

Youth Exchange Committee and Foundation

Report by George Robison Chairperson and President

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Over the past twenty years the MD19 Youth Exchange Program has had highs and lows because of the difficulty in being assured that all clubs are aware of the Lions Youth Exchange Program and having a Lion at the club or zone level who will promote Youth Exchange. Several districts and most zones and clubs do not have a Youth Exchange Chair. The years 2018 and 2019 have been modestly successful years. In 2018 we hosted significant numbers from Europe and Australia and expect the same in 2019.

In 2019, youth from Canada and the U. S. will travel to Australia, Italy, Japan, Switzerland and South Carolina. We are presently seeking hosts for two youth from Germany and have hosts for youth from Italy and Turkey. Several months back we were informed by Australia that unless some changes were made to the MD19 host family process that only youth 18 and older would be allowed to visit as part of the Lions Youth Exchange Program. A new Host Family Application was developed for MD19 and we have been notified that the changes meet the standard required by Australia for ages 16 and 17 to visit.

The year 2019 is seeing some significant firsts. For the first time a Muslim youth from Turkey will be hosted and MD19 will send a youth to Spain and another to Switzerland. Thanks to Robyn Berry of 19I, two youth from Vancouver Island will visit a youth camp and hosts in South Carolina. In 2018 MD19 hosted a youth from Mexico, another first. Because MD36 (Oregon) has no active Youth Exchange Chair, we completed the paperwork process for a youth sponsored by an Oregon club to visit New Zealand and Australia.

The MD19 Youth Exchange Foundation is well and functioning. In 2019 three \$1,000 awards were given, resulting in youth travelling to Australia, Italy and Spain. However, very few contributions have been made to the fund. Only a handful of clubs and two zones have made donations. MD19 and the districts have not made contributions. Each fall every club and every Leo Advisor receives information on how to apply for the scholarship, but the applications received came from applicants who did not receive the information through a club or a Leo Advisor.

Lions Clubs International has a written policy on Youth Camps and Exchanges, which can be found at https://temp.lionsclubs.org/EN/pdfs/yce_policy.pdf. The first paragraph reads "a. Committees of liaison officers shall be established to coordinate various aspects of Youth Camp and Exchange at the district and multiple levels where deemed appropriate and advisable. Youth Camp and Exchange committee members shall be appointed by the respective governor, at the district level, or council of governors, at the multiple district level. Members of the multiple district Youth Camp and Exchange committee may include the subdistrict youth camp and exchange chairpersons."

The MD19 Council of Governors has consistently found that Youth Exchange is beneficial to MD19 and the Council Chair has consistently appointed an MD19 Youth Exchange Chair. Note that the paragraph mentioned above states "shall be established", yet many District Governors have failed to appoint a Youth Exchange Chair and it seems that such will continue in 2020. Since MD19 does not have a Youth Exchange Camp, one can skip to page 8 of the policy for something specifically applicable to MD19. It appears from the "Operating Procedures" that in any district that does not have a Youth Exchange Chair that it becomes the duty of the District Governor to perform all youth exchanges. "(b) Initial communications between an interested sponsor club and host club will be through the district youth camp and exchange program chairperson or multiple district chairperson, as appropriate. If contact information is unavailable, this communication will be sent to the respective district governor."