

THE LOWDOWN



WHAT IS IT?

Every year youngsters between 17-21 are given the opportunity to visit other countries of the world. Youth Exchange mainly takes place in the Summer holidays and usually involves 10 days family hosting followed by 10 days in a Youth Centre. In Britain there is one Youth Centre which takes approximately 40 youngsters from over 20 countries. Each year there is a Discover Ireland with 30 youngsters. There is a smaller Youth Exchange over the Christmas period. It is not about tourism, the emphasis is about the value of sharing in family and community life of another country, though of course visitors want to explore your part of the world.

WHY?

'To create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.' The idea is that youngsters can learn from first hand experiences the culture, religion and way of life of another country. To be able to understand the people and unite in friendships with other youngsters both in family homes and at Youth Camps.

HOW?

The sponsoring Lions Club is responsible for the costs of travel to the country visited plus insurance. The family themselves sometimes pay for the travel. The host club with the host family is responsible for the costs of accommodation, meals and outings during the stay.

HOSTING THE FACTS

Helping the youths of this world understand each other is one of the best service activities a Lion can do.... *Fact*
You can ask to host a youngster from a specific country.... *Fact*

They don't need entertaining every second of the day you will meet typical teenagers who want a bit of space at times to lounge about or just enjoy each others company *Fact*

If several youngsters are hosted near to each other, the project can become a zone responsibility..... *Fact*
(see What a Success overleaf)

YOU WILL ENJOY IT.... IT IS GREAT FUN *Fact*

HOSTING..... THE FALLACIES

We work full time, we can't host..... *Wrong*

We don't have any youngsters at home, we can't host *Wrong*

In fact a Zone last year of the 4 families hosting 8 youngsters, two families worked full time and three of the families did not have relevant aged children themselves

Can't speak the language, we can't host..... *Wrong*

All of them speak some English, a lot, better than we do and in any case it's great fun trying.

WELL..... HOW ABOUT IT?

Every Lion is entitled to participate. All that is needed is to have an interest in and enjoy meeting other people, be willing to open up your home to a complete stranger! Sounds like a typical Lion!!!

Give Youth Exchange Hosting a try whether by yourselves or as part of a zone project.



WHAT A SUCCESS! **LIONS YOUTH EXCHANGE**

A great example of a successful Zone Hosting.

During a Summer hosting a Zone hosted 17 young people from 13 different countries. Who said language was a barrier? - it didn't seem to worry these youngsters and we all know how adaptable Lions are! Lots of gesturing, phrase books and a huge amount of laughter helped, though most of the visitors had an excellent grasp of the English language, a lot better than their hosts I have to admit.

Visitors arrived into Birmingham International to a specially organised Lions reception. It was great, a lot of work went into that organisation, but it was worth it and we didn't lose one of them! They arrived but not necessarily their luggage! In fact Mayumi from Brazil didn't see her luggage for 4 days and that was after it had travelled on its own from Birmingham to New York, then to Frankfurt onto Japan, back to Birmingham and finally by courier down to Seaton in Devon.

The secret of the success of this Youth Exchange was the fact that over 17 clubs in 4 zones shared the hosting. It was not just the responsibility of a host family and one or two Lions. Never again should the old excuses be heard again, 'we're working, we haven't the time', or 'we have no children of our own at home'. Zone hosting means we all share the responsibility and better still we all share in the fun and satisfaction of getting to know a group of people from all over the world. Some make friends for life. Lion Phil was heard to comment at the time of emotional goodbyes, 'I don't want Anssi to go, he's like one of the family'.

Make no mistake about it, Youth Hosting is a true Lions service project. Eva Maria from Austria told me, 'if ever I was in trouble anywhere in the world I would find a Lion, I feel so safe with them, I know they would care'. *What a compliment for Lions Clubs International.*

Each year approximately 40 young people from over 20 countries (who attended the Youth Camp) will be going home knowing a little of how we live, having made friends between themselves and their hosts. We know they enjoy themselves because they tell us again and again, but so did the Lions. It's hard work at times sorting arrangements but what fun, please join them and become part of Youth Exchange next year, I promise you won't regret it.

LEARN MORE (Family of Zone Hosting)

Please ring your District Youth Exchange Officer or Youth Team Leader/Chairman:

Youth Exchange Officer District 105M for 2003-04 – Jo Hand

Tel 02476 640179

Email jo@hand666.freereserve.co.uk

Or Alternatively

Contact MD Youth Exchange Co-Ordinator (Inwards) for 2003-04 – Ron Twining

Tel 01983 862017

Email twinronlion@lycos.co.uk

Your District Officer would be pleased to come and talk to clubs or zone meetings about how to take part in one of the best service activities a Lion can do. It could be for just a Lion host family, a club or a zone.

INWARD - DATES FOR WINTER 2003/04....

Hosting dates 27 December 03 – 5 January 04

Hosting dates 5 January – 14 January 04

PROPOSED DATES FOR SUMMER 2004...(to be confirmed)

Hosting dates 19 July – 27 July 04

Youth Centre, Street. Somerset 27 July – 6 August 04

Hosting dates 6 August – 18 August 04

OUTWARD

Discover Ireland Camp 10 July – 17 July 04 (preceded by 2 weeks family hosting)

Information on other international camps available on MD website from November 03.