

Golden Gallop Sponsored by Cultural Exchange and Childcare

At the 19th annual Golden Gallop on 9/21, seven au pairs from three different countries volunteered to help pass out water on the course and run the Cultural Care expo booth. [Cultural Care](#) is a company that places au pairs with host families in the US, and the Golden local representative of the program, [Michelle Faust](#), arranged for the company to be a sponsor of the race.

As daycare costs increase and wait lists lengthen, many CO families are looking for alternative childcare solutions to meet their needs. Over the two years Michelle Faust has worked as a Local Childcare Consultant (LCC) for Cultural Care, she has helped over 50 Golden families benefit from the flexible, affordable, and personalized childcare the au pair program provides, along with the meaningful impact of the cultural exchange aspect of the program.

The expo booth reflected the international scope of the program, with globe stress balls and mini globes on keychains. The latter was a big hit with the kids in attendance; Faust set up an obstacle course for them to go through to earn a keychain. Their parents picked up “Fall Bucket List” pamphlets and entered a raffle to win a fall goodie basket with a \$50 Amazon gift card. They also talked to the au pairs helping Faust with the booth and learned more about the benefits of the au pair program.

Benefits of the au pair program for Golden families

An au pair lives in the home with the host family, becoming a member of the household. They can adjust the hours they are on childcare duty to exactly fit the families’ needs. It’s not just the hours that are individualized—the host parents set the household rules and guide their au pairs to care for their children in a manner that aligns with their own parenting style. For many Golden parents, this means facilitating lots of playtime outdoors!

“We love to be outside ... we live in an active neighborhood with neighbors that love to be together. There are lots of kids running around,” said Kelly Dillon, the mom of one of the host families Faust supports. Kelly and her husband, Michael, have three kids; the oldest is just over six and a half, the middle child is four, and the youngest is just over a year and a half. Their au pair, Ana, finished her first year with the Dillons in July and chose to extend her stay for a second year.

Michelle Faust’s role supporting the Golden community

In Faust’s role as an LCC, she serves as the main touchpoint for her families in the area. She wears many different hats: welcome committee, support team, relationship mediator, event planner, and community builder for host families and au pairs in her network. As a former au pair herself, she loves being involved with the program still.

"I love being more connected to the community that I live in, while being a part of the global community...bringing countries together through this great concept of childcare and cultural exchange," Faust said.

Golden families value empathy and curiosity

For the Powers family, the au pair program "has been a life saver." Zoey works in politics, following her passion for making a difference in her community. However, her work sometimes requires traveling, which results in shifts to their family's schedule. Their au pair, Martika, provides that much-needed extra support during these occasions. However, more than just the childcare aspect, the cultural exchange benefit is what drew Zoey and Phillip Powers to the program.

"It's a chance for our family to learn from someone with a different background while sharing our own. We want our children to grow up with global awareness, empathy, and curiosity," Zoey Powers said.

To learn more about the au pair program, Michelle Faust can be reached at michelle.faust@lcc.culturalcare.com or (303) 618-3428.