

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

PD110—ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE



8 March 2006

To: 2005-06 District Youth Exchange Chairs
2005-06 District Governors

On 7-8 March 2006, the 2005-06 Youth Exchange Committee met with RI Youth Exchange staff and other senior staff, General Secretary Ed Futa, and Director Liaison Jerry Hall. The two day meeting covered a variety of Youth Exchange topics, foremost of which was certification and abuse prevention policies and procedures. An open, honest and productive sharing of concerns produced a spirit of cooperation, a commitment to collaboration and a positive pattern of two-way communication, all aimed at the mutual desire to make certification succeed as a means of ensuring the safety of every participant in Youth Exchange.

The Youth Exchange Committee is supportive of the certification program to make Youth Exchange safe for all participants and to improve the quality of Youth Exchange. The Youth Exchange Committee shared a variety of concerns about the implementation of certification, and many suggestions have already been implemented. **The Board formally extended the period for completing certification to 30 June 2007.** In order to be considered for certification or provisional certification, districts must submit certification applications to RI along with a summary of progress to date by 1 June 2006. The Youth Exchange Committee has shared additional recommendations regarding support and resource materials in development, particularly the training materials that will be forthcoming from RI.

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General Secretary Futa made it clear that we are in a process of moving forward with certification and asks that districts make a good faith effort to comply. He stressed that there is flexibility for districts as they develop procedures to comply with Board policies and has directed staff to work with districts to find successful ways to implement RI policy in ways that reflect local situations. When examples of concerns expressed by Youth Exchange officers in the field were shared, he demonstrated a sense of understanding and willingness to have staff assist in making modifications that will make certification work, while preserving the integrity of Youth Exchange and meeting Board policy.

We have identified challenges that districts face in determining which aspects of certification are clearly mandated by Board policy, and those considered recommendations, suggestions, or examples of how Board policy might be implemented. Continued communication and additional Frequently Asked Questions documents will be sent based on common inquiries and challenges. We encourage districts to contact staff if there are questions on these or any aspect of certification.

We are extremely pleased with the results of the meeting. While certification has been a source of great stress for many in the Youth Exchange world for the past two years, we are convinced that the remaining obstacles can be overcome and that our cooperative efforts will be able to help districts comply with Board policy, while preserving the integrity and vitality of Youth Exchange around the world.

Sincerely,



Arne Jensen, Chair
2005-06 Youth Exchange Committee



Adam Doty
Manager, Youth Programs, RI

On behalf of

2005-06 Youth Exchange Committee:
Friedrich Neddermeier, Vice-chair
Shindo Kondo
Stuart McDonald
Ana Maria Pimenta
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RI Youth Exchange staff:
Christine Evans, Supervisor
Jill Wechtler, Senior Coordinator
Ellen Tierney, Correspondent

cc: 2005-06 Multidistrict Youth Exchange Officers
2006-07 District Governors
Mr. Jerry L. Hall, Director, RI