

Workshop Notes for Special Interest Exchanges FFI International Hamburg Conference

Garden Lovers Exchange – FF Cornwall May 2011

1. Select a competent team – we had 4 – plus a treasurer.
2. Decide areas of duty – programme planning –days out – Welcome and Farewell etc.
3. Communication - ED
4. Plan and cost out the week's activities- make sure you have a contingency fund. Decide on a 'break even' number of ambassadors. FFI will add their fee which covers fluctuation in exchange rates. We accepted 25 ambassadors.
5. Submit to FFI for inclusion in the FFI Catalogue – we placed it in the catalogue 7 months before, but earlier would be better. (See catalogue entry specimen)
6. FFI then sent out a personal invitation from me to all FF members who had expressed an interest in Garden themed Exchanges also to people on FFI email address list. (See personal invitation specimen). That brought in over 70 enquiries.
7. Have all the documents ready to send out in a folder therefore responding quickly to enquiries. Explain that the exchange is physically demanding hence the need for a mobility policy.
8. Documents- Mobility policy (ask for a reference from a person they have travelled with, re mobility), Itinerary, Credit Card Charge Form, Ambassador Details and Declaration forms.
9. Advertise the Exchange through local Gardening Clubs and local Press; also ask club members to invite gardening friends to host. We had 5 families who were non member hosts, two of which have joined our club, one couple are joining our next outbound exchange.

10. We didn't have an ambassador meeting point prior to the exchange, they were asked to contact their hosts and they made arrangements for their arrival. *Be specific about the start and finish day of the Exchange, as opposed to arrival day!!*
11. Be very specific about how long it takes to travel from airport to host town. I had included the distances and times in the original itinerary but some hadn't read it prior to booking their flights.
12. Ask all the ambassadors to write a short profile and circulate it among the other ambassadors, a chance to get to know a little about each other before the exchange starts.
13. We invited our Patron Lady Mary Holborow to Welcome Party- She had been a guest at the Royal Wedding!
14. The planning was meticulous, we visited all the gardens prior to the exchange and organised excellent guides. We hired coaches for the 4 days of garden visits and gave all the ambassadors £40 lunch money for the 4 days. All the ambassadors thought that was a good idea, instead of trying to book lunch for 25. We had 2 hour lunch breaks which worked well, an opportunity to socialise with their fellow ambassadors. The ambassadors had two free days with their hosts and pot luck meals also.
15. Great mix of people – 6 nationalities -who all got along very well, no problems at all.
16. Excellent feed back from the ambassadors and hosts. Would do it again!!

The advantages of being both Ambassador and Host ED.

Communicating with the ambassadors prior to the exchange was a great advantage when placing them with host families. One of the ambassadors was a physiotherapist, I found a non member who was a retired physiotherapist to host him therefore reaching out into the wider community.