



***(pronounced rye-la)
is the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards***

About RYLA

More than merely awards, RYLA is an opportunity for youth– to hear from professional speakers at no cost to the candidate, to participate in a four day program with like-minded individuals, to have fun with group activities, to form lasting friendships and to develop and grow as a person and as a leader.

We run the RYLA program for Rotary District 5050. You can find our website at **www.ryla5050.org**. For information on RYLA internationally, you can check out Rotary International's page at: **www.rotary.org/programs/ryla/index.htm**.

Every District operates RYLA differently. We admit to bias, but in our opinion, our RYLA program is one of the best in the world.

To give you an idea of what we do, here is an outline of the selection process and what successful candidates can expect.

Selection

Candidates have to be sponsored by a Rotary club. Often the participating clubs will contact young adults that they know personally, either at a local school, in the community, at work or at home. RYLA is one of the few programs that Rotary has where family members of Rotarians can participate.

Candidate ages usually range from 18 to 25. We do make some exceptions, such as 17 year olds who are in their last year of high school.

We ask for candidates who hold a position of leadership and/or display leadership potential. In our experience, pretty well every youth has that potential. The problem isn't usually finding candidates, but choosing between them.

We find the candidates canvas many types of leaders - coming from academics, sports, arts or other parts of the community. We have both verbal types and quiet ones who lead by their behaviour and by example. We have candidates that don't believe they are leaders, but learn that they are and can be leaders.

Candidates can be male or female, married or single. Since District 5050 clubs are in both Washington State and British Columbia, we normally have an equal mix of Americans and Canadians.

There is no cost to the candidate as the Rotary club pays the application fee. For RYLA 2008, that cost is \$375.00.

We invite each club to sponsor two candidates - preferably one male and one female - by the deadline of March 31, 2009. After that date, clubs may sponsor additional candidates, if there is space available, on a first-come basis. As we are required to confirm the number of participants with the Zajac Ranch one month before RYLA begins, we cannot offer any refunds for cancellations after May 1.

RYLA 2009 & The Zajac Ranch

Our next RYLA will be from **June 4 - 7, 2009** and will be held at the Zajac Ranch, on Stave Lake near Mission, BC. The Ranch is an undertaking by the Zajac Foundation to raise the spirits of children with life threatening diseases and improve their self-esteem, confidence and quality of life. We feel their mission complements ours and that we have a lot to offer and learn from each other. For more information on the new location, visit their website at **www.zajacranch.com**.

Arrival At RYLA

Organizing for the June RYLA begins well ahead of time with a committee that coordinates the dates, speakers and all other details. The programs at RYLA however, are organized and run by previous RYLA graduates that we call Facilitators.

When the participants arrive on Thursday, the Facilitators are there to greet them and introduce them. Pretty well everyone arrives with some nervousness, but we try to set that at ease right away. Participants are divided into smaller groups lead by a Facilitator.

Although participants meet as strangers on Thursday, they leave RYLA on Sunday with many new friends.

Going into too much detail would spoil some of the fun of attending RYLA. There are professional speakers who speak about different aspects of leadership. There are also many fun activities to put leadership skills into practice while building a sense of team and community.

RYLA has three expectations:

ATTEND, PARTICIPATE and HAVE FUN!

After RYLA

It is our hope and expectation that participants will take the lessons learned from RYLA and apply them to their personal life and to their communities. We ask participants to share what they have learned and to lead others to better serve at work, home and/or in community activities.

We ask that once participants have completed RYLA, they attend one weekly Rotary meeting and share their thoughts about RYLA with the sponsoring club. We strongly suggest that the sponsoring club make arrangements before RYLA for the candidates to speak to the club at the next meeting following the RYLA weekend.

We follow up RYLA with a reunion barbeque hosted by Rotaract (a Rotary sponsored service club for ages 18-30). For more information about Rotaract, see Rotary International's site here: [**www.rotary.org/programs/rotaract/index.html**](http://www.rotary.org/programs/rotaract/index.html)

The RYLA Committee is comprised of Rotarians and previous RYLA participants. If you are interested in joining the Committee, please contact me. If you want to see RYLA, we encourage Rotarians to visit - usually on the Saturday. If you would like to visit, please let us know in advance.

Thank you for doing your part to ensure the success of the program.

Frank Jarvis
Chair, RYLA 2009