

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER



Eastern States
Student Exchange

ESSEX Chair Corner..... Patti Smith

May 1st, 2009

Spring is here! ☺ A time to rejoice and a time to cry. Your Inbounds are getting ready to return home and your Outbound are heading home to the good old USA, most probably reluctantly.

2009-2010 Exchange year is coming to an end. I am sure you have all enjoyed successful experiences and look forward to the class of 2009-2010 arrival. We tell our exchange students that communication is important and I think it starts with us. So I am publishing this Newsletter .

Much as changed over the past few years when it comes to managing a Youth Exchange Program. Over the years we have done much to create a safe and happy experience for all our students. We now are mandated by the Dept of State and RI to follow a strict criteria and to document what we do. It has been a bumpy road to get where we are today, but I believe with everyone's help and hard work we are in a position that will enable ESSEX and the Districts to meet the requirements necessary for a successful exchange program. Some measures have been tested , tried and found not to fit our needs, so we move on. Hence the development of the "**Standardize Forms**". These forms have been developed to help our organization two fold, in lowering the cost of the Annual Audit by giving the Districts a resource tool where everyone will be on the same page. District Chairs have received Inbound and Outbound handbooks per student. If you need extra books please let me know. The forms have also been posted on the website for your convenience.

Another helpful tool coming your way is a **Chairman Manual** which is currently being developed and should be available in July.

As we prepare for the next class of students it is very important for your District to stay on top of the paperwork. It is important that Guarantee Forms not sit around for more than 4-5 weeks and less as we get closer to summer. This is so important for the student trying to get a visa. Some students are looking at a wait of 3 months and can't get appointments until Guarantee Forms arrive to them.. Please do your best to stay within 4 weeks and/or keep the country contact in the loop if having difficulties.

The news lately has not been very favorable towards Mexico and Thailand. Each year it seems we have a different country that seems to be getting negative headlines for some reason or another. Be assured that ESSEX country contacts are in constant contact with these countries that have our students. We are being told that the students are safe, not in areas where there is escalating problems and to date we have had no reports from current exchange students on unsafe or unhealthy situations. ESSEX will monitor the situation and if at anytime we feel the need to change assignments or pull a student out of a country we will do so immediately.

Managing an exchange program in any District is not easy. It takes a passion that goes deep. I want to thank our 36 Districts for hanging in there when it sometimes gets difficult or cumbersome and you might think "why am I doing this". Just remember the difference you are making to each student that comes your way. YOU are helping to pave the way towards "peace and understanding".

I look forward to seeing you all in July 2009 in Boxborough, Massachusetts.

Patti, ESSEX CHAIR

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www.exchangestudent.org

Executive Board Meeting, held April 2009

Executive Board meeting was held in April 2009 in Ocean City. Thank you Bob and Carol Saghirian for their generous hospitality. Some of the highlights of the meeting were By-Laws review, Database, Audit discussion, Chairman's Manual and much more.

- The Essex By-Law recommended changes will be sent to you shortly from ESSEX Secretary Colleen Wood. Please take the time to review and bring your questions and concerns to the July 2009 Meeting where you will be asked to vote approval of these recommendations.
- After review and discussion of the current database with the auditor who commented that the use of this particular database, as it stands, does not cover all the needed requirements for the compliance audit. It was decided to discontinue the utilization of the database. The development of the Standardized Forms will better fit the audit needs as well as lower the cost of the actual audit.
- NEW GENERATIONS—It was discussed and decided that ESSEX will not represent New Generations, at this point. It was felt the Districts had enough on their plate with Long term and Short term programs. Also the liability of managing 18+ might create more than we want to handle. I welcome the members (Youth Exchange Officers) to share with me your thoughts regarding New Generations. Should we keep at the District level and/or have some form of management/directive at the ESSEX level?
- AUDIT—Overall, we did well, however it took months to gather the materials and to get all of the background checks for all of the host families and youth exchange officers/counselors. We have to do better in this area. In addition, the following standards presented significant problems that must be corrected for the 2009-10 audit:

Inbound Students

15 of 24 files did not have evidence of a monthly contact with the student and host family. (This 79.2% rating is below the 85% minimum and would result in CSIET/DoS corrective action.) Only 18 of 24 student files showed that the host family interviews were conducted in the home with all family members. (This 75% rating is below the 85% minimum and would result in CSIET/DoS corrective action.)

Outbound Students

Only 9 of 17 student files had evidence that all required items were provided to students prior to their departure. The major problem was the failure to have copies of ID cards given to outbound students. (This 52.9% rating is below the 85% minimum and would result in CSIET corrective action.)

INBOUND NEWS.. *From ~ Carl Hill, ESSEX Inbound Coordinator*

The inbound process for 2009-2010 is progressing very well for this point in the year. Most of the applications have been received from the Country Contacts and assigned to districts. The remainder of the assignments should be made in the next two weeks. Our numbers have increased over the 2008-2009 academic year. Thank you to the Country Contacts, District Chairs and District Inbound Coordinators for your cooperation and good work. The paper work has increased significantly because of "AC" time...that is State Department Audit and Rotary International Certification.

Reminders:

1. Please continue to report host family changes as soon as possible after the move. I only need the student name and country and names and address of the host family...eg. John Smith - Borneo - Matilda and Amos Smith, 555 Park Street, Sixty Four, PA 11111.
2. I will be responsible to send a copy of the completed guarantee form to Rotary International. I do this at one time at the end of August.
3. **Please keep me posted when your students have returned home at the end of the year.** Again, all I need is name and country of student and date of departure. I do not need flight information. Please keep that information for your files. Please pass on the information only after they have departed the country not in anticipation of their arrival. This is usually the responsibility of the District Chair or Inbound Coordinator.
4. District Chairs/Coordinators - When faxing or e-mailing the copy of the completed guarantee form to me, please remember to send both pages (assuming it is the new two page form)

Inbound News...continued

5. We need the hosting information form and guarantee form as quickly as possible after placement. It does take several weeks for the students to obtain the proper visas, etc

Keep the postal service, fax machines, telephones and computers operating at a high level for the next couple of months.

Carl E. Hill

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Outbound News

From: John Brady, Essex Outbound Coordinator

The 2009 – 2010 outbound class has been selected and applications have been sent to the four corners of the world. Host families are making contact as the final paperwork comes back to us. Its been quite an experience handling the placements this year that Patti Smith did so well for the past 9 years.

The initial crush for the December 20th start was a bit overwhelming at first. Applications arrived by US Mail and every other delivery service out there. For the most part the applications were complete with only a few that had missing items.

My living room was sectioned off by countries. Piles of applications started to grow daily starting in December. I still can picture the looks my wife Diane gave me as I added more and more applications to the piles.

The first placement took over an hour. I thought I was going to collapse. Fortunately, they move a lot quicker after that one. It took two and a half days to complete the initial placements. The hardest part was picking the students to wanted countries like Japan, Spain and Argentina where we had around 3 applications for each opening.

After the initial placements it's a lot easier. If the applications is complete and the student qualifies and there is an opening in the county, then the student is placed.

The hardest part of this year was checking the applications. This year I received at last 5 different versions of the application. They come from different websites, ours, Rotary International and other districts. One application was at least ten years old. This made it very difficult to check.

We have a new look Country Selection list. This will be updated and sent out in September for next year. It is very important that you review this form with your students and make sure they qualify for the countries they select.

Also new this year, I put out on the website a list of available countries and the number of spots that were open. . This has worked very well for those students that were placed after the first of the year. In all probability I will be doing that from the beginning next year.

I have enjoyed speaking to a number of District Chairs and Outbound Coordinators and look forward to working with everyone again next year. If you have any suggestions or even a better idea, please send it to me.

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www.exchangestudent.org

Eastern States Student Exchange

CSIET AND STATE DEPARTMENT BEGIN NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE 'YOUTH EXCHANGE'

During the waning moments of our last ESSEX meeting in Pennsylvania, I alerted you that CSIET and the government were planning a big nation wide media campaign to 'sell' the American people on the concept of youth exchange and family hosting. Well it recently started with a CSIET announcement--

"We are very pleased to be launching a joint CSIET/ Department of State multi-media public service announcement campaign to increase hosting capacities for the international youth exchange community. Working with the state department staff and the exchange program membership we have developed a new campaign website featuring print, radio and web advertisements which will be distributed to more than 4000 media outlets nationwide."

Please go to new web site www.hoststudents.org and you will find easy to use resources for host families seeking foreign students, schools seeking exchange students and even potential kids seeking an exchange program. There are also good examples of posters you can print off, news releases for local and HIGH SCHOOL newspapers, post cards templates and official Department of State letters you can copy to approach your local and regional newspapers and TV stations.

If your district needs a publicity boost about the work of Rotary, here is an opportunity to appointment someone in your committee or district to work on it. Remember www.hoststudents.org They could also contact Walt Haworth at wehaworth@verizon.net as I have some other materials which were sent to me as the ESSEX rep.

Since the government is now going to be the 'big evaluator' of youth exchange programs, CSIET, at the urging of its members (like ESSEX), is committed to helping us further develop our programs and impact on more Americans the great ideals of youth diplomacy!



ESSEX lost two members of our ESSEX family this year, Joe Bolduc and Cliff McLean. Both of these gentleman had given 250% towards youth exchange through out their Rotary life. We will miss them and remember them with fond memories.

If you would like to send a donation to the ESSEX Scholarship Fund in their memory please send a check payable to ESSEX—mark for Scholarship in memory of _____ and mail to Allen Smith @ 900 Denis Circle, Swatara, PA 17111

www.exchangestudent.org

The Contact Loop ~ George Wood, Chief of Country Contacts

The Country Contact is the key link between you and your students. Both the Inbound and Outbound student applications are processed through the Country Contacts. It is so important that you maintain communication as the chair of your district from beginning to end of the exchange.

The Country Contact needs to know if there is a concern throughout the year that may result in the possibility of the student returning home. In some cases they just need to be aware of a situation and in others it may be that they should take some type of action. Sometimes it is a good idea to have their input as to the steps that should be taken to help correct the problem before contacting their counterparts in the other country.

Contacts want to work directly with you or one person in your district to resolve problems. They should on very rare occasion have direct interaction with the club, student, natural parents or host parents. If we follow this procedure communication efforts can filter down in a way that everyone knows what is happening at all times.

Another important part of communicating, especially through email, is being very careful in forwarding all the information you receive. In some cases a Contact may share with you something that was shared with them and it should only be for your eyes and not the student or either the host or natural parents. So look at the information before you forward it, and if needed, delete the parts they shouldn't see or copy and past in a new email. One more important thing is be careful who will receive the message when you click "reply all" you may want to delete someone from receiving the information.

As we come closer to our critical time of year remember that the longer you take to supply the Contacts with all the paperwork for the placements of the Inbound students the more money it cost ESSEX. Please take the file off your desk and do something with it and follow-up with your clubs before the Contacts start getting on your backs. We are all in this together so let's make this the best year for getting these students placed.

If you have questions on the process and the responsibilities of the ESSEX Country Contact please contact George Wood, ESSEX Chief of Contacts at george@woodsjewelers.com



SUMMER ESSEX MEEETING

July 17-19, 2009

Holiday Inn, Boxorough, Massachusetts

Deadline for reservations is June 21st, due to the RI President dinner at the same hotel.

Please mail your registration today.....

Registration form can be downloaded from the Welcome page of the ESSEX website

Registration questions can be directed to Pat Doyle, registrar

dwdoyle@verizon.net

Meeting Agenda will be emailed to you in mid-June. If you have a specific subject you would like to see presented please contact Patti Smith @ patti7430essex@comcast.net

Show Case one of your Students.....SHARE YOUR LETTERS AND PICTURES for the WEBSITE

We have over 100 visitors a month to our website and a great way of promoting our program to our visitors would be to recognize a few of our better inbound and outbound students each month. We will need your help to do this.

Please send me any articles that were written about any of your students. Please send me any e-mails you receive concerning how this program has affected them. (ask permission for us to publish it on the website) Relay any favorable stories to us about your inbound or outbound students. Pictures tell a thousand stories. Send them too.

I will put up as many as I can each month. I am not a good editor so please make sure they are ready to publish.

John Brady

STUDENT CORNER.....From Hollis living in Ecuador.....

Hey!

I got home from the Amazon trip on Monday. It was absolutely incredible! Completely unlike anything I have ever seen. I saw real wildlife monkeys and toucans! The plant life was just out of this world. But dont get me wrong - there was some bad parts ... the heat and the bugs, yikes! I didnt actually SEE any tarantulas ... but other people did. I saw some other crazy spiders though, very very scary haha. I attached a link with some pictures so you can take a look! My parents are coming in less than 2 weeks, ahh! Shall be interesting. But I think Im excited. I think? Haha. Yes, Im definitely excited ... I guess I just feel like I dont really "need" them. I dont know, Ecuador is my thing now. Is that terrible to say? Haha, I think it came out different than I wanted it to.

Ive changed so much Max. I mean - I think its all for the better, but I am a little nervous about how things will be when I come home. I mean once youve lived in another country and experienced so much - how are you supposed to just go home and go back to your old life? After youve been to the Amazon and talked with tribal people that dont even speak Spanish .. they speak a seperate language called Quichua - how are you supposed to just be the person who you were with your friends 6 months ago?

I really do think that if I changed than its for the better, I just dont know where Ill stand with my friends. During this trip to the Amazon, there was about 3 girl exchange students who were kind of arrogant and didnt want to do the hiking and the "down and dirty" Amazon stuff. And I just kept thinking - "YOU'RE ONLY IN THE AMAZON ONCE, JUST DO IT!" I dont know .. part of me was sitting there and watching them and I just kept thinking, "Oh my goodness, that was me in high school." - Scary, huh? Thinking about how far Ive come these 6 months is crazy. And now 4 more months to go and Ill be crying and calling my Ecuadorian host family and saying " I wanna come home ... to Ecuador!" Haha, yes .. Im crazy.

PS.... Hollis was tethering on returning in December



Upcoming Youth Exchange Meetings

- 2009 RI Pre-Convention, June 18-20, 2009 ~ Birmingham, England
<http://www.rotary.org/en/Members/Events/Convention/Pages/Preconregistration.aspx>
- 2009 ESSEX Bi-Annual Meeting, July 17-19, 2009 ~ Boxborough, Massachusetts
- 2009 EEMA Conference ~ September 4-6, 2009 ~ Reykjavik, Iceland
<http://www.eema2009.com/>
- 2010 ESSEX BI-Annual Meeting, January 15-17, 2010 ~ location TBD
- 2010 North American Youth Exchange Network Annual Meeting, February 2010 ~ Chicago, IL
<http://www.yeoresources.org/>

www.exchangestudent.org