in a bottle” meal presentations by the different brain trains. The lunch thereby provides nourishment not only for the body, but also for the brain.

1:15-2:25 Chill Out Time / Store

Relaxation time, or if you want a souvenir from America, a soda or a candy bar, the store would be open during this time as well.

2:30-3:25 Brain Train Express

Each day a new Conductor teaches us specialized subjects such as totem poles, the Salem witch trials, American Sign Language and much more.

3:30-5:25 Sim Town

Sim Town is a simulated town. This is where the villagers are divided up into 5 different branches; The Fine Arts, Parks and Recs, The Chamber of Commerce, The Media and The City Council. These 5 branches make up the city, which is entirely run and governed by the villagers of Hometown, Europe, only monitored by the Counselors.

5:30-6:25 Scramble

Different activities are offered to the villagers.

6:10 KP

KP = Kitchen Patrol, every day a different street was in charge of setting the tables for lunch and dinner.

6:30-7:15 Dinner

The third and last meal of the day, message in a bottle, meal presentations by the different brain trains.

7:15-8:15 Break Time

Time to relax, play sports, check your e-mail or hang around with your friends. It's also the "Cell-phone time"

8:30-10:00 Evening Program

This is different activity, group game or simulation every night

10:00 Good Night

After the Evening Program the counselors might share "Roses And Thorns" with the villagers, where they talk about the good (roses) and the difficult (thorns) things that happened that day before finally going to bed.

FOOD

At Hometown USA, even meals become a learning activity. Students take turns helping out in the dining hall by setting the tables and preparing the meal presentation in English to introduce the food and explain where it is typically eaten.

When the food comes to the table, everyone takes a little bit and passes it around until everyone has been served. If you want more food, you must ask for it to be passed to you in English. Our helpful counselors will guide you during meals.

Every day of the week, no matter what the menu items are for the day, the word among villagers is that everything is delicious! Your taste buds will be tempted by pizza, hot dogs, vegemite, macaroni and cheese, and fish and chips. We prepare all of our foods and bake all of our breads and pastries from scratch.

If you have food allergies, are vegetarian, or have other special dietary needs, just let us know. The chefs will be happy to provide authentic and delicious meals that suit your needs, and your counselors will be there to help you.

HOMETOWN USA CAMPUS—SANDSTONE MINNESOTA

Hometown USA is located at a 100 acre Audubon Center in Sandstone, Minnesota. It is located on the shores of Minnesota's deepest lake. Because the facility is an Audubon Center, it has a wide variety of "environment or nature themed" exhibits around the facility. The most striking of these exhibits would be the "raptor exhibit"

which is like a mini-zoo filled with about 10 eagles and hawks. There are docents who regularly give tours and information about the exhibits.

Lakeside activities include miles and miles of trails, plus canoeing and swimming. The water-based activities are extremely closely monitored, and there is absolutely no problem with students who don't know how to swim.

Despite being in a somewhat remote, lakeside location, all of the buildings are very modern, air-conditioned and comfortable.

Villagers stay in dorm rooms with 5-6 students in each room. There is always a counselor who sleeps in each dorm room. Each dorm room has its own private bathroom, including a private shower. The bathrooms are clean, private and modern.

The language villages are constructed with an impressive amount of environmental staging that simulates everyday American life so that students can become familiar with real-life situations. An example of this would be the Village Store. This is a real store where students can buy things they might want, and practice language and counting skills. A coffee shop may also be available so that students can meet with their new-found friends, buy a real coffee and sit and chat. There is also a wide array of typical American signage, so that students can learn what to expect. This ranges from traffic signs to simulated advertising.

STAFF

Staff Structure at the Villages

The administrators, managerial staff, support staff and some Village deans are year-round employees who work in our administrative office in Moorhead, our office in St. Paul or our year-round offices and site near Bemidji. Most deans are summer employees with full-time jobs elsewhere during the school year; they live across the country and around the world.

The deans are the head of each Village. The dean is generally assisted by an assistant dean, a two-week curriculum facilitator, a four-week credit facilitator and staff counselors in the overall administration of the Village. All of us welcome you to the Language Villages and look forward to helping you!

Selecting Staff

Selecting staff members for a Language Village is a competitive process. We recruit staff members from many different backgrounds from all around the world. Every year approximately 50 percent of our staff are returning to the Villages. The deans of each Village are responsible for hiring their Village staff on the basis of their oral skills in the target language, enjoyment and effectiveness in working with young people and ability to teach the target language to villagers.

The staff members are talented professionals with experience in teaching non-native language speakers. Most staff members speak another language in addition to English and are well acquainted with the language-learning process. The one-to-four staff-to-villager ratio ensures personalized instruction for all villagers. Staff members participate in all aspects of Hometown.

Staff Orientation

Summer staff members attend one week of intense orientation before assuming their Village responsibilities. Teaching techniques, health and safety concerns, Concordia Language Villages' policies and counseling skills are covered during this week.

Packing

A packing list is included in the Welcome Packet, or you can refer to our Web site. The list includes two columns: "To Villages" and "From Villages." These checklists will help your villager bring everything that was brought to the Village back home again!

Even younger villagers benefit from helping to pack their own bag. After all, once in the Village, villagers will have to be able to find their own clothes. Please mark all of his or her belongings and leave all valuables at home. Villagers are encouraged to bring items with them that will enhance the immersion experience, such as CDs or books in the target language. Clothing with inappropriate or offensive language or designs cannot be worn in the program. Please refer to the Customs and Contraband section of this handbook (Page 20) for items not allowed at the Villages.

Laundry

There are no laundry facilities on site for villagers. Villagers need to bring enough clothing for their session and a mesh or cloth (not plastic) laundry bag. Villagers must be able to carry their own bags, so it is important not to overload suitcases.

Bedding

Towels, linen, and a blanket are provided by the Concordia Language Villages.

Spending Money

The registration cost of each Village session covers food, lodging, instructional materials and supplies. However, villagers may want a small amount of additional spending money.

Village Store: Your villager will have opportunities to purchase items from the village store. There are a number of items available for purchase, including T-shirts and snacks.

Meals

Meals are served family style in the cafeteria. During the week three daily meals plus a snack are served. On Saturday and Sunday, a mid-morning brunch and dinner are served, as well as an afternoon snack.

Special Nutritional Needs

If your child has special nutritional needs, including any food allergies, please bring these needs to our attention on the Health Form.

COMMUNICATION

Outside of an emergency situation, parents can find out any information they need about their villager's adjustment to the program through communication with the Village dean. Nearly fifty years of programming has taught us that direct parental contact with a villager (except in cases of emergency) often serves to take the villager's mindset out of the program and can exacerbate any lingering homesickness. **Staff wants to be there for villagers—to celebrate their accomplishments and help them work through new challenges. Allowing your child to build the kind of relationship with the counseling staff that fosters trust in the adults closest to them at the Village enables our staff do their very best for your child.**

Most villagers will be so busy that they may find it hard to drop their family a letter! If that proves to be the case for your child, you will be able to learn about your villager's experience by checking our Web site for Village Production Pages describing their experience. Not all Villages are able to maintain daily online updates, so if there are things about which you want to inquire, please call the dean.

NOTE: Your villager will not have access to telephones, e-mail or faxes to communicate with you on a regular basis. You have the following options to communicate with your villager:

Emergencies

The first step is to call the Village dean. If he or she does not return your call within an acceptable amount of time, please call CIEE. Our priority will be to assist you as soon as possible. Business office answering machines are checked regularly for emergency messages.

Telephone Calls

We highly discourage non-emergency phone calls between parents and villagers. In an immersion program, a call from home interrupts the careful building of the immersion experience for the villager (and for other villagers who are aware of the call and staff who are involved).

If you have a concern, the Village dean is happy to receive your call, to look into your concerns, and to assist in any information exchange in a way that is least disruptive to the villagers and the immersion program.

Villagers with cell phones will have access to them occasionally for short periods of time.

E-Mail and Internet

Internet access at the Villages is for educational use only. Villagers will not have access to personal e-mail.

Faxes

Fax messages sent to villagers are distributed daily with regular mail. Faxes must be addressed with the villager's legal name and session number printed clearly on the top of each page. Faxes received prior to 10 a.m. Central Time are normally delivered that same day. Villagers do not have access to fax machines to send messages.

Letters—Old-Fashioned Fun

Receiving mail from home is a highlight for villagers, so we encourage your family and your villager's friends to write often. They can also communicate with you by mail, so encourage them to do so. Villagers receive their mail at a specified time each day. Please keep in mind that mail delivery to the Villages may take longer than usual because of the rural location. The address will be provided prior to the start of camp.

Packages

In accordance with our customs procedure, packages are opened by the villager in front of a staff member monitoring for items not permitted in our program. If you have questions about a particular item you'd like to send, please contact the dean of the session your villager will attend. Please do not send food items.

POLICIES TO DISCUSS PRIOR TO ARRIVING TO HOMETOWN USA

The mission of Concordia Language Villages is **"to prepare young people for responsible citizenship in our global community."**

We take our mission and its implication of good citizenship seriously. It is our goal to create peace through understanding, and in order to create and maintain a harmonious Village experience for all villagers, we apply our behavior expectations fairly across all Villages. Please read all the policies below carefully and discuss them with your villager. Keep in mind that this is not, and can never be, an exhaustive list, and that each Village has culturally authentic behavioral expectations. As such, at the discretion of the dean, a villager might be asked to alter or modify his or her behavior to align with and respect the cultural authenticity we strive to bring alive each summer.

We appreciate your discussion of these important policies with your villager, and more importantly, your commitment as a parent or guardian. With your help, we create unique and sometimes life-changing experiences for thousands of villagers from around the world.

Agreement

The Villager Program Rules forms an agreement between CIEE, Concordia Language Villages and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the villager who is enrolled, in accordance with the Parent Handbook and all the rules and regulations stated therein. This agreement has been accepted by both parties and is governed by Maine and Minnesota law. The parties consent to the jurisdiction of Minnesota courts if any legal action ensues.

Attendance

It is expected that the villager will remain at the Village for the entire session. Written notification is required if your villager must leave during the session. You will be asked to complete a page in your villager's passport which transfers him or her out of, and back into, the program.

Behavior

Concordia Language Villages seeks to maintain an environment free of discrimination, violence, intimidation, and harassment based on gender, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. Language, behavior and attitudes that intimidate, offend or debilitate villagers or staff members are not tolerated. Encourage your child to talk with his or her cabin counselor or dean if he or she has concerns about these matters.

Villagers are expected to comply with requests and directions that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all members of a Village. In addition, villagers are expected to respect and act in accordance with the cultural norms of the Village program.

Concordia Language Villages does not tolerate emotional or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse of one person by another. It may be grounds for dismissal from the program. If necessary, you will be notified and your child will be sent home at your expense without refund.

Inappropriate sexual behavior is not allowed in the Village program and may be grounds for dismissal. You will be notified and your child will be sent home at your expense without refund. All program and support staff have been informed of and have agreed to comply with the Concordia Language Villages sexual harassment policy.

Mental, emotional, social, and/or physical behavior that affects a child's ability to participate in the program or that significantly disrupts the program experience for others may constitute grounds for dismissal. You will be notified and your child sent home at your expense without refund. We are particularly concerned about psychiatric or psycho-social conditions, especially those that make it challenging for your child to sustain his/her involvement in our community-based program and/or conditions that impact the experience of others. Consequently, we require that parents appropriately complete this section of our Health History Form. As an additional strategy, call Health Services to discuss concerns before your child arrives.

Confidentiality of Villager Records

All villager records and files, including health forms and information about medical treatment during a Village session, are treated in a confidential manner, both in the registration process and at the Village.

We will communicate any sensitive information to you about your child's emotional or physical well-being that may come to our attention during the stay in our program. It is our policy and intent to involve parents in handling Village behavior that does not conform to the expectations outlined in this handbook.

We encourage you to attach additional information to your villager's health form that may assist us in working with your child during the Village session. If for any reason we believe we cannot uphold the confidentiality of a particular item, we will contact you and discuss how best to meet your needs and those of the Village.

Furthermore, because we hold villager records in confidentiality, we do not distribute address lists of villagers before, during, or after the session.

Customs and Contraband

In order to simulate and establish an authentic cultural atmosphere, your villager will go through our customs process upon arrival. Villagers are encouraged to bring culturally appropriate items (music, books, realia, clothing, etc.) to the Village to enhance everyone's experience. MP3 players or other music devices may be used in group settings and kept safely by staff when not in use (see below). Personal use of these items is not allowed.

According to our policy, items not in the target language (except religious texts) such as radios, electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, DVD players, PDAs, Gameboys, etc.) and books can be treated as "contraband" at the discretion of staff, turned in to staff and kept secure until the end of the session. Help us help your villager tune into this experience. Please respect our CLV-unplugged policy (above).

Food items are also considered contraband, but they may or may not be returned to the villager at the end of the session, depending on the Village. Concordia Language Villages cannot be held responsible for lost items.

Contraband includes:

- ★ Cell phones/Electronic message devices (cell phones may be allowed on an occasional, but not daily, basis)
- ★ Language media not in the target language, including music, games, books, magazines, etc. (except for religious texts)
- ★ Food, including candy and gum
- ★ Illegal Substances, alcohol, and tobacco
- ★ Weapons, lighters
- ★ Offensive clothing

Illegal Substances, Alcohol and Tobacco

Concordia Language Villages prohibits the possession, use and/or distribution of illegal substances, alcohol and tobacco products. If your child is found in possession of or using an illegal substance or alcohol, you will be contacted and he or she will be sent home immediately at your expense without refund. If your child is found in possession of tobacco, it will be confiscated and disposed of and you will be contacted. Lighters are considered contraband

Photographing Villagers and Staff

At different times throughout the summer, we try to capture images of Village life using several types of media. We are careful not to disrupt the normal activities of the day. These images are then used in displays, on our Web site, for publications, in advertisements or on Village Production Pages. All photographs, video or audio are exclusive property of Concordia Language Villages. No compensation is paid to the villagers or staff whose photos are used.

Villagers and staff use their "Village name" at all times while in session, for both linguistic and cultural reasons. Therefore, a degree of anonymity is reinforced both in daily Village life and in the images that are used for promotional purposes. Villagers are very rarely identified by their legal name in publications; villagers will never be identified by name or home address in any publications without prior parental consent.

Release of Information about a Villager When We are Contacted during a Session

Please note that when we are contacted for information about villagers while those villagers are in session, we will release information about them (including how they are adjusting, language progress and general well-being, etc.) ONLY to the person or persons listed on the villager application form as the custodial parent or guardian during the session. Anyone else who calls requesting information about a villager, including the non-custodial parent/guardian or other family members, will have to secure permission from the custodial parent during the session before we can release any information.

Respect for Property

Participants must respect the personal property of others as well as the Village facilities and grounds. Destruction or intentional abuse of property, including graffiti, may be grounds for immediate dismissal and/or mandatory reimbursement made to Concordia Language Villages.

Stealing or shoplifting is also grounds for dismissal, depending on the circumstances. If necessary, you will be notified and your child will be sent home immediately at your expense without refund.

Tipping

In accordance with standards of the American Camp Association and Concordia Language Villages policy, staff may not accept gifts or other forms of gratuity for any services during your child's stay at the Village.

Visiting the Villages

In order to ensure a safe and secure environment for all of our participants, we are a closed community to the general public while Villages are in session. Parents, relatives and guests are encouraged to attend Opening and Closing Days. Additional visits can be arranged upon request. Prior notice of a parent visit helps us maintain a safe environment as well as a quality language immersion experience.

Weapons Policy

The use, possession, or carrying of any kind of firearm or weapon on the property of Concordia Language Villages is strictly prohibited. Concordia Language Villages retains final authority in determining what constitutes a weapon, especially when evaluating potential danger.

Specifically prohibited items include, but are not limited to, knife blades, lasers, numchucks, shockers, razor blades, brass knuckles, acid, metal pipes, stun guns, BB guns, firearms, pistols, shotguns, rifles, ammunition, explosive devices, fireworks, pyrotechnics, any other instruments capable of inflicting serious injury and/or other common materials used for the purpose of inflicting fear or injury.