



## District 5360 Youth Exchange Information Sheet #15 – Re-Entry: Making the Most of Your Experience



Welcome back! You have undoubtedly learned a great deal from your experience. Now is the time to make the most of your experiences – that’s what re-entry is all about. Making the most of your experiences involves a reflective and active process. In other words, thinking about re-entry and the process of applying what you’ve learned is helpful, but you must also “do it.” The following information suggests some ways to “do re-entry.” Certainly, these represent only a few possible suggestions; if you think of other ideas, please share them with your fellow exchange students both at home and abroad.

### Journals

As suggested in the pre-departure phase, journals are an excellent way to record your reactions to a new environment. Since coming home puts you in a familiar surrounding (maybe!) it might seem reasonable to stop keeping a journal. However, as you may have experienced, the familiar may be a bit frustrating or challenging: friends and families may not appear interested in your exchange stories; your adventure days are over for the time being; and maybe you question exactly what you did learn and experience while you were away. Taking time out of your busy schedule to record what you are now experiencing is a great way to reflect upon these and other issues. Some possible questions to ask yourself:

- ◆ What did I learn about my host culture? About myself?
- ◆ How can I apply what I learned to my life back in Canada? (A very important question!)
- ◆ Who will listen to my stories? Who could I seek out – International Clubs, Rotary, Rotex – to get more involved/stay involved in international activities?
- ◆ Do I think of Canada any differently now that I have returned?
- ◆ What do I like most about my home culture? The least?
- ◆ What advice would I give to those who are leaving this year to for my host culture? How did I learn these things?
- ◆ How would I describe the “world” that now surrounds me? How does this differ from the “world” I just left?

### Other Resources

One of the great things about exchanges and travelling is that you are not alone in your experiences, or in wanting to share them. Several people have written about their travel and exchange experiences in such a manner that they can engage you in making wonderful insights about your own experiences. No matter the reaction they provide a route towards better understanding of the learning process concerning culture – and ourselves. Look for books like this at your local library or bookstore.

Staying involved with Rotary or getting involved with Rotex is another great way to stay connected to your exchange as well as use your learning to build the future of the youth exchange program for future students. You will be introduced to this at the Re-Entry Weekend in Fort Macleod upon your return.

