

## Au Pair of the Year 2026

Each year, EurAupair proudly honors outstanding au pairs through our Au Pair of the Year competition. Host families are invited to nominate au pairs who go above and beyond, and from these heartfelt nominations, three finalists are selected based on their dedication, care, and commitment.

This year's finalists were Naima Rashid from Germany, Naphatson "Sai" Manuporn from Thailand, and Farah Kanif from Italy.



Finalist Au Pair of the Year Naima with her host child

### What Our Host Families Said About Their Au Pairs

*"Every single day, Naima goes above and beyond. She pours intention into how she spends time with our children, developing creative crafts, cooking new recipes together, and celebrating their school successes with silly songs and joyful rituals. She turns ordinary moments into meaningful memories and creates an environment where our children feel encouraged, safe, and deeply valued. Being around Naima makes people feel seen, appreciated, and valid. She models thoughtfulness through her actions, teaching our children how to care for others in meaningful ways."*

— Carter Family, Muskegon, MI

*"We were eager to learn everything we could as new fathers, but we also didn't always know what we didn't know. Sai gently filled those gaps. She brought perspectives and practical knowledge that we simply lacked, helping us better understand the unique needs of a baby daughter, from daily care routines to emotional sensitivity and developmental awareness. Sai has given Eloise more than attentive care, she has given her an example of kindness, cultural openness, and devotion. Her presence in our home has enriched our lives in ways we could never have anticipated. For her compassion, her professionalism, her cultural generosity, and the profound impact she has had on our family, Sai exemplifies everything an au pair should be."*

— Geske Family, Alexandria, VA



Finalist Au Pair of the Year Sai with her host child



Finalist Au Pair of the Year Farah with her host family

*"From the very beginning of her time with our family, Farah has gone above and beyond the expectations of the program, enriching our home not only through exceptional childcare but through cultural exchange, emotional intelligence, and genuine connection. Farah brings an incredible depth of culture and perspective into our lives. Born and raised in Italy, practicing the Muslim faith, and with Moroccan origins, she embodies the true spirit of cultural exchange. Farah's warm, playful, loving, and consistent presence made that transition seamless. She has an incredible ability to connect with children, helping them feel safe, valued, and excited to learn. She creates engaging learning activities, takes them to the library regularly to explore new books, and fills their days with creativity and joy."*

— Kadar Family, West Allis, WI

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Au Pair of the Year Finalists
- Au Pair of the Year Winner
- Winter Weather Experiences
- Top 10 Winter Activities
- Photo Gallery

### About Us...

EurAupair Intercultural Child Care Programs is a non-profit, public benefit organization designated by the U.S. Department of State to conduct the Au Pair cultural exchange program under the Fulbright Hays Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and is intended "to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges".

### Would You Like to Contribute?

If you would like to contribute to the EurAupair Gazette, please email [info@euraupair.com](mailto:info@euraupair.com). We would love to hear from our Host Families, Au Pairs, Community Counselors, Area Coordinators and Partners.



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# Au Pair of the Year 2026: Naima Rashid, Germany

*“Describe your Au pair Life..”* Where do I even start? I can tell you stories all day long, but no one will ever truly feel what a WONDERFUL time I am having! I can only speak for myself but my time here in Michigan with the Carter Family and everyone else I met along the way has topped all my expectations, I had when I left Germany in 2024. My journey finding the right match did not start as smoothly as I was hoping for. I ended up waiting a whole year to match with a Host Family and right when I thought it wasn't going to happen... I met the Carters! I couldn't be more grateful, the wait was DEFINITELY worth it. Every second I spend with my host kids is priceless and memories I will cherish FOREVER!

One thing is for sure; the Carters and I will stick together for the rest of our lives. I can't wait for the day Atlas/Lyria (my host kids) get married. I will give a speech that might go on for hours, reminding them of all our memories and time together. From moments of sharing, caring and loving to the weirdest kid things they did when they were young, I will name it all. Till forever I will do anything for my little duckies no matter what no matter where I will be there!

Not just my Au Pair Life but my host parents and especially Atlas and Lyria have taught me endless things over the past year and a half. From overcoming my fear of picking up animals: *“It's easy, you just pick them up,”* to helping me improve my cooking skills and trying every baked good (even after hundreds of fails), patience, parenthood, confidence, cultural exchange, Line Dancing, creativity, importance of family and friends, to becoming more independent than I have ever been!

A stereotype I have heard a lot about is that Au Pairs never want to have children after their experience. I do not approve. The joy these kids bring me with every happy moment up to any tantrum we have overcome; I can't wait to become a mother myself someday and use all the knowledge I was able to gather in the future.

Beyond the time I get to spend with my second family, I am able to see so much of the world in just a short time. Time goes by way too fast, and all the trips I went on made me realize to enjoy every moment and take nothing for granted. I feel so free, I am learning to manage my adult life, earn my own money and travel on solo trips or together with new friends that I will have with me for the rest of my life. Au Pairs make it so easy to connect no matter where you come from or because of whatever reason they are here — we all share the same passion for what we do and understand our life, future, and experience. That connects you in a unique way.



I don't ever want to imagine my time here in the U.S. to end, but when it does, I know it won't be a goodbye, but a see you later. Nothing can take away what we have learned and lived, and I couldn't think of a better way to start my future life. I may not know what will come next, but I was always sure being an Au Pair was the next right step!”

*“Carters, you will ALWAYS have a special place in my heart!”*



# Winter Weather Experiences as an Au Pair

“I am an au pair from Italy and this winter in the United States is very new for me. In Italy, winter is cold but not like this, and we do not have so much snow. Here everything is white and quiet, and it feels like I am inside a movie. The snow makes the roads look different and sometimes a little scary.

Driving in the snow in a minivan is something I am not used to. The minivan is very big for me, and when the road is slippery, I feel nervous. We drive very slow and careful. I always look at other cars on the road because some drivers slide a little, and that makes me worried. When I see cars moving strange, I think, ‘*Okay, better be extra careful now.*’

The cold weather is also hard for me. The air hurts my face and my hands get cold fast, even with gloves. I wear many layers, big coat, scarf, and hat, and still I feel cold. But at the same time, it is kind of fun to see the snow and do new things, like cleaning snow from the car.

What I like the most is spending time with friends. After driving in the snow, we laugh and talk about how crazy the roads were. Being far from Italy is sometimes difficult, but these moments make me feel happy and not alone. This winter experience in America is different, a little scary, but also very fun for me.”

— *Au pair Beatrice from Italy*



Italian au pairs Beatrice, Chiara and Daphne in Richmond, VA

“I arrived in Alaska in October 2025. Many au pairs, during their process of finding a family, decide to be conservative and stick to what they know. In my case, I have an adventurous spirit, and the experience in Alaska is something I wouldn’t change for anything. I come from a country where there aren’t seasons, and being able to see how the landscape transforms and to enjoy it in different ways is absolutely incredible. It’s like feeling as though you’re in a different place, when really it’s just transitioning through certain stages. I love the kindness of the people here and their spirit of helping the community, plus being surrounded by beautiful nature and fulfilling my dream of learning English.

I still remember my first time skiing — I couldn’t stay on my feet for more than two minutes. It was shocking and frustrating at the same time, and I thought I wasn’t going to make it. Today, three months after constant practice (I actually rented skis to make sure I wouldn’t fail), I can say that I enjoy it. That, along with ice skating, taught me perseverance. The number of bruises I got from falling is nothing compared to the feeling of satisfaction that comes from knowing you made it.

Definitely, Alaska isn’t for everyone, but I think that if you make the decision to come and truly focus on enjoying it, it’s going to be an unforgettable experience.”

— *Au pair Angie from Colombia*



Au pair Angie in Anchorage, AK



Au pair Angie in Eklutna Lake, AK

# Top 10 Winter Activities

Winter meetings are the perfect excuse to get cozy, have fun, and connect. These winter favorites are easy to plan and au pairs love them.

**Chili Cook-Off** – Warm up with flavor and friendly competition with au pair-made chili.

**Movie Afternoon or Night** – Pick an award-nominated film and enjoy popcorn and cozy laughs together.

**Bowling Night** – Classic winter outing — no planning needed and always fun!

**Cookie Decorating or Baking** – Create yummy treats and share recipes with friends.

**Escape Room** – Team challenge indoors that brings lots of laughs and teamwork.

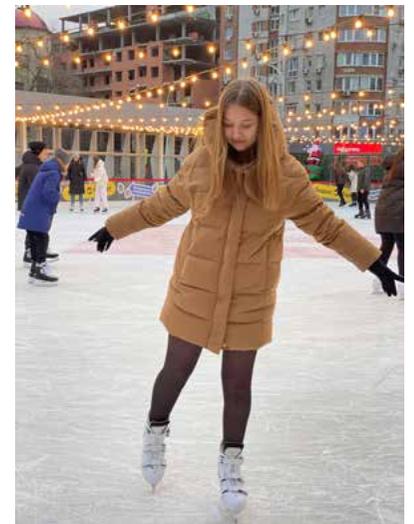
**Cultural Potluck Dinner** – Au pairs bring a favorite dish from home to share.

**Museum or Art Visit** – Explore local exhibits and enjoy conversation on a cold day.

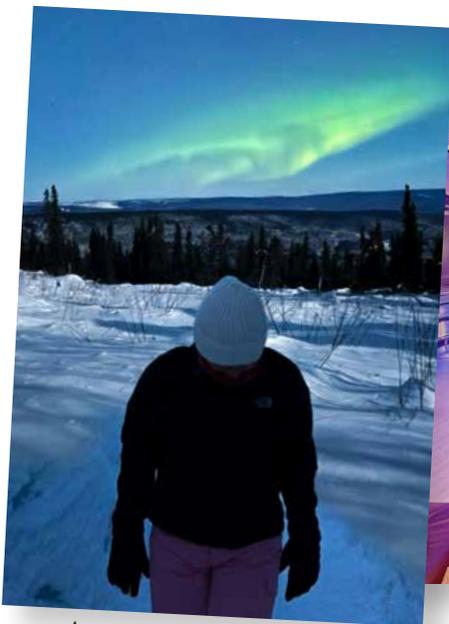
**At-Home Spa Day** – Easy self-care evening with foot soaks and nail polish sharing.

**Ice Skating** – A classic winter activity; try indoor rinks if weather is too chilly!

**Clothing Swap** – Au pairs and CCs bring clothes they no longer want to trade and refresh wardrobes.



# Photo Gallery



Au pair Maia (Colombia) in Alaska



Au pairs and their CC Anna bowling in Tustin, CA



Jireth (Colombia), Jairlyn (Venezuela) and Maria (Mexico) paddle boarding in Anchorage, AK



Au pair Maia (Colombia) in Alaska



From left: au pairs Loelia (France), Emilie (Denmark), Crystal (South Africa), Irel (Mexico), Thanwarat (Thailand), Leidy (Colombia), Ariana (Venezuela), & Angelly (Colombia) hiking at Scott's Run Preserve, VA



Our LCC Maria and Phannida at the Childcare Expo in Washington, DC



Au pairs ice skating in Reston Ice Skating rink, VA



From left: au pairs Isa (Colombia), Tati (Colombia), Nicol (Colombia), Sophie (Germany), Emelie (Finland) at Sac Kings NBA game in Sacramento, CA