



Emilie J. from France

Nominated by the Bernosky family in Texas

To Whom it concerns,

We'd like to nominate our fantastic au pair Emilie for au pair of the year!

Our family was in rematch, in need of help, and we were searching for the right personality to fit of our atypical family! We searched for someone that would embrace the hectic, or at least give in to it, and enjoy the crazy with us! Then along came Emilie, an extension au pair who also found herself in rematch!



Let me explain, our family and our needs are unique in comparison to other host families with younger children and for many we can be a fairly tough assignment. Our clan has of 6 has 4 children - all preteens and teens. One child is a Japanese foreign exchange student. Our "Japanese son" and 2 eldest children attend a Fine Arts High School Downtown and our youngest son attends a school specializing in highly gifted children. A host dad that works from home running his own company, and host mom that teaches fulltime and works the family business part-time.

Emilie arrived 2 weeks after we first spoke to her and within her first week, I knew we had hit the au pair jackpot!! She made the transition effortless exceeding our expectations in every way! It was surreal; it felt as if we'd known her forever. She wasn't just comfortable in our chaos and hectic schedule, but she added calmness and organization to it! I still revel in the fact that she chose us; a family in Texas with 4 older, over scheduled children. Yet, she confidently took on this challenge in the calmest, nurturing, fun, patient, and organized way.



Even though it has only been about 2-months that she has been with us, we feel as if we've known her for years! She's been a positive ray of sunshine in what can often be a tornado of busy children and working parents!

Emilie is fun, silly, and spontaneous and she really "gets" my kids with all their different quirks and personalities. She is a kid at heart, yet ridiculously mature for her age. The second week Emilie was with us, Ron was incapacitated by kidney stones in the middle of the night while Emilie was off. My middle son was scheduled to sing with the Houston Symphony in the morning and needed to be at Symphony Hall at 7:30



AM, my daughter had a Madrigal performance at a city Christmas festival, and our Japanese son had a piano competition that same day too. The children had other holiday vocal and piano obligations on Sunday as well. While sitting in the ER with Ron, I wondered how I'd manage the weekend without another driver, and I hesitated to let Emilie know what was going on. However, when we returned from

our overnight ER visit, she took over; driving my son in the morning, while I slept a few hours. She then split up the obligations with me and helped me shuttle the kids to their events and even stayed on to watch them perform! She never complained and actually seemed to enjoy helping and being part of our family! When queried, she answered, "This is what family does in times of need and crisis"!



Aside from being Wonder Woman to me and Ron during the dreaded weekend kidney stone attack, Emilie willingly and excitedly attends all the family events! City festivals, children's school events, concerts, long crazy road trips, parties, theater,

operas, museums, AFS foreign exchange student family events, and large dinners and celebrations with extended family and friends. She enthusiastically joined us for our Hanukkah celebrations even though this is not her religion or ritual back home and she shared her own custom of Fetes des luminaires that takes place in her city of Lyon by purchasing candles and illuminating our front porch. It was so beautiful, and we felt so grateful that she included us in her special tradition.

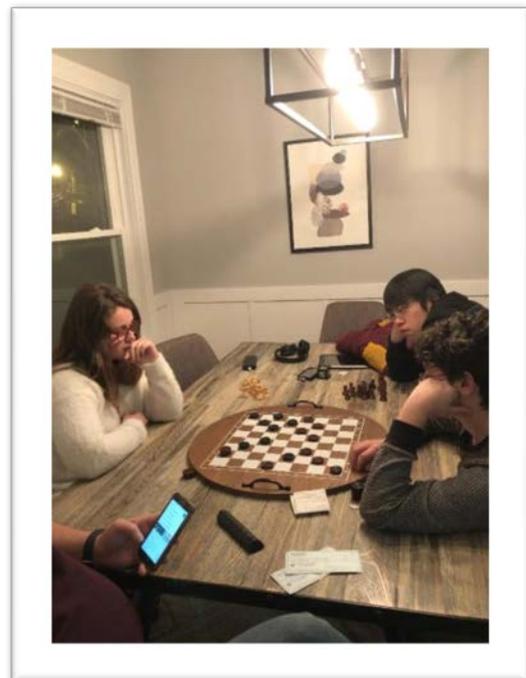
Emilie survived our 19-hour Christmas road trip to Ron's home town of Adena, Ohio, population 759 people. She happily participated in all areas of family time, assisted us Christmas Eve wrapping gifts until the wee hours of the night, and wowed the family with her ability to play cards. She even beat some real Bernosky card sharks! Our visit to Ohio was followed by an 8-hour drive to Chicago to visit my hometown, explore the city, and see cousins. It was a 4-day fully packed itinerary excursion without much downtime. Emilie was a great sport during our rainy 16-hour road trip back home, which included a hawk hitting our windshield on the highway (yes, it is always exciting and never dull with us). To my relief, she even helped out with the driving!

On a regular basis, Emilie endures teenage eyeball rolling, messy and often smelly teenager rooms, endless baskets of laundry, lunch making, and driving, driving, and more driving!!! She is always flexible and greets us with a smile – always!! I love that she actually enjoys the extra-curricular driving (which I can't stand) shuttling kids to voice and piano lessons, karate, art classes, friend's homes, shopping, errand running, appointments, and carpooling to name a few driving responsibilities.

She can often be found in the kitchen cooking and baking with my daughter or playing board games, chess, or cards with my sons. Her enthusiasm bubbles over to include our pug, Kirby whom she takes for walks. Her giving nature doesn't stop there, she even volunteers her time to various organizations too -- she'll be volunteering for the upcoming Houston Marathon!

4 older kids, all with very different personalities and interests is no easy task, yet Emilie makes it look easy and fun! She is intuitive, respectful of us and our children, and they look up to her. When I asked my kids what they like most about Emilie they unanimously answered, "We have fun with her and she is really interested in us. She takes care of us and gets us to where we need to be." As a parent it's the most comforting feeling knowing that your child is with someone you trust completely with their wellbeing.

Emilie took a chance on our family, and she put back our faith we in the program after we had difficulty rematching and because of this, Emilie is a winner to us! Somehow, the stars aligned perfectly for our unique and quirky family and Emilie has quickly become an important fixture in our family – a true family member! We hope that with this nomination Emilie and the world will know we feel so blessed to have the most special au pair on earth!



- Bernosky family, Houston, TX, USA