



Area Representative: Recruitment and Placement

OBJECTIVE: Upon completion of the training session, participants will demonstrate understanding of marketing strategies used to recruit host families.

GOALS: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

- Identify
- Use
- Understand

OUTLINE OF CONTENT:

1. Introduction
2. Networking and Recruitment
3. School Relations
4. Student Placement
5. Summary

MATERIALS: *Volunteer Training Manual, Volunteer Handbook*

METHOD:

1. Introduction

Let's spend some time getting acquainted and maybe learn a little about listening.

2. Networking and Recruitment

NOTE to FACILITATOR: Before this session begins, copy page 10 from the Volunteer Training Manual onto a flipchart.

ACTIVITY: In order to begin our recruitment strategies, let's see how much ground work we already have in place, before the process has even begun. As a group, we're going to create a spider web of networks that we each have. We'll begin by forming a line here in front of the flipchart. The first person should write down one person or group of people whom you can tap into. Then pass the marker to the next person in line and he or she will do the same. Let's see how many we can networks we can get in our web within one minute.

NOTE to FACILITATOR: If you have enough people, you may create two identical flipcharts, each with it's own line of people. It can then be a friendly competition, to see who can get more non-repeated networks in their web within the one minute timeframe.

DEBRIEF: Networking in your community is the best place to start. Each network that we see on the flipchart will help recruit not only host families, but volunteers too. And remember that you're part of a team, so sharing contact information has the potential of doubling our output.

Look at page 11 in the Volunteer Training Manual to see how many on the list we had covered on our flipcharts. Are there any others on page 11 that we hadn't thought of, but you thinks are a great idea? Or are there any that don't seem like realistic sources to tap into?

I'd like to take a minute to have everyone copy down from the flipcharts onto page 10 of the *Volunteer Training Manual*, the networks that will work for you.

ACTIVITY continued: Now let's brainstorm about how you will each tap into your networks – after all, having a network isn't worth much if you don't access it. So turn to the person next to you and create a list of 5 ways in which you'll tap into the network you now have in your *Volunteer Training Manual*.

DEBRIEF: Let's go around the room and have each pair give us just one of their ideas and offer some explanation along with it. Once we've each group has contributed, we'll look for any ideas that haven't been mentioned yet.

NOTE to FACILITATOR: Write the ideas on a flipchart as they are explained.

And now to close the loop on our field recruitment plan, let's as a group consider placement goals and a timeline for our field. How long do you think it will take each of us to place 3 students in our field?

NOTE to FACILITATOR: Encourage an open dialogue between participants as they narrow down on realistic numbers and timeframe. You may begin adding their individual numbers on a flipchart to illustrate what the group is committing to for the whole field. Be sure to guide them toward realistic numbers and timelines based on your experience. For example, if someone says they could place a student a day, ask questions that will help them realize this may not be feasible.

Now that you each have numbers for your area, which we can compile to get a look at our field goals as a whole, let's put it in writing (only for your own use!) in the *Volunteer Training Manual*. If you turn to page 14 in the *Volunteer Training Manual*, you'll see a Recruitment Plan template. Take a minute to record your plan there.

MARKETING TOOLS: Let me show you a few tools that are developed by YFU for our recruitment. These are all things that you can request as you prepare for schools presentations, booths at fairs, etc. You may send some posters to high school counselors, libraries or community centers. The bubble sheets can easily be sent through email, perhaps to church members.

NOTE to FACILITATOR: Have examples of a few promotional materials on hand to show participants. If possible, you may even have a supply, so they can each go home with a few posters, pamphlets, etc.

- Q & A about hosting
- Ad slicks
- Hosting recruitment poster
- Bubble Sheets

INQUIRIES: Let me point out briefly the way in which YFU tracks potential host families, students and volunteers, which we call *inquiries* and store in the *inquiry system*, part of my.yfu.org. Inquiries are received from many sources such as 800-TEENAGE, online applications and calls to the YFU offices. These inquiry leads are then assigned to volunteers who are willing to follow-up on them. It is critical that these leads are contacted ASAP, as the longer we wait the more chance we'll lose a potential host family.

If you look in your packet, you'll see that everyone has an Inquiry System Guide. Though we won't go through the guide right now, please know that you have it to help you through your first inquiry. You can also call or get together with someone who has completed an inquiry before. It's a simple process once you've done it once or twice.

STAFF PARTICIPATION: It's also important for you to know how YFU staff in the field and the national office contributes to the recruitment efforts with their own administrative activities. There are always mass mailings to former host families, alumni, AO parents and volunteers, they make hundreds of phone calls to former host families, AO parents and alumni and they review host family contact sheets for leads.

CSIET STANDARDS: I'd like for us to consider some CSIET standards relating to recruitment of host families. Let's talk about these ones as I read them aloud.

- It is unacceptable to appeal to public pity or guilt or imply that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found
- It is unacceptable to use this language: Urgently needed, Don't let me be homeless, This is an emergency...
- It is not permissible to identify a specific student by name, picture, etc. in the public media and state that that specific student as needing a home.
- It is not permissible to refer to a student's athletic ability or accomplishments.

3. School Relations

Finding a host family is one piece of the placement puzzle – the second piece is finding a school that will enroll your student. And thus school relations are of critical importance to YFU and the Area Representatives are the face of YFU to school administrators.

ACTIVITY: Go ahead and form groups of three, and I have here one or two questions for each group to answer for the group.

NOTE to FACILITATOR: You can either write the questions from pages 25-26 in the Volunteer Handbook on separate slips of paper to distribute to the groups or you can write them on a flipchart in advance. Depending on the number of participants, you may not cover all eight questions, so choose the ones that you deem most important at this point (suggest #s 2, 4, 5, the text box question).

DEBRIEF: Now let's have each group tell the other what their question was and their group's ideas for an answer.

NOTE to FACILITATOR: Be sure that in the ensuing group discussions that the issue of local school policies for acceptance of YFU students is raised. This should start a group discussion of known rules and regulations for schools in each volunteers' area. Emphasize there is a lot of variance in school policies. If one school's policies are strict, don't assume all are like that. Schools may apply different rules for exchange students than the rules for American students. It is important for the YFU volunteer to have a contact at the school and find out what the policies are regarding exchange students.

4. Student Placement

ACTIVITY: Now that we have the host family chosen and school enrollment secured, we'll consider the actual student placement. But this time I'd like to start the discussion around the CSIET standards that relate to student placement.

Why do you think that each of these policies are in place?:

- Personally interview all prospective families *in their home*.
- Match students and host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.
- Complete placement arrangements sufficiently in advance of student's departure from home.
- Provide suitable orientation and training to the host family.

DEBRIEF: Keep in mind that YFU policies and CSIET standards overlap, so you are following all of CSIET standard if you follow YFU policies. It's good to know where YFU policies are based though.

Host family Application

- Host families may fill out the application online or use the paper copy. If completed online, the host family must fill out by hand the Host Family Agreement, the Emergency Contact Form and the References Form, signing all three.
- Repeat host families must have a home visit and sign a new Host Family Agreement and Host Family Renewal Form.

Host Family Interview

- Tips on how to conduct a host family interview can be found on pages 20-23 of the *Volunteer Training Manual*
- New Area Representatives are best off shadowing an experienced interviewer before conducting one on his or her own.
- Remember that students must not necessarily have their own room, but they must have their own bed. And if they do share a room, the interviewer must meet the person with whom they will be sharing. What are some examples of inappropriate room sharing scenarios? (baby, small child, sibling of the opposite sex, four children to a room).
- In looking at the host family interview packet please know that you do not have to go question by question and write every word they say. Rather, you should review the packet in advance for your knowledge and then use it as a guide. More importantly, you want to make the family comfortable and ask general questions, being sure to hit important topics such as why they want to host, religious practices and expectations, discipline, family rules, family activities, smokers, etc. Also, discuss things with the family that will cause them to think about the possibility of the student needing transportation, three meals a day, the possibility that the student and children may not get along, etc. and have them consider and verbalize how they might handle some of these situations. **The volunteer should be looking not for specific answers, but the ability to adapt and flexibility.**
- What might be some things that raise concerns or even “red flags”? (look at page 2 of the Host Family Interview Packet)
- And finally, it is very important that a volunteer NOT promise a student to a host family until all host family paperwork is complete, the references are checked, and it has been verified that there will be a school slot for the student.

Host Family Reference Check

- It is highly preferred that reference checks are done by phone, rather than having the reference fill out the form and mail it in. This personal contact is important as you read the tone of voice, pauses, etc. You are also able to ask follow up questions in a conversation. And who knows, the reference may become another lead for a host family.
- The reference checks may be done by the volunteer, field director or district office staff.

Special Hosting Situations

- A staff person must ask the partner country to get both the student’s and natural parents’ permission for the following placement types:
 - single person who lives alone
 - dual placement (two YFU students hosted by one family – the students cannot be from the same country)
- It is advisable to have a staff person or the partner country ask the student and natural parents if they are comfortable with the following placement situations:
 - unmarried couple in a committed relationship (heterosexual or homosexual)
 - host family church attendance greater than once a week – advisable to ask std if willing to participate
 - remote locations or non-traditional environments (Indian reservations)
 - religion-based private school attendance

ACTIVITY: Let's practice placing a student with a family now. Back in your groups of three, I'd like the first group to read about Mateo on pages 27 and 28 of the *Volunteer Training Manual*. Group 2, your student is Yu, profiled on pages 29 and 30 in the *VTM*. Group four has Anthony on pages 31 and 32 and Group five, you need to place Mona, found on pages 33 and 34 in the *VTM*.

After getting to know your assigned students, consider pages 35 and 36 in the *VTM*, which will guide you in selecting (and not selecting) characteristics for matching. Then read about the Smith family on page 37 – is your student going to be a good match with the Smiths? Why or why not?

DEBRIEF: What are your conclusions about matching your student with the Smith family and specifically about the matching process in general?

Wrapping Things UP

Student Profile System: Review handout “Viewing student profiles on my.yfu.org”

Placing Students on Hold: Volunteers may place a student on hold for 72 hours while showing them to a family. Holds automatically expires after 72 hours unless student is “re-held.” Multiple holds on a student for the same family won't be allowed unless there are special circumstances (like a family member is out of town, waiting to see if a school slot is available). No more than two students may be put on hold for a family at one time.

Placement Pending: If a host family has been approved, the student they have selected may be put on “placement pending.” Contact your field director so they may make this change in the system.

School Clearance: review page 39 in *Volunteer Training Manual* and the YFU School Enrollment Form. Stress that the local volunteer, not the staff person, is the most important contact for the school.

Area Rep Assignment: It is best to determine who will be the Area Representative for the student at the time of placement. Ideally, the Area Representative should be the one who does the host family interview.

Communication with the student: Stress that staff, volunteers and host families are not allowed to communicate with the student until at least 48 hours after the placement is complete and the partner country has been notified. After that time the host family and Area Representative are encouraged to write letters to the student. Students are eager to learn about their families, schools, immunization requirements, etc.

Review Placement Checklist on p. 40 of the *VTM*.