

## Exchange Directors' Training Oct. 21, 2015

**Attending:** Wendy Adams, Steve Adams, Allan Bartley, Lorie Root, Pierrette Benoit, Donna Dawson, Alain Dawson, John DuVernet, Susan Gardiner, Kathy Hatherill, Richard Hatherill, Lynda Heffernan, Ruth Kirk, Richard Mason, Donna Nicholson, Andrew Nicholson, Anna Rochon, Linda Steingarten, Tim Traynor, Ian Wilson

### Q & A's and points raised

- 1. Planning.** Make use of the help available--ambassadors want to help. Other EDs are always happy to talk about their experiences in the area you will be visiting. Use our FFO VP/Exchanges who is a valuable resource, and also usually there is someone on the exchange that has a lot of experience that you can talk with freely. Use the resources available on the FFO website Member Resources/ED Toolbox where you will find guidelines, templates, lists of venues, activities, forms, etc.
- 2. Host Matching.** Important to consider languages spoken by visiting ambassadors and hosts assigned – e.g. consider 3<sup>rd</sup> languages. spoken that may be common; matching pairs of visitors so one is not isolated, etc.
- 3. Hosting Fee.** Recommend all FFO Inbound Exchanges hosting fees include cost of all out of home meals. Increase hosting fee sufficiently to cover this. Much easier and more pleasant for ambassadors. Build in extra unexpected expenses when setting fee. Be prepared to refund hosting fee remainder if significant surplus.
- 4. Mental Health & behavioural issues.** EDs should be communicating any problem with an ambassador verbally since doing it in writing is too sensitive. Host who detects a problem must inform their ED immediately. Prior to the exchange, Host ED should ask visiting ED if they are aware of any issues such as special needs, issues that arose during former exchanges, etc. Linda S. was asked to draft suggested wording for a guideline to screen such sensitive issues.
- 5. Physical demands concerns.** Recommended that EDs ask another club who has visited the same area/club to find out about their experience and ask about activities (what they did, what they'd recommend), geography, terrain demands, etc. Ask another ED who has hosted a group about the outcome of the exchange and if any issues arose during that exchange.
- 6. Communication.** EDs should copy the VP Exchanges on all communications of exchange planning committees to keep up to date

with progress of exchange. Designate an exchange cell phone and make sure all ambassadors and hosts have the number. Charge the expense to the exchange account.

- 7. Language considerations.** When communicating with non-English speaking clubs/EDs, keep sentences and emails short, number questions, use translation software. Do email in English and then add translated version. Use resources such as FFI, community groups, social media, FFO members. On an exchange with a different language/culture some ambassadors may not hear from their hosts after the matches are made (maybe no e-mail, maybe no English). Host EDs can be very helpful in making these connections—(e.g. in one case the ED sent an ambassador a translated message of welcome from their host. By the time of the exchange, everyone had a message even if through a third party.)
- 8. Cultural considerations.** Important to always remember to make allowances for cultural differences. Remember that FFI manual does not reflect this very well but is very North American in its tone and approach. Be patient and flexible and educate yourself about cultural practices such as response to emails, getting answers to questions, etc.
- 9. Confidentiality.** Keep all personal info of ambassadors confidential and do not share widely – email to individuals if necessary.
- 10. Passports.** EDs must check passport validity dates which are different for many countries (e.g. may be as much as 6 mon. following return home).
- 11. Inbound venues.** Choose locations for Welcome and Farewell events that are quiet, spacious to allow mixing, inexpensive, good parking. Review Activity Reports on FFO website to research good locations.
- 12. Educate ambassadors and hosts.** Don't overstay your welcome. EDs show the PPT presentation on "How to be a good ambassador" and "How to be a good host".
- 13. Managing Outbound Exchanges with non-FFO ambassadors.** When planning the exchange, important to assign the pre/post exchange planning early, especially if there will be guest ambassadors - the decisions about this need to be made early and by our FFO members--just too complicated to have guest ambassadors be part of this decision. (Ruth Kirk is happy to share her own experience of screening and selecting guest ambassadors.). FFO is developing a screening process for global exchange ambassadors – guidelines to be posted soon. See FFI website for recently developed FFI screening guidelines.

14. **Terminology.** Recommend FFO avoid using the FFI term 'Fill the seat' when referring to undersubscribed inbound and outbound exchanges because of the term's perceived negative and derogatory nature. Change to "fill the exchange" and refer to non-FFO participants as "guest ambassadors".
15. **Wrap-up.** Have an official end to the exchange to identify when the ED is no longer officially responsible for ambassadors. After the exchange follow up with thanks, etc. to the host ED and mention thanks to the hosts and others who contributed to making the exchange a good experience, etc. Thank the individual ambassadors for their contributions to the exchange, for making it a wonderful exchange (send e-mails). Have a post-exchange party to celebrate the adventure (outbound) or completion (inbound). Prepare a CD with photos.
16. **Reports.** Decide whether or not to have an exchange journal to distribute to the ambassadors afterwards--assign the "days" and someone to put together a CD if desired. Send an electronic version of exchange journal and brochure to FFO Archive Manager so it's available to share with other exchange EDs who ask about our particular experience. On exchange completion, deliver reports to VP Exchanges/FFO Board and membership (GM, CapCon) about the exchange. (Guidelines for Oral reports on FFO website/ED Toolbox). Ask activity co-ordinators to complete Activity Templates for each event and deliver to VP Exchanges for review and posting on FFO Website.
17. **FFI web-based training.** All EDs and ETs invited to join the 1 hr. FFI online video conference call (web-based ED Training) on Monday, Oct.26<sup>th</sup>, 3 to 4 p.m. or Tues. Oct.27<sup>th</sup>, 9 to 10 a.m.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. **Change term 'fill the seat' to fill the exchange and refer to non-FFO participants as "guest ambassadors".**
2. **Do not use bars as a venue for parties.**
3. **Don't carry significant amounts of cash on one person (Host fees).**
4. **Post a newly updated exchange brochure template (Wendy's).**
5. **Include all meals for ambassadors in inbound exchanges.**
6. **Review FFI and FFO Screening for 'global' ambassadors.**
7. **Ask for help!**
8. **Have fun.**
9. **Have a party!**