

Sunday, February 21, 2016

To: OSAA/ District Committee

RE: Samuel Malik

I have known Robert Hatala, MD, Sam's stepdad, since 2002. We met because we share a profession and a subspecialty which is cardiac electrophysiology. We met for professional reasons and became friends. We have seen each other once or twice a year at conferences and during my occasional visits to Bratislava, Slovakia, where I was born and lived until the age of sixteen and where Robert is a cardiac arrhythmia doctor. He later married Sam's mom, Katarina Malikova who is also a cardiologist in Bratislava. Our kids met on two or three of occasions when we visited Slovakia, last in the summer of 2015 when we went there for a family wedding. Sam's parents told us they would like Sam to spend a semester in the United States to improve his English and experience America. Apparently a sizable minority of exchange students don't find a good match at first and need to change host families after they've arrived in the United States. We talked about the option and then offered to host Sam in our house in Salem. Neither my wife nor my kids speak any Slovak and only English is spoken in our household so he gets a very good language experience. So far my family has enjoyed him very much.

Sam has made friends since he got here both in his classes as well as at our local tennis club. Sam used to play tennis until 2009 when he had two knee surgeries playing soccer. He has not played any competitive sports since. He has reconnected with tennis since coming here and would love to play for his High School team.

Sam's direct placement with our family had nothing to do with playing tennis. Please grant him the waiver to allow him to partake in the quintessential American experience and the healthy social outlet of high school sports. Thank you very much for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Fedor
Host Father