

Lodging sought for rural students

The Rural Student Vocation Program (RSVP) which provides rural students with two-week work experiences in large cities, needs people to provide homes to RSVP students.

The program brings about 800 students per year into Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks to work in government and private businesses as well as on Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Base.

The program gives the students an idea of what it is like to live and work away from their families — often for the first time.

Each student stays for two weeks during the work experience.

Sharon Leon, housing coordinator for the program says that she needs housing for almost half of the students who will

come into the Anchorage area this year. Approximately 400 students will be in Anchorage this year and two-thirds of them need housing.

She said that this year was a big transition year for many of her regular parents. All parents at Elmendorf and Ft. Rich have transferred out and many civilian hosts also have moved.

The host family is paid \$13 per day for the students and is expected to provide a bed and three meals per day for the student. The student is expected to pay for all non-nutritive snacks he or she eats.

Leon said that the program is very strict and a student "is given only one chance. If they blow it (by getting into trouble) they are returned to their villages immediately.

"I know that seems hard but

we tell them that they are adult enough to join the program and they should act that way."

A host family may take one or two students once, twice or more frequently. "I've had hosts take a student once a year on a regular basis or once every couple months...it is very flexible," said Leon. The flexibility also means that more families

must be found.

The program does not operate during the last two weeks of November and December and ends during the first part of May because most rural schools begin summer vacation at that time.

Orientation is provided for new housing families and the staff works closely with students and

families throughout the school year.

Leon says that most of the host families have been with the program for several years because they find the students refreshing and see that they are helping their development.

If you are interested in joining the program, please call Leon at 248-2673.