



Lions Clubs International **MD 201 Youth Exchange** **Guidelines for Host Clubs**

Hosting a Youth Exchange visitor is an **activity** of your Lions Club and is a prime example of Lions Clubs International first Purpose – **“To create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.”**

Hosting occurs during July/August and December/January each year for various periods of 4 to 6 weeks. Clubs need only host for half of the exchange (2-3 weeks). It is considered that two host families create the opportunity for a better total Australian experience. Host Application forms must be completed and signed by the Host Family **in quadruplicate** and returned to the Club Youth Exchange Chairman who should check that all has been completed correctly. The Club sections should be completed and signed by the President after passing a motion at a Board Meeting agreeing to participate. Send the forms to your District Youth Exchange Chairman who will sign them, retain one copy and forward the application to the relevant Multiple District Youth Exchange Programme Chairman by the **advertised deadline**.

This is essential so incoming Exchangees can be matched with families who have similar interests, if possible, and be advised of Host Families in time to allow them to correspond with each other.

Usually applications submitted by the advertised schedule obtain their first preference for nationality of their choice and their preferred hosting dates. Note that hosting periods usually do not coincide fully with midyear school vacations.

Regardless as to whether the Host Family is a Lions family or not, your Club **must** be involved with the various activities, functions and meetings arranged and make sure that the Youth feels very welcome. Host Families do not need to be members of Lions but it is essential that they be interviewed as to their suitability as Hosts and given full information of what is required of them. Give them a copy of “Guidelines for Host Families” and re-assure them of the Club’s assistance and if a problem does arise who their Club contact person will be. Check that the host’s home is suitable to adequately accommodate a visitor.

Give the visiting youth a Club member’s name and phone number so that they may be contacted if there is a problem.

Clubs may host more than one youth but we recommend they be from different countries and preferably only one Exchangee per family at a time. Two families in the same club can share a youth e.g. 7 to 10 days each.

Host families are not expected, or should feel obliged, to take their Exchangee on expensive trips or holidays. Exchangees should not expect this of a host family – remember this is a cultural exchange. Unfortunately many Exchangees have no concept of the size or the wide expanse of Australia and have desires to see Ayres Rock, Barrier Reef, Gold Coast and Sydney – get out a map, show them and explain the huge distances, how long it takes to travel and the cost involved.

Host Family and/or Host Club members need to be at the airport/bus terminal to meet their Exchangee both on arrival and on departure. Lions Club members should wear dinner badges or club uniform to assist in identification for the youth.

Host Clubs should provide some financial support from the Activities Account for Host Families e.g. \$5 a day or a certain amount per week to help defray extra costs put on a family budget.

Exchangees should attend a club meeting and should be asked to speak to the Club - they will be expecting to do so. This is an ideal opportunity for a visitor’s night. Make sure you include the Host Family and present them with a Host

Family Appreciation certificate. Remember the Host Family will be a guest of the Club if a non-Lion. If hosting during December-January and your Club is in recess ensure that you have either a welcoming BBQ or picnic

Clubs should exchange bannerettes and/or pins with the Exchangee at a Club meeting or function and it is appreciated if the Club presents the Youth with a small Australian gift as a memento. Please remember – heavy books are not recommended because of luggage weight restrictions.

Exchangees are responsible to pay for their own souvenirs, gifts and personal items. If they offer to pay for a drink or a meal while they are out it does not hurt them to do so.

After a while check that the Exchangee and Host Family are compatible – Exchangees should become part of the family, not honored guests or visitors. They should be informed of what time they are expected to be up for breakfast and by what time they are expected to be ready for any outings etc. each day.

They do not enroll at school – they are here on their school vacation. They are, however, encouraged to visit school as special guests.

Attempt to arrange a meeting with your local Mayor and also arrange, wherever practicable, an interview with your local news media; i.e. newspaper, radio station and/or television.

Hosting Clubs **must** stay in contact at all times with Host Families during the period of exchange to ensure that all is well and that the Host Family is not having problems. If there are problems, try to sort them out immediately. If you need further assistance then consult your District Youth Exchange Chairman or the relevant MD Program Chairman.

Sometimes the Exchangees have problems with their Hosts too. You must try to handle this very tactfully and confidentially. **No Exchangee can or should be moved without first consulting the appropriate MD YE Program Chairman.**

No Club or District Chairman has the authority to send an Exchangee home for any reason. This must be referred to the MD 201 Committee Chairman.

It is a good idea to draw up a calendar for the length of the exchange, prior to the Exchangee's arrival, and get members to commit themselves to selecting a day/s that suit them and what they will do (so as you don't double up). Club members should develop a list of activities and places to visit and members select the activity and time best suited to their own situation. The Club YE Chairman should keep a copy and a copy should be given to the Host Family. Give members a friendly reminder of the date/s they have committed to or better still publish the calendar in your Club Bulletin.

Make sure some one is available to help out if the Host Family has commitments on certain days or nights that cannot include their Exchangee.

Enjoy the experience of changing an overseas youth's life.

Remember Lions Youth Exchange is the easiest way to give practical support to the first Purpose of Lionism:

“To create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world”

The purpose and objectives of the Youth Exchange Program are:

- To bring young people into contact with youth and adults of other countries.
- To share family and community life with another culture.
- To promote international understanding and goodwill throughout the world of Lionism.

Youth Exchange. Try it. You'll Like it.

www.lionsclubs.org.au/ye