

The Lions International Youth Exchange Program fulfills the First Object of the Lions:

To create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.

The program was officially introduced in 1961. Since then, thousands of young people (ages 15-21) have experienced life in another culture as Lions youth exchangees.

Unlike some exchange programs, the Lions program does not involve tourism, academic studies, or employment. Instead, the Lions youth exchange program provides young people with a unique opportunity to:

- participate in everyday life in another culture;
- reside with a host family;
- serve as an ambassador for international understanding;
- participate in local customs.

Generally, Lions youth exchange visits are two to four weeks

in duration. Many youth exchangees also participate in one-week (or longer) Lions international youth

camp. Organized by Lions around the world, the Lions International Youth Camp Program provides young people (ages 16-22) with an opportunity to meet and share cultural viewpoints.

How the Program Works

The success of the youth exchange program is the result of cooperation among many people. The program begins when:

- a young person requests sponsorship from a local Lions club to become a Lions youth exchangee or;
- a Lions club seeks young people to participate as youth exchangees. Clubs often sponsor speech or essay contests in local schools to select youth exchangees.

Participation in the Lions International Youth Exchange Program is open to all young people who are:

- 15-21 years of age;
- sponsored by a Lions club;
- capable of representing their sponsoring Lions club, community, and country;
- willing to accept the customs of another culture.

When a Lions club agrees to sponsor a young person as a Lions youth exchangee, it accepts responsibility for:

- explaining the objectives and regulations of the program to the young person and his or her parents;
- preparing the young person for the cross-cultural experience;
- contacting the district Lions youth exchange chairman (who works with both the sponsoring and hosting Lions club, district, or multiple district) to coordinate travel and home-stay arrangements.

Exchanges can be arranged with hosting Lions clubs, districts, or multiple districts in the more than 180 countries in which Lions clubs exist.

Host Lions clubs accept responsibility for:

- screening prospective host families;
- arranging (optional) group activities for exchangees;
- greeting exchangees upon arrival;



youth exchange program

- transporting exchangees to and from host families;
- remaining in contact with host families.

Lions, their friends, and other local volunteers can serve as Lions youth exchange host families. It is not mandatory for host families to have children the same age as the Lions youth exchangee. However, host families should enjoy the company of young people.

Host families agree to provide meals and lodging for the young person. In exchange, the young visitor agrees to participate in daily family activities. This may range from learning how to weave fabric to partaking of daily saunas.

After residing with a host family for a week or two, exchangees may relocate to a second host family. Some exchangees may attend a local Lions international youth camp.



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Details About the Program

- The sponsoring Lions club, the youth's family, or both, are responsible for the cost of the young person's international travel and insurance.
- Costs incurred while in the host country are the responsibility of the host Lions club.
- The host family agrees to provide the young person with housing and meals in the home.
- Planned excursions, entertainment, and restaurant meals are the financial responsibility of either the host Lions club or the host family.
- Youth exchangees should have adequate personal funds for gifts, long-distance telephone calls, souvenirs, and incidentals.
- Young people with special needs can participate in the youth exchange program. Arrangements can be made through the youth exchange chairman.

For more information, log onto: www.lionsclubs.org

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**THE LIONS
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*Information for
Young People,
their Parents,
Host Families
and Lions Clubs*

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