

## **Group Study Exchange Information**

The following information may offer ideas to enhance the GSE team's experience during their stay.

Your itinerary is a day-by-day, location-by-location listing of the activities planned for the team's visit. Include contact information for each stop along the way so that GSE team members may inform their families at home.

### **About Vocational Days:**

- Five vocational study days per team member
  - Assign a GSE subcommittee member to coordinate the vocational aspect of the exchange.
  - The five days required per member for vocational study need not be consecutive but can be separated, depending on when members have opportunities to meet individually with representatives of their respective fields.
  - Vocational study days must match the team members' professions. The importance of vocational study cannot be overemphasized. It is often difficult for professionals to take an extended leave of absence from their jobs. Valuable vocational visits are essential to reinforce to employers the specific professional benefits that GSE can bring to both the company/organization and the employee
- The team must remain together at all times, except when it is with host families and possibly during vocational study days, if one particular city cannot provide opportunities for all team members to study their individual professions.
- Team members should live with each host family from four to seven days to help them reduce travel fatigue and get to know their host families better.

- Avoid scheduling too many Rotary functions and do not plan more than three Rotary club meetings per week. Organize multicity or multiclub meetings where possible.

## **During the Study Tour**

Maintain control of the program itinerary. Do not allow clubs to add extra, unplanned activities. Any additions could force cancellation of some previously planned activities and/or reduce the time allotted for the visiting team's rest and relaxation.

Check that Rotarians responsible for meeting and/or transporting the team at various points along the route know exactly what is expected of them.

**Finding Host Families** Host families should provide their names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses.

## **Tips for Host Families**

Effective host families will:

- **Welcome the team member.** If possible, one or more family members should be among the welcoming delegation that meets the GSE team upon arrival in the host district. Families should introduce themselves to the team member(s) assigned to them and assure that they are looking forward to the visit.
- **Share their home and lifestyle.** While the team member is living in local homes, the daily routine should be disrupted as little as possible. Host families are encouraged to share their culture as it exists in everyday life. This does not mean hosting elaborate parties and entertainment but allowing the guest to participate in daily family activities, religious pursuits, community involvement, etc.

- **Be aware of language factors.** Preparation and communication are key to the success of any GSE. District governors are encouraged to appoint a team leader who is proficient in the language.
- If families have difficulty communicating with their guest, they should speak very slowly, pronounce each word distinctly, and avoid using colloquialisms. Occasionally, it may be necessary to seek help from someone fluent in the guest's native language: the GSE team leader, a teacher, or a translator assigned by the host district's GSE subcommittee to provide this service, or perhaps a visitor from the guest's home country.
- **Provide for meals and laundry.** Unless otherwise stated in the team's itinerary, team members are usually not with their host families for lunch. Before the team member arrives, determine if he or she adheres to any dietary restrictions.
- **Provide transportation to and from activities.** Coordinate with GSE club representative.

**Free time** At least a half day free in the middle of each week and one free day each weekend for team members to relax. Free time means that no activities are planned for the team either by host Rotarians or host families.

### **Suggestions from Former GSE Participants**

- Put team members together with hosts of the same profession, hobbies, or interests.
- Expose the team to people in the same age groups as the team members.
- Limit the number of areas team members visit so they can absorb life in your country without rushing from place to place.
- Plan reasonable workdays — not 12- to 15-hour days.

- Overlap the exchange with the outbound GSE team so that team members from both partner districts have some one-on-one time in both countries.
- Allow time to meet with Rotary Youth Exchange students, Ambassadorial Scholars and Rotary World Peace Fellows while in the host district.
- Create more interaction with young people, especially college and high school students.
- Share profiles on the Rotary host families and provide photos.
- Include more vocational days.
- Include more time to join in the day-to-day life of hosts, possibly during Rotary projects.
- Provide an orientation and training for host families.
- Make sure that host districts schedule sufficient presentation time at Rotary dinner meetings.