



LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL
District 201W2

LIONS CLUB OF EATON

Supporting the Lions Youth Exchange Program for over 12 years

In July 2010 Lion Geoff Goddard, a member of the Lions Club of Eaton, and wife Jeni will host a Slovenian teenager visiting Western Australia as part of the Lions Youth Exchange Program. Over the past 12 years, Eaton Lions and the Goddard family have hosted six other youth aged 16-21 years from Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sweden.

Jeni and Geoff decided to host international youth exchangees because of their passion for travel. Enjoyable visits to Bali, Bangkok, United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Italy and the Eastern Block encouraged them to consider giving youth from other countries the opportunity to see the wonders of Western Australia and experience Aussie culture. What better way to achieve this than through Geoff's affiliation with Lions and the Lions Youth Exchange Program.

Supportive Club members

Eaton is located on the WA coast, north of the port of Bunbury and 175 km south of the city of Perth. Members of Eaton Lions are very supportive of the YE Program and help out by taking the international visitors to the Trots, sightseeing, fishing, dolphin sighting, ten-pin bowling and to BBQs. All visiting youth attend Club meetings and give a presentation to Club members.



Lion Geoff and Jeni Goddard

Hosting highlights

The visiting youth have enriched the Goddard family's life. Geoff and Jeni's daughters Fiona and Kym, son-in-law Stuart and grandchildren Cassie, Josh and Jessica live in Eaton and nearby Bunbury and become involved with each exchangee's visit. Christmas celebrations have been memorable for the exchangees as well as the extended Goddard family.

One of the Japanese youth, Katsuya, returned to WA with three of his friends after his official exchange visit to Eaton and stayed with the Goddards for three weeks. "It was a fabulous time, like an extended party", says Jeni. "By interacting with the visitors, my grandchildren have much more knowledge about other ways of life. Being a

host family leads to long-term benefits including appreciating other cultures, exchanging useful gifts such as cookery books, corresponding via letter and email and opening our minds to how people in other countries live.”

“My grandchildren have learned so much about other ways of life.”

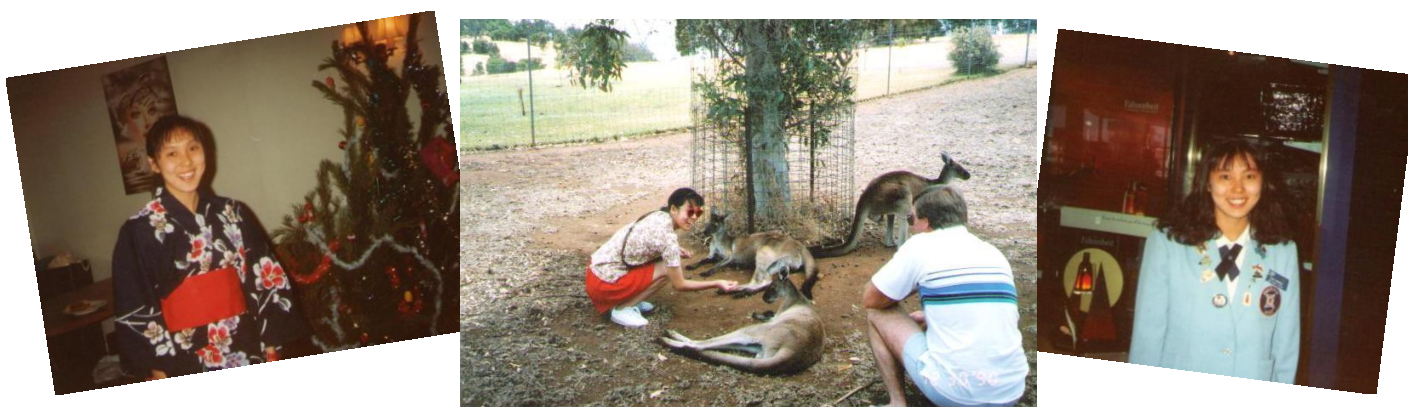
Tips for other host families

Jeni and Geoff have some useful advice for new host families. Preparing for each youth’s visit is crucial. Learn about their culture well in advance and email them to be aware of their likes, dislikes, their family and what they would like to do while they are in WA. Always exchange photos and family information before their arrival to help with the inevitable home sickness. Tell them something about the WA town or suburb they will be living in, particularly if it is a unique country location. The more comfortable they feel with their host family, the better their chances of enjoying their visit and Australian culture. The Youth Exchange Program emphasises experiencing different cultures rather than offering the visitors a sightseeing experience.

Exchangees staying with the Goddards always have their own room. Jeni enjoys cooking so a variety of food is served at every meal. “If I am unsure about their food likes and dislikes, I just ask them”, says Jeni. “I also offer to do their washing although most of the visitors are happy to be independent and look after themselves.

“We have had only one negative experience” said Geoff. “One youth travelled to Australia to please his parents and really did not want to be here. He didn’t bother to take photos and was disinterested. However, all other youth have enjoyed their visits to Eaton and fitted in very well with the family’s routine.

As most host families are required to greet and farewell exchangees at airports, it is helpful to display the visitor’s name in large print on cardboard in the arrivals lounge so they can find the host family quickly. Wearing Lions shirts, displaying a banner or flag is also helpful. Exchangees are required to wear a Youth Exchange “uniform” (usually T-shirt, blazer or jumper) identifying them to the host family.



Above: Japanese exchangee Yumi dressed in Japanese Kimono at Christmas time, meeting kangaroos with Geoff and wearing her Youth Exchange uniform.

Gratitude

The success of the International Lions Youth Exchange Program lies with Clubs offering to host incoming youth. The Lions Club of Eaton and Jeni and Geoff Goddard have supported the program for many years and no doubt have given youth exchangees wonderful life-time memories of Australian families, culture and way of life. Keep up the good work!

**For further information about the Lions Youth Exchange Program –
go to www.lionsclubs.org.au/ye**