

Youth Exchange Program Policy Manual

This book is an attempt to bring together all of the policies established over the years for the operation of the Youth Exchange Program of Lions International Multiple District 19. Whenever possible references to the dates of minutes will be provided, but some policies were formulated prior to current records. The first page was approved May 17, 1998. Pages will be issued as they are written and approved. Page numbering and indexing will be left until completed.

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Expense Reimbursement

District Chairmen

A District Chairman is representing and promoting the program for the benefit of the youths and Lions of a District. As such, expenses relating to the District operations should be recovered from the District budget, if one exists. For example, postage for letters that are sent to District Clubs to promote the program would be considered a District expense. However, in many districts, a budget is not provided, accordingly, we do not want to see a chairman go short and will consider all reasonable expense, provided the category is within our policy guidelines, as below.

All Committee members and Officers (including the District Chairmen, Coordinators and Airport Meet and Greet)

We will cover the following – postage, long distance telephone or fax toll charges, courier when required, photocopying of documents. Receipts and notations as to the reason for the expense are required. i.e.: letters to host families to acknowledge their application , etc.

Airport Duty

We will cover the cost of parking and any lunches as required for those on airport duty. We will also cover the cost of lunches for youths traveling to MD19 if between planes.

Ferries

We will cover the cost of ferry travel to attend all General Committee meetings, even if there is no mileage allowance for a particular meeting.

Mileage

This allowance is to provide a token amount to assist with meeting attendance. While the amount is quite nominal, it was not available in the past and will be reviewed based on experience. It involves upper limits to be conservative. (It is easier to increase an allowance than to reduce it.)

Allowance for YEP Committee Meetings

This allowance is available for only **two general committee** meetings per Lions year - July 1/June 30.

The maximum payment per event in this category is \$80.00.

The rate is .25¢ USD per mile, 16¢ CAD per kilometer).

Claims under all of the above categories will be charged to Committee Expense

Allowance for Travel Administration

This category will cover mileage to orient outgoing travelers as well as incidental travel to receive/move visiting youths or to assist a host family in the event of problems. Whenever possible, try to group outgoing travelers to reduce the number of trips for orientation.

The rate is .25¢ USD per mile or .16¢ CAD per kilometer.

The maximum payment per event in this category is \$80.00.

Claims under the above category will be charged to Travel Administration

Allowance for YEP Promotion

This category will cover mileage to club meetings or zone meetings (other then your own club or zone) to promote the program, including both travel and hosting.

The rate is .25¢ USD per mile or .16¢ CAD per kilometer.

The maximum payment per event in this category is \$80.00.

Claims under the above category will be charged to Program Promotion.

Note that this is a new expense reimbursement and will be subject to a review April 30, 2009.

Expense claims are to be submitted quarterly. Time your submissions to have the claim approved at a general meeting or an executive meeting. As the end of February is our fiscal year end, we want claims to be submitted to a meeting called in late January or early February. We generally try to have a meeting shortly after the winter exchange.

Original Approved at AGM, May 17, 1998

Amended to increase mileage allowance May 24, 2008 at AGM held in Yakima

Age Limitations

While the material provided by Lions International indicates a minimum age of 15, and a maximum age of 21 at the time of the exchange, we have established a higher minimum age. Youths coming to MD19 from the east (Europe), or from South American countries, must pass through a number of airports without an escort or chaperone. As well, we have found that 15 year old youths are frequently more likely to suffer from homesickness and this detracts from their visit.

Youths We Receive

Youths travelling to MD19 from **Japan, Australia** and **New Zealand**:

Minimum age 16, maximum age 21 at the time of the exchange.

Youths travelling to MD19 from **European** countries and **South America**:

Minimum age 17, maximum age 21 at the time of the exchange.

Youths We Send

Youths from MD19 travelling to **Japan, Australia** and **New Zealand**:

Minimum age 16, maximum age 21 at the time of the exchange.

Youths from MD19 travelling to **European** countries and **South America**:

Minimum age 17, maximum age 21 at the time of the exchange.

In addition, youths travelling to some European countries may be subject to the age restrictions of the YEP in their country of choice.

These policies have been established and confirmed in order to safeguard the youths, committee members, and, in the case of our youths travelling, to promote good relations with foreign YEP organizations. In the past, we have received requests from parents or others for exceptions to these limits on the basis of “advanced maturity”, “very responsible youth”, etc. Requests such as these are to be reviewed and voted on by the executive committee (by telephone, if necessary) in order to relieve the Coordinator of the responsibility for a decision.

Reviewed and approved Nov. 7/98

Exchange Policy

Definition – *Exchange refers to a two-way movement, that is, we receive at least one youth and we send at least one youth, but not necessarily in the same year.*

It is a policy of this committee that any proposals for new exchanges require the approval of the majority of committee members present at a general meeting of the committee.

A new exchange requires a review on completion at a general committee meeting in order to consider whether to repeat the exchange.

Once two exchanges have been reviewed and found to be satisfactory, the present coordinator should make a motion to move the exchange into the “established” category.

Each coordinator, at an appropriate time, will request consideration of the number of youths to be received from a country. In so doing, the overall availability of host families is to be considered along with the number to be received from other exchanges at the same time.

At the time of writing, established exchanges are as follows:

Australia
New Zealand
Japan
Finland
France
Italy
Switzerland
Great Britain

Reviewed and Approved Nov. 7/98

POLICY STATEMENT FOR FOREIGN CHAIRMEN/COORDINATORS

Comments – The following is the text of a notification to other YEP regarding our policies for receiving youths. It should be forwarded on letterhead to each chairman or country coordinator with whom we have exchanges, or with whom we may wish to have exchanges. To be sent each year by the co-ordinators.

“Greetings from MD19. I thought that you should be made aware of the operation of the Youth Exchange Program in our Multiple District. We consider ourselves unique in that our clubs are in the states of Washington and Idaho, U. S. A. and the Province of British Columbia, Canada. This creates interesting opportunities for a cultural exchange. I would like to provide you with a list of our main considerations, so that the youths you select can be informed in advance.

- (1) Ages - the minimum age of the youth we receive is 16 at the time of the exchange, the maximum age at the time of the exchange is 21. For youths from Europe and South America, the minimum age is 17. This is because they have to negotiate several airports without escort.
- (2) Provided sufficient host families are available, we provide two - three week hostings, one in the US part of MD19 and one in the Canadian part. The youth then has an opportunity to learn from two cultures. **Travel documents for both countries will be required.**
- (3) Our host families are volunteering their hospitality. They are not compensated in any way. They simply enjoy the opportunity to learn about the culture of another country, and to assist the program. Some host families may not be Lions but all are sponsored by a Lions Club. Your youths should be prepared to attend one or two Lions meetings to tell about their homeland.
- (4) Visiting youths are not allowed to drive vehicles or to travel in private aircraft. Non prescription drugs are not permitted, drinking of alcoholic beverages is not allowed, and smoking may not be permitted in some homes.
- (5) Since we try to provide airport greeters, the youths dress for travel should identify them as being in the program.
- (6) For December and January exchanges, the weather can be quite cold and snowy.
- (7) Travel outside of the program is not allowed unless approved in writing by the youths parents and the co-ordinators in both countries.
- (8) Unacceptable behaviour will result in the youth being returned early.
- (9) We ask that you apply well in advance. Our ability to obtain host families is limited.

We are sending this information as a guide to assist you in the selection and orientation of youths travelling in the program.

Yours in Lionism,”

Reviewed and Approved Nov. 7/98

HOSTING

See Appreciation for Host Family Incentives and Public Relations

MD19 is an International District, which affords visiting youth an opportunity to experience two cultures.

It is a policy of this committee that each youth visiting MD19 in the program will enjoy a host period on each side of the border. This policy is subject to the following exceptions:

- (1) The youth is coming to MD19 by a special arrangement with a predetermined host family for the full period.
- (2) There are not sufficient host family applications early enough to provide for this.

When a coordinator begins matching host families to travel applicants, there are many considerations, not the least of which are gender, desired age, allergies, interests, time period of request. It is our goal to have host families assigned 30 days before the arrival of the youths so that a dialogue can be started between host families and youths. While this is the ideal, sometimes we fall short and a heavy responsibility lies on the coordinator to generate host family applications. In order to relieve the coordinator of some of the stress and to prevent criticism, it will be a policy of this committee as follows:

If the coordinator has not received (**in writing**) sufficient host family applications to provide for host periods on each side of the border by 20 days prior to arrival, the coordinator is free to fill the vacancy from the applications on hand.

To prevent any misunderstanding, while applications will be dealt with in the order received, to provide for cross border hosting, some host family applications may be held up. For example, when a youth is assigned to a US family, the coordinator will be looking for a Canadian host family up until 20 days prior to arrival. At that time if a Canadian hosting has not been received, the youth will be assigned to a US host family.

Reviewed and Approved Nov. 7/98

Hosting Period

While it is a policy of this committee that the normal host period will be two three week host periods, with one on each side of the border, from time to time this will not be possible. The foreseeable reasons are as follows:

- (1) The exchange is for four weeks only, such as some Japanese University students and some European countries.
- (2) The youths own schedule does not provide sufficient time, usually due to schooling.
- (3) The exchange may be by "special request" as detailed earlier.

In those circumstances, it will be the policy of this committee to provide two host periods of close to equal numbers of days on each side of the border provided sufficient host families are available. This will maintain our "two culture" policy, however, there may be exceptions requested by experienced host families. Therefore, the following will serve as guidance for the Coordinator:

If in the view of the coordinator, the host family applying is a "seasoned" host family and has requested or accepted a four-week host period, it will be in order to assign a youth to that family. The rationale is as follows:

- (a) The family has hosted many times and all reports are favourable.
- (b) The coordinator is satisfied that the youth will receive a good grounding in at least one country culture.
- (c) The travel application for the youth indicates a desire for the country of the proposed host family.

Hosting (Continued)

Letters of Welcome

In the past, many host families have complained that the youths did not properly thank them for their hospitality. It will be a policy of this committee that the youth should receive a reminder of this, therefore, the General Chairman (or designate) will write to the youth at the first host family to provide the following information:

To welcome him/her to MD19

To provide the youth with phone numbers of YEP committee people in the event they have to contact someone.

To remind the youth to wear proper YEP ID (clothing, etc) while travelling from host family to host family.

To remind the youth that the host family is volunteering their hospitality for the good of the exchange and that they should be properly thanked.

A format for this letter follows:

Dear:

I am writing to you to welcome you to Lions International Multiple District 19. We hope that you will have a worthwhile and enjoyable visit to our area. I would like to tell you something about us.

Our Lions Youth Exchange covers all of Washington State, the northern part of Idaho, and south and central British Columbia. Because this is an international district, we try to give each youth a host period on each side of the border. This gives them the benefit of two cultures.

In the event you need to contact a YEP person, there is a list of phone numbers on the reverse.

There are a few rules that we want you to be aware of, and this may just be a repeat of your orientation.

1. You are not permitted to travel on your own, except between host families. For travel between host families, you will be met by your host family at your destination
2. Wear YEP clothing or carry other YEP ID when travelling between host families or on your departure so that you can be identified.
3. The three "D"s –no drinking – no drugs – no driving.
4. Respect your host families wishes. They are voluntarily opening their homes to the program.
5. Thank your host family, both verbally, and by a short letter or card from home.

Most of all, have fun, learn about a new area and have an enjoyable visit.

Yours truly,

General Chairman

Reviewed and Approved Nov. 25, 03 – Executive Meeting

Orientation

The lack of a proper orientation has resulted in friction between ourselves and foreign committees. When a youth is not made aware of the rules of the program, there is the potential for misunderstanding.

It is mandatory for each youth travelling from MD19 in the YEP to take part in an orientation session. At least one parent must be present and should be an active participant.

We usually offer group sessions in the Seattle area or the Vancouver, BC area and some chairman may find it helpful to direct their travelling youths to one of those.

It is the duty of each District Chairman to ensure that a youth travelling from their District in the program receives orientation.

If the youth has been invited to a group orientation, then the District Chairman must follow up to ascertain that the youth, and a parent, did attend. If they did not, then it is up to the District Chairman to do the orientation. In areas not handy to the group sessions, the District Chairman will arrange for orientation, preferably in person. In the event a District Chairman is not able to attend, then a local club member, such as the President of the sponsoring Lions club, could be enlisted to help. The club has a stake in knowing that the youth knows and understands the rules of the exchange.

An orientation program is included in the District Chairman training manual. This sets out many subjects to cover, but the following are particularly important and are not to be overlooked.

- (1) All host families are volunteers and should be suitably thanked.*
- (2) You should be prepared to make a presentation at your host club, and your sponsoring club.*
- (3) Travel on your own outside of the program is not allowed. Travel with your host family is allowed, but your parents should be made aware of any extensive trips.*

Three important rules

- (1) - No drinking*
- (2) - No drugs*
- (3) - No driving*

Improper conduct will result in an early return home, at a higher cost due to not returning within the group rates. You may be liable for these additional costs.

Reviewed and Approved Nov. 7/98

Appreciation – Host Families, Clubs, Zone Chairmen

The Youth Exchange Program depends on the goodwill of host families. As well, the program requires the cooperation of Lions Clubs to locate and sponsor youths to travel, and host families to host. We will express our appreciation in the following ways:

Host Families

Each time a family hosts, they will receive a ~~Certificate of Appreciation~~ host family pin to cover the exchange period. Whenever possible, the ~~certificate~~ pin should be provided by the General Chairman in time for the District Chairman to ~~sign and~~ present to the host family at the club meeting when the visiting youth and the hosts are invited. It may be necessary for the District Chairman to forward the ~~certificate~~ pin directly to the club if it is not possible to attend the meeting. Clubs should be requested to look on this as an opportunity meet potential members in the event the host family are not Lions. If the District Chairman is the host family, the General Chairman will send the ~~certificate~~ pin directly to the club, to be signed and presented by the President. In order to accomplish this, the Coordinator should forward the host family list promptly to the General Chairman.

We should be prolific in expressing our appreciation in other ways. Correspondence should include phrases such as – “Thank you for participating in the Youth Exchange program”, etc. Certificate presentations should include a verbal thank you and comment that the program works because the host families generously offer their hospitality.

We should also thank the host the families in advertising we place with the “Border Crossing”

Clubs

Whenever a club sponsors a traveler, or a host family, they will receive recognition. When they participate for the first time, they will receive a YEP patch that can be sewn to their banner, ~~along with that they will receive a year patch to indicate the year they participated.~~ If they participate in subsequent years, they will receive a Letter of thanks for continued participation. The General Chairman will maintain the award records, with copies to the Secretaries files. The awards will be sent out each September and will be for the preceding Lion year just ended.

Pin approved May 24, 2008 at AGM in Yakima.

Year patch withdrawn Sept. 27/08by consensus of Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Treasurer to be ratified at next YEP meeting.

Policy Manual -Travel Package

The Youth Exchange Program is costly to operate. Without being specific, the costs include communications in various forms with many people, including foreign countries, stationary, advertising, meeting expense. The costs, spread among all committee members is considerably higher than most Lions can afford to cover on their own. In addition, no individual should be in the position of being asked to cover program costs personally.

The only real income the program generates is the interest on the funds invested. These funds were donated by clubs with the distinct purpose that they would be held in perpetuity to assist with the financing of the program. Unfortunately, the interest revenue varies from time to time and is currently not sufficient to cover all costs.

Accordingly, it is necessary to include a charge on travel packages to assist. The reasoning is those receiving the most benefit from the program are the youths who travel.

The travel price will be determined each year, based on airfare rates and exchange rates.

The package will include the following:

- Airfare to the destination airport in the country of choice.
- Taxes, except departure tax and Airport Improvement tax.
- Trip insurance.
- An allowance for internal travel to the host family(s), except for Europe where the required ticket(s) will be purchased before departure.
- € 4 YEP Friendship Banners (*amended Feb. 19, 2005*)
- 6 YEP pins
- Personal business cards.
- YEP patch for jacket.
- Name tag.
- An administration fee in an amount to be determined when the travel prices are set.
- ~~A Youth Exchange T-shirt.~~ (*amended Oct. 20th, 2007 to a \$20 US gift certificate for a purchase from our on line store*)

Policy Manual – Dress for MD19 Youths Travelling in the YEP

A standard of dress is required for the following reasons:

- (1) To assist with rapid identification in airports
- (2) To present a neat appearance at formal presentations and special occasions.

The standard dress for MD19 youths will be a Navy Blue blazer with a YEP patch on the upper front left pocket, (lower left pocket for females), gray or *khaki* pants (skirt or slacks for female), a white shirt (blouse) with a tie being optional for males. Note that the older Japanese seem to prefer females to wear skirts, but this is not obligatory.

This clothing will be worn

- (1) When travelling from country to country and from host family to host family by public conveyance. One exception would be when the host families are making a “family exchange” – that is, when they are travelling by automobile and meeting at a convenient location to make the exchange.
- (2) Club presentations, unless it is an informal arrangement, such as a picnic. The host family in those circumstances should guide the youth.
- (3) At any other formal occasions, such as a presentation at public functions. Again, the local Lions or Host family can guide the youth.

In all of our dealings with other Lions Youth Exchange, we should encourage them to adopt a similar policy, although the dress would differ.

Amended Sept. 8, 2001 to include khaki as gray is difficult to obtain when not in style

Exchange Year Dating Policy

In order to avoid confusion, for reporting purposes, Lions International, requests that reports list exchanges in the year in which they were arranged. For example, even though several youths arrived in MD19 from Japan Aug. 1st of 1999, their exchange is considered to fall into the 1998/99 Lion year because that is when it was arranged. A club that sponsors a youth or a host family relating to that exchange would receive a year patch for that Lion year, in the example, 98/99. We have two exchange periods per year, therefore, if a club sponsors a host family in August, and then a host family in December, they would receive a patch for each Lion year. To prevent confusion, these awards will be sent out each September, based on the previous Lion year participation. For our purposes, exchanges should be expressed as 98/99, 1999/2000, or 99/00, rather than 1999 or 2000.

Approved Feb. 12, 2000”

Distribution of Travel Application

In Canada – Mail completed application & \$500 deposit to: PDG Ron Silver, 2826 Gook Road, Quesnel, BC V2J 4J1

In USA - Mail completed application & \$500 deposit to: Lion Kathy Schumer, 17723 – 23rd Ave. SE Bothell, WA 98012

These individuals will forward the application to the proper coordinator, and the funds to the proper Treasurer.

Approved Minutes of February 19, 2005