

The successful recruitment of qualified host families is a constant, ongoing process. It is not a once or twice a year effort. The clubs that have had the most success in this phase of the Youth Exchange program have recognized this fact and have defined their goals, developed methods, and committed the necessary resources and time to meet the goals. The suggestions detailed herein are by no means all inclusive of what works. They can be modified to reflect what works for your club. BUT THEY ARE TIME PROVEN TECHNIQUES THAT DO WORK IF USED!

As is typical for most successful programs in Rotary, the YE program needs the commitment of the Club President, the Club's Board of Directors and the Club YEO and his or her committee and particularly the club members. This commitment begins with a thorough understanding of the program by the club members AND their spouses. This understanding is most effectively gained in the involvement of your student with the activities of the club and its members.

1. CLUB YOUTH EXCHANGE ORGANIZATION: Clubs need to commit the resources necessary to effectively get the job done. This means budget, people and time. Budget has not been seen as a substantial problem. However, the job of the YE program has at times fallen to one person, which can result in a problem in the lack of people and time categories. We recommend you spread the load by having a multi-member committee in which one member of the committee is designated as the host family coordinator. He or she must agree to do the job and commit the time and effort necessary to do so (emphasize job is "coordinator", not a 1-person task).
2. INBOUND STUDENT APPLICATION: Inbound student applications should be carefully reviewed to see if the student's background and/or interests would suggest a potential host family. For example, a Swedish student noted that his hobby is competing in tri-athletic events. He was placed with a family who participated in this type of competition. A Japanese student was an accomplished pianist fit in perfectly with a family active in the local symphony.
3. HIGH SCHOOL CONTACTS:
  - a. High school superintendent/Principal – gain approval to put a notice on the school bulletin board or school newsletter that you are seeking host families
  - b. High school counselors and foreign language teachers have been a source of recommendations for several clubs. The suggested procedure is to request names and ask assistance of the teacher making the recommendation to set up an appointment to present the program to potential families.
4. INVOLVING STUDENTS WITH CLUB MEMBERS: The more your membership (including spouses) knows about the Inbounds, the better the chances of their being interested to be host families.

- a. Have your Inbound attend club meetings on a regular basis. Make sure they meet different members each time and play an active role in the meeting, such as greeting members at the door or assisting the Sergeant at Arms.
  - b. Have your student give a short (3 to 5 minute) presentation early on in their exchange (within the first 2 months). Do not be concerned if their English is limited; just have them write their talk down and practice with you several times before the presentation. The talk should focus on their background, interests, hobbies and skills. Follow up with a single sheet biography on your Inbound and pass this out to the membership.
  - c. Have the Program Committee set aside one meeting per year when the students can give their “formal” presentation to the club. Think beyond the standard PowerPoint presentation for ways to make this more interesting. For example, we have all known students with special talents. Encourage them to use these talents at this meeting. Or, they can have a table display of books of their country, maps, currency, hand-made items etc.
5. **HOST FAMILIES:** Approach current and past host families and ask them if they can recommend potential host families to you. Ask them to help you set up a time and place to explain the program.
6. **INBOUND STUDENT CONTACTS:** The Inbound students often have made friendships that lead to host families. Particular care should be taken to qualify potential families, with emphasis on a clear understanding of the relationship between the family and the student.
7. **OUTBOUND STUDENT ORIENTATION:** The host family program should be covered in some detail at the Outbound student orientation. Follow through by offering to set up meetings with interested families to explain the program further. The observation is that families may decide that the Outbound program is not for them at that time, but they may agree to host an Inbound student later.
8. **OUTBOUND STUDENT FAMILIES:** Families of the students selected for the Outbound program are potential host families. Approximately 25% of host families are either current or past Outbound parents. Note: this does not mean that the family will qualify as a host family; they must be interviewed in advance of placing a student with them and be cleared to host by ESSEX Compliance Officer.
9. **INFORMATIONAL EVENTS:** Host family information should be available at all events where the Youth Exchange Program is promoted.
10. **ORGANIZATIONS OUTSIDE OF ROTARY:** Investigate for potential families:

- a. Church: Talk to the priest/minister/rabbi and ask for their help in identifying potential families.
  - b. Fraternal Organizations: Elks, Moose, Lions have active community minded memberships. Ask to address their club and explain the program.
  - c. Athletic Clubs: Baseball, basketball, etc are great sources of families.
  - d. Professional Organizations that any of your club members belong to.
  - e. Co-workers
11. **EMAIL BLAST:** Gain approval from the leadership of any community, fraternal organization and professional organization that a club member belongs to or employer or Business office if leasing space where you work, to send an email blast that you to their membership that you are seeking potential host families for an exchange student in your school district.
- ❖ For one club in 7390 a total of 4 individuals responded within one hour of 2 separate email blasts – one email blast to a professional organization of the club YEO and one email blast to the club YEO’s Business Office. Two of the respondents were within the school district and have served as Host Families and the other respondents lived in other school districts and their names were referred to appropriate club YEO.

As you can see there are a lot of different approaches in identifying potential host families. Using all of them will improve your success rate in obtaining host families for your school district. However, don’t forget to incorporate EMAIL blasts in your recruitment efforts – they are the least time consuming approach and they have proven for D7390 to be an efficient way to source excellent and caring host families.

\* Content for suggestions 1-10 is from District 5010, Alaska.