



ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

What You Need to Know if Your Club Decides to Participate

HISTORY: The first Rotary Youth Exchange occurred in 1929 between the Rotary Club of Copenhagen and several European Countries. Then, in 1939, several Rotary Clubs in California and Latin America established an exchange program between their Clubs. The Youth Exchange Program was finally adopted by Rotary International as a worthwhile endeavor in 1972. Now Rotary Clubs in over 80 countries worldwide and approximately 7000 students participate in the program on an annual basis.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT: The cost to the Club to host an exchange student is approximately \$2000. This includes a monthly allowance of about \$125 and a \$450 activity fee that covers all costs for the student to participate in the six District Youth Exchange activities throughout their year.

HOST FAMILIES: One significant difference between the Rotary Youth Exchange Program and other programs is that students USUALLY live with three different families during their year in the US. Not only does this provide the student the opportunity to experience several family situations, but it also makes it easier to commit to being a host family since the duration of hosting is 3 ½-4 months rather than an entire year. Host families need to be carefully selected, be willing to submit to a background check and attend a host family training session, but they DO NOT need to be Rotary families. Host families are expected to treat the student as a member of the family, NOT as a guest. All families are eligible -with or without children - young or “older” - employed or retired. An open heart and an open mind are all that are required.

THE STUDENT: Students are carefully screened by their Home District prior to being accepted into the Youth Exchange Program. In most countries this selection process is very competitive. The student’s age can range from 15 ½ to 18 years. If your club has a “boy vs. girl” preference or would prefer a student from a specific country, the District Committee will do its best to accommodate the request. Germany, Belgium, Turkey, Brazil, France, Ecuador, Japan and Mexico are some of the countries with which our District has exchanged in recent years.

THE COUNSELOR: The Club should select a Rotarian of the same gender as the student to serve as the student’s counselor for the year. This person is CRITICAL to the success of the exchange experience. The counselor will assist the student with school registration, opening a bank account and becoming familiar with the community. He/she will also be responsible for developing and maintaining a close relationship with the student throughout the year and assist with any questions or problems. MANDATORY Counselor Training is conducted by the District Youth Exchange Committee to ensure that the counselor understands his/her responsibilities.

RECORD KEEPING: In order to comply with State Department and RI requirements, the Counselor or Club Youth Exchange Officer will be responsible for submitting various reports and updates - both upon the student’s arrival and throughout the year. Assistance will be provided by the District Committee.

DISTRICT SUPPORT: Members of the District Youth Exchange Committee handle all of the logistics dealing with insurance, immigration issues and processing of applications. They are also available to answer any questions and assist with any issues that may arise during the student’s year in the US.

CONTACTS:

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