

## Priscila Fernandez Rodriguez Au Pair of the Year Award Nomination

Host Family: Holley Davis & Gavin McIntyre

Host Family Location: Troy, New York

Au Pair Country: Colombia

### Essay

Priscila joined our family in June 2023 and has changed our lives and our family for the better—forever! Priscila is our first au pair, and I was so nervous about what we were getting ourselves into when we matched. From the minute she walked into the airport arrivals hall, I knew we had made the right choice. She walked out to us, said, “my family!” and swooped our two-year-old son into a big, wonderful hug.

Priscila is extraordinary in so many ways. She deeply loves children and is one of the most creative and crafty people I know. During her first few months with us, she worked hard to build a predictable and fun routine with our son. She prepared weekly menus of what she would feed our son for us to review, shared the activities she planned to work on with Rhys, and engaged in incredible imaginative play. After we got into a comfortable rhythm, she took it upon herself to potty train our son three weeks earlier than we had anticipated (an incredibly welcome surprise!). We’re now into our sixth month with her, and it is just as wonderful as the first week. Our son adores her and is always interested in what “Scila” has in store for the day. She always has a new craft—a gratitude tree, connecting emotion faces, cardboard binoculars, a sweet tote for our son’s rock collection; the list goes on. She is always attentive, safety-focused, and engaging. When we started our au pair search, we had hoped to find someone who loved our son as much as we do, and we can confidently say that Priscila does. Under her care, our son has grown exponentially in so many ways—he is more conscientious, has better fine motor skills, and his imagination has flourished.

Our love for Priscila doesn’t stop with her care for our son. She’s an incredible housemate and is truly a part of the family. We eat dinner together each weekday night, catching up on our day, sharing stories, and discussing cultural practices. We have been able to enjoy Colombian Independence Day with her and try many delicious foods from Colombia—we love agua panela! She is always ready with a smile, a helping hand, and a genuine interest in our family and our activities. It’s been fun sharing so many “firsts” with her—her first real Christmas tree, her first driver’s test, her first Thanksgiving, her first trip to New York City. She comes to all our family events and has made real connections with everyone; she will even attend my sister-in-law’s wedding in the spring. We even had the opportunity to host her family this December, which was an incredible experience! We loved how Priscila was able to show her parents around her new home with confidence and a real connection to the area.

Beyond her involvement in our family, Priscila has integrated herself into our local community and the greater au pair community. She is very active in her local church in Colombia and found a chapter of her church in our area. She now assists with their community volunteer events and

Sunday School. The congregation adores her and has welcomed her with open arms. She's also very active within her au pair groups—she provides level-headed guidance to other au pairs from Colombia who started au pairing at the same time as her, connects with new au pairs who arrive to our area, and participates in cluster meetings. Most recently, she volunteered at a soup kitchen and attended the Nutcracker.

Our relationship is based on mutual respect and trust. We are open with one another about what is going on in our lives, ask questions, and provide feedback. Pris brings a lightness to our parenting that extends in every area of our lives, and she has taken some of our project management skills. Matching with her is easily the best decision our family ever made, and we are so grateful for all that she has brought to our family. We adore her!