

# NAYEN Training Committee Best Practices

## Youth Exchange Officer

### Other names this Role is known as:

- Club Officer
- Local Coordinator
- Youth Exchange Chair (RI)

### Qualifications of a Youth Exchange Officer:

- Previous Youth Exchange experience.
- Current Rotarian with the local club
- Enjoys working with youth and the public
- Organized, attentive to details
- YEO cannot be the club counselor or a host parent at the time of being the YEO.

### Responsibilities

The following are the primary responsibilities of the Club YEO

- Serve as Liaison between Club and District RYE program
- Oversee club's recruitment and selection of Outbound Students
- Oversee the hosting of Inbound students
- Lead efforts to maximize student involvement
- Lead the Club RYE Committee
- Create a calendar of tasks for Club RYE committee

The following sections detail each of these areas of responsibility.

### Serve as liaison between Club and District RYE program

Club members should be made aware of the RYEP throughout the Rotary Year. They should be encouraged to take ownership of the inbound students and make them a part of the club and the community. (EEMA)

### Coordinating Club Youth Exchange activities with the district program and ensuring compliance with RI and District policies.

The Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) is the individual at the club level that oversees the club's youth exchange program and is well versed in the compliance requirements of Rotary International and District policies. If there is need of clarification of a policy, the YEO will know who in the District to ask for needed clarification.



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The YEO will oversee the smooth communication, transportation and understanding of the activities with the district programming.

The YEO oversees those in the club Youth Exchange committee, which includes the Club Counselors (Inbound and Outbound) and other committee members, as well as the youth exchange students, inbound and outbound.

### **Attend District Youth Exchange Activities**

As a representative of the club's youth exchange program, the YEO should make all possible efforts to attend District youth exchange activities, as continuing education and familiarity with the program.

### **Establishing Club expectations for students.**

Beginning with the earliest communication with the inbound and outbound students, the YEO can begin to set expectations of the program and continue to reinforce those values. Adapting particular language helps to establish this, such as: referring to students as Ambassadors or Representatives of their hosting districts and clubs, sponsoring districts and clubs, Rotary International, their home country.

### **Ensure that students attend mandatory functions, such as orientations or district conferences.**

The YEO can act as a protector of the mandatory functions established by the District. Making the schedule/ calendar known to the student and the host families in advance with the expectation the student will attend and there would be very few exceptions allowed. Calendars can be sent to students and host families before the student arrives. These mandatory dates can be highlighted. Outbound Applicants should also know of mandatory dates of attendance, through the YEO or communication from the district committee.

#### **Idea:**

- Create a Traveling Notebook ([Link](#))

### **Receive feedback from students for program modifications.**

Read Student reports and Host Family surveys with the attitude of 'how can we improve the program'. If a student has a complaint or concern about the operation of the program, be available to understand, change if possible, and communicate with others who can have impact for change or need to receive the feedback.

Rotary Youth Exchange is a program that can change and learn and grow; using the Four Way Test as a reference for application.

### **Notify district Youth Exchange chair of any student issues or concerns.**



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Districts have different protocol about what is to be reported, who is to receive a report and how. The YEO should know what their District protocol is and follow it each time. The RYE program has oversight from Rotary International (RI) and in the USA from the Department of State (DOS), with the intent to keep students, and those working with them, safe and protected. YEO's should not keep pre-determined reportable issues to themselves. They must be reported in a timely manner. The YEO should be trained on what these reportable items are, as well as others, and know who to report to.

## Oversee club's recruitment and selection of Outbound Students

### Promote the program to students in the community, distributing applications, and coordinating selection at the club level.

Coordinate with district committee to provide up to date information on the Outbound program costs and requirements. Build relationships with school counselors, principals, language teachers, Interact advisors, and others who are in regular contact with potential candidates.

### Interview and Selection of the Outbound Candidate

The club has the first responsibility for selection of the outbound candidates. The club YEO makes it publicly known in their community that the application is open. This can be done by electronic notifications (emails, social media, websites, etc.) or by word of mouth or group presentations. Making the opportunity known in the community should be done year-round, but likely the application is open for a limited number of months in the calendar year.

The YEO also makes their contact information public for any questions an applicant and his family might have.

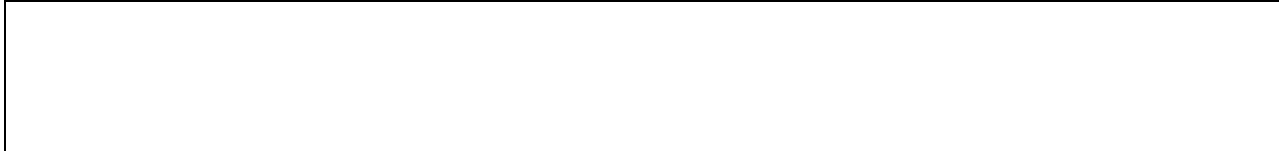
Once the application, and accompanying required documents, are submitted by the due date; a time is established by the YEO and committee as to when the student, along with his/ her family are interviewed. Perhaps, during the time the student is being interviewed, by at least two interviewers, the YEO could be speaking to the parents about the details, dates and expectations of the program.

Unless there are significant reasons, the student's application should be advanced and considered for their second interview at the District level.

The YEO can make it known to the applicant the details of the District Interview, such as dates, times, expectations and any other questions the applicant and his/ her family might have.

#### Ideas:

- A club might consider combining their efforts with a neighboring club when interviewing applicants. Share the excitement and energy together and share the resources.
- Some districts hold district-level interviews, in which case clubs conduct a preliminary interview and nominate students for the district-level selection. In this scenario, consider using a preliminary application form for students to be included in an informational interview.



### Communication and training of guardians/ parents of OB applicant...

- Applicant’s parents/ guardians must understand their responsibility and unconditional support of the student is crucial before, during and after the exchange. The parents of the outbound students must be included in the selection and orientation process and be well-informed about:
- Insurance
- Rules for students
- Parental visits
- Correspondence
- Preparing for the Student’s return
- Communication with student
- Helping students and Parents after the exchange

#### Ideas:

- Sample power-point (link)
- Sample video for recruiting (link)
- Sample display boards (pictures)
- Sample of Black Out dates (link)
- 30 day no contact contract. (link)

### Assign a Rotarian Outbound counselor for each student.

- See Outbound Counselor Role

### Maintain contact with district outbound coordinator.

- See District Outbound Coordinator Role

## Oversee the hosting of Inbound students

### Secure a placement in a school

Make sure you understand the local schools’ process and policies for placing exchange students. Secure a placement in a school so that the Guarantee Form can be completed in the spring. Schools often require placement discussions to start in early January (for a fall placement), if not earlier.



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See section below that covers the topic of the YEO serving as the liaison between the Rotary club and schools.

### **Completion of the Guarantee Form**

The Guarantee Form is a tool used to insure the inbound student and our exchange partners that there is a school ready to host the student, that the Rotary Club is ready to host the student and will abide by all the agreements pre-arranged between the exchanging districts, and that the Youth Exchange Officer will abide by all policies, rules, regulations and best practices of the exchange program. In addition, a host family will be ready and prepared to open their home to the exchange student named on the Guarantee Form.

### **Establish and maintain contact with inbound students before they arrive.**

The YEO is likely the first person from the student's host club to communicate with the student. The District may want to establish a template of what that initial communication should include. Items such as:

- Link to the Host Club's website
- Link to the Host School's website, including calendars and courses and activities offered.
- Link to the community's website.
- Link to the District or Multi District website
- Information about the student's host families.
- Information about the student's club counselor, including contact information
- Information about the YEO, including contact information.
- Information about other Rotary students in their community.
- Information unique to their hosting community.

Including these items in the first Welcome Email from the club will help to suffice to the US Department of States requirements and therefore this email should be saved with the student's file in the event this student goes through an audit.

### **Meet students at the airport (or train or other mode of transport)**

Lots of people at the airport to meet the student tends to create a long-lasting memory for the students. Carrying a country flag of their home country, a Rotary flag and/or signs or banners helps to identify you to the student, but also helps create a fun and welcoming environment. It also likely creates an image to the public of what it looks like to have a Rotary Exchange Student arrive, something positive and fun, something they may want to involve themselves in in the future! Invite to the airport all of the Host Families, the Club Counselor, Club members, other students interested in the RYE student, Rotex, and anyone else wanting to welcome the student.

Having a meaningful and welcoming beginning, such as a large party at the airport, reinforces to the student that others care and are on this journey with them. This would reinforce to them that what they do matters and this could possibly help when moments are challenging and they need to reach out to someone for help. The YEO and Club Counselor should do all that is possible to be at the airport to meet the student.



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The YEO can also help guide the group in the event there are any challenging issues at the airport through customs or if the student does not arrive because of a missed connection or something like this.

#### Ideas:

- Instead of having the group dis-band at the airport, continue the celebration at a nearby restaurant, on the way back to the host community. Alert the restaurant that a large group is on its way. Be sure to invite the Country Coordinator/ Officer and others to join you.
- Wear name tags, so the student can identify better who is who.
- Take a photo of the group at the airport, with the student, and email it to the student's parents so they know their student arrived.
- Carry the Traveling Notebook to meet the student, in case there is an 'emergency' and contact information is needed. Perhaps the student missed a flight, having a notebook or an official name tag or Rotary business card will help encourage the airline personnel to share updated information about the student.

### Serve as liaison between the Rotary club and schools that students attend during long-term exchanges.

The YEO is an important liaison between the Rotary club and the hosting school. Whenever the YEO walks into the High School, they are encouraged to wear their YEO nametag or Rotary logo gear. This relationship should be nurtured and reinforced.

#### Ideas:

- In a gesture of appreciation for hosting, a Paul Harris could be given in the name of the High School. A plaque on the wall representing this honor is recommended.
- A flag from the countries the students' hosted at the High School could be given as a thank you.
- A day of recognition given to the High School during a Rotary meeting, inviting the staff that work closely with the student.
- A yearly meeting with the school personnel (Principal, Vice Principal(s), School Counselors, Activities Director and others), with the YEO there to say thank you and to review the local RYE program. A handout might include the name(s) of the Inbound student(s) last year (or historically at the HS), the Outbound student(s) from the year past, the current Outbound student(s) and the current Inbound student(s). A short bio of the current Inbound, with a photo is helpful for them to remember the Rotary exchange student. This should be a time to show appreciation for the school's support and to inquire of any changes they would like to see in the relationship or exchange program.
- Invite the school personnel to attend the meeting when the Inbound student(s) are speaking, or to any meeting.



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## Assign a Rotarian Counselor for each student.

This is a distinctly different role from the YEO and this should be reinforced and developed. See Inbound Club Counselor Role (hyper link). This person should be chosen carefully, as they often hold the key to helping guide the student into a successful exchange year.

Review the Role of the Inbound Rotary Counselor and follow the policies pertaining to this position.

## Interview and screen potential host families

### Recruiting Host Families

Long term exchanges have more than one host family, preferably three. The Youth Exchange Officer should work hard to insure the student has three host families. The Host Families are expecting to be one of three and the student is expecting to have three, as laid out by Rotary International. Any exceptions to this must be special and unique to the particular time.

Recruiting host families should happen all year. The YEO and YE committee and all club members should always be able to introduce the idea of hosting to those they meet or work with.

The YEO should keep a running list of people who have been thought of to host or who said they would like to host one day, so that are families to follow up when there is a need.

### Selection of Host Families

Rotary International recommends that each student has three host families during their long-term exchange. Host Families do not have to be Rotarians. In fact, it optimizes the Rotary program to recruit host families outside of the club membership. This will give an opportunity to introduce more families in the community to the Rotary Club and Rotary International through the exchange program. Often times those parents, especially when invited and encouraged, become members. Rotary Youth Exchange can be a viable avenue for increasing membership in the club.

According to the Rotary International Code of Policies: Never insist a family host because their son/ daughter is going to be an outbound student. Those families can be asked to help the program by suggesting names and contact information, also encouraging their contacts to consider hosting.

When asked, students have said the best host families are the ones who want to host, who make them feel like one of the family, and are willing to be understanding and flexible

### Vetting of Host Families

All host families must be thoroughly vetted and approved before the student starts communication with the family or moves in.

#### Vetting includes:

- Completion of Application (is this an RI approved application?? Ask AL?)
- References completed (2 or 3, as prescribed by each District)
- Criminal Background Check

- In-home visit and interview by two Rotarians. Best practice would be that the YEO and the Inbound Club Counselor be on the visit together.

The host family should understand that they are not an approved host family until the vetting is complete and approved. There may be situations that come up that one of the steps in the vetting process reveals a situation that would not permit the family to be approved.

The US State Department requires a follow up visit, by someone who did not do the first visit, before 60 days have come since the student moved in. This will need to be reported and filed, according to each district's procedures.

#### Ideas:

- Create a display banner/ board that list the historical records of families who have hosted (insert photo).
- Give each host family a **Welcome to Rotary** packet that includes:
  - A Welcome/ Thank you Letter from the Club President, that is personalized and on club letterhead
  - A formal name tag that can be used and reused at Rotary events, identifying them as a host family.
  - Tickets to use to attend club meetings when they are available.
  - Always publicly thank host families when at public events, recognizing their large contribution to the program.
  - Include the host families on club emails or newsletters, so they know what is happening within the club and include the host family in those events.
- Select all three host families at the beginning of the year so that they can be introduced to one another during a casual event – the YEO and Counselor can provide guidance and encourage families to work together over the course of the year. For example, making a travel commitment early in the year for something in the spring will impact a future family – having those families connected at the beginning (preferably in September) will help them navigate these types of logistics.

### Connect vetted Host Family with their future Inbound student, encourage lots of communication

- As soon as a host family is approved, the student's application can be shared with the family (it is recommended that the student's school reference be removed, since this is a confidential report and should never be shown to the student).
- The host family should then begin their communication with the student and everyone begins the process of getting to know each other.
- Host families can set expectations and introduce cultural norms at this time too, things that would be helpful for the student to know before arrival.
- There are many ways to communicate and these different ways could be shared at this time.



**Coordinate selection and orientation of host families and maintain contact with host families throughout the student’s exchange.**

- Host families should be chosen carefully. If the host family lives a distance from the host community, consider carefully if they are to be first, second or third family. Perhaps having the family that lives out of town is best suited to host first. If the children in the host family are not showing willingness to host or engage, this family is may not be ready to host and should be considered for another year.
- Once a month contact should be made with the host family, to find out how the exchange is going. (Put in here how RI/ DOS states this)

**Training/ Orientation of Host Families**

- Host families should be encouraged, if not required, to do the NAYEN online host family training. This is a policy set by the host district.
- In addition to the NAYEN training, an training session held by the District committee or the Club committee should go over the resources, expectations and awareness training for hosting. This training can include items such as:
  - Who to contact in an emergency.
  - What if you want to travel with your student.
  - What is a host family supposed to pay for?
  - What are the expectations for school attendance and grades?
  - What is on the calendar the host family needs to be aware of.
  - What are other items particular to the student’s community or District?

**Maintain contact with district inbound counselor**

- Since the Youth Exchange Officer, the Club Counselor and the District Inbound Counselor/ Country Officer work as a team, periodic communication with each other is a good best practice. This includes communication about activities the student is involved in, relationships with friends, host families and school. If there is a small issue, it is a good idea to share this with others on the team, especially if it were to one day become a bigger issue. Addressing issues while they are small can often prevent them from becoming large and when the student knows they have multiple resources or concerned adults, it is better for all.

**Arrange disbursement of monthly allowance for long-term exchange students.**

- Dependable and predictable monthly allowance payments are to be expected. Establish this habit early on. Students should never have to ask for their allowance.
- Students should know early on what they are to pay for, what the club pays for and what the host family pays for.
- Host families should also know what they are expected to pay for, what the club pays for and what the student is responsible for.

**Idea:**

- Open a joint banking account with the Club Counselor and the student. Have automatic deposits into the students account on a known day of the month (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> perhaps). If possible, have a debit card associated with this account for withdrawing cash or for use as a method of payment. When the student returns home, hold the account open and any determined balance of their \$400 deposit can be returned to this account, after all outstanding bills are paid, and withdrawn by the student in his/her home country. Once the money has been withdrawn, the Club Counselor can close the account.

**Oversee any travel and overnight stays, as described by RI and district policies and practices**

- The Youth Exchange Officer should know the District policies about travel and fully communicate this with the student, Club Counselor, the host family and anyone else involved in the daily life of the student.
- File the necessary records for this authorization.

**Lead efforts to maximize student involvement**

**Assign a time for the student to speak to the Rotary Club**

- It is recommended that this is done early in the year, so the club gets to know the student, but also at a time when the student has a fairly good grasp of their host’s language.
- Invite host families and other significant members of the community (school officials, coaches, significant friends at the school, etc.) to come and hear their presentation. Inviting others to come helps to promote the program and may encourage others to consider an application to host or be an outbound student.
- The Club Counselor should help the student prepare their speech and hear it before it is delivered to the club, in order to avoid any embarrassing moments and to be fully prepared in terms of delivery and timing.

**Have student attend as many local Rotary Club meetings**

- The goal would be for the club to really get to know their student and be able to share their life with the student and visa-versa.
- The club should strive to have their student attend as many meetings as possible; hopefully every time the club meets, the student is there too.
- At each meeting that the student is in attendance at, have them stand and share something about their week or day.
- Have the inbound student help with club fundraisers and attend the club’s social events.

**Idea:**

- Another way for the Club members to get to know their inbound student: have a table flag of the student’s home country and move it from table to table at each meeting, requiring the student to sit by their flag and get to more in the club.
- Create a social calendar for the club and the student: Rotarians can sign up to take the student to events they are participating in (e.g., a sporting event o performing arts).

## Lead the Club RYE Committee

### Manage shared responsibilities between YEO, Club President and the club YE committee

- The club president appoints the club YE chair, who should be someone with previous YE experience. The president also oversees the selection of the club committee and supports the club’s YE activities.
- The club YE chair (usually the Youth Exchange officer) plans, implements and supports all activities involving sending and hosting long-term and short-term exchange students.
- The club Youth Exchange committee provides support as directed by the chair. The size and scope of this committee will vary according to the size of the club and the extent of its involvement in the program.
- Information about a student should always be kept confidential, but at times, this information may need to be shared with the Club President, but not necessarily with the entire club board members.
- The Club President is also responsible for signing Inbound and Outbound Guarantee Forms.
- It is advisable to have a succession plan for the YEO, in the event he/she cannot continue in the role.

### Vetting of Volunteers on the Club RYE Committee

- All volunteers on the committee should follow the policies set out by Rotary International, their District and the Department of State (applies only to Clubs in the USA) and other country specific policies.
  - Fill out the Rotary Youth Exchange application, also known as Youth Volunteer Application/Affidavit.
  - File completed reference checks. Each District sets the number of references.
  - Have an approved background check on file, **less than one year old.**
  - District-determined requirements; for example NAYEN trainings

### Maintain Proper Reporting and oversee the Club RYE committee



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- Make sure the required reports are in on time and are complete. If a monthly counselor report is missing, the YEO should communicate the necessity to complete this report in a timely manner.
- The YEO is responsible for overseeing that these are complete.
- Understands and fulfills all of the obligations/ rules of the DOS Exchange Visitor Program policies. (USA specific)

### **Communication with the Committee, Club, Students, Host Families, School and others**

- The YEO and committee can facilitate transportation to Rotary scheduled events, easing the burden on the host family. This should be clearly noted, and in a timely manner communicated to all involved by the YEO.
- Communication with the media should be pre-approved or overseen by the YEO to insure all DOS rules are followed. (USA specific)
- The YEO should see their role as communicator, making sure everyone has up to date information and notifications. When this is done well, stress is reduced between all.

### **Create a budget**

- The Youth Exchange Officer is in charge of the Youth Exchange's line items in the Club's budget.

### **Create a calendar of tasks for club RYE committee**

Create a calendar of tasks for all members of the RYE committee. This includes all compliance tasks, all club- and district-level events, required trainings, relationship-building tasks within the club and the greater community.

For example, the following approach might be taken:

#### **Weekly tasks**

- Look for opportunities to engage Inbound students and Club members
- Look for opportunities to recruit Outbound candidates

#### **Monthly tasks**

- Monitor DOS compliance for Inbound students, host families, and Rotary volunteers

#### **Quarterly tasks**

- Stay in touch with district committee, inbound coordinator,

#### **Other tasks as needed**

- Participate in district-level events and training

For those annual events, create a calendar to outline those items:

#### **August**

- Make sure Outbound students have club exchange flags for their exchange
- Conduct Host Family orientation for family #1
- Secure Host Families #2 and #3
- Greet Inbound student(s) at the airport.
- Coordinate transportation for Inbound student to Inbound Orientation
- Coordinator club RYE committee participation at the Inbound Orientation

### **September**

- Hold a barbeque with Inbound student, host families, and counselor. Invite the club RYE committee.

... and so forth **[Should we develop a full checklist?]**

### **Some Resources for the Youth Exchange Officer:**

- RI Youth Exchange Handbook
- Department of State, Exchange Student Program
- EEMA Vision of a model RYEP
- NAYEN website