

**Rotary District 5160 Youth Exchange Program**

**Club Counselor Roles & Responsibilities**

**Rev 2.0 August 2014**

**Roles:**

* To ensure the success of the Inbound exchange student during the exchange school year.
* The Counselor is the single continuous point of contact for the student as he or she moves through the three host families.
* The Counselor or mentor is the most critical, central role from the perspective of the Inbound exchange student.
* The Counselor is the liaison between the student, the Rotary Club, host families, school, and community at large.
* Assist the student in adapting to our culture and the language.
* The Counselor has the unique opportunity to be an advocate for the student, have frequent personal contact, and hopefully become a friend.
* The desired outcome is a close and open relationship so that the student can confide their problems with the counselor, and the counselor can provide loving, honest and constructive feedback and support to the student.
* The duration of the Counselor role is intended to be the year that the foreign student will be in the US. This is in contrast to the YEO whose role is ideally bridges successive exchange years.
* Many YEOs and Counselors exchange positions year after year, and the YEO and the Counselor can be the same person.
* It is suggested, but not required, that the Counselor be the same gender as the Inbound exchange student.
* The Counselor must be a member of Rotary International.
* The Counselor cannot be a member of the student’s host family. If a Counselor becomes a Host Family during the student’s exchange year, an alternate Counselor is needed.

**Responsibilities:**

* Complete all the paperwork and training needed to become a certified Rotarian, including becoming trained in the use of the WESSEX system. Maintain certification current while active in the position.
* Together with the YEO, recruit and train 3 Host Families. Assist the families to complete paperwork and training.
* Obtain the student’s emergency fund money if brought in cash. Return it at the end of the year.
* The student will be given a Rotary student ID card during the Inbound Orientation. Provide the student with updated ID cards each time the Host Family changes.
* Meet with the student and the Host Family monthly. Log student and Host Family meetings into the WESSEX system monthly (this is a key audit topic).
* Ensure that the student receives their monthly allowance.
* Arrange transportation for the student to District Youth Exchange activities.

**Program Year Activities:**

**Note:** This list is provided as an example of ideas, suggestions, and best practices for a Counselor, organized by the program year. Not all these actions are required.

1. **General**

* Complete all the paperwork and training needed to become a certified Rotarian, including becoming trained in the use of the WESSEX system. Maintain certification current while active in the position.
* Ensure that spouse/partner and all members of the Counselors household complete volunteer paperwork and training.
* Together with the YEO, recruit and train 3 Host Families. Assist the families to complete paperwork and training.
* Visit the Host Family homes and obtain photographs. Upload them and all required documentation to the WESSEX system.
* Obtain training from the District YE Committee about the upcoming exchange year: schedules, trips and tours, deadlines, etc. Share the info with the student and the Host Families.
* Obtain a copy of the Inbound Student Exchange manual and read it so that you can answer questions about it for the student. Encourage the student to read and study the material in the manual.
* Arrange transportation for the student to District Youth Exchange activities.
* Help obtain travel approval when needed (such as joining a host family on a vacation to another state)
* Report allegations of sexual abuse to the District YE Chair for appropriate response.

1. **Before The Student Arrives**

* Review the Inbound student application, noting medical section, religious preferences, and interests such as sports and dance.
* Contact the High School counselor before summer break.
  + Discuss the student with the counselor. Identify grade level.
  + Obtain a list of class choices and list of required courses, and send them to the student for review.
  + Find out the registration procedures and dates.
  + Obtain a list of clubs and activities such as sports and the fees associated with each. Send the information to the student and ensure that the biological family understands that they are responsible for the costs of after school clubs, activities and sports.
* Send a welcome email introducing yourself and providing general background about the city and region. Introduce host families if known.
* Establish plans for a Skype session(s) and meet the student and their family.
  + If the student’s English skills are not adequate, ask the student to obtain an interpreter to help.
  + Review the school class list and discuss the student’s educational goals for the year. Answer student’s questions about class titles and help prepare for registration.
* Obtain a copy of the student’s flight schedule.
* Help the other host families meet the student through Skype as appropriate.

1. **After The Student Arrives**

* Meet the student at the airport with the first host family.
* With the first Host Family, arrange a welcome party and invite other students from the high school where the student will attend.
* Obtain the student’s emergency fund money if brought in cash. Return it at the end of the year.
* Attend the Inbound Orientation weekend with the student.
* The student will be given a Rotary student ID card during the Inbound Orientation. Provide the student with updated ID cards each time the Host Family changes.
* Meetings with the student: Weekly the first month, then weekly to every two weeks thereafter. Rotary requires meetings every two weeks, Dept. of State requires monthly meetings.
* Host Family meetings: Meet monthly with the host family. Ensure private time without the student for HF communication.
* Log student and Host Family meetings into the WESSEX system (this is a key audit topic).
* Arrange monthly stipend checks from the club treasurer, and give the check to the student. Provide support for a bank account if desired or provide another method to cash the monthly stipend check.
* Arrange attendance at Club Rotary meetings and functions at the frequency desired by the club, including arrangements for transportation and meals (the club generally pays for the meals). Introduce the student and help them feel comfortable in these situations.
* Arrange student interactions with Interact, Roteract, other service clubs in the area to promote Rotary Youth Exchange. Have the local newspaper or TV station do a student interview once their language skills are adequate.
* Arrange for the student to make their country presentation to the Rotary Club once language skills are strong.
* Sports – May need to meet with the sports coach to request adequate practice time.
* Quarterly Reports – Ensure that any required reporting by the student back to their exchange country are completed in a timely manner.
* Assist with the processing and tracking of student health insurance claims if needed
* Keep the Youth Exchange Committee and local Rotary Club informed about Youth Exchange program and student activities.
* Get the local Rotary club involved in the success of the exchange -- arrange for members of to take the student on excursions – eg. boating, concerts, camping, bonfires, barbeques, skiing, and snowmobiling. Help the inbound student experience as much as possible of the local activities available during the exchange year. The student will complete a “wish list” of program goals during the Inbound Orientation. Get a copy of this list and help the student by reviewing it during the exchange year. Provide support to the student to help complete the list.