

Notes for clubs on the Rotary Youth Exchange Program

OUTBOUND STUDENT

The Club promotes the program to local schools and other likely sources for potential applicants.

Rotary Youth Exchange Australia and the District 9810 Youth Exchange Committee promotes the program to all schools and the community at large thereby supplementing club efforts.

Selection of a student by club interview occurs between mid April-mid May. This can be done as a joint activity with nearby participating clubs so as to allow time for completion of the application by the selected student/s prior to their attendance at the District Assessment day.

The Youth Exchange committee provides an orientation program leading up to departure in January.

INBOUND STUDENT

The Club is asked for a preferred gender and country of origin. Gender preference takes priority. Subject to availability any one of the club's preferences is likely. Details of placements are advised in mid April. The inbound student arrives in July-August and returns home in July of the following year.

Many but not all club members will be involved in the program. Hosting and support as a counselor and mentor are important requirements. Other members provide hospitality.

PERSONNEL RESOURCES REQUIRED

Counselor/s. This can be the same person for both students. Preferably the counselor should be the same gender as the student. It is acceptable if the partner of the Rotarian is nominated to meet this requirement. The counselor attends any district activities for which the student/s is required to attend as per advice.

Host families. RI Code of Policy requires more than one host family and does not stipulate being a Rotarian as a qualification to be a host family. The number arranged is up to the club and will vary with a club's circumstances but the usual number is three or four host families who need not have secondary school aged children. A wide range of family structures will provide a broad experience for the inbound student.

There is now an obligation on the family of the club's selected outbound student to provide the names of three or four potential host families. These must be interviewed for suitability and satisfy all legislative requirements of working with children legislation and RI Policy. On some occasions the family of the outbound student may volunteer to assist AFTER selection of the outbound student. This has proved very successful in other districts.

School partnership. To recruit applicants and other assistance to resource the program the club is encouraged to form a mutual assistance arrangement with the school community. This is a resource of potential host families who if given the opportunity could provide an ideal demographic of potential members.

The Rotary exchange program is held in the highest regard as a student exchange organization by schools, parents and potential applicants. Your club can tap into that reputation.

FINANCIAL

Outbound student: It is usual for the club to pay for and present the student blazer prior to departure. The cost of this is around \$290. Other costs will be attendance of the student at a few club dinners prior to departure and at the district conference after they return. Parent/s should be invited to any special dinners.

The student and or their parent/s are responsible for ALL other costs of the exchange. These come in two forms, a participation fee which is payable to the district 9810 YE committee and for the day-to-day personal expenses of the student whilst away. The student participation fee is currently \$6,000 and is payable by the Parent/s. That covers the return airfare to the final destination, full travel insurance, orientation program and administration costs.

Costs during the exchange include travel on Rotary organized tours, day-to-day personal expenses i.e. footwear and clothing and language tuition that might be required by host district. Once again all of these items are the responsibility of and are paid by the student or parent/s. It is difficult and unwise to be precise on these likely costs. The student and their parent/s are provided with advice about the need to be responsible with providing a personally acceptable budget for this.

FINANCIAL

Inbound student: The club is responsible for arranging and paying any costs involved with the school. It is advisable to discuss these arrangements well in advance and to be prepared to look for the best deal. The basis for such any such arrangement is to minimize school charges if any and need to be negotiated. Those should be nothing more than some particular subject fees or excursions and uniform items.

The club cannot pay any type of allowance to a host family. This is expressly forbidden both by Rotary International and the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) both of who accredit the district to conduct the exchange program.

The club provides the student with a monthly pocket money allowance of \$120 - 130. The monthly allowance is universal but varies from country to country. It is for the student's personal use, Coke and Big Macs etc.

The club is encouraged to have the student attend meetings regularly irrespective of the student being hosted by a Non-Rotary family who can also be invited to meetings that are of interest. The spin off is their involvement with Rotary and its projects. This does not have to be every week but should be regular. The most successful exchanges are those where the student has regular involvement in club activities.

District Conference: Both students are required to attend a conference. The inbound student will attend the conference during their exchange year. The outbound student attends the conference after their return from exchange. The cost of registration, travel and accommodation to and from is the club's responsibility. It is usual that an accommodation arrangement is made with another club with a to minimize costs.

Bike Ride to Conference: This is a great experience for the student both for fellowship and an opportunity for them to understand the purpose of this Rotary project. The student should be encouraged to seek sponsorship from their school community for the Australian Rotary Health Fund.

Central Australian Trip: The student pays for their cost of participation in this trip, which is arranged for the exchange students. The club is advised not to fund any of this cost except in exceptional circumstances.

Miscellaneous costs might be participation in Rotary youth programs or other community group activities.

GENERAL

Once a club advises its intention to participate in the coming years program a support package of general information and promotional material is forwarded to a nominated person responsible for coordinating the club's requirements. That can be the Youth Committee Chair or someone else nominated to be the Club Youth Exchange Officer.

All involved adults over the age of 18 years are required by state government legislation to apply for and obtain a Working With Children Card. That is the same requirement for any other Rotary or non-Rotary programs or activities that are covered under this state legislation. Host families and others with a significant role such as counselors are interviewed and briefed on their and Rotary's expectations.

The district youth exchange secretary both coordinates and assists participating clubs prepare for the inbound student's arrival and with the selected outbound student to prepare the final application and any other matters in a timely manner.

The district committee is always available to advise and provides support to participating clubs, student/s and parent/s including host parents. This is both by written information and verbally during orientation or specific information sessions for those involved. The district structure also provides ongoing support for students and everyone involved in the exchange based on the country of origin or destination.

This advice is general in nature and is not intended to be the only information required to conduct a successful exchange program. If you have any other questions please ask.

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