Youth Exchange Counselor

YOU'RE THE YOUTH EXCHANGE COUNSELOR. WHAT'S NEXT?



So, you are the new Counselor (Youth Exchange Counselor) for your club. Now what? What is your role entail? What can you expect? Here you will find a quick overview of your responsibilities. A much more complete instruction can be found by downloading and reviewing the YEO manual. This position is considered the most fun position on the committee. Your main job is to be connected to the student to make sure everything is going well. It is advisable to meet with the student at lease once a month for a “chat”. This can be over coffee or a phone call. Obviously personal contact is the best to develop the kind of relationship you should have with your student. You may even consider having them stay with you for a couple days early in the year to get better acquainted. A student is more likely to “open up” to you if they feel they know you. You are required to have contact with the student at a minimum of once every 30 days. This contact can be from a personal visit, a phone call, an e-mail or a text.

In addition, each club sets up their club committee in a unique way that fits their specific dynamics, and you may be asked to assist the YEO (Youth Exchange Officer) in certain aspects of the committee that may include:

Second Home Inspection

Our district requires a second home inspection/visit be conducted by a different “certified Rotarian” than performed the initial home inspection/visit. This most likely will fall to you as most clubs only have two or three certified Rotarians in their club. There is a form that requires submitting onto the YEAH database. Your YEO can assist you with this.

Other Activities where you might help are:

Recruiting Outbound Students

In early September the committee will need to make arrangements with the school to talk to students about the program. This can take place in several ways; a school assembly, a class

of 10th graders with a sympathetic teacher that will allow you to take up time in their classroom, flyers, interact club, and many other possibilities. The committee will need to introduce the program to these students; we say 10th graders because although a student can choose to go out in their 12th grade year, it is ideal for them to go in their grade 11 year. There are many reasons for this, but a very important reason is they will be there to help you talk to the grade 10 students about the program. In fact, using the current inbound and the most recent rebound to talk about the program is the best sales tool we have. The committee should be there only to advise, let the students do the talking. Set up an information night where you invite interested students and parents to hear more about the program, the committee will then have to schedule an interview night and panel. Interviews should be set no later than October 1st.



Finding Host Families

Time and time again we hear that this is the hardest part of the job. It is the YEO's responsibility, along with your entire club, to find appropriate host families for your inbound student. To get a view on best practices and how to vet your families review the process under "*Host Families*". Ideally you should have three qualified families, but two will suffice. All families do not need to be selected prior to the student's arrival, however a first family must be previously vetted in the spring prior to the student's arrival in August in order to fulfil Guarantee Form requirements.

Vetting Volunteers

You may also be asked to assist the YEO in helping to complete the vetting background process on all volunteers that work with the Youth Program, this includes YEOs, counselors and host family members and general club members that want to be involved with the student program.

Monitoring the student's school progress

Either the YEO or the counselor should be checking in with the school on a regular basis to see how your student is doing. Do they require some additional tutoring to help them in the beginning? Would a change in classes be beneficial? Only one person should be the school contact and that is usually the counselor, but you should work this out with your YEO.

Monitor the student's family life

Checking in with the student and family often (at a minimum once every 30 days) to see how things are going. A Counselor's Report must be submitted monthly through the YEAH database Portal. Again, you and your YEO can decide who should be the main host family contact.

The message: have fun and be the person in your club your student thinks of first when they have a question or concern. The YEO in your club will be the person you check in with if you have concerns or questions.