

## AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS RETURNING HOME

Life in the foreign service isn't always easy. Being a teenager and having to adjust every time your family is transferred can make it hard. And having to say good-bye to dear friends and trying to establish yourself at a new post sometimes might seem too much to cope with.

Still, coming back to the States creates an altogether different problem. How do you learn to adjust to living in your own homeland? All of a sudden you're on your own - no foreign service friends. You're considered a snob, simply because you were either born abroad or lived in foreign places that your schoolmates never even heard of.

When you return to the States, you're confronted with many different emotions. One is what you feel when you encounter the many prejudices here, directed against blacks, whites, Orientals and Hispanics. This hits you like a slap in the face, since [you] are taught to live among the many different races.

Ignorance among our peers is also difficult to cope with. I can't begin to count how many times I've been asked the foolish question: "What was it like, having lions and tigers running around in the yard?"

Being stereotyped is another thing that's not easy to counteract. You're automatically classified by the way you dress. For foreign service kids, this is a major setback. Some of us have had to purchase clothes from the Sears catalog. And on returning to the States, we're sometimes enrolled in school right away, which doesn't give us enough time to update our clothes.

Having to deal thus with the many rejections from people is enough to lower your self-esteem. During the discussion, we all came to the conclusion that you yourself have to be self-confident. If you don't believe in yourself now, you must put yourself into trying to do so, because this will help you later on in life when you're looking for that all-important job.

*Michele Kozlowski reports on a discussion group held among American Foreign Service youth. Reprinted from an American magazine.*

### ADOLESCENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD HELP US TO HELP YOU

How are you coping in the foreign service?

Being a foreign service adolescent, mixed feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of your international life style are not new to you. You have had to deal with the loneliness of saying goodbye to close friends, the unfamiliarity of daily routines in foreign places, and cultural shock. On the other hand, you realize you have learned a lot about yourself and others, adapted to new environments, and gained knowledge and skills not accessible at home.

Now you're facing another move ... home. How do you cope? Much has happened in Canada since you left for your last posting. School programs have been updated and fashions and fads have been renewed. Coming home can be as stressful as any posting. How do you feel about it? We'd like to know. We want to do something, but we need to understand your concerns to make meaningful changes for you.

The PSC, FSCA, foreign service adolescents and parents in the National Capital Region are all committed to making the transition back home happier and easier. What can be done to make this transition a better experience? You'll find some suggestions below and space for your comments.

1. CREATE AN ASSOCIATION OF FOREIGN SERVICE ADOLESCENTS

2. CREATE A WELCOMING COMMITTEE

3. ORGANIZE GROUP ACTIVITIES:  SPORTS  PARTIES AND DANCES  PICNICS

TOURS  CONFERENCES  DISCUSSION GROUP WITH  WITHOUT  COUNSELLOR

4. MATCH AN OTTAWA FSA WITH AN FSA BUDDY ABROAD

5. OTHER SUGGESTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your comments to: J. Mailhot, Posting Services Centre, ABC, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0G2 or Phone (613) 995-9347

**PARTICIPATE! SEND YOUR COMMENTS AND THIS SURVEY TODAY!**