



- Welcome all participants
- Thank them for joining YFU
- Introduce yourself
- Let them know the length of your training

TRAINING ASSUMPTIONS

This is intended as beginning training only.

It is assumed that all Area Reps will continue with *Support Skills B*, as well as other pertinent training.

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- Tell participants to look on the volunteer training page on my.yfu.org. Look for “The Man in the Wheat Field” on the front of my.yfu.org. They will be able to find all upcoming training dates there.
- Share other support topic trainings that may be available to them.
- Mention that these are advanced trainings that will build on the foundation of Skill Building A & B

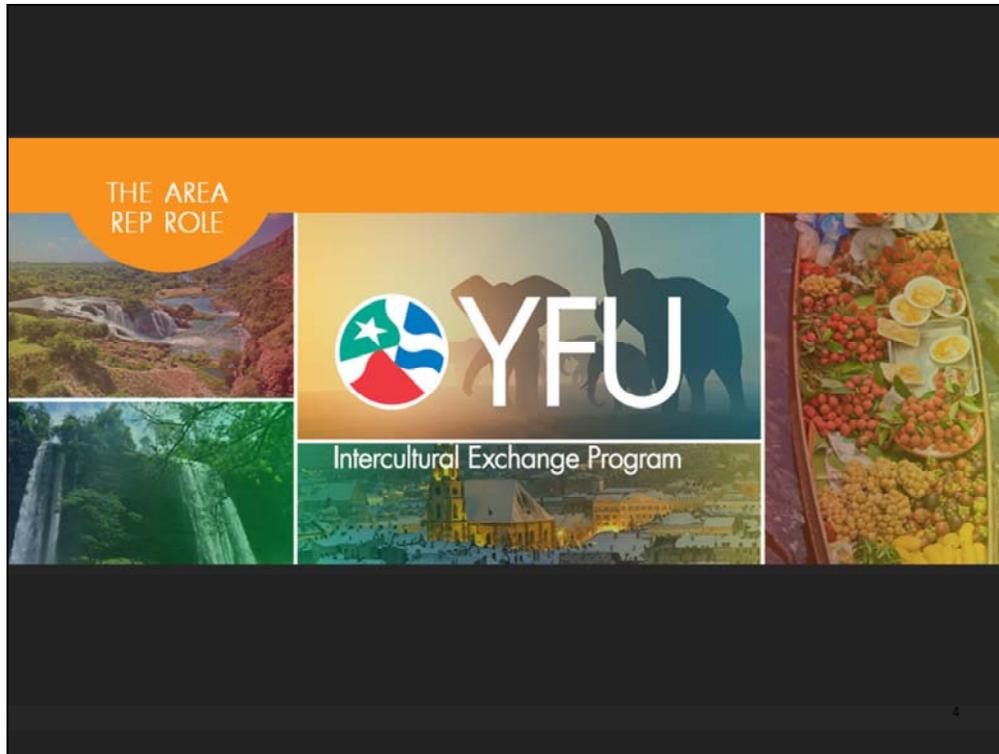
GOALS

At the conclusion of this training, you should:

1. have a reasonable grasp of the Area Rep role
2. know the lines of communication within YFU
3. know what is required for student and host family support
4. be familiar with necessary documentation and reporting
5. be aware of basic problem solving skills
6. be familiar with YFU Policies and Procedures

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- This training is intended to help you understand how to be an effective AR – to give you the basic tools, and thus increase your confidence.
- Ask if there are questions about the goals.



- YFU operates under the assumption that being an exchange student is challenging
- YFU assumes that the exchange experience includes highs and lows with failure inherent in the process
- It is YFU's responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of every student
- We should expect failures from our students. In fact, we should encourage them to get outside their comfort zones and try things without fear of failure. That's the way they learn.
- Often the students who require the most support from ARs are the ones who grow the most, show the most appreciation, and stay in touch.,

THE AREA REP ROLE

The Area Rep supports students, host families, and schools.

“Support” entails:

- regular contact with the student and host family
- quality documentation and reporting
- ensuring that policies and procedures are followed
- maintaining a good relationship with the school

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- Area Rep is key support for student on program
- although the AR should strive to be an impartial advocate for both student and HF, never forget that the HF has its regular support network, and the student is in a foreign country, foreign household, foreign culture. You must be especially attentive to student needs.
- Area Rep is present to cheer during exciting times and problem solve during challenging times

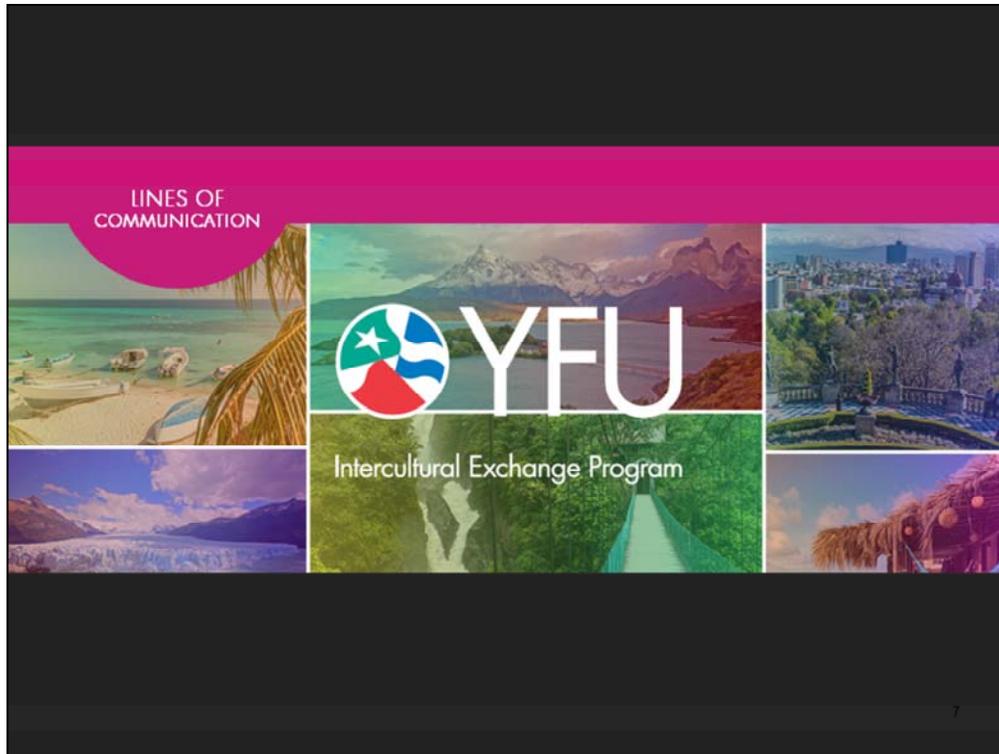
THE AREA REP ROLE

Specifically, the Area Reps must:

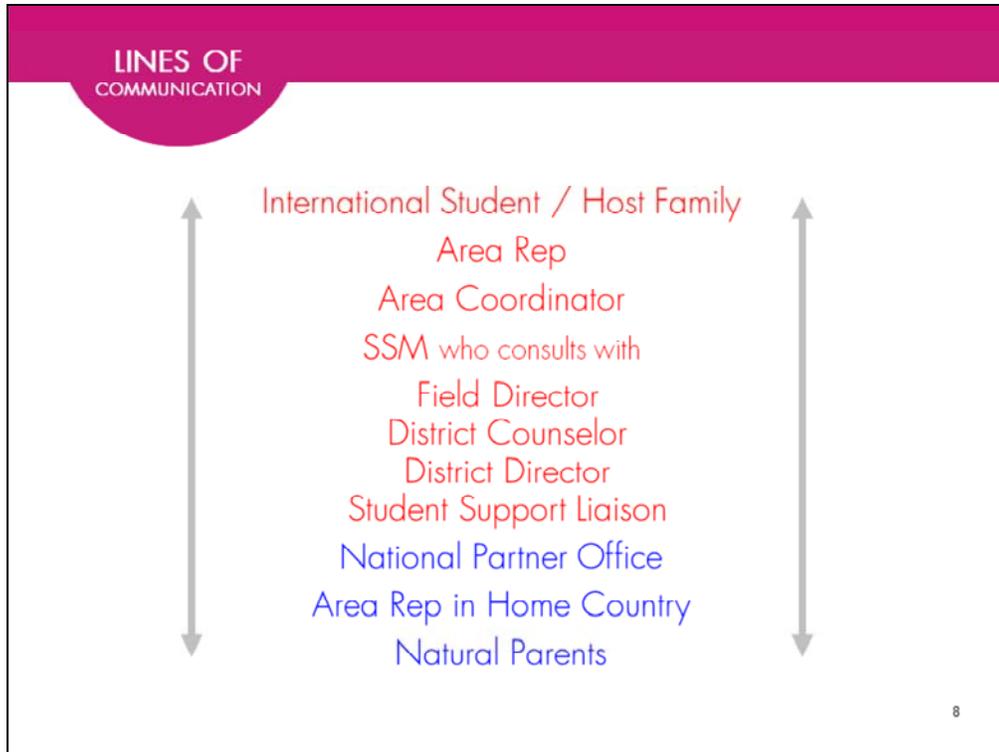
1. meet with the student in person within two weeks of the student's arrival
2. contact the student and host family every month in person or by phone
3. meet with the student in person at least once during the second semester
4. contact the school at the beginning, middle and end of the year
5. complete a contact report in my.yfu.org each month

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- ALWAYS preferable to meet in person
- Email, text, facebook, etc. not acceptable for monthly std/HF contacts
- Email OK for school contact.
- Identify the contact as your official check-in. This will open space for the std/HF to talk openly about struggles.
- Identify yourself as the Area Rep – use those words - instead of saying that the contact is your official monthly contact (which sounds as tho you are in touch only because it's required)



- The Area Rep has many layers of support to be used as needed
- Lines of communication make the support system more effective



- Some areas may not have an Area Coordinator in place. Those Area Reps should go directly to the SSM
- Always go to the SSM for student/HF support issues.
- The District Counselor is a licensed mental health professional who provides assistance to students when needed. They are outside consultants for YFU.
- The Student Support Liaison works in the YFU USA National Office. This person works with district staff to identify causes of a problem and develop a course of action.
- Copy the FD on support emails.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

- An Area Rep should never communicate directly with natural parents or a sending country
- The Support Services Manager (SSM) is responsible for all international communication
- Area Reps can call the District Director for assistance

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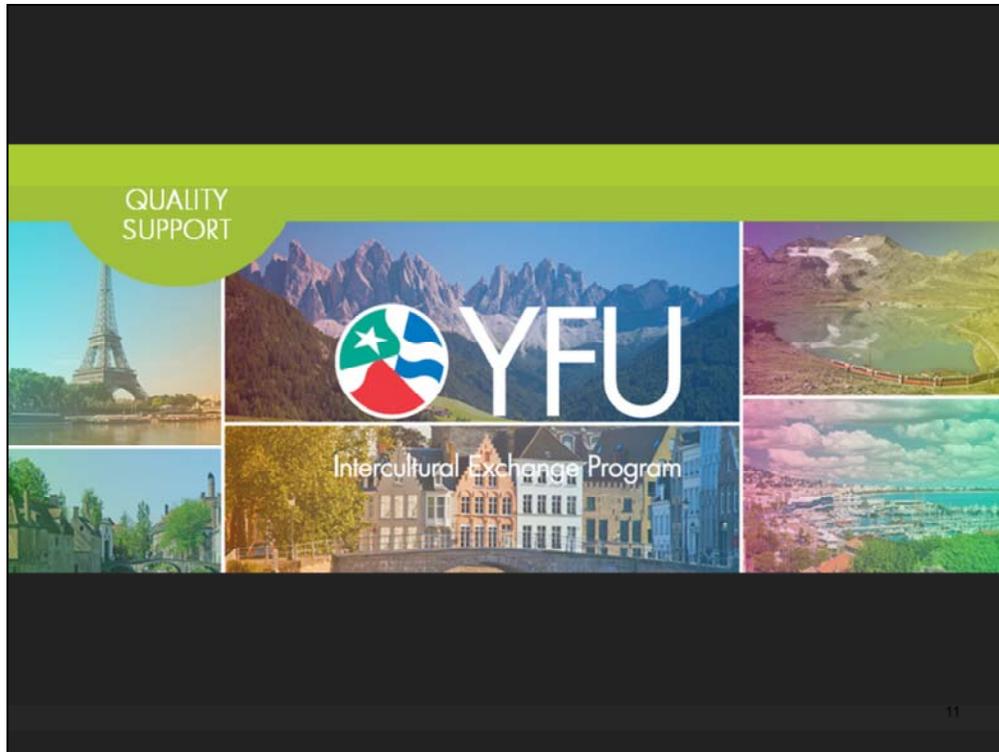
•SSMs are trained to communicate effectively across cultures. Also, there are legal reasons to say or to refrain from saying certain things.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only
- YFU prohibits release of information about students or host families without permission
- YFU expects students and host families to respect privacy in regard to matters within the family relationship
- YFU considers it unethical to examine a student's personal belongings

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Students are privy to personal knowledge about the HF and they should respect the privacy of the HF. Do not talk about personal HF matters outside the family. The reverse is true with HFs who should respect the privacy of the student.



- Meeting the bare minimum for support is not the YFU way.
- YFU prides itself on providing quality support to all participants
- Support is encouragement, guidance, assistance in attaining a successful exchange, **documented** by contact reports.

QUALITY SUPPORT

Goals of your monthly contact are:

- build relationships and establish rapport
- develop trust with the student and host family
- assure the student that s/he has an advocate in the Area Rep
- provide support to the host family
- ascertain how the student and host family are adjusting to the exchange

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- From start, Area Rep goal is to make each person feel comfortable.
- Once you've agreed to rep a student and host family, you can begin developing rapport, even if the student hasn't arrived in the US yet. Introduce yourself by email, let the student know that you'll be supporting them throughout their exchange. Let the host family know that you're looking forward to developing a relationship with them.
- Never promise full confidentiality; some information must be shared within the YFU support team.
- Be sure that student and HF know and agree before you share something they have told you, with the other.
- Be careful putting in writing to student or HF anything that may cause controversy or conflict. Keep written messages general e.g. could we meet and talk about your curfew expectations NOT student tells me that you lock the door at the minute of curfew

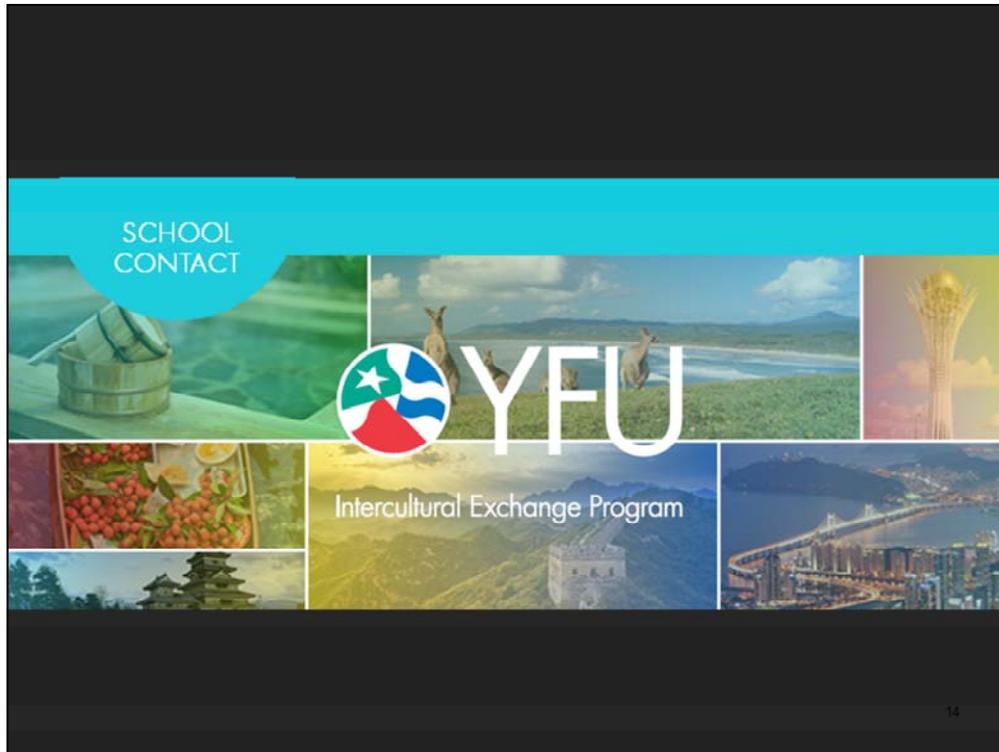
QUALITY SUPPORT

The Area Rep should:

- read "Monthly Support e-Tips"
- ask open ended questions
- speak with the student and host family separately
- talk with the student outside of the host family home
- contact the student and/or host family again if a problem or concern was reported

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- E-tips are emailed to all Area Reps during the first week of the month.
- Talking with the std/HF together doesn't allow them to speak freely about challenges.
- Talking with the std while in the HF home doesn't allow him/her to speak freely.
- Always encourage open communication between student and family.
- Monthly contact is the minimum. More contact can be helpful especially in the beginning when you are building a relationship.
- Take notes as an aid to follow-up discussions. When you ask, "Is math getting any easier?" it shows the student that you are listening to them and care about them.



- School contact should be made at the beginning, middle and end of the student's enrollment.
- Some schools are too busy in the first couple of weeks to want a call from AR, so consider your timing.

SCHOOL CONTACT

- good relationships with schools are essential for YFU
- schools often base their opinion of YFU on the Area Rep
- the relationship can be mutually beneficial
- ongoing goal is to establish YFU as preferred exchange organization and partner for educational enrichment

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- Email before calling, and use the call to follow up on your points.
- The 1st contact with the school is a good chance to tell a little about YFU support and to ask that AR contact info be added to student's file.
- The little things often make a world of difference such as stopping in personally to introduce yourself, if the student mentions something good about school, send an email to the teacher, guidance counselor or principal. Thank you's from student and AR at the end of the year are good, but messages at unexpected times may have even more of an impact. The ongoing goal is to establish YFU as the preferred exchange organization.

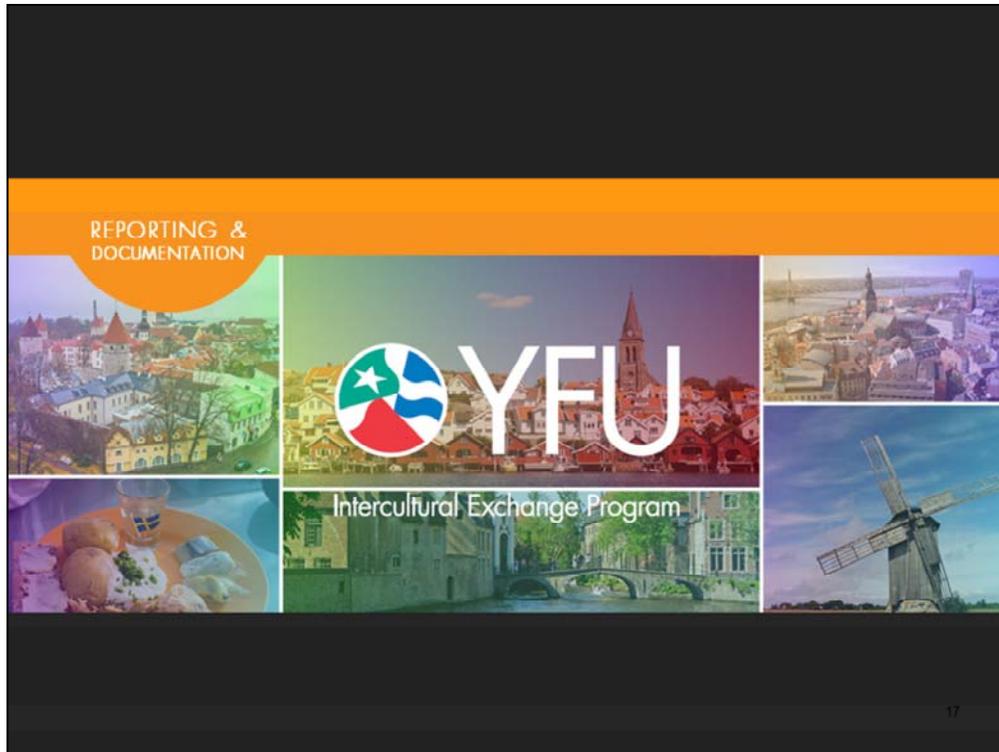
SCHOOL CONTACT

The Area Rep should:

- Determine which school personnel s/he should contact
- Make every contact meaningful
- Review questions on the school contact report before making the call
- Complete a school contact report three times throughout the year

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•4 things to include in your first written correspondence with the school – who you are (role and responsibility); reason for and importance of contact; what I need to know (write questions); please keep my contact information in the student file.



- The YFU USA support system is designed to support our students, host families, volunteers and schools, while at the same time, meeting all U.S. Department of State, CSIET and YFU regulations and standards.
- There are counseling cases each year where appropriate action cannot be taken due to the lack of necessary documentation.
- If something hasn't been formally reported, and documented, it is difficult or impossible to take the behavior or incident into account when a subsequent problem arises.
- Volunteers tie YFU's hands when they take pity or overlook an incident and fail to report it.
- When in doubt, document!
- The SSM needs to be informed about emerging as well as ongoing issues. No SSM wants to be ignorant of a situation when called by YFU USA or the home country.

Monthly Contact Reports:

- complete a monthly contact report in my.yfu.org for every student and host family
- include specific comments – positive, negative or neutral
- focus on facts using objective language
- remain unbiased avoiding labels
- problems/concerns should be documented in an email or telephone call to the SSM

DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT

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- Quality personal monthly contact with students and host families must be reported, on a monthly basis, through the Contact Reporting System in my.yfu.org.
- Contact Reports are crucial for YFU's compliance with U.S. Department of State regulations. They need to be completed on time and on line so that they are available to Department of State auditors.
- Contact Reports on their own, do not suffice as documentation of an issue or problem. It is important to send a separate e-mail to your support services manager detailing problems or concerns as they don't always see the contact reports.
- Support Services Manager's (SSM) are notified automatically when a Contact Report is submitted with the answer "Poor" or "Needs Improvement" in it.
- A brief but specific comment in all or most of the boxes demonstrates that quality personal contact was made. SSMs do not routinely check contact reports. Therefore, Contact Reports do not require the depth of information that SSMs need when an issue is developing.

 YFU USA my.YFU.org

October Student Report for Johanna Fretz



| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| District | Heartland |
| Field | Minneapolis |
| Date Due | 10/31/2012 |

- All items require an answer
- If "Not Applicable" is selected, a comment must be added
- A combined total of at least 140 characters throughout the report is required
- Your Electronic Signature is required to submit this report. If you do not remember (Click on Account above your name and then on "Change E-Signature" in the left sidebar)

[Questions](#)

1. Date Performed

2. Performed By

Reporting to the SSM:

- Developing issues, problems or concerns must be documented through a telephone call or email to the SSM.
- Good documentation is objective; gives all perspectives and includes specific behaviors
- Good documentation avoids vague generalities
- Copy the Field Director on emails to the SSM

DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT

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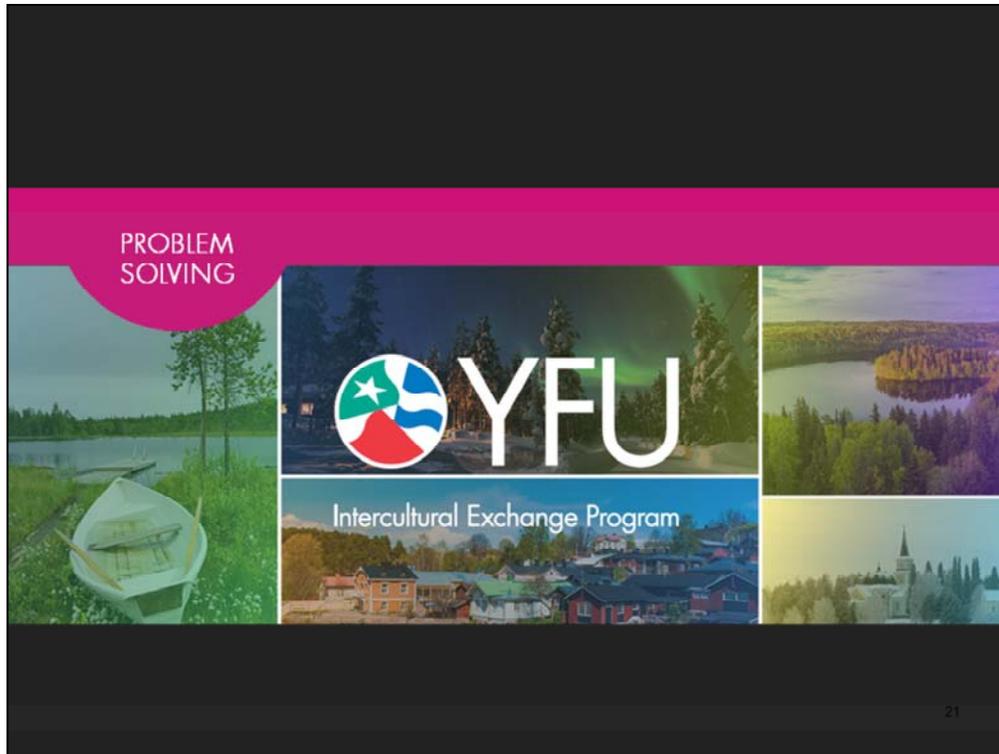
- Ask open-ended questions to get real information from the student and HF.
- Consider including quotes from the student or HF: *“Our young daughter adores her”* or *“We see that she is making a real effort to bring up her history grade.”*
- SSMs need to be informed with timely and detailed documentation of any concerns that the Area Rep has or is aware of.
- So that SSMs can proactively support Area Reps, students and host families, they need to be aware of situations before they escalate. Waiting for a Contact Report that indicates “Poor” or “Needs Improvement” forces SSMs to be reactive rather than proactive.
- When an Area Rep contacts the SSM regarding a student issue, the SSM enters notes in the “Comments” section of a student’s record in my.yfu.org.
- Things to email or call your SSM about: Anything that makes you uneasy, Adjustment issues, Continuing behaviors that are interfering with exchange, Requests to move a student, School issues: poor grades, attendance concerns, not following rules, Change in host family status (illness/divorce/additional person in household), YFU policy violations (shoplifting, drinking, risky behaviors), Student or host family medical issues
- **Is there any information that should not be included in documentation to the SSM?** No. There is no information that is inappropriate for inclusion in written or verbal documentation provided to the SSM. Good Documentation is:

Objective

Gives all perspectives

Includes specific behaviors

Avoids vague generalities like: messy, irresponsible, inconsiderate, uncooperative, self-centered, not doing homework, too much time on homework, doesn't follow rules, too much contact with home country, seems unhappy.



Before we move on, what questions or thoughts do you have about Reporting and Documentation?

PROBLEM SOLVING

Area Reps should:

- help participants develop problem-solving skills
- use personal experiences to guide students and host families
- seek guidance from the SSM and/or other Area Reps
- remain objective, or recognize that you have a conflict of interest

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- When you use personal experiences, be sure that they are relevant and brief.
- Be careful of saying “*I know exactly what you are feeling/think.*” It can be interpreted as a put-down, as though the person’s feelings aren’t unique and important.

PROBLEM SOLVING

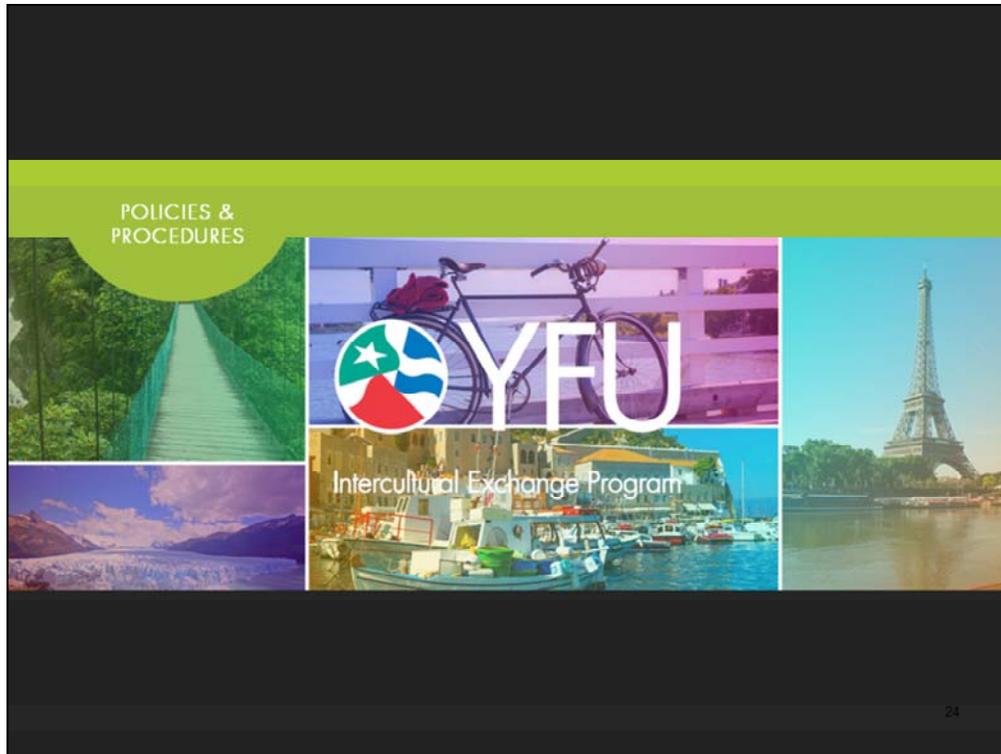
The Area Rep can head off problems by:

- establishing trust and rapport with students and host families
- facilitating effective communication and problem-solving
- remaining unbiased
- engaging the SSM when issues become serious

Moving the student to a new home is never the first response, unless there are safety issues.

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- Knowing your student and family allows you to anticipate problems and head them off before they become too big to solve.
- You are not there to “fix” a problem though you will want to! You are there to facilitate communication so they can fix the problem!!!



Before we move on, are there questions or thoughts about Problem Solving?

YFU follows 3 sets of guidelines

1. YFU Student Policies and Procedures
 2. U.S. Department of State
 3. CSIET Standards
- Area Reps commit to work in compliance with all applicable standards
 - Conflict of Interests must be disclosed

•YFU depends on its volunteers to maintain programs at the highest quality level

•YFU follows 3 sets of guidelines **designed to protect YFU volunteers, students, host families, employees and organization:** YFU Student Policies and Procedures; U.S. Department of State's J1 Visa Regulations; CSIET' Standards for Long-Term International Educational Travel Programs

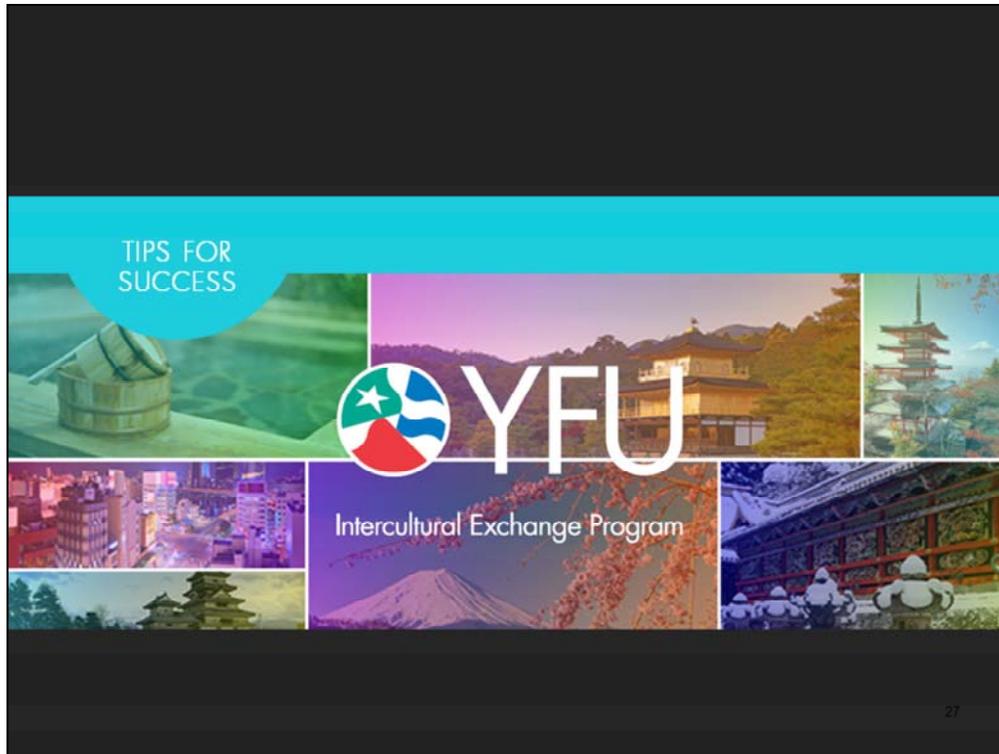
•Area Reps should disclose any conflict of interest to the District Director

•Identify CSIET as the accrediting organization for exchange organizations. Mention that many/most schools require CSIET listing.

Area Reps must be familiar with the:

- Volunteer Handbook
- Area Rep Training Manual
- Permission to Travel
- Dangerous Activities
- Policies regarding driving, drinking, and drugs
- Keeping Your Students Safe





Before we move on to our Wrap Up – are there any questions about Policies and Procedures?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- attend orientations and assist when you can
- take advantage of YFU's advanced skills trainings
- ask the SSM for help when you feel "uneasy" with a situation
- copy the Field Director on your emails to the SSM
- never threaten a student with being sent home
- assure all participants that we make every effort to ensure a successful exchange experience

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- The more training you have, the more effective you will be.
- You are NEVER in this alone!! If you need help, just ask another YFU volunteer, your Support Services Manager or your Field Director when YOU need support.

SUMMARY

- the Area Rep is the face of YFU in the community, supporting students, families and schools
- establishing trust with all parties facilitates effective communication
- quality documentation is critical
- effective and timely problem solving prevents bigger problems
- following policies and procedures protects the volunteer
- this training serves as a basis for the Area Rep; further training is necessary

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•YFU is only as good as its volunteers so set your bar high. We really do change the world, one person at a time!

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Mandatory for all volunteers

- ✓ Introduction to YFU
- ✓ New Volunteer Training
Department of State Certification



Mandatory for Area Representatives

- ✓ Support Skills A
Support Skills B

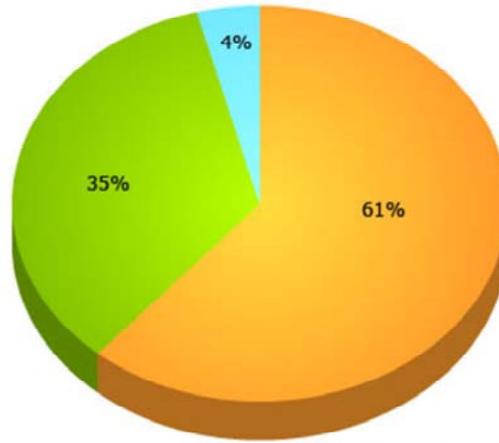
Sample of Other Training Topics

- Filing an Expense Report
- Effective Host Family Interviewing
- American Overseas Student Interviewing

QUESTIONS



EVALUATION



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- Once I end this training, an evaluation will appear on your screen.
- Please let us know what you thought of this Skill Building A volunteer training!