

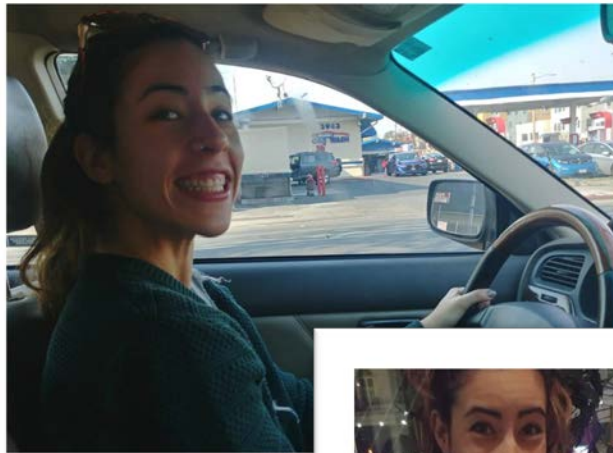
Aikaterini S.

Nominated by the Papavassiliou family in California

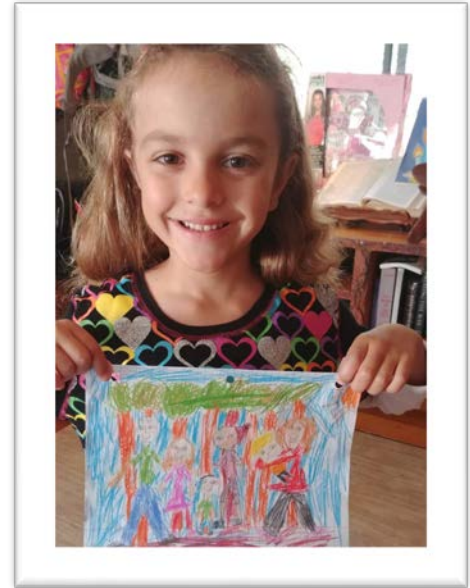


Katerina has been an amazing addition to our family. We had months of corresponding before we even met in person. From our countless exchanges she already had a glimpse into our world and began preparing accordingly; like what favorite activities my daughter has and how she loves art. Katerina started compiling project ideas and would send them to me even months before coming to us. We even had the opportunity to meet Katerina and her lovely family in their home city of Athens prior to her coming to California. She has assimilated rather quickly, not only to America but to our family. From the start she has adapted to our way

of life, our style of child-rearing and to the healthy foods we try to incorporate in our diet. We practice a positive/attachment parenting style with our children. She quickly learned how to engage with our 2nd child who can sometimes exhibit intense emotions and defiant behavior. Katerina attended a workshop with me on how to effectively redirect some of these negative behaviors and she has done so with great success. My little boy is different since Katerina started spending quality time with him, showing him love and patience and simply just playing games with him. In addition, Katerina turns recipes of my children's favorite foods into delicious and healthy alternatives. Right now, she's researching how to make my daughter's beloved breakfast food, the bagel using whole wheat flour and natural sweetener. As a parent nothing makes me happier than this. She often times includes my children in the cooking process which has facilitated a love of cooking and

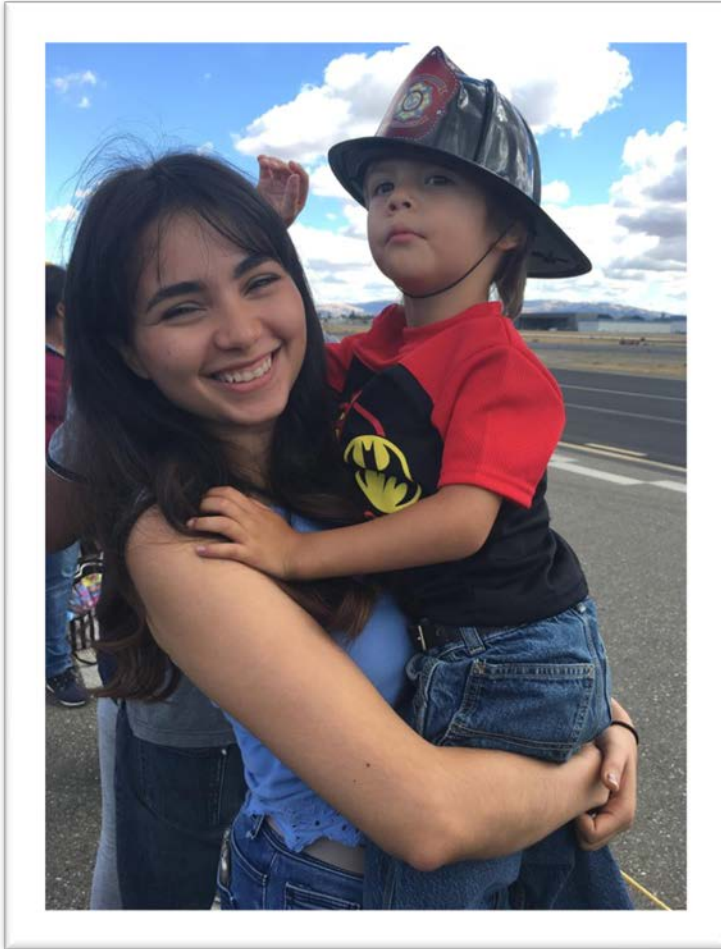


bonding with Katerina. She also has a very creative eye and engages my children in fun and educational arts and crafts. She saves all items that would otherwise go to waste and creates educational and fun art projects for the children. She's also open to using products that will help and not further destroy our environment like bamboo toothbrushes, reusable food containers, composting, recycling, etc. My kids can't get enough of it and sometimes will wait to take turns to spend time with her. Katerina is constantly interested in experiences that will enhance her knowledge of her field of child education. She is currently in the process of setting up observations in various schools that range in teaching methodologies such as Waldorf, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, traditional and even a forest school! One of the things I love most about Katerina is how receptive she is and how she takes feedback. Living with others cooperatively and harmoniously takes work, mutual respect and communication. Katerina possesses and exemplifies all of these qualities. She has fit right into our city and enjoys learning about and exploring it in her free time. It's fun watching her develop a taste of her favorite restaurant or her favorite neighborhood to take a stroll in or enjoy an outing that is different from what she's accustomed to. She is cautiously coming out of her comfort zone to try new things and it's wonderful to watch that unfold in front of me. I would love for her to win this opportunity to further broaden her horizons.



Andrea S.

Nominated by the Rascon family in California



It is a pleasure to nominate our Au Pair, Andrea Sainz, for Au Pair of the year. From the moment that Andrea entered our live, she became a part of our family. She has enriched our children's lives and brought an array of culture to our home. She has integrated herself into our family life and has contributed greatly. She has not only embraced her role in our family but has embraced the cultural exchange spirit of the au pair program.

Andrea's main and greatest contribution to my family is what she has done for my children. She is an amazing influence in every way. She makes sure they always say please, thank you and your welcome. She makes sure they always clean up after themselves and has even taught them a song in both English and Spanish for picking up their messes. She teaches and communicates to my children how to be self-sufficient and to do more for themselves while building their

confidence. Just this last week I came home to her teaching my boys their vowels. She reads to the children constantly. She goes above and beyond on teaching them things they would learn in preschool. She teaches them diverse games such as hopscotch and fosters their imagination as they build forts and puts together a camping tent in the family room. She is an amazing influence when it comes to food and makes several items from scratch and always teaches my children to eat health when she is with them. Her cooking is remarkable from homemade lasagna to an incredible homemade salsa.

My son Angelo struggles with speech and she has been a driving force in his ability to articulate himself better. She forces him to use his words and to communicate what he needs. When he points at something, she communicates to him how he must use his words. She communicates well with all the children and embraces the many changes that happen in the household daily will integrating herself and culture into the home. For Day of the dead she builds the children an Ofrenda and put up a picture of my grandfather who had passed away. She also used the movie "Coco" to teach the children about her culture.



Andrea is great about making sure that my children's clothes always match and that they have what they need. She makes sure to do my daughters hair daily and keeps them looking presentable. She is diligent about making sure she has everything that is needed for even a short trip to the park and knows how to organize all their things efficiently. In the first month that Andrea arrived to us she

organized all the kids clothing in their dressers and closets and organized the DVD's. She keeps the kid's art supplies and toys organized and is teaching my children to respect the items that they own and how to care for them. She is great at communicating to the children when things need to be done or if something needs to change and embraces the changes that happen in a busy household with three toddlers.

When we are out and about, even on her time off, she is a great helping hand. Just yesterday we went to the snow and she helped carry my daughter to the lodge and had a snow ball fight with my boys. She is involved in important family days such as parties and helps with the décor and food. She participates in almost every family activity and is a joy to have with us. She is part of our family if we are at a birthday party, out to pizza or just going to a new place to discover. She has been willing and excited to do things she has never done before such as carving pumpkins or baking Christmas cookies. She enjoys leisure family time with us and has enjoyed movies or hang out time and has integrated herself when we have friends or family over.

Andrea is both friendly and likable by every person she encounters. She has made friends with a variety of au pairs from different organizations and taken the opportunities to travel



and make new friends. She goes out of her way to experience new places and is always ready to do something different. She has shown maturity in her choices and done more around California than many people who have grown up here have their whole lives. Just over New Year's she went to Las Vegas on a road trip and got to see the Grand Canyon. In November she went to Disneyland and explored the LA area. She also took advantage of the four-day weekend au pair class in September and was able to explore San Diego.

She has also been amazing at communicating with both my husband and me. We always feel that communication is key. She lets me know what is going on at home, updates me regularly during my work day if one of the children get sick during the day. She sends me videos and pictures and is quick to respond if I ever need to get ahold of her when she is home with the kids. She also always communicates if she is going on, who she is with and when she will be home. She communicates with us enough for us not to have to worry about her and to know that she is safe.

There is so much more I can say about Andrea, she has embodied everything we look for in an au pair and has gone above and beyond in everything she does and how she has embraced both American culture and her role in our family. We can't imagine this year without her and knows she deserves to win Au Pair of the Year.

[Click here to see the nomination video submitted by the Rascon family!](#)



Gabriella C.

Nominated by the Noto family in New Jersey



We are writing this letter to nominate our super woman, Gabi Cox! There are so many reasons why Gabi deserves recognition as Au Pair of the Year! From day one Gabi came into our family never treating this as a job. We are so fortunate that she was able to renew a second year with us this past July. The thought of her ever leaving is heart wrenching to be quite honest. We have “four under four” with the oldest now being 6. Our house is busy, crazy, fun and non-stop. While life is not always easy her willingness and love for our family shows no end. She is more than an extra set of hands, she is what keeps the house and family afloat. She loves and cares for our children as if they were her own. Gabi

is always two beats ahead when it comes to their wants, needs and hopes. She deals with difficult situations with patience and grace and shows them so much love. Her dynamic and bond with our four daughters Scarlett 6, Violette 4 and our twins Juliette and Nicolette 2 are unmatched. We love Gabi and call her our fifth daughter. There are very few adventures Gabi does not join us on. Whether it be a trip to the islands, Sam’s Club, a Target run, NYC adventures, aquariums or amusement parks she is always up for fun. We have traveled together, explored together and made countless memories.

Having a large family, it’s hard to give everyone what they need at 100% every single day. While we wish this were easy, we are always pulled in many directions. Gabi has the natural ability to make this possible. Whether it’s listening to Scarlett play the piano for ten minutes alone, watching Violette do 20 handstands in a row, Juliette and Nikki



painting and coloring she make it happen. This summer she would take all four kids in the pool and practically give them lessons! As a water polo player, the water is her happy place. Scarlett learned to touch the bottom of an 8-foot pool, Violette went from panicky to getting her face wet and the twins could float and kick around the pool confidently with their puddle jumpers thanks to Gabi. Let me also add: four kids, four opinions on swim suits, four bodies to apply sunblock, five towels to take outside, four pairs of water shoes to avoid burning feet! You get the idea, these are the things she makes look easy. Sometimes the



little things are what means the most. When we have a crazy day after school and the rushing to activity begins Gabi has everything prepared. Leotards are laid out, snacks and a drink are in a zip lock, hair brush and hair ties lined up and coats and shoes are near the door. This is not something we ask it's just something she does to make life easy.

What makes Gabi extremely deserving of this title is that while she has impacted and touched the life of our immediate family, she has also made major impact on all our friends and relatives. Gabi always goes above and beyond to get to know everyone on personal level. If we are entertaining Gabi steps in to help cook, tidy up or runs errands like part of the family. She always offers to do more and help wherever possible to make everyone happy. She took family into NYC to see



the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree. She takes time to share family recipes with us and gets messy in the kitchen. She will sit with my 89-year-old grandparents and make conversation and spend time with them. She has gone to a Broadway play with my father and spent time with my siblings and cousin without us. She hand wrote cards to each family member with an extremely thoughtful gift at Christmas. She enjoys the gym, boxing and going to Jay's hockey games. Fellow families at school and friends adore

her and always say they wish they had a Gabi in their lives. She has impacted each person in a special way. If you are blessed to know her you would understand.

Gabi is more than a special hand to hold. She is a protector, snuggle queen, heart of gold, funny, loving and one of a kind human. I truly feel there is nothing she would not do for our kids and family. Her good nature is always evident. I am confident she has never made a cup of tea (she makes about 4 a day ha!) without asking if anyone wants one. She loves to prepare coffee the night before and always leaves a note saying, "fresh pot". She never comes home from anywhere, whether it be out with friends, the gym or just getting fresh air that she doesn't call to see if anyone needs anything. We were all down and out with a vicious stomach bug in November and Gabi held down the fort making sure everyone including myself got better.

Jay, myself and Gabe's have a special relationship, we laugh and joke and often make fun of each other in the best way possible. We will play games, watch





shows, and have real talk and difficult conversations when need be. There is nothing we wouldn't do for her.

Last January we were lucky her brother Nick got to spend some time with us, in October our first Au Pair Alessia visited us for a week (two 20-year old's, four young daughters plus myself = Jay is very outnumbered) and in March her Mom will be coming to visit us for two weeks! These are moments we will cherish forever. Gabi is not just an Au Pair she is our family and has touched the lives of everyone she met here.



## Marcella C.

### Nominated by the Keeler family in California

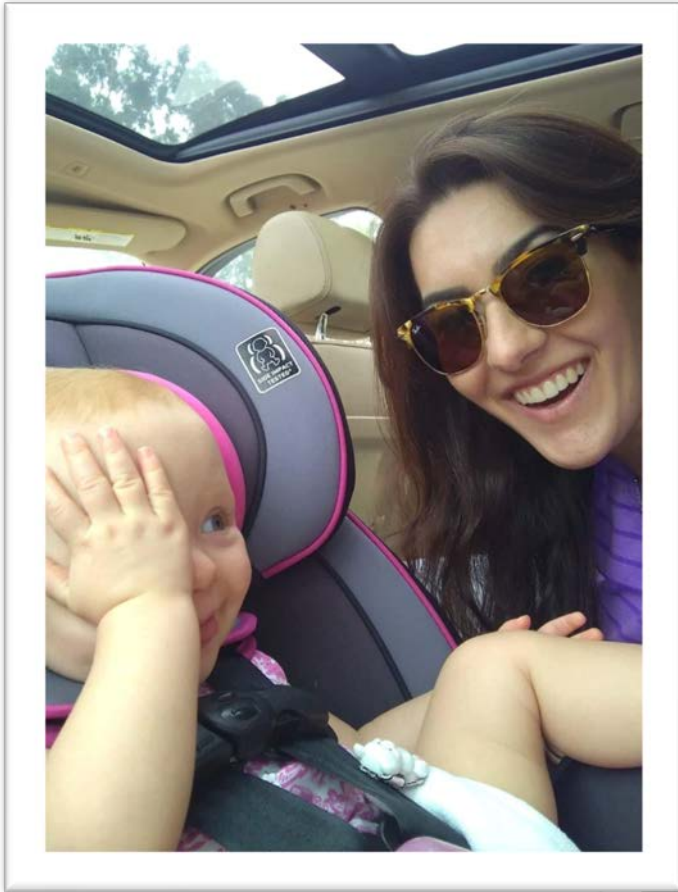


My Au Pair Marcella is a wonderful individual and such a blessing to have in my home. She is such a giving person helping with my daughter who is a special embryo adopted baby. Sarah was frozen for 9 months before I got her and had her transferred to a surrogate. She is a miracle baby and blessed by God to be alive. I know she will be an amazing person and have a wonderful story to tell. My daughter loves Marcella as she spends time daily helping her with learning language skills, social skills, and developing her independence. I work full time and am an early childhood specialist. My standards are high for those who work with children. I searched for the right fit for Sarah, someone who is compassionate, caring, and would invest in Sarah's life with teaching her skills from a young age. Marcella is the right fit and I knew when I interviewed her she would be an amazing Au

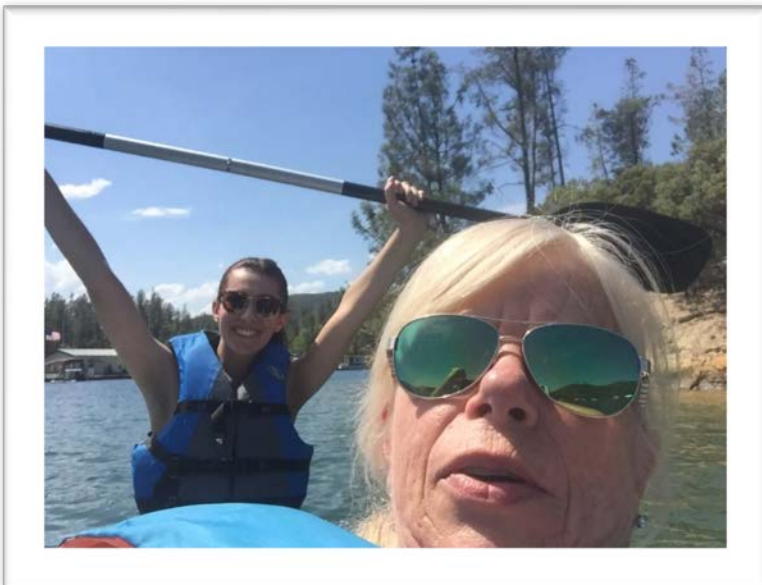
Pair. Marcella researches the best strategies and we discuss what to do in challenging situations. From patio time, each day with water colors and play dough my daughter is learning new skills along with being read to several times a day. She truly is a partner and a great match for my family. Marcella has a full social life but always makes a priority to meet the needs of our family first. I am blessed that Marcella takes time to spend with Sarah and I in addition to her work schedule.

I am most touched by Marcella's desire to volunteer in the community helping others and understanding the needs of those who live close by. Marcella has a strong desire to make the most of her time here in the states by taking additional classes to improve her English and often asks the correct way to say phrases. She has many interesting conversations with a variety of people as she tries to understand other people's points of





view. She is a good friend to other Au Pairs and tries to regularly spend time with them as she benefits from other international students. Marcella includes myself and my daughter in on video chats with her family so we can be connected together. Her regular videos with her family always include a video with my daughter, an update on how she is doing and warm conversation. I value the multicultural experiences my daughter has with Marcella and her family and believe she is enriched as a result. Marcella's family is truly an extension of our family.

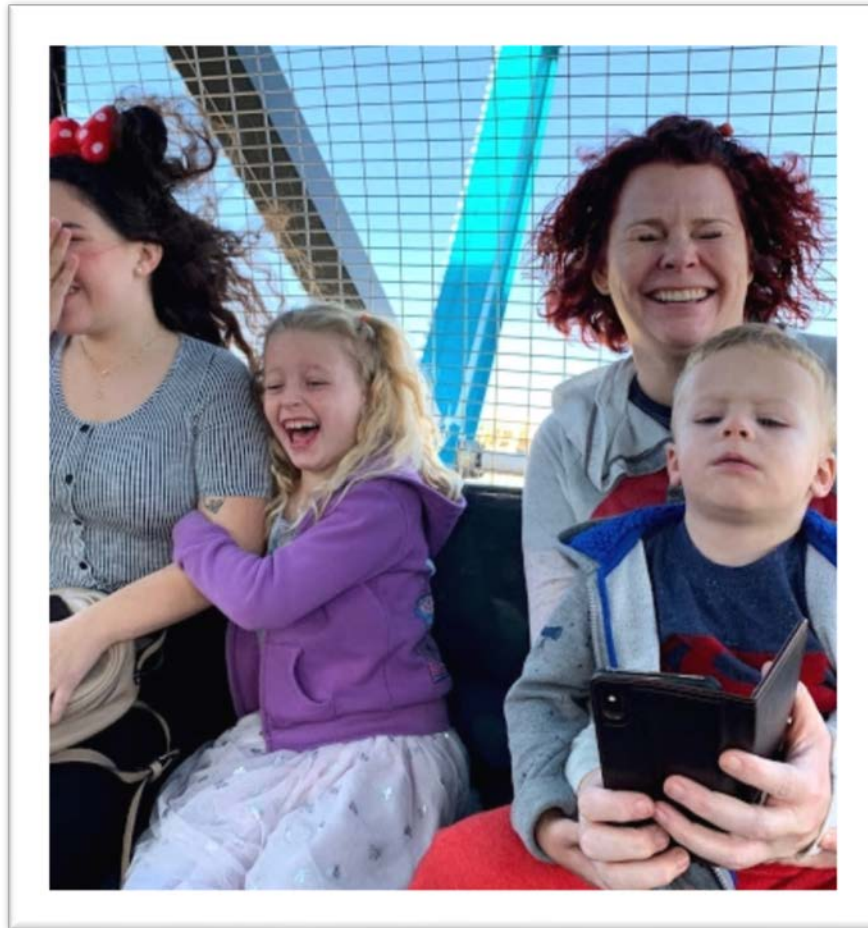


It is such a joy to come home and hear about my daughter's day from Marcella and get a kick out of how she relates to my daughter and the amount of laughter in my home. I could not be more pleased with the moments we have shared as a family. We laugh often together which is an important quality and enjoy the moments of each day. I am a single working mom so Marcella is an important part of making our home a positive place and extra hands for support. I truly believe she is the best of the best and gives all she is to my family. She is tops!

Natasha M.

Nominated by the Yorg family in California

We've been blessed with amazing Au Pairs. Truly. We've had three before our current Au Pair and I can honestly say each and every one of them has become part of our family. It's why we love the Au Pair program so much: it provides a wonderful opportunity to learn new cultures and expand our family internationally. We've been so fortunate thus far.



But Natasha, our current Au Pair defies all expectations. She provides EXCEPTIONAL care of our four children (aged 3, 5, 7, 12). She effortlessly manages being both firm and gentle. Loving and strict. Unlike any other childcare providers, Natasha got through the boundary testing phase with almost no help required from us. She stays relentlessly focused on the children's needs and understands that along with gentle nurturing children need boundaries and consistency. Not a surprise then that our children also fell in love with her immediately.

Beyond that exceptional care Natasha brought to the children on day one, she also manages their schedules so well. My husband and I both work fulltime with hour long commutes. As well, I am in the midst of a fulltime graduate school program. Natasha eases this burden by incredible attention to detail

that allows our children to still have rich activities outside of school – something we wouldn't be able to manage ourselves at this point in life. She always has a new activity to try. She proactively meets other parents to schedule playdates and has improved the reading and math skills of our three school aged children. She's truly a super nanny.

And all of that would be enough to make her the best Au Pair we've ever had. But it's how she manages all of us that truly makes her rare. There are periods of life where it feels like you just keep getting knocked down. 2018 was one of those years for us. My husband was laid off twice in the same calendar year. We unexpectedly lost both one of our dearest friend's child, my father, and our dog in quick succession. Our kids learned that the world is not always a kind place this year. I've spent what feels like more nights awake anxious about the kids than I have had good night sleeps.

One of the few truly great bright spots amidst all of this was Natasha. Through it all she cared not only for the kids, she cared for all of us. Not only did she hug, and love, and snuggle the kids through their grief, she checks in with my mom daily. She encouraged my husband during his search. She gave me hugs and reassured me the kids were OK as I struggled with my own grief. To say she's been a godsend is no understatement. I don't think we would have gotten through this year without her.

To have someone love your children so deeply is amazing. To also have her remove so many burdens as you're carrying a heavy weight is...a kindness that can never be repaid. We're so so lucky!