Hello everybody,

Tara Hofmann, President of AFS USA here. It's that really challenging period of the year at AFS USA where our time is running out and we need to place all of the students who are not yet placed. This is a very sincere message to all AFS USA volunteers. I know that you've all been working hard at hosting, and I know that you've all been asking people to host. I know that you've all been using the great tools that have been created for marketing the hosting experience and you've been working with your RFS staff contact. Together we've been doing lots of press and we've been doing lots and lots of great things, *but* the reality is that we still have about 197 students who need to be placed and within that group of 197 we have almost 60 YES students and a number of Congress Bundestag and FLEX students who also still need to be placed.

I'm sending this message in the most heartfelt tone that I can find to please ask all of you to consider welcoming a student into your own family. I know that's a big ask and I know that some of you have already committed to hosting - and I greatly appreciate that! If you haven't yet thought about welcoming a student, I'm asking you to please do that today. The critical nature of getting all our students placed, with particular focus on the YES students (given the time constraint) is something that we're going to need all AFS USA volunteers to help in achieving that goal. It takes time to find new host families and we're running out of that time. So, hosting for a short period as a welcome family is what we must all do.

As we all know, it can be fun! We also know that it's the time when a lot of "firsts" take place - all of those wonderful moments that happen when our students first arrive. Most critically, it is about getting the students into school and settled because it's much harder to get a school placement after the beginning of the school year. So, I really do ask that you take some time to think about welcoming a student and think about other folks you think could welcome a student. Even if you've asked somebody already, please ask them again - the worst thing that's going to happen is they say no again. An ask coming from you is a much more powerful message than perhaps an email from me or one of the staff.

We have big challenges ahead of us and I know that, like me, you are thinking about the students. It's all about these kids and, for many, many different reasons, we really cannot disappoint them.

I thank you for thinking about the ask that I've put in front of you. I thank you for everything you continue to do for AFS USA, and I look forward to seeing a lot of welcome families come in over the coming days.

Thank you so much.