

# Host Family Handbook

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## Host Family

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## Youth Exchange Mission

- 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 our children and ourselves. Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures. This plants the seeds for a lifetime of international understanding.



## Purpose of Youth Exchange

- Provide high school students an opportunity to spend a year studying in another country, discovering the culture, learning the language, developing skills and maturity
- Bring the world into our local community through friendship
- Promote Rotary's goal of world peace and understanding, one person , one exchange at a time.



## Who are Rotary Exchange Students?

- Age 15-18 ½ upon arrival
- Selected and prepared
- Most speak English sufficiently
- Anxious and excited to:
  - Learn our language
  - Discover American culture
  - Represent their countries
  - Become part of YOUR family



## What is Rotary?

- World's oldest and most international service organization
  - 1.25 million Rotarians in 170+ countries
  - 32,000 clubs in 520 districts
- Rotarians are a diverse group of professional leaders working to address various community and international service needs. Through community service and other means, Rotary club members help promote PEACE & UNDERSTANDING throughout the world.
- Rotary Motto: "Service Above Self" and adhere to "The Four Way Test"
  - Is it the TRUTH?
  - Is it FAIR to all concerned?
  - Will it build GOOD WILL and better friendships?
  - Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?



## Rotary Support System

- Club Level
  - Counselor
  - Club President
  - Club Members
- District Level
  - District Chair
  - District Governor
  - District Committee
- ESSEX
  - Chairperson
  - Country Contact
  - Inbound and Outbound Chairperson



## Who is the Host Club?

- Selects host families, provides Host Family Orientation
- Provides student counselor and Club YEO
- Supports and enforces the Essex Youth Protection Policy
- Supports & trains the host families
- Helps with school arrangements
- Supplies monthly allowance
- Involves the student in club activities and encourage club members to get involved
- Work with host families with transportation for special events



## Who is the District Committee?

The District Committee are Rotarians from the District that facilitate the youth exchange program within the District

- Provides education, training, resources and support to Rotary Clubs in all avenues of the exchange
- Provides orientation and resources to the exchange student on the Rotary Exchange Program, Youth Protection, Rules and Guidelines, Health/insurance, cultural differences.....



## Who is ESSEX?

Eastern States Student Exchange

- 35 Rotary districts in the northeastern United States, eastern Canada and Bermuda.
- Manages the placement of inbound and outbound students into over 60 countries around the world placing approx. 280 Inbound/240 Outbound Students per year
- Operated completely by volunteer Rotarians



## Expectations of Exchange Student

- Adapt to host family
- Learn our language and culture
- Attend school with passing grades
- Communicate
- Represent country and Rotary
- Participate in rotary, school and community
- Adhere to the Rotary Int'l, Essex and District Rules and Guidelines



## Expectations of Host Families

- Provide a safe, non threatening, respectful and appropriate environment
- Adhere to the ESSEX Youth Protection Policy & the ESSEX Rules & Guidelines
- Room and board
- Treat student like your own child
- Help with challenges
  - language
  - School
  - culture shocks
  - homesickness
- Provide an ear to listen, a shoulder to cry on, a hand to depend on
- Assist with transportation



## What is the ESSEX Youth Protection Policy

- Statement of Conduct for working with Youth  
“Creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary Youth Activities”
- Provides definitions of harassment & abuse
- Outlines Volunteer selection and screening procedures
- Provides Incident Reporting Guidelines
- Meets the US State Department Regulations



## Host Family Youth Protection Responsibilities

- Provide safe & nurturing environment
- Be interviewed in home and provide access to club counselor
- All 18 and over household members must.....
  - Sign Youth Volunteer Affidavit
  - Permit criminal background check
  - Provide references
- Receive and review State Department Policy 22 CFR
- If student reports incident of abuse or harassment to you as a host parent....
  - Listen attentively and stay calm
  - Protect the student
  - Get facts, but don't interrogate
  - Be non-judgmental and reassure the student
  - Assure privacy and record details
  - Immediately report this information to the Club Youth Exchange Counselor, provided the Counselor is not the accused individual
  - Do not challenge the alleged offender



## Arrival and Settling In

- Meet and welcome your student at the airport
- Introduce student to your family and home
- First Night Questions
- School arrangements
  - registration, choose classes
  - encourage participation in activities, such as sports, music, drama, Interact club, etc



## Are you a 1<sup>st</sup> Host Family?

Expect...

- Excitement – everything is new
- Culture shock – major adaptations
- Homesickness
- Language struggles
- Organize school registration
- Often the closest bonds



## 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or Last Host Family

- Language and culture begins to click
- Involved in school activities
- Hopefully many friends
- Transition to new family, new rules and family practices
- Big events: prom, graduations, departure
- Preparing for separation
- Tearful goodbyes



## The end of the year

- Leaving for home will be harder than arriving, especially if a successful exchange
- Reverse culture shock
- "The more successful the exchange, the harder the re-entry"
- You will see them again, and you will have travel opportunities unlike any you've experienced before



## Other Topics to Discuss

- Medical Insurance and care
- Dietary issues (religious or other)
- Sibling relationships
- Choosing friends
- Travel while on exchange
- Family visits
- Calendar of events for Club & District activities



## QUESTIONS?

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