

ROTARY DISTRICT 5100

rotary
youth
exchange



A GUIDE FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICERS

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Success Factors for a Strong Rotary Youth Exchange Program

- The leadership has a positive and committed attitude and knows why this is an important program.
- There is a Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) committee of at least three
 - Having someone else know what the Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) does is important for succession or emergency.
- The Hosting Club gives strong and unwavering support to the student and the Club Board receives monthly updates about the status of the program.
 - The Club President is notified immediately if a major issue arises.
 - The Club is provided with news about the Outbound student and information about the Inbound student.
- The YEO and the Club Counselor are not related.
- The Club Counselor is never the Host Family.
- The Club Counselor has a strong relationship with the Inbound Student.
- The Student has two to three Host Families.
- The Club is always looking for potential Host Families. Host Families should always be looked for inside the Club first.
 - Remember to invite Host Families to join Rotary.
- Develop and maintain a good relationship with the High School.
- The RYE committee and club are willing to learn from the bumps and celebrate the peaks.

General Information

- District 5100 Youth Exchange is regulated by Rotary International (RI), United States Department of State (DOS), The district is a member of CSIET (Council on Standards for International Educational Travel) through its membership in the Multi District (WESSEX) Western States Student Exchange. Many school districts require membership with CSIET in order to accept our students.
- Rotary International has established regulations that all Rotary districts must follow. Districts are required to be certified by RI periodically. We cannot exchange with uncertified districts.
- The US Department of State regulates the number of students we can host each year. Therefore, through an every two year Management Review by an independent CPA

for DOS we are obligated to closely follow all of their regulationCSIET is an organization with a membership of approximately 70 International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs and High Schools in the United States.

Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET)

The CSIET is a governing organization that has established various standards that all youth exchange programs must meet to rate a listing in a publication supplied to all secondary schools. School officials can then determine the legitimacy of youth exchange programs attempting to place exchange students in their schools.

Highlights of the United States Department of State Regulations

- Youth Exchange Officers (volunteers) must participate in annual training sessions.
- Youth Exchange Officers (volunteers) must submit a volunteer application through our website: youthexchange5100.org Youth Exchange Officers (volunteers) must pass a background check annually. A link will be sent to the volunteer upon completion of the volunteer application.
- Youth Exchange Officers must take the Department of State test each year. A link will be sent to the volunteer each year
- Youth Exchange Officers must take a YPA (Youth Protection) Test Annually. A link will be sent to the volunteer each year
- Youth Exchange Officers (volunteers) must provide 3 references on their initial application, only one can be a Rotarian
- Youth Exchange Officers (volunteers) must complete an on line interview with their initial application

Youth Exchange Officers (YEO) (Volunteers) must complete the above steps prior to placing or interacting with the student.

Club Counselors are DOS EXEMPT, as are other club volunteers.

The first host family must be designated and fully Vetted (Approved status) via the HUB prior to arrival of the student before the DS-2019 can be issued to the student.

- If the family has hosted before and has an electronic application already registered on the HUB, then they simply need to renew their application.
- If they have never done an online application, then they need to begin a new host family application
- Host family applications are only valid for eighteen months. Repeat host families need to renew their application as well as re-do the Background Check and refresh their reference reports.
- Criminal and sexual background checks are needed for all host family members living at home who are 18 years of age or more each year they host. If a host family member is only there for short periods of time (such as a college student) they should also do a background check.
- The Host Family will need to provide two names and contact information for references.
 - The references **cannot** be a relative or someone on the Rotary Youth Exchange Committee.
- The Host Family will need to take the DOS US Host Family Orientation Course online.
 - A link will be sent to the Host Family after application has been approved, the course must be taken as part of the host family application process.

Chapter 1 – District Information

Objectives of the RYE Program

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to different cultures. The world becomes a smaller, friendlier place when we learn that all people, regardless of nationality, desire the same basic things: a safe, comfortable environment that allows for a rich and satisfying life for themselves and for their children. Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures, thus planting the seeds for a lifetime of international understanding.

Rotary Youth Exchange is considered to be the premier exchange program in the world with around 8000 exchanges taking place annually. Our goal is to further international goodwill and understanding by enabling students to study first-hand the cultural differences of people in lands other than their own. In 1972, the RI Board of Directors agreed to recommend Youth Exchange to clubs worldwide as a worthwhile international activity. This RI program is not funded through the Foundation. This opens the door to children of Rotarians being allowed to participate just the same as the rest of the population. Our program enables students to advance their education by studying for a year in an environment entirely different than their own and undertaking study of courses and subjects not typically available to them in secondary schools in their own country.

We encourage students to broaden their outlook by learning to live with and meet people of cultures, creeds, and colors different than their own. By having to cope with the everyday life difficulties in an environment completely unfamiliar from the one they have experienced in their home country, our students mature and adapt to different viewpoints and cultures helping them form ideas meant to promote goodwill and harmony. They act as ambassadors for their own country by imparting as much knowledge as they can of their country and its culture to the people and groups they meet during their 11 months abroad. They study and observe all facets of life and culture in our country so that on their return to their native country they can pass on the knowledge they have gained thereby drawing the world together in greater harmony and understanding.

Purpose of this Manual

The following information was created to support the Club Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) and Counselor to assist in understanding the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. Through Youth Exchange, Rotarians seek to provide the best possible conditions for the participant. Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of dedicated Rotarians and their families, the program is highly successful, and it enjoys the advantages of many years of experience and a network of more than 1.2 million Rotarians around the world.

Please remember that the District Chairman and committee members are always available as resource people should you have any problems or situations that are not addressed adequately in this manual. While we recognize that there are many ways to parent a teenager, we have prepared this manual specifically to explain how our program operates.

The suggestions that follow are not meant to be dictatorial, but to serve as guidelines to deal with situations created by different cultures, backgrounds, values, and expectations. In our attempt to provide consistency, we have thoroughly explained our positions on a wide variety of topics. This manual is intended for use by the Club YEO but also will be very beneficial for Counselors.

District 5100 Youth Exchange Committee

THE DISTRICT CHAIR

The District Chair is appointed by the District Governor and is responsible for all Youth Exchange activities within the district, including stimulating, coordinating, and promoting club participation in the program. The chairman communicates with the District Governor, and the clubs when developing the Youth Exchange program in the district. The Chairman must appoint the district committee and define responsibilities as requested by the District Governor. Training of YEO's and Club presentations is also this Rotarian's responsibility.

INBOUND COORDINATOR

The Inbound Coordinator serves as liaison between host Rotary clubs in District 5100 and the Inbound students assigned to those clubs. The Inbound Coordinator is aware of all travel and visa documentation for the students who will be studying in the district, coordinates training/orientation for students upon their arrival in our district and is available to assist clubs in the selection and orientation of host families.

The Inbound Coordinator coordinates the Inbound Student District events, which will occur at least three times during the exchange year.

OUTBOUND COORDINATOR

The Outbound Coordinator works with all the clubs in the district to locate and train students wishing to participate in the RYE program overseas. This Rotarian oversees the selection, application processing, country assignments, travel plans, and orientation of all District 5100 Outbound students and their parents/guardians before they leave to study abroad.

While abroad, the Outbound Coordinator continues to monitor their progress and safety through monthly reports alongside the student's Country Officer.

TREASURER

The District Youth Exchange Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the funds necessary to run the program within the District. They pay all the invoices; help prepare budgets and administer the collection of the commitment fees from the participating district clubs.

The Treasurer also is responsible for providing the required program financial reports to the District Governor for compliance with RI's reporting requirements.

Club YE Officer Timeline

Each YEO will need to note the guidelines included below to help organize their year:

- August YEO and Counselor District Training
- August 15 - 31 Arrival of new Inbound Students.
- August - Departure of Outbound Students (Some will leave as early as June/July)
- September
 - Inbound Student District Orientation
 - Recruit Club Outbound Applicants to interview (If you participate in Fall recruitment rather than spring recruitment.
 - Complete Club selection of Outbound candidate for the following August departure.
 - **September 31st deadline** to submit Outbound applications
- October – Outbound Candidate Application Seminar
- January
 - Outbound Candidate Orientation, Country Fair and Parent Orientation
 - Eastern Oregon Trip with Inbound Students -
 - Outbound student with parent orientation -notify Outbound students of country assignments.
- February/March – Review and sign Club Compliance letter to be able to participate in the program the following year.
- March - May - Receive application for new Inbound. Complete guarantee form in less than 30 days.
- April/May– Begin to find host families for the following year. (This should be a year round activity)
- April/May – Inbounds and Outbounds to attend District
- July 15th – Last date for Inbound students return home

YEO / Inbound Student Guidelines

Inbound students can be fragile creatures. They need nurturing and an occasional pep talk to guide them down the right path. Here are some suggestions:

- Meet with your student at least twice a month or as needed. Provide a regularly scheduled time and give the student an opportunity to speak in confidence if the need arises.
- Remember the student's birthday- do something special.
- Verify that the student has written or emailed the monthly report to the Inbound Coordinator. Respect your student's privacy and only read the report if the student requests you to do so.
- The confidential section of the monthly report will be seen only by the Inbound Coordinator and may be used to discuss host family or YEO difficulties experienced by the student.
- Go over the travel rules with your student. Any overnight or any travel outside the district must be agreed upon by the Inbound Coordinator and/or the District Chair.
- Process the application and visa information form immediately upon receiving it from the Inbound Coordinator. The student is waiting anxiously to hear where they are assigned and are very excited to make their travel plans to come to America.
- The RYE program is designed to expose students to a variety of American lifestyles. Ensure that you have at least three host families lined up to house your student during the year. The YEO must comply with the safety requirements outlined in the signed Club Compliance statement with regards to applications, interviews, and criminal background checks for host families.
- Ask your Club President for permission to do a weekly/monthly update of your students' activities and interests. Include your new members. Help them understand the wonders of this program and encourage them to get involved.
- Use one simple guide to help with your decisions; if your son or daughter were involved in the program or a specific situation, how would you like him or her treated?

Inbound Program Timeline for YEO and Counselors

A host family orientation should be held by the YEO or assigned Rotarian Counselor to discuss how the year will be conducted and what expectations the families should have of the YEO or Counselor. Use the **Host Family Manual** prepared by Rotary International as your guide. All host families, even the experienced ones, need to be visited in their homes at least once a year. **The host family orientation must be held prior to the student's arrival.**

August – New students should plan to arrive between August 15-25th to allow the student a week or two to acclimatize prior to school starting. Have a small welcoming group meet the student at the airport but don't arrange any parties until their jet lag is over after a couple of days. This is a good time to get the student registered for school— schedule an appointment with the School Counselor before the student arrives.

The Counselor should ensure that the student has gone over the **first night questionnaire** with their host family and that there are no problems with either of their expectations. You might consider having the Club YEO or Counselor help the first host family arrange a **small party** for all the host families and also maybe the club youth exchange committee members to introduce themselves to your student and each other. The Club probably should pay for the refreshments.

The Counselor should take your student to the bank to establish an appropriate bank account(s) and teach them how to use it. Each student must come with an **emergency fund** of \$500. The emergency fund must be set up in a separate account (usually a savings account) to be accessed by any two: the student, the counselor and the counselor's significant other, YEO, or Club Treasurer.

The YEO or Counselor must safeguard this money and also may want to safeguard the student's **visa, return airline ticket, and passport**. Copies of the documents should be made for the student, club and Inbound Coordinator.

The Counselor and/or First Host Family member should be with your student while they register for school. Pay attention to their language abilities and sign them up for classes that will be interesting but not overly taxing. They are not here to do homework all the time, but they are here to attend school, learn our culture, and do well at the classes they attempt. Most students will not get any credit for this year of school and rarely will they be allowed to graduate from your high school. They may have already graduated back home, so be careful that boredom doesn't set in.

Since you will want your student to attend your weekly meetings, try and arrange the class schedule so as to not irritate too many teachers with their absences. Schedule the difficult classes for times when they will not be away for Rotary meetings or if they have an activity, they will not miss the important classes.

The District encourages every club to require their Inbound Student attend each weekly club meeting and fund raising or social event. Exposure to the club members and their spouses will lead to increased inclusion in their family outings. Simple dinners, movies, and trips with the club members are of great interest to most students. Less club involvement creates a greater burden on the host families to entertain your student. The entertaining of your student should be a shared responsibility.

September - Your student is already involved in school and should be urged to sign up for group activities. Examples include band, chorus, sports, dramas, and pep clubs. These activities will help speed the students' acceptance into the school community. The student who goes home every day after school to watch TV or chat on-line for hours will be bored, frequently homesick, and will complain that the exchange was not what they had expected. It will be the host Mom and Dad who will be the first to notice problems and the Counselor needs to be able to suggest a plan to orient the situation back to normal.

On the other hand, be sure to counsel your student to not focus all their energy and time into one activity to the exclusion of family, friends, and schoolwork. A varsity sport will often demand all of their time, be careful as they did not come on this exchange to only play soccer, football or some other sport. Mandatory District meetings and family activities should take priority over any sporting event. Talk to the coach ahead of time to head off conflicts.

All Inbound students must attend the **Fall Inbound Orientation** which will be held sometime in mid to late September once the Inbound Coordinator has been able to sort the Homeland Security/SEVIS documents for US Inbound students. The cost for this conference has been included in the District fee paid by each club to host a student.

The hosting club is responsible for getting their Inbound student to and from the various District events. A district event calendar is available online at **www.youthexchange5100.org**.

Check to ensure that your student is attending your weekly club meetings. You may need to arrange transportation to and from the school. Ask your members to volunteer, as it's a good way for them to meet the new student

October- Continue to encourage your club members to get involved with your student. We suggest that the president allow the student to give a 3-minute update to the members at least monthly at the Rotary meeting.

Continue to monitor your student's progress to acclimate to their new school and host family. Continue to go over the ways to avoid homesickness with both the student and the host family.

November – Discuss with your student about their presentation to the club and establish

a date for the presentation. If the student's command of the English language is strong then get the presentation done as soon as possible. If the student is having trouble with the language then you may want to wait until later on in the exchange for the presentation.

Your student may need some help or guidance with the presentation Remember how you felt at their age having to get up in front of a group to give a speech. Please make sure that the format being used by the student is in line with the club's presentation equipment (slides, PowerPoint, Canva, etc)

Be sure to invite all the host parents to the student's presentation so they can gain more knowledge about the background of their student. Be sure to introduce those families to the club to give them proper recognition for their involvement in the program.

It is also a good idea to plan early on for moving the student to new host families. Make sure everyone knows the plan and agrees with the plan and stick to it.

December - Be sure the student is invited to your club's Holiday Party. The Club may want to purchase the student a present. The YEO or Counselor should explain to the student that the club members are not expecting a gift in return. However, the host families should each receive something from the student or their bio-parents at this holiday. The Counselor may need to help remind the student to make this happen.

January – Your Inbound student should be in their second host family by now. Go over the adjustments needed for all to feel comfortable with the move. Review that the new family discussed the questionnaire and resolve any problem areas. Notify the District Inbound Coordinator of the new address and contact information by updating YEAH. The District is required to update the Federal Government whenever the student changes address.

Some inbound students will be asked by their country officer to participate in the January Outbound Orientation Country Fair. Your student will let you know if they need any assistance getting to this event, usually held in Salem, OR.

All Inbound students must attend the **Eastern Oregon Discovery**, which usually takes place in late January. Again, the cost of this weekend has been paid for in the District fee.

Continue to have your student attend weekly meetings. Continue to encourage your student to get involved with extracurricular school activities. Monitor what they are doing and who they are considering as friends.

Encourage your club members to spend some time with your student by inviting them on outings or trips. Know the travel rules and submit travel requests when overnight or out

of district trips are planned.

March - the applications for your new Inbound begin to arrive. If you receive yours, return the **guarantee forms** and associated paperwork back to the Country Officer within 30 days. Delays may cause problems for your student to obtain their Visa. Finish lining up your host families immediately and begin to communicate with your new student.

May – Continue to monitor the monthly reports and encourage club involvement with your Inbound student. Now is the time when return tickets and itineraries must be organized for their flights home. Please forward a copy of the plan to the Country Officer as soon as it has been established. If your student graduates from your high school, provide the appropriate recognition for this accomplishment.

All Inbounds and new Outbounds are required to attend the **District Conference** which is usually scheduled in April/May. Please make sure that the student has a ride to and from the District Conference.

June/July – Current Inbounds will be departing very soon after the conference to return home to their bio-parents. Provide them an opportunity to say thank you and good-bye to the club. Schedule a going-away party and invite all the host families. Be sure to give those families the appropriate recognition and thanks.

Inbound Student Assignment

We do our best to rotate the country assignments between the clubs so you will receive students from a variety of countries. This diversity is considered to be one of the benefits of our program to your Club and community. Exposure to a number of different cultures and customs is one of the many values of each exchange.

If your host parent situation seems to indicate a requirement for a specific gender because of the other children in the family or the living arrangements, we will make every effort to meet that requirement. Otherwise, we typically will alternate genders each year.

Locating Host Families

Once your Club has committed to accept an Inbound Student, the process to locate host families should begin. Do not wait until the last moment, as this part of the job can be difficult sometimes. As the Club YEO, finding and approving these families is your responsibility. It is encouraged and advised that each student be hosted by at least three (3) families over the 10+ months that they are with you. This means that each family would host for a 3-4 month

period. Additional information for prospective host families can be obtained from the District Inbound Coordinator. The YEO or Counselor must conduct a personal interview with each potential host family and retain a **written application** form to ensure that only qualified, safe dwellings and families are approved. Our program will not continue to succeed if the YEO fails to find good loving Host Families for their student. Much effort may be required, but the big smiles on your students' faces will make it all worthwhile!

Also as per the Club's signed compliance statement, all Host Family members who are 18 years or over need Criminal Background checks done prior to the student arriving. Any criminal background check that is done which reveals criminal charges will need to be reviewed with the Inbound Coordinator or District Chairman prior to the student being able to live in the home.

Criminal Background checks are required to be kept on file for at least 7 years as per the Club Compliance Statement signed. Updated criminal background checks are required every year for host family members and Youth exchange volunteers described on the Club compliance statement.

In many cases, it seems that finding host families is the most difficult part of a YEO's responsibilities. The following suggestions may be of assistance to you in soliciting these families:

- Remember that host families are not required to be that of a Rotarian. Some clubs utilize all non-Rotarian families out of necessity.
- Use previous host families to assist you in recruiting other host families. Don't rely on the same families to continue to host students. Try to spread it around among many of your Club members and the community.
- Discuss hosting opportunities at Rotary social events as well as at your weekly meetings. The spouses are often the ones that will be instrumental in getting their family to host a student, or may know an interested neighbor.
- Consider the hosting possibilities of Rotarians from other Clubs who live in your community. They may want to share the experience but feel that they cannot host because they live outside the boundaries of the high school serving their home club.
- We suggest placing the student with an experienced host family at first if one is available. The first section of the exchange is usually the most difficult because the student will be going through phases of homesickness and culture shock.
- Place an article in the school newspaper before the end of school to get any student interested in other cultures to talk to their parents about hosting.
- The student must stay enrolled in the same school all year. This generally means

that all host families need to live within the boundaries of that school district. Families just outside those lines who can commit to problem free transportation can be considered.

- Consider submitting a notice to your local churches and Park District soliciting any interested families to contact you.
- A notice sent to your local newspaper publicizing the Program and the need for host families can be beneficial. Combining this notice with information about your current Inbound Student can be an attention grabber.
- Families of past Outbound Students can be a great source of assistance.

One of the most important ingredients is time. Exchange students (as do all teenagers) require a lot of time. Initially, time is spent getting acquainted with the student, sounding out what they like, laying down boundaries and working out rules for living together, etc.

Time must be spent for all aspects of schooling--from adjusting course level to driving the student to sports practices or other meetings, to helping with homework to attending performances, etc. Time must be spent on cooking, cleaning and washing for another person and on teaching them how to help. Time must be spent on making sure the student is driven to Rotary functions and to the student's social activities with new friends; sometimes long distances.

Most importantly, time must be spent with the student in talking—talking about new feelings, questions, confusions, insecurities, traditions, and life in general. Your exchange student is dealing not only with a foreign country, food, school, and customs, but also with normal teenage feelings and issues, most likely in the following order of priority: the opposite sex & friends, clothes, food, family and school.

Inbound Student Processing

Prior to the arrival of an Inbound Student and after the student's arrival, the Rotary Club YEO bears the responsibilities to organize how the Club will handle the requirements inherent in hosting a student.

Processing an Inbound Application

Upon receiving the new application from the Inbound Coordinator, typically in the months February to April, the YEO must complete and process the guarantee form as quickly as possible. A delay will cause your student to be delayed getting a Visa to enter the USA.

- **Guarantee Form/ Visa Application** – Guarantee Forms can be automatically generated through the YEAH system. You may need a Country Officer to assist you, or you can use the online fillable PDF on the website. Obtain the signatures from the

Club President and Secretary, as well as from the high school administrator with the school stamp. **Ensure that all signatures are originals and are in blue ink.** No copies are allowed. Your student will use this form to obtain his/her visa and make the necessary travel arrangements.

- The first host family should be the *real* first family, not a nominee. If a change is found to be necessary later, the Inbound Coordinator has a form to make the change. If the Rotary counselor is the first family, a second Rotarian should be named to be the counselor during that hosting period. The monthly allowance must be at least \$100 per month and all school expenses are the responsibility of the host Club.
- Our goal is to take no longer than 45 days to complete the turnaround of these documents within the District. This means that the club should try to spend no longer than 30 days completing the forms. Preparing ahead makes this an easy task.
- Your student may have to make a personal appearance at the US embassy in their country for the approval of their entry visa. The best policy is to return the paperwork as quickly as possible so your student has adequate time to go through the visa approval process.

After all forms have been completed and returned to the Country Officer, both the YEO and the first host family should begin correspondence with the new student. The YEO or Counselor could tell the student about your community and the area of the District where you live, provide information about the weather, school and other items of interest about your community and Rotary Club.

Host Families could describe their family and provide the names and ages of children and also provide details about pets, occupations, or provide photos of the family and home. Host families could also describe activities that the family members are interested in and what opportunities may exist for your student in the areas of interest expressed in their application.

The YEO would also present the application to your Club- Announce the name, age, country and other pertinent information about the student at one of your weekly meetings. Keep encouraging the members to be involved in the student's life and the search for host families.

Your Student Arrives

Here are some suggestions relating to what steps the YEO should follow as your new student arrives:

- When you know the itinerary of the flight arrangements, spread that information to all of the host families and Club members.

- Meet the flight at the airport. We would suggest that the assigned Counselor, YEO and first host family attend. Because the student typically has been flying for many hours it would be advisable not to plan a big welcome party on the day of arrival. Let your student get over jet-lag and settle in with the first host family before having such a get together.
- Ensure that your student immediately notifies their bio-parents that they have arrived safely and that all is well. Think like a parent.
- Have a small party to meet your new student and invite Club members and their families, other high school students, and the other host families. Target the first weekend they are in town. The club should pay for the refreshments but keep it simple.
- The Counselor should try and establish your relationship with your student as soon as possible. The following items should be dealt with:
 - Provide all Host Family/Counselor information (names, addresses, and contact numbers) to the Country Officer.
 - Check the passport and visa for expiration dates to assure that they will not expire before July 15th. Make photocopies of important documents for your student to carry, to send to the Inbound Coordinator, and for your file. Safeguard the originals where you can access when necessary.
 - Examine the student's airline return ticket to assure that it contains the provision for an open or changeable return. Emergencies or early returns are a problem with a definite return dated ticket. If there is a specified return date, make note of the date so appropriate arrangements can be made. Place the ticket with the other documents for safekeeping. Students are apt to lose any or all documents during their multiple moves from family to family.
 - Each student is required to have a \$500 cash emergency fund. This money should also be safeguarded, typically in a savings account. This money may be used for any emergency such as medical, dental or (at your discretion) - special events (Prom) but must be replaced immediately by the bio-parents so that it is available for the next emergency.
 - Discuss sports eligibility and the availability of club sports for your student.
 - Discuss the outcome of the Host Family First Night Questionnaire. Review the RYE rules and expectations with your student.
 - Discuss how they will receive their allowance, how much it will be and confirm

receipt each month. It is often easiest if an automatic payment is set up with their new bank account so the process is automatic.

- Assist your student by setting up an appropriate account at a local bank and instruct them on how to use the account and the danger of being overdrawn. This account may then be a tool for monies to be transferred to the student by their bio-parents as well as a place to deposit their monthly allowance checks. Check to see if one of your Club members has a banking connection that may provide this account with no service charges. Include yourself as an authorized signer on the account so you can help in time of need. An ATM card may be advisable for the teen on the go. If the bio-parents provided a credit card for their use, help them understand its use in our stores.
- Assist your student to register at the high school. The student should take appropriate classes considering their language abilities. Arrange classes to not be too difficult, where they will meet the most people, have the greatest opportunity to experience our culture, and have fun. Remember to arrange the schedule to let your student attend your weekly Club meetings without upsetting any teachers. **This exchange is culturally based rather than one with an academic emphasis.** A heavy course load need not be designed so they can graduate from your school. The students move to at least three families over the year to gain maximum cultural exposure. Most students get little or no credit for their courses taken here. Classes designed for heavy homework should be avoided so the student has more time to interact with their new family and friends. **However, stress that full attendance and effort in school is absolutely required, or your student will be sent home. It is also very important to ask the school that they discuss any class changes with you and not allow the student to make class changes without your blessing.**

YEO and Counselor Responsibilities During The Year

Here are suggestions regarding what the club YEO should do during the 10+ months the student is hosted by the Club:

- Carry out appropriate Youth Volunteer, Counselor and Host Family Training as required by program Certification compliance.
- Check up regularly with the Counselor to make sure all is well. When the student arrives at the meetings, introduce the student to as many people as possible. Listen to what your student says and help them work through any problems.
- The Counselor and YEO are directly responsible for the welfare of the student assigned to your Club. The District Committee members are available and willing to provide any assistance required. All of us are, and should be, concerned that the exchange is a

good experience for all concerned (the student, the host families, the Club, and the community).

- Develop a lifeline of names and telephone numbers for your student that includes the District Coordinator and all three of the host families. Notify the Country Officer each time your student changes families so we may comply with government regulations.
- Be familiar with the information contained in Chapter 5 so those points can be discussed with the host parents.
- Contact the current host family at least once a month to review the progress of the student and determine if they are having any problems or concerns with the student. Resolve any conflicts or determine that a change of families is needed if problems are so large that they cannot be corrected. Always back what the host family wants over what the student may demand as long as the family is reasonable and fair. The student needs to blend into the family and culture as quickly as possible. Be sure that the First Night Questionnaire was completely discussed with each family by the student. Encourage the families to not treat the student like a guest.
- If your student has language difficulties make arrangements for help or a tutor. Don't let the student keep struggling or avoiding contact with our world because they can't speak English well enough.
- Arrange for transportation to all weekly meetings and to both the optional and mandatory District RYE events. This transportation need not be provided by the YEO, just responsibly arranged by the YEO. It is acceptable to ask the host parents to help with some of these trips, but it should not be required of them. Help your student maintain a personal appointment calendar and fill in the mandatory dates so your student may become proactive and not always reacting at the last moment.
- The YEO must be aware of the District Travel Guidelines and enforce the need to have the travel request forms to be filed by the student before any overnight travel is attempted. The host parents, YEO, and District Inbound Coordinator must approve all travel arrangements. The safety of the student and our ability to reach them in an emergency is our reason for these restrictions.
- Arrange with your Club treasurer to issue monthly allowance checks to your student-auto deposit to the checking account would be preferred. The amount of this check must be at least \$100. Additional funds should be provided for school lunches, book, lab fees, and other required school related fees. Temporarily withholding allowance can help correct minor behavioral situations, but the topic should be discussed with the Country Officer so we can all be on the same page. It is ok for your Club to be generous, but be careful that it is appropriate and that the other students in the District will be receiving like assistance. The bio-parents should fund

trips, clothing purchases, and gifts.

- One point that is frequently overlooked is corresponding with your student's sponsoring Rotary Club and family back home. They are naturally quite anxious to know how their student is getting along and they're interested in your club and its activities. Make it a point to send a report to the sponsoring club and ask them questions about theirs. Read any correspondence at your Club meetings to help the members of your club realize the true internationality of the organization to which they belong.
- Arrange for the student to present at least two (2) programs for your Club during their year with you. They should have arrived with some pictures depicting their family, home, school, and community. If they have not brought them, coordinate with their bio-parents to have them sent to the student soon. Assist your student to organize and practice this presentation and locate the necessary visual equipment and screen for their presentation at your club. The student should not be asked to do this talk within the first month or until they have an adequate command of the English language. The final presentation you should require would be a good-bye and thank you^l at the conclusion of their stay with your club.
- Refer any problems or concerns you have during the stay of your student to the District Country Officer. Don't wait to consult the District until the problem becomes so bad that you are requesting to send the student home for disciplinary reasons. ***If your student breaks the RYE rules severely, the District will send them home without the Club making the request.*** It is important that the rules are uniformly enforced throughout the District because students exchange information when they get together at the meetings and via emails and Facebook. Tough love, consistency, and being proactive are frequently the key words to success. A successful YEO and Counselor should not be the students' buddy, but rather strive to be a confidant, fair counselor, and facilitator.

YEO and Counselor Responsibilities At IB Student Departure

The year is coming to an end, but the YEO responsibilities continue to have an important part in the success of the Program for your student. Here are some suggestions to end the year on a high note:

- Assist your student in making return travel arrangements. They usually have to be submitted by the middle of February.
- If your student intends to have their parents arrive for a visit right at the end of the year, discuss the situation with the student's Country Officer.
- Confer with the airline to determine their baggage weight limits. Frequently it is necessary to ship any excess baggage by boat or Airexpress, as the cost is great when you exceed the airline limits. Typically, the student is allowed 2 bags with a

combined total of 70-100 pounds. Suggest sending winter coats, accumulated gifts and memories in the spring to help avoid this problem in July.

- If the student doesn't want to take their entire belongings home with them, encourage donations to charities or, as some clubs do, add coats, mittens, and hats to the collection available for use by the next student you will be hosting.
- Plan on going to the airport with your student for a last good-bye. Remember that you have played an important part in their experience and they will really value your level of care. Determine how much lead-time is required by the airline for security and make sure that your student is there on time.
- When travel arrangements and the departure date have been determined, complete the Departure Form and send it to the Country Officer. Assist your student to close out their bank account. Advise your student to take the remainder of their funds for any emergency expenses during their travel home. Counsel them to not spend all of their money prior to departure so an emergency can be covered. Be sure that any medical deductibles have been collected and that the student does not owe money to any host parent for telephone calls, etc. It is really important that the year end upbeat.
- Arrange for the host families to attend a club meeting before the student leaves so that they can feel appreciated by the Club and the student. A little token gift (flowers) is appropriate. The student should be given the opportunity to say thank you to your Club for the hospitality and assistance during their exchange year.
- Check with those host parents to see if they have an interest in being a host parent again in the future, or if they know another interested party for you to contact.
- Visit with your student privately and ask for suggestions on how the Program may be improved, what the student liked and disliked. The student is more likely to be honest and open just before their departure. Please listen carefully for the benefit of the Program.

Chapter 3- The Outbound Program

The following chapter of information is provided to assist the Club YEO as the Outbound Student aspect of the RYE Program develops within the Club. Remember that the District Committee members are always available as resource people should you have any problem or situation that is not addressed during the following section.

Outbound Student Selection

At PETS (President Elect Training Seminar) each year, the District Committee will forward a Club Compliance letter to the Presidents of all clubs in the district for participation in the following year's exchange program. Once the compliance letter is duly signed and returned, the club will then be able to proceed on with the process. ***If your club elects to send out a student, then your club must also take a student in return.***

Outbound Student Selection Process

The District recommends that clubs begin searching for Outbound Student applications before the end of the school year. Many clubs wait until the start of the fall semester, but please remember that the selection process should be completed by the end of September.

- The first step of any selection process is to advertise the availability of the exchange program with the schools and within the community. Most clubs utilize the school counselors/administrators and the foreign language teachers as a resource and referral source to locate applicants. Stories in the school newspaper about a current outbound or inbound may help draw attention to the exchange program potential for the students at the school.
- All applicants must fit within the requirements established by Rotary International. Students must be between ages 15-18 and must be in high school when they apply. **There are only a few countries that will accept Grade 12 students who are finishing school and will go on exchange after they have graduated. These students will still have to continue on in high school while on exchange. Preferably the student chosen would not yet have graduated.**
- **Adaptability** is a keyword to apply to all students. We have found that the top ranked student in their school may not be able to adapt to life in a small town in Brazil, whereas the C average student may be able to easily adapt based upon their life experiences, maturity, independence, and outlook.
- Students applying should fill out a Preliminary Outbound Application to provide the necessary information to the club to screen for qualified students. Clubs

should provide necessary printed information about the program and if necessary hold announced information sessions to provide a forum to answer student inquiries. Provide website addresses to help students satisfy their curiosity about our Program.

- Club interviews with the student applicants and parents should be conducted by mid-September at the latest. Parents and students should be provided with all the necessary information for them to be able to make a decision if chosen. Final club selections must be completed no later than the end of September.
- Once your Club has selected a student, the long term application must be completed. The District will hold an Application Seminar in early October for both LTEP and STEP students. All applications are online. Careful attention must be paid to obtain all signatures in **original blue ink** or you will find the application sent back for repairs. Follow all the detailed instructions to minimize problem areas and possible rejection at the District Interviews.

Conducting the Outbound Selection Interview

An interview committee should meet before any interview is conducted to read and become familiar with the information in the Preliminary Applications. The members should agree upon the basic questions to be asked of each student and their parents, and any other questions that the interviewers feel necessary. To avoid any bias or discrimination, each applicant should be given the opportunity to answer the same general questions.

It is recommended that the student be interviewed separately, then talk with the parents alone, conclude with the parents and student together. Look for basic changes in attitudes when alone and then together. Students who are basically independent can usually handle the exchange situation better than those who are overly dependent on the parents for all decisions, or those students who are just doing the exchange routine trying to please or escape their parents.

The District Committee cannot guarantee students the country of their choice. There are a finite number of exchanges available to any given country as controlled by the number of Inbound Students received by our district. Some countries are more popular and appealing than others. Students are encouraged to realize that the exchange experience will be the same in Europe, as in South America, and so on. Each applicant must rank all exchanging countries and can typically expect to receive one of their top 4 choices. Note that some countries have a requirement of some familiarity with their language before the start of the exchange.

The **key trait** to look for in the student is **adaptability**. Does the student have the desire to adapt to a different language, culture, food, and way of life?

- Do they have an interest in learning the language by immersing themselves into the culture?
- Will this student be a good ambassador of the Rotary ideals, an ambassador of our community, school, and country?

Will this applicant be flexible in accepting a country assignment? Reject an applicant willing to accept only a specific country assignment; they've missed the point of the Program.

The students and parents should also be clear that the student will most likely have to repeat their school year when they return. The parents and students should also be made aware of what the approximate costs to go on exchange would be.

Costs include an open ended or changeable plane ticket (could be \$2,500.00), medical insurance (normally \$800.00 - \$900.00), cost of trips to the consulate, cost of language training, and any other fees of approximately.

Also, many countries run language camps when the students arrive and there is often a cost for these language camps. There are also costs to obtain the student visa and the everyday costs for clothing, spending money, and any optional trips.

Selection Committee

It is recommended that the selection committee use a rating system form with all the criteria involved in the selection so that all members of the committee are judging the students on identical factors. The ratings should be quantified, and the highest scoring student chosen. It is usually good to discuss the top choices within the committee and get a definite majority opinion on the selection of the primary student.

If your applicant has a handicap, please discuss that factor with the District Outbound Coordinator to determine if an exchange would be feasible for that student. In most cases an exchange may be possible.

Once the decision has been made, the students should be notified as soon as practical. It is a good practice to notify the best student first. If for some reason the best candidate does not accept the nomination, then the next student can be offered the primary sponsorship position immediately.

The YEO should immediately notify the District Coordinator with the contact information of those students selected. The YEO should use the LTEP Nomination Form and the STEP Nomination Form for their students. Critical information is the Student and Parents contact address, phone numbers, including cell phone numbers

and e-mail addresses.

Completing the Formal Application

Once your Club has selected a student, the Rotary International Long form application must be completed. An application seminar will be held in October to assist in explaining the application along with tips to make the student's application shine.

- **All signatures** on the applications must be **original blue ink**. No stamps or copies are acceptable.
- The YEO must review the Application Checklist for completeness and ensure that all items are included as required.
- The Club President signatures must be **original and in blue ink** just like all the rest of the signatures.
- Pay attention to the request for the date format of year, month, and day.
- The **deadline** for receipt of the completed applications by the Outbound Coordinator is **September 30th**.
- Each application must be complete in every detail. These applications are legal documents that are used to procure Visas, Entry Permits, and are the basis for all transactions with foreign governments and immigration personnel.

Preparing Your Outbound Student

Assisting our outbound candidates to prepare for their year abroad is of highest concern to the District YE Committee. Failure of an Outbound Student to attend our training sessions could result in being dropped from the program. There are at least TWO Outbound orientation sessions that the student must attend. The first orientation session which usually takes place in early January and requires the parents/guardians to attend.

The club YEO should have the outbound student attend some Rotary meetings at your club, so that the student can introduce themselves to the club and update them on the progress of the exchange process. Attendance at meetings also allows the student to learn more about Rotary.

District Conference

- Outbound Long-Term Students and Current Inbound Students must attend this

conference which takes place in late April or early May.

- Transportation must be arranged by the YEO both to and from this conference.
- All students are expected to stay for the complete conference.
- All students are expected to participate in the Speech Contest for the honor of speaking at the conference. Two Inbound and Two Outbound are selected. The speech is usually based upon the Rotary Theme for the Year.
- Students are also HIGHLY encouraged to participate in the student talent show, which is a highlight of every District Conference.

Prepare to Depart

- Has your student made their slide presentation?
- Plan a farewell party. Nothing elaborate is necessary and make sure the student understands that you are expecting correspondence during their exchange year.
- Reinforce the need for the student to submit their monthly report to their District Country Officer, but that you are also interested in hearing about what they have been experiencing.
- Provide several club banners for your student to hand out when visiting a club in their host country. Remember that they represent your club and our Rotary ideals.
- The communication should not be just one way while your student is abroad. Keep the lines open with emails about what your club is doing, forward your club's newsletters, and make sure that you receive information from the student's parents on how they think things are going. If there appears to be a problem developing, contact the District Country Officer for assistance.

Chapter 4 - Working with Host Families

A universal problem for all Rotary Clubs involved in the Youth Exchange program is finding families willing to host an Inbound Student. This problem is discussed at length in the following paragraphs and hopefully you will find some of these points to be helpful in your search for host families in your community.

Who should Host

The biggest barrier to a family becoming a host family is "fear of the unknown". Informing the prospective host family about the benefits of the program and their responsibilities as host parents help to break down this barrier. Host families, including children, **should always be interviewed by the YEO** before a student is placed in the home. **Criminal Background checks are required** for any family member 18 or over. Following up with the personal references is very important to safeguard your new student. Use the Host Family Application available online at www.youthexchange.org.

Begin your search for families immediately upon your Club making a commitment for an Inbound Student. Take in several applications and then when you receive the student application in the spring, finalize which families will be most appropriate for the gender and interests of the student. Doing it early allows the prospective families to correspond with the student. It also allows for your student's Visa to be obtained without delay.

There is no "perfect" family situation that makes for a good host family. The most important ingredient of a good host family is the willingness to show love and understanding to the student being hosted and make them feel part of the family. Other traits:

- The family does not have to have a Rotarian Mom or Dad to qualify.
- It is not necessary to have children the same age as the hosted student. This helps with the adaptation to a new culture, but is definitely not required.
- Successful host families have been an older couple whose own children have grown up and left home.
- A young couple with small children, or no children, or children in a variety of age categories.
- Families with children the same general age as the student, but with diverse interests.
- Know that the parents will support and enforce the RYE rules and guidelines and will not treat the student as a guest in their home. It goes without saying that the

family should be of good moral character and well regarded in the community.

The assigned Rotarian Counselor cannot be a host parent

Finding Host Parents

- NEVER coerce or “guilt” any family into being a host family. This will only create problems later if they are not doing it willingly from the beginning.
- Use previous host families to assist you in recruiting other host families. They have first- hand knowledge and would not be regarded as “selling ” the program in an official capacity. Don’t rely on the same families to continue to host students. Try to spread it around among many of your interested current or past Club members and the community.
- Discuss hosting opportunities at Rotary social events as well as at your weekly club meetings. The spouses are often the ones that will be instrumental in getting their family to host.
- The student must stay enrolled in the same school all year. This generally means that all host families need to live within the boundaries of that school district.
- Families just outside those lines who can commit to problem free transportation can be considered.
- A notice sent to your local newspaper discussing the Program and the need for host families can be beneficial. Combining this notice with an interview about your current Inbound Student is an attention grabber. Submit a picture of the current student so they can put a face with the idea.
- Families of former Outbound students can be a great source of assistance. Many of these families feel an obligation to participate in the program because of the opportunity that was provided for their own child or children. Make personal “opportunity calls ” on families that you or your committee feel would make good host families or be interested in supporting the program.

Discussing the Advantages of Hosting a Student

Your first visit with the prospective host family should serve as an interview, and an opportunity to plant the seed. Review the responsibilities and benefits of the program and provide them printed information about the program (Host Family Manual). As you discuss the opportunities created by the program, be sure to include the children in the interview. They

must be happy at the prospect of having a host brother or sister or it will not work out well. Ensure that both the husband and wife are in agreement to host. It is the wife who frequently takes on most of the responsibilities of hosting; she is the one that may be spending more of her time with the student.

Assure the prospective host family that they will have the full support of the local Rotary Club and the YEO during the time they are hosting the student. Emphasize our suggested policy that you will always support the host family decisions during a dispute with your student. However, stress that resolution and harmony will be your goal. Some advantages you can mention when discussing the program are:

- The opportunity to share their home and love with a person from another country and culture.
- The opportunity to learn about another culture from the hosted student. Develop a broader outlook on world affairs by helping a student understand our culture and customs.
- Development of a life-long friendship with a person from another country. Participate in Rotary's efforts to promote friendship and understanding between nations.
- Help their children learn a new language and have them assist a young person learn English.

YEO Guidelines and Host Families

It is the responsibility of the YEO to educate and train host families so they understand the workings of the RYE program. Please make good use of the Host Family Manual prepared by your District committee. This manual is a valuable tool for host families.

- Before your student arrives, even if all the families have not been selected, have a casual meeting to discuss the general rules and guidelines that each family will need to enforce for the student, such as curfews, travel/rides, and attendance at meetings.
- Agree on dates on which the student will move from one family to the next. Review procedures for handling special dates while the student is being hosted, such as Christmas, family birthdays, special family trips, spring break, and Prom.
- Establish the order of **priority** for control of the student. First priority is the RYE program followed by the Club activities. The current host family has second priority followed by former host parents, other Rotarians, then their new friends. Their bio-parents should be consulted on different issues, but the Program has the end say

in what should happen and when.

- Families should be encouraged not to schedule activities that will conflict with the District dates if at all possible. The District Conferences have a greater priority than activities such as Homecoming, a football game, or Prom. With proper advance notice to the District Country Officer, arrangements and compromises can be made so a student who is participating in a special school event can attend.
- ***The application package contains a statement from the bio- parents releasing their guardianship and establishing guardianship with the current host parents to make all decisions such as schooling, medical treatment, and social activities. This form should be taken along on any trip the family and student take together so emergency decisions may be made by the host parents and be accepted by the authorities.***
- Review the Rotary rules and guidelines discussed that each student must abide by during his/her stay.
- Review the need for and benefits of each family utilizing the First Night Questionnaire.
- Review the need to learn English and the importance of attending and making an earnest and continuous effort at school.
- Discuss having a "back-up" family for the student in the event a problem develops, the student will have a place to stay until the problem is resolved. This back-up family will also provide a place for the student if the host family needs to leave town temporarily and cannot take the student along. Many times a family that has hosted previously will be willing to serve in this capacity or the Counselor or YEO can fill this role as long as they are vetted to be host families.
- Sometimes what appear to be problems are only misunderstandings and can be resolved easily if caught soon enough.
- Discuss the symptoms of homesickness and what measures can be taken to combat this frequent problem.
- Finding host families requires effort on the part of the YEO and committee. We know that families rarely beat down the door to become host families. With the proper approach and preparation, the job can become easier and prospective families are there if you are willing to work at selling them on the idea.
- Not all families will make good host families even if they have expressed an interest in

the program.

- It is important to have a selection process, or criteria, established for host families just as it is important in the selection of an Outbound Student. Apply the rule of "would you let your own children live with this family?" Finding the proper family for the student resolves many problems in advance.
- Placing the student in a family that you do not believe would be a "good" host family only delays the problem. The student may have to be moved from the family eventually or may be miserable while living in that environment.
- Inviting a stranger into your home for 3-4 months requires a special type of person, and host families are special types of people. They provide love and understanding to a young, impressionable stranger who may not even be able to speak our language.
- Consider giving these people the highest recognition for their contributions from your Rotary Club.

Chapter 5 - The Host Family Viewpoint

Hosting a high school student from another country is a challenge – and an opportunity. It is an opportunity to get in touch with a young person and share his/her hopes and ambitions for typically a 3-4 month period. The hosting experience can enrich every member of the family. In the broader sense, the host family will share in the experience of a student gaining knowledge about American/ culture and customs. While at the same time the host family will learn about the culture and customs of another country. It is through this experience that both participants will share in the promotion of international understanding and fellowship.

The following information is intended to provide information from the host family viewpoint about the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. We have found that those families informed about the program share a more pleasant and enjoyable host parent/student relationship.

Program Rules

The RYE Program is governed by rules established over many years of exchanges. Rotary Youth Exchange and Rotary International require that all students and their parents participating in the program agree to follow our rules and must sign a copy of the rules to indicate their agreement. A copy of the rules form is included for review. These rules represent the conditions under which a student will be allowed to continue to participate in the exchange program, and will be reviewed with the student several times during the year at the various conferences that they will attend to ensure that they all understand the conditions of the exchange program.

The International rules include provisions that are common to all young people:

- Obey the laws of the USA. If found guilty of violating any law, a student cannot expect assistance from either their sponsoring country or Rotary Club, nor from our local Rotary. The student will be returned home as soon as the legal authorities release them.
- No student may participate in drivers education programs to obtain a license to drive a car.
- Stealing is prohibited. There are no exceptions.
- Smoking and vaping is discouraged. If the student application states that they do not smoke, they will be held to that position throughout the year.
- Visits by parents, friends, or siblings are strongly discouraged. An approved visit may only take place during the last quarter of the year. The student is not to be pulled from school during an approved visit.

School

- Students **MUST** attend school regularly. If your student is not attending a minimum of 90% of school hours, please notify the District Country Officer. Students that are ill frequently or call to come home frequently may need to be assessed and addressed.
- While attending high school, all students must attempt to pass every class and participate in school activities. Students are not to miss any classes unless there is a legitimate excuse.
- Host parents should be willing to monitor the study habits of the student. Be aware of any language problem that may result in poor performance in school and assist the student with school assignments.
- If a school bus is not available to your student to get to school, it is the responsibility of the host parents to arrange for safe arrival or transportation to school on a daily basis.
- If the student participates in after school activities the host parents must arrange for safe transportation back from school. YEO's and Counselors are encouraged to help with transportation if it is a problem for the Family.

Travel Guidelines

There are certain travel restrictions placed on all exchange students. It is important that students abide by the following guidelines when traveling outside of their host community. **Please note that our guidelines may vary slightly from other Rotary districts but have been developed after many years of experience. All travel arrangements must be communicated to and approved by the District Chair, Inbound Coordinator and District Country Officer using the travel request form included.**

- Travel is permitted with host parents, or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary club or district **with proper adult chaperones** that fall within the club compliance agreement for Volunteers. Other travel must be approved by the District Chair or Inbound Coordinator, Country Officer, host club, and the host family. The student's own parents / legal guardians must approve the trip in writing exempting Rotary Youth Exchange of responsibility and liability.
- **Students may not travel alone or accompanied only by other students.**
- All overnight travel and out of district travel requires prior approval by the Club Youth Exchange Officer **and** the District Chair or Inbound Coordinator and the District Country Officer. This includes any sleepover with any other exchange students.

- The District Chair or Inbound Coordinator and the District Country Officer must be informed and have the opportunity to discuss and approve plans for:
 - Exchange student group birthday parties and gatherings where more than 3 students will be together.
 - Bio-parent visits
 - Extended travel, especially if during scheduled school days
 - Travel that will interfere with an organized and scheduled activity of the District.
- The District has developed these travel guidelines over many years of experience with the safety and well-being of the students in mind. **We must honor our pledge to the biological parents to safeguard their children.** We recognize that we exceed their expectations of guidance and care in many cases.

Guidelines for Host Families

Hosting Rotary Clubs are responsible for selecting families who are representative of the community and who are willing to assume the responsibility involved in hosting an exchange student.

The host Club should make every attempt to arrange for at least two preferably three host families during the students' 11-month stay. This gives the exchange student a broader base of understanding of our diverse culture and the community in which they will live.

Having non-Rotarian host families is very acceptable and will help you spread the word about the benefits of the RYE program and Rotary to the rest of your community.

No exchange student/host family experiences are ever the same. However, we have found that if the host family abides by the following guidelines, the experience will prove to be a good one for both the family and the student.

- Provide an environment of love and understanding. This requires that the host family treat the student as they would one of their own children living at home, not as a houseguest or visiting tourist.
- Provide housing accommodations. A **separate bed is required** and a separate room is recommended and preferred, but not required.
- If a student is sharing a room with another member of the family, that member must be of the same gender, and areas should be provided where the student may store their belongings and may be alone to study or write letters, etc.
- Provide meals, including a sack lunch if required.

- Make the student feel a part of the family.
- Assign normal household chores consistent with those performed by the other children in the family.
- Do not expect that the student will be a babysitter for other small children in the family. An occasional sitting is reasonable, but not to the exclusion of other activities. This program is not for bringing in nannies.
- Set curfew times. It is advisable for all the families hosting the student during the exchange to agree on curfew times so they will be consistent with the move to each family.
- Recommend that families do not put a TV or personal computer in the students' bedroom, as this will allow them to be isolated from the family activities.
- Participating in the decision on what TV show to watch or who controls the remote is a part of Americana.
- Remember special days for the student such as birthdays, graduation, Christmas, etc. Also, make the student aware of the special days of the host family to avoid embarrassment should they forget. Additionally, help your student remember the special dates of their bio-family.
- The first host family and the Counselor should make arrangements to meet the student upon arrival at the airport. Assist the student to get over "jet-lag" and become settled in their new surroundings. In most cases, this involves letting them sleep and unpack before making any appearance at a welcome party.
- The Counselor or Host Family should actively be involved with getting the student registered in school. Be aware of any difficulties with the language and assist the student take appropriate courses. Encourage the host family to assist the student with homework assignments. If a tutor may be needed, discuss the situation with the family and make plans to find someone soon after the student's arrival. The guidance department at the school may be able to suggest someone who is available to tutor your student. The expense should be borne by the club.
- Encourage the student to immediately become involved in school activities such as choir, leadership, sports, and drama.
- Encourage scholastic excellence. Grades should be as good as the students' grasp of the language and innate ability. The student should set a good example for the other exchange students and is not in school to "goof off". Conversely, the student has not come on this exchange to spend all of their time

doing homework and studying. A balance is necessary to create a good school experience.

- Monitor their performance. The Counselor or host parents should be encouraged to visit with the teachers to assure that all school requirements are met and that the student has the ability to comprehend their classes. If necessary, cancel one class in favor of one better suited to the student's abilities and interests. Send a copy of all school reports to the District Country Officer.
- Let the host family know that the student's emergency money, passport, visa, and return airline ticket are in a secure, but available place under your control.
- Transportation is always an issue for an exchange student. Because the student may not drive at any time, transportation must be arranged to avoid any problems.
- School related transportation is the responsibility of the host parents.
- Arranging transportation to District RYE conferences and meetings is the responsibility of the YEO.
- If your student is invited to visit another student within the district, we suggest that the host parent of that student should arrange transportation, or at least split the chore. Visiting is lots of fun, but is not a right.
- Car pools are a great idea to the optional District events. Some sponsoring clubs will arrange for your student to be picked up for their event.
- The host family must approve of all drivers providing transportation for the student. If they would not allow their own child to ride with the driver, please urge them to not allow your student to either.

Hosting Situations and the Six D's

Because we are dealing with individuals and different cultures, no two experiences are ever the same. We have found from experience that many of the students experience a degree of difficulty coping with culture shock, new surroundings and new language. Listed below are some of the situations that may occur and suggestions on how to deal with them if they should occur. This is by no means a complete list, nor does every student experience every situation discussed. The four "D's" that are the primary rules governing the program are developed in the following points.

Romantic Attachments - Serious Dating

Contrary to what the student may think, romantic attachments don't just happen. The

student, with help from the host parents and YEO, can avoid these entanglements. Our policy may be stricter than what you have for your own children regarding dating. Rotary prohibits developing a strong romantic attachment by the student, i.e. going steady (or the current word for exclusiveness) or becoming engaged. This is not only to protect the exchange student from emotional hardship when they must return to their home country, but also has significant legal ramifications. Our stance is that if your student concentrates on one individual, they will avoid other contacts and cultural events that could help make their experience as an exchange student more rich and complete. This is what the first "D" refers to in the rules.

- Remind the student that at the end of the exchange year they are going to return home (alone) even if they are "in love".
- Encourage group outings. This way the student will develop many "boy" and "girl" friends, but no steady relationship with one person. If asked to go to the movies, suggest the inclusion in a larger group. If one person persists to seek a relationship, insert parental influence to cool things off to "friendship" level. Always know who is out with your student and avoid the less desirable influences.
- We want, and actually expect that our students will attend Prom and other social functions that typically require a date. We urge the host family to help identify friends and groups to join so the experience will be fun and not romantically charged. Encourage your student to find an American/ date and not depend on their friends from the RYE program. The experience will be diminished if there is not an American/ involved to help the student participate and understand our traditions and customs.
- Explain that a steady boy/girlfriend will interfere with their ability to fully participate in the benefits of the program and will interfere with their responsibilities to the program. Experience has shown that when a steady relationship occurs the student wants to spend all of their free time with that person and neglects their host families, Rotarians, school, and the responsibilities of the RYE program.
- If your student does accept a date, spend time with them emphasizing that RYE expects our definition of no sex to apply in their case, and only our definition. Too many young students have made the mistake of thinking that they can ignore this "D" and have found out the hard way that we will send them home for violating this rule.

Drinking Alcohol

It is not at all unusual for our Inbounds to be quite experienced with drinking alcohol beverages. This is the second huge "D" in our rules. Each student and their parents have acknowledged in the written application that the RYE rules prohibit them from drinking at

all during their exchange year. Host parents are the first line of defense with this problematic area.

- Reject the idea that it's ok to drink if nobody knows.
- Limit access to beer and wine in your home during their stay.
- Allow only the most trustworthy student to attend a party that they know or suspect will have alcohol available. Apply the tough love rule again. If they do attend the outing, provide transportation and a bail out phrase that the student may use to call you at any time to signal that you need to come and pick them up when they are in danger or an uncomfortable situation.
- It is always better to just say no and leave it at that. If your family attends a party of friends where alcohol is available, the answer is a resounding no to any drinking.

Driving

The third "D" prohibits the driving of any motorized vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to snowmobiles, jet-skis, motorcycles, cars and trucks, farm tractors, riding lawnmowers and boats.

Students are not allowed to obtain a drivers license here. **Students coming to America/ who already have a license are still completely prohibited from driving at any time.**

Drug Use

This "D" is very definite in its application. All illegal drugs must be avoided completely. Host parents are requested to monitor the use of prescription drugs for any potential abuse. A student with a medical problem should arrive in North America with enough of their prescription drugs to last the year.

With the ease of obtaining drugs such as ecstasy and pot, parents must be extra vigilant, and always know whom the student is with and where they will be going. Not only will there be the possibility of court entanglements, but any student found breaking this rule will be sent home immediately. Rotary cannot interfere with the court system and will not intercede with a drug offense.

Disfigurement

Students should not seek out tattoos or piercings either done by a professional or a friend. Such behavior can lead to discipline or sending the student home.

Disrespect

Students should respect their host parents, teachers, country officers and Rotarians and Rotary itself. Examples of disrespect would be refusing to attend Rotary meetings, missing mandatory events, speaking back to an adult or refusing to attend an event that is to represent youth exchange.

In general, disrespect can be shown in some of the following ways:

- Shaming, humiliation.
- Demeaning comments.
- Spiteful behavior, backstabbing behavior.
- Constant distorted or misrepresented nitpicking/faultfinding.
- Insults or insensitive jokes or remarks.
- Misogynistic comments.

Additional Situations

Homesickness

It is typical that a student will become somewhat homesick sometime during the first three months after arrival. Homesickness is a very normal emotion and the student should not be made to feel guilty about missing their family, friends, and way of life back home.

Symptoms of homesickness may include crying or moping around the house, wanting to be alone, wishing to go home, doesn't like school, can't make new friends, loss of appetite, and won't communicate. Causes may include over use of the telephone and email systems to back home as well as the obvious separation from everything familiar. Tough love dictates an evenhanded approach to limiting the use of both communication systems to once a week or even less frequently until the problem recedes, and plenty of one on one care. Recommended solutions include keeping the student busy and involved and limiting contact with back home. Discuss their feelings in an empathetic manner and allow some time for the student to work out the problem by themselves. Provide some distractions for the student to help get their mind off the problem.

Culture Shock

This phenomenon will occur and is related to being confronted by differences in language, surroundings, food and customs, and education. Parents may notice the development of some of the stages of culture shock. They include initial excitement and euphoria, hostility, irritation, or aggression leading to uneven school performance, gradual adaptation, and eventual adjustment to biculturalism.

Host parents may also notice your student exhibiting withdrawal, excessive sleeping, fits of crying and lost concentration, and tension with others. This will be an ongoing process of developing increased cultural awareness, learning how to deal with it, learning new skills and eventually adapting. Culture shock is not a one-time event, but rather is a process of subtle immersion into our culture.

Explain and discuss the cultural differences with your student. Remind them that they are a necessary part of their learning experience. No one is trying to change the student (program them into being American/) but one of the benefits of the exchange program is the opportunity to experience these differences. The key to solving culture shock is helping them adapt to new ideas and changing their old habits.

Challenge them to point out all the differences and then discuss which ones merit a closer look. Encourage them to take on new chores that perhaps were done by a maid back home. Be able to listen and explain what America is all about and that our sense of nationalism is not out of control.

The student may also experience **reverse cultural shock** when they return home. Discussions on this issue, advice and preparation before they leave for home will help them handle this situation better. Students will often deny that this will happen to them because they think it will indicate that there is something wrong with them if they admit it. The fact is, this is normal and they will have more problems than necessary if they try to deny its impact. Reverse shock can be viewed as the completion of the circle of change in an intercultural experience. Upon their return, they can more completely appreciate the changes they have made, readjust to their native culture, and know that they will be bicultural for the rest of their life. The experience may be over, but the memories will continue to impact their life.

Language problems

Problems with the language are most likely to occur with the students from South America and Japan. However, all students will have some difficulty adjusting to our language, especially our slang terms. Don't change your manner of speaking; just speak to them as adults, but it will be helpful to speak more slowly at first. This is

necessary because the student will be translating in their mind what you are saying back and forth into their native language. These translations take time and concentration; so don't be surprised if the student does not like to carry on long conversations when they first arrive.

Show plenty of patience and offer lots of help with words and phrases common to us but foreign to the student. You will find that they will be thinking in English within 3-4 months, but likely will need some prompting during their whole exchange. When they start to dream in English, you know that they have adjusted.

If the language problem seems elevated, we suggest the services of a tutor or ESL teacher to spend time daily working with your student to learn English. MOST schools will not allow our students to enroll in ESL because of funding. We have also found that having the first host family work with the student by the use of little sticky notes with the English and native word stuck to various objects around the house can be very beneficial. Be sure to explain slang terms and swear words so they don't get into trouble by using them inappropriately. They will learn these words anyway; so don't hide your head in the sand, just deal with them promptly.

If someone in the family speaks the student's native tongue, refrain from using it until the student proves to be proficient in English. By allowing them to avoid practicing English is not doing them any favor as the world around them demands that they communicate in English. The student who will not try or is a slow learner will tend to be withdrawn from their new world and place a greater burden upon the host families.

Personality Conflicts

Sometimes what appears to be a personality conflict is due to lack of communication. If the student is to become a part of the family, it is necessary to communicate the family rules, procedures, expectations, and customs to the student. If after communication attempts have been made between the student and host family the problem cannot be resolved, the host family should request the assistance of the YEO counselor to mediate the issues. In some cases it may become necessary for the YEO or District Committee to place the student with another host family.

Parental Visits

Although visits by parents, friends, or siblings are strongly discouraged, we find that the bio-parents frequently want to come and visit their child during the exchange year. This visit can be either a wonderful experience or a major problem. The District requires that prior approval be sought from the District Chair or

Inbound Coordinator and the Country Officer. If the student has not been a stellar performer, doing poorly in school, etc. that request for a visit may be denied. This denial may also be made at the request of the Club or host parents. An approved visit may only take place during the last quarter of the year or during a school break.

Do not schedule a visit during the holiday season, as it will conflict with family and community activities. The student is not allowed to miss school to go traveling with their parents for more than a day. **No host parent is required to provide housing or meals for a visiting bio-parent.** However, meeting with the parents of your student can be a truly rewarding experience too.

Lack of Involvement

A lack of involvement in family activities and school functions leads to apathy and poor performance, and frequently results in chronic homesickness. The best cure is prevention. Encourage the student to become involved in all family activities and to participate in extracurricular activities at school, church, youth groups, and doing community service (volunteer at the local hospital or retirement home).

Always encourage group activities so the student keeps busy and meets as many people as possible.

The student who comes directly home from school to watch TV, use their phone excessively, or play on the computer is headed for an unhappy exchange. Remember, these students are no different than American/ teenagers; they need to be entertained (imagination is frequently stunted) and directed down the right path. Don't give up if you don't see positive results right away.

Sibling Rivalry

Host brothers and sisters will become as close as natural brothers and sisters and some sibling rivalry can be expected to occur. Many times the exchange student and host kids will not become best of friends (each will go their own way).

Don't expect too much and don't force your natural child to "take care of " the exchange student. Approach this as opening a door to opportunity for the child to expand their horizons and suggest that they consider what it would be like to trade places with the student. With this approach sometimes the doors to the clique will be opened at least a crack and your student knows how to do the rest.

- Prior to the student's arrival in the home, discuss the role the children will play in hosting the student.
- Give the children and the student ample time to get acquainted. Don't force or ignore the issue. If the student is sharing a bedroom, help establish roommate

rules and try not to upset the child's comfort level to the extreme.

- Establish bathroom rules and expectations.
- Treat the student the same way as you treat the natural children; avoid “special status” or “house guest” treatment. If the other kids do chores, so should the student.
- However, the student is not here to be a servant for the family either. Only reasonable occasional babysitting and typical chores should be expected.
- The host family will probably be doing some things for the student that they would not do for their own children. Things such as providing transportation when they are old enough to drive, inviting guests to the house to meet the student, attending special functions for the student, etc. will need to be explained to the children so they understand why this “special treatment” is necessary.

Communicating with Home

We need to ensure that the bio-parents do not feel shut out of their child's life, so encourage the student to communicate regularly with their family back home. Most students will be inclined to Facetime, Zoom, etc with home often when they first arrive and everything is new. But soon they will become busy after they get settled into school, the frequency will diminish. Host Families are encouraged to introduce themselves to the Bio-family via Zoom or other platform, despite the possible language barrier.

Help your student maintain a scrapbook for the events and outings they experience during their year here so they can share it with their friends and family upon their return home. Encourage sending a second set of photos back home to let them see what's happening in their child's life.

We suggest the limitation of calls during the early period of the student's year because they tend to promote or continue homesickness. In a perfect world, phone calls home should be reserved for emergencies or special occasions such as Christmas, birthday, or anniversaries.

Working

Although children of the host family may be allowed to work, exchange students are not allowed to hold a job when participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. This means that your student may not go to work at McDonald's or any job. If they run out of money, they must contact their natural parents and have them send extra funds. Compensation for occasional babysitting, chore work or gardening work is allowed.

Financial Responsibility

- The host family **is not financially responsible** for the expenses of clothing, trips, gifts, or individual recreational activities. These expenses are the responsibility of the student and their bio-parents
- It is reasonable that the host family should provide the minor necessities such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and laundry detergents
- When the family dines out, the student should not be expected to pay for their own meal. Likewise, when the family goes to the movies the student should be included just like the other children.
- The student will receive a monthly allowance of at least \$100 from the Club. This money is intended to cover the costs of postage, phone calls and expenses that they may incur when out with friends and other students (food, movies, bowling, etc.)
- The Club must cover the extra academic costs associated with attending school. The Club should pay for expenses such as lunches, books, and lab or class fees. Frequently the allowance will be larger than the minimum and host parents should be aware of what expenses the student should cover with the money received. The YEO or Counselor is responsible to see that the student gets their allowance promptly each month.
- Help your student avoid lending or borrowing money. If money is borrowed the host parent should urge the student to contact their bio- parents for the funds to pay back the money as soon as possible.

Student Illness

If your student falls ill it is the host parents responsibility to excuse them from school attendance and then seek appropriate medical attention. If a serious problem develops, the YEO should then inform the District Country Officer. If a student should die or be involved in a serious accident during their exchange year, the District Chair will put the District Crisis Plan into action.

The application package contains a statement from the bio-parents releasing their guardianship and establishing guardianship with the current host parents to make all decisions such as schooling, medical treatment, and social activities. This form should be taken along on any trip the family and student take together so emergency decisions may be made by the host parents and be accepted by the medical or legal authorities. If the student needs to pay for any medical services up front and will get reimbursed later by their medical insurance plan, the funds can come from the emergency

fund.

We require all inbound students to purchase insurance through CISI Bolduc. Information about this coverage can be found on the youth exchange website.

Abuse Policy

There is the possibility that your student may be the victim of assault or abuse. As the safety of our students is very important to us, it is critical that the information of such an assault be made known to the District committee immediately.

The YEO is to know the District 5100 Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy, and Abuse and Harassment Reporting guidelines that have been provided. Your student should be made aware that if they are physically or sexually assaulted or abused they should follow this procedure:

- Report the situation and circumstances to the YEO immediately
- If they cannot reach the YEO, or prefer that the YEO not be informed, they should report the situation to the District Inbound Coordinator or Chairman. ***It is important that there be no delay in reporting any incident.***
- The District Committee will take charge of overseeing the student's safety and an investigation into the facts of the situation.
- No Inbound student will be sent home, nor any Outbound student brought home for reporting such a situation unless the student's personal safety requires it and the District Chairman has approved their return.
- Constant communication between the YEO and the student will instill confidence that any abuse complaint will be treated confidentially, promptly, and seriously.
- Helping your student understand that they are not guilty of bringing any abuse upon themselves will go a long way to resolving any abuse situation.

Sending a Student Home Early

The District Chair and only the District Chair has the authority to send home a student early. If the student has done something to warrant early return, please contact the District Chair immediately to discuss.

Resolution - Changing Families

At times, certain issues arise between students and their host families that cannot be resolved. Although this can create a very difficult situation, it is not unheard of for a student to change host families ahead of schedule. As this is a very serious step to take, changes should not take place until all avenues of resolution have been explored and no other options exist. Here are several reasons where changing host families are

acceptable:

- **A death or serious illness occurs in the host family;**
- **A change in the financial circumstances within the host family**
- **Damage to the home due to a natural disaster or fire;**
- **The host family is relocating out of the school district due to work**
- **The host family is requesting that a student be moved**
- **Irreconcilable differences between a student and the host family.**

There are also many issues that are considered to **not** be significant enough to warrant changing host families although it is always within the power of the Club YEO to direct a change whenever they deem it warranted. Here are some of those possibilities:

- **The student complains that the placement is too rural**
- **The student refuses to adjust and adapt to the host family**
- **The student is too attached to a previous host family**
- **The student is unwilling to share a bedroom**
- **The student desires to be in another school, city, or state**
- **The student desires to be closer geographically to a friend or relative**
- **The student is dissatisfied with the school they are attending**
- **No public transportation is available.**
- **The student is unhappy with the presence or absence of host siblings.**

If the student does not appear to be making the effort to adjust to what they believe is a difficult situation, get the Country Officer or Inbound Coordinator involved. Often a discussion with the District committee or, if they feel it is necessary, with the student's natural parents, will create an incentive for the student to make more effort to adapt. If the situation becomes totally unglued, it may be deemed by the District that the student should be sent home, but that is the last thing we ever want to happen with any exchange student.

Religion

Each student will arrive with his or her own sense of religion. Each host family will also have a set of beliefs and may or may not practice a religion. These two ideologies may not mesh

together. Never demand that the student go to the church that they are not comfortable attending by free choice. Never make any attempt to sway a student away from their own religion to accept that of the host family.

Offers to provide transportation to a church of his or her own choice is very appropriate, but if the student wishes not to attend at all, we must abide by that decision. If the student is of the same religion as the host family, no pressure should be applied to get the student to follow the practices of the family. Religion must be a personal choice at all times. Encouraging the student to visit diverse religious organizations and experience their beliefs is another way for them to view the wide diversity of our country. Please remember to never force a student into any religious practice.

Host Family Conclusion

Until you have been a host parent it is difficult to describe the feelings of love and understanding that can develop between host parents and their exchange student "son" or "daughter". In a very short period of time, this stranger becomes a member of the family. It can be a relationship that lasts a lifetime.

A host parent assumes the parental responsibilities of the natural parents. Because of this level of responsibility, there is a bond created between the two sets of parents centered on their mutual concern for the student. This trust is based upon the belief that our program will take excellent care of their child.

By treating the student as part of the family with all the privileges and responsibilities that accompany that relationship, the student becomes a permanent part of your family, not just a visitor. You share in the experiences of the student as they learn about our society and family life, while at the same time families learn about their country, family, customs, and beliefs. It is an education that cannot be purchased or acquired any other way.

Hosting has its responsibilities, joys, sorrows, and problems, but the rewards are far in excess of any difficult times. The greatest sorrow of the hosting experience is saying good-bye when the student moves on to the next family or returns home, but the relationship that has developed lives on. Without the support of host families this Rotary Youth Exchange program would never be possible.