

Youth Exchange Officer Job Description

Job Description

The Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) is one of the most critical roles in the RYE program. The wrong choice can be detrimental to the success of an exchange, not only for the student, but also the host club. It is imperative the person chosen is one who is genuinely interested in young people and appreciates the value of the Youth Exchange program. He or she should be able to relate easily to young people to gain their confidence and respect and be in a position to assist and advise them. The YEO should fully understand the responsibilities involved and have the time to attend to them. A person who has worked or is working with young people in schools or local youth services, someone who has a long and successful track record working with young people in the volunteer sector, or someone who has previously hosted or counseled RYE students is an ideal candidate for the role. **Although it is recommended that the YEO assume the roles listed below, many clubs share the overall responsibilities for the student differently. This is acceptable, as long as the student is receiving the proper support throughout the exchange.**

- **First and foremost, the YEO is the “Local Coordinator” for purposes of the U.S. Department of State**
- Be a member of the Host Rotary club, appointed to serve as the Inbound Student’s (referred hereafter as "student") main contact with the Club.
- Confirm who the Host Parents will be during the student's stay and arrange the date and time of changing Host Families.
- Orient the Host Parents & student as to their responsibilities.
- Arrange for schooling and introduce student to the principal and teachers.
- Look after the student's Emergency Fund and other important papers.
- Arrange to celebrate the student's birthday, Christmas and other holidays.
- Be respectful of the religious beliefs and practices of the student.
- Introduce and integrate the student into the Host Rotary Club and ensure that student is invited as a guest to meetings and other activities.
- Develop a Club Activity Calendar that includes different members spending personal time with the student. (hand around a student calendar and allow member’s to invite student to events)
- Be sure the student receives a monthly allowance from the Host Club on time.
- Find out the dates of the District required meetings, and arrange for transportation. Students will be told of these events well in advance, to help avoid schedule conflicts.
- Obtain appropriate funds from the Host Rotary Club to cover travel and food expenses for student attendance at required meetings.
- Assist the student when there is a need to file insurance claims.
- Deal appropriately with any unresolved difficulties between students, Host Families and school.
- Work with student to properly gain permission for travel
- Submit a Monthly Counselor Report in YEAH
- Listen to student’s comments and concerns, and establish a rapport with the student.

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- Refer any problems or concerns to the Inbound Coordinator and District Chair when they occur. Don't wait until the problem becomes so unacceptable that you are requesting to send the student home. We always make every effort to turn a negative situation into a positive one before a decision to terminate an exchange occurs.

Duties

Before arrival of the student:

Work with the Country Coordinator to facilitate the issuance of a US Visa. See Inbound Process in Resources and Forms on the website.

- Establish early contact by e-mail or letter with both the student and his or her parents and give them some information on the area, the school and any information to assist in their final travel preparations. Club, District, School, and local newspaper websites can give the student a lot of information.
- Obtain details of the student's anticipated date and time of arrival. Make sure it works for the first Host Family.
- Make contact or visit the school which the student will attend to make arrangements for education. Obtain term times and bus availability if appropriate.
- Make up a file of useful information for host families to be passed on as the student moves.
- Ensure that all adult host family members have submitted background check forms to the District Security Officer.
- Hold a meeting of Counselor, Club YEO, President and Treasurer to discuss finance and the schedule for the year.
- Decide how much allowance to give to the student on a monthly basis and how those funds are to be transferred to the student.
- Create a District events schedule and list of contacts (counselor, host families) with addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses and distribute to all involved persons.
- Ensure that host families realize that if a club invites the student to an event, all costs are paid by the club. For required District events, the club is also required to arrange transportation.

On the student's arrival, the YEO or YEC should:

- Welcome the student at the arrival airport, with the first host parents and/or members of the hosting Rotary Club. If the Counselor cannot do this, then arrangements should be made for another member(s) of the club to do so.

Confirm Arrival in YEAH

- Visit the school with the student and introduce him or her to the school personnel, guidance counselor, principal, superintendent, etc. Ensure that the student is aware of the choice of subjects available.
- The student is required to bring emergency funds of US\$500, which must be given to the counselor and deposited in a local bank with Counselor/YEO as co-signer on the account. Additional funds and monthly stipend checks can be deposited into the student's account, but at no time should the funds in the account go below \$500. If at any time there is not \$500 in the account, the Inbound Coordinator and District Chair should be notified.
- Arrange for a bank account to be opened for the student (may be the same in which the

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emergency fund is deposited) and agree on payment dates for monthly allowance from the hosting Rotary Club. Consider arranging for a debit card for use by the student at the same time.

- Establish contact with a local doctor for the student. This is most often done when the student completes a Sports Physical required if he or she is participating in a school sport.
- Outline what is expected of the student by your Rotary Club and District. For example, attendance at Rotary meetings, regular reports to the club, attendance at District Conference, District RYE meetings, etc. As soon as possible, take the student to a local Rotary Club meeting and ask him or her to introduce him/herself to the club.
- Ensure that the student knows how to contact the Counselor and Club YEO. Give him or her phone numbers and e-mail addresses. He or she should also be furnished with local safety and law enforcement contact information.
- Hold a meeting of all host families and counselor shortly after the student has arrived to cross refer all information.

During their year in this country, the YEO or YEC should:

- Know where to contact the student at any time – consider providing him or her with a “pay as you go” mobile phone (Net 10 available at Wal-Mart is recommended) that you can program with important contact numbers (counselor, Club YEO, Club President, Inbound Coordinator, District Chair). Give host families the student’s mobile phone number. Ensure it is agreed with the student who will pay for the phone (many clubs have taken on this responsibility as an added measure of safety for their student).
- Meet or talk regularly with the student (recommend at least twice per month /once in person and once by phone or e-mail) to discuss any problems he/she may have.
- Contact host parents and the school guidance counselor to ascertain there are no problems in the home or in the classroom. A scheduled home visit at least once per semester is required.
- Ensure that the student submits regular monthly reports via the YEAH system
- Contact the student’s natural parents from time to time informing them of their son or daughter’s progress.
- Approve any travel the student wishes to make outside the State of Colorado. If the student will miss school for a Rotary District event, the Counselor or YEO should be responsible for informing the school of same.
- When the student changes to a new host family, the Counselor or YEO should facilitate the move and ensure that the YEAH system is updated with the new family. A new Host Family Application and required background checks must be completed before the move takes place.
- Encourage the student to attend as many Rotary meetings as possible. The more contacts they make within the host club, the more opportunities he or she will have. Ensure that the Rotary Club does not forget the student’s birthday and also remembers him or her at Christmas.
- Start a wish list of what the student would like to do or where he or she would like to go during the exchange year and encourage club members to help the student to fulfill his or her dreams.
- The Counselor/YEO should be acquainted with the rules of the exchange program and should ensure that the student abides by them; however, the Counselor/YEO is there to guide and

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assist the student rather than to dictate each move the student makes.

- There are occasions where host families may have a pre-arranged time away or an event requiring absence of one night or more where it is not possible or practical for the student to attend. Host families must advise the Counselor/YEO of this, and it is the responsibility of the Counselor/YEO to arrange temporary accommodation.
- When a student moves from one host family to another, hold a meeting of both host families and, if possible, future host families to discuss any problems that may have arisen.
- Write to each host family after they have completed their term of hosting, thanking them for their undertaking and enclosing the Post Exchange Evaluation, asking them to return it to the Counselor/YEO. This is useful feedback to the Counselor/YEO and to the hosting Rotary Club, and gives a “feel good” opportunity for hosting families who may well consider a repeat performance in the future.

Dealing With Problems

It sometimes happens that the Counselor and the student cannot get along. If this happens, then the Counselor should step aside in favor of another person where there can be a happier relationship. The Counselor should not take this as an indication of failure, as there can be times when personalities clash for no apparent reason.

There may also be a problem between a student and a host family. If this occurs, then the Counselor or YEO should have another host family on standby, or even move the student to another home on a temporary basis, to enable the cause of the problem to be established.

If a student breaks the rules of the program, then the Rotary Club should not be afraid of sending the student home. Before making the final decision for such action, a full explanation of the circumstances should be discussed with the Hosting Rotary Club President followed by additional discussion with the District RYE Inbound Coordinator, District Country Contact, District Youth Exchange Chairperson and the District Governor. Support for such a decision is necessary from all entities. The District Chair is responsible for notifying the sponsoring Rotary District RYE Chair of any pending decision and then of the final decision. The Counselor/YEO and District Chair should arrange the return of the student in a timely fashion and inform the District Department of State Responsible Officer when the student has left the country.