



Lions Clubs International

MD 201 Youth Exchange

Guidelines for Host Families

All participants should know and understand the purpose and the objectives of the Lions Club Youth Exchange Program

In 1962, the Lions International Board of Directors adopted the Lions International Youth Exchange Program. This was part of Lions contribution to the improvement of international relations throughout the world and to the promotion of world peace through mutual understanding.

In participating, you will be furthering the purposes 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 of another culture.
- To promote international understanding and goodwill throughout the world of Lionism.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING HOST FAMILIES

Goodwill and understanding do not simply "happen". People have to make an effort to care for others and to welcome them as one of their own.

Acting as a host family to a young person from another country can be a very rewarding experience. However, it does entail some obligations.

As Host Parents you must accept the responsibility of being parents to your guest in the same way you would with your own child. You must be firm yet sympathetic, understanding and loving.

The Exchangee should not be treated as a special or honoured guest. The success of the Youth Exchange Programme is the acceptance of both the Exchangee and host family that he or she is part of the family.

For most of the young people participating in the Youth Exchange Programme, this will be their first trip without their parents. Some will experience homesickness in varying degrees. You should appreciate and expect that there could be some adjustment problems. If the youth spends time alone in his or her room, don't be alarmed. This is fairly common, but if a lot of time is spent alone this could signal that the youth is not making the adjustment. In this case, you must involve him or her in a number of activities. Ask the Host Lions Club to help in providing some activity. The club may have a Leo Club who can involve the youth.

You are under no obligation to provide the Exchangee with pocket money as his or her own parents would have provided this. However, you are responsible for the Exchangee's accommodation and meals. If possible, the Exchangee should have his or her own room or share a room with a youth of about the same age and sex.

It is essential that he or she should not be left alone for long periods during the day. It is unsatisfactory if both parents are at work all day and children are at school. If the family should be away for a day, arrangements should be made for the Exchangee to visit someone on that day.

Finally if the young visitor is going to be part of the family, he or she should be told the ground rules that the other young people of the family have to accept. This should be done very early during the visit, this will leave no doubt in the Exchangee's mind what his or her obligations are.

PREPARATION FOR THE VISIT

You should prepare for the visitor long before he or she arrives. As soon as you have the young person's name, address and/or email, you must begin corresponding. Provide details of your family life, including such details as how many children are in the family and their ages and the occupations of those who are working. Let the visitor know something of your town, suburb or city where you live. Members of the family should learn something of the new family member's own country. It is fun to learn a few phrases of the visitor's language.

Keep in touch with the Host Lions Club, informing the members of anything of interest that the Exchangee may write about.

Make sure you are kept informed of the arrival date, time and airline flight details of the youth. This will be provided to you by the MD Programme Chairman.

DURING THE VISIT

You should endeavour to ensure that the Exchangee sees as much of your city or town as possible. Contact the Host Lions Club for assistance. Members are only too pleased to arrange outings for visitors. It is possible that the Club has arranged a number of activities for the youth; therefore it is advisable to keep in contact with the Club.

Ask your visitor if he or she wishes to attend Church during the stay and arrange for the young person to be taken to the church of his or her choice. If the Exchangee is staying with another host family, make sure some contact is made between the youth and the next/previous host family before he or she moves on.

The Young person is expected to adapt to the discipline of the host family. If the youth shows unwillingness to accept discipline you should seek assistance from the Host Lions Club Youth Exchange Chairman.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, ARE ANY ARRANGEMENTS TO BE MADE BY YOU FOR THE EXCHANGEE TO RETURN HOME OR BE MOVED. THIS MUST BE DONE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE HOST LIONS CLUB AND PROGRAMME CHAIRMAN.

Do not allow the youth numerous telephone calls or emails to home. This only leads to home sickness.

AFTER THE VISIT

After the Exchangee returns, you are encouraged to continue corresponding with the youth, since he or she has shared your family life. You should contact the Host Lions Club and give them your impressions of the visit, successes, problems and suggestions for other families. A Host Family Evaluation Questionnaire form will be sent to you by the Programme Chairman for your completion. Please return it to the Programme Chairman as soon as possible after the departure of the youth

HOST FAMILY CHECKLIST

Before the visit

- Are we corresponding with the young person who will be our guest?
- Are we working closely with the Host Lions Club?
- Do we understand that the direct purpose of Lions Clubs Youth Exchange is to spread international understanding and goodwill?

During the visit

- Do we treat the visitor as a member of our own family, overlooking small differences from our way of acting?
- Have we introduced the visitor to young people of the same age?
- Do we keep the Host Lions Club informed about the exchange?

After the Visit

- Have we corresponded with our Exchangee?
- Have we recommended other families that could participate in the Lions Clubs Youth Exchange Program?

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

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