

Youth Exchange Officer Job Description

This position is one of the most important roles in our Youth Exchange Program, it is up to this person to both recruit potential outbound students, place inbound students with host families, monitor the progress of both students throughout the year and work with the YEAH database.

The club Youth Exchange Officer plans, implements, and supports all activities involving sending and hosting long- and short-term exchange students.

PARTICIPATING CLUB Each participating club assumes the following responsibilities:

- Coordinate club Youth Exchange activities with the district program and ensure compliance with RI and district policies.
- Attend district Youth Exchange meetings.
- Establish expectations for student participation in club meetings and activities.
- Ensure students attend mandatory functions, such as orientations or district conferences.
- Obtain feedback from students about the program.
- Notify district Youth Exchange chair of any student issues or concerns.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SENDING STUDENTS ABROAD

- Promote the program to students in your community, distribute applications, and identify potential candidates.
- Interview and select students for the exchange.
- Assign a Rotarian counselor for each student.
- Maintain contact with district leadership who coordinate sending students outbound.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RECEIVING INBOUND STUDENTS

- Interview and screen potential host families.
- Coordinate selection and orientation of host families and maintain contact with host families throughout the student's exchange.
- Establish and maintain contact with inbound students before they arrive.
- Coordinate students' arrival, welcome, and orientation.
- Serve as liaison between your Rotary club and the schools that students attend
- Assign a Rotarian counselor to each student.
- Maintain contact with your district leaders who coordinate receiving inbound students.
- Arrange the disbursement of a monthly allowance.

Vetting Volunteers

Completing the vetting background process on all volunteers that work with the Youth Program, this includes counselors and host family members and general club members that want to be involved with the student program. This process is explained in detail in the YEAH HUB and Portal Basic Instructions file under the YEAH heading on this website.

It is recommended that you develop a Youth Exchange Committee; your team can assist you in all matters Youth Exchange. Your team should consist of yourself and your club's student counselor, and (if possible) one other vetted Rotarian. You can ask any other interested Rotarians that have the same passion for the program as you do. It is advisable that you have 3 vetted committee volunteers; but 2 are required.

Finding Members For Your Committee

The easiest way is to ask at a club meeting who would be interested in working with you in the program. You may be surprised how many want to help out; they just don't want to be the "leader". Get the names of those interested and set up a meeting with them, individually or in a group setting, to find out their desire; what would they like to do? Would they be most interested in working directly with the student? Do they like handling paperwork and working with the database? Perhaps they would be happy to be the "events planner" – getting club members involved with the student for fun activities or even a dinner at home – helping the club get to know your student.

Once you find your team you will need to get them vetted in the YEAH database. District 5470 requires all adults working with our youth for more than just casual contact be fully vetted. Plus having them vetted in the database allows them to assist you in follow up visits with both the host family and the student.

Recruiting Outbound Students

In early September you will need to make arrangements with the school to talk to students about the program. This can take place in several ways: a school assembly, a class of 10th graders with a sympathetic teacher that will allow you to take up time in their classroom, flyers, Interact club, and many other possibilities. You will need to introduce the program to these students; we say 10th graders because although a student can choose to study abroad in their 12th grade year, it is ideal for them to go in grade 11. There are many reasons for this; but a very important reason is that they will be there to help you talk to the students about the program after their return. In fact, using the current inbound and the most recent rebound to talk about the program is the best sales tool we have. You should be there only to advise. Let the students do the talking.

Follow this up with an information night where you invite interested students and parents to hear more about the program. Interviews will be set virtually. Once a student decides to go, you should help them to get their application completed by the end of December. The application is online, and the link is available at www.mountainandplainsrye.com/applicants. The application is very lengthy and requires a letter written by both the student and parents. Don't be shy about asking the student to rewrite this letter if it is not in good format. This is their first impression and it needs to be their best. Pay attention to sentence structure and grammar. Did they answer all the questions?

Finding Host Families

Time and time again we hear that finding host families is the hardest part of the job. It is your responsibility, along with your entire club, to find appropriate host families for your inbound student. Ideally you should have three qualified families, but two will suffice. All families do not need to be selected prior to the student's arrival, however a first family must be previously vetted in May prior to the student's arrival in August in order to fulfill Guarantee Form requirements.

Monitoring Student's School Progress

You should be checking in with the school on a regular basis to see how your student is doing. Do they require some additional tutoring to help them in the beginning? Would a change in classes be beneficial? Be sure to work closely with your club's student counselor to insure timely school checks.

Manage Students Travel Requests

Familiarize yourself with the student travel policy and make sure the student and all host families are familiar with the requirements. When a student requests travel, make sure all the information is there before sending it on up the chain for final approval (if it is needed).

Keeping In Touch With Outbound Students

Try to keep in touch with the outbound student. This can be easier said than done because they are so busy in their new life; but students are required to send home monthly reports that YEOs can access in YEAH.

The Club Youth Exchange Officer manages the LOGISTICS of a student's exchange as they relate to Rotary. YEOs are eligible to serve as host parents as long as a vetted Counselor is appointed to advocate for the student.