

**CENTRAL STATES ROTARY  
YOUTH EXCHANGE**

**[www.csrye.org](http://www.csrye.org)**



**OUTBOUND STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

**For Outbound Students, Host Families, Youth Exchange Officers**

**CSRYE is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment  
for all participants in Rotary activities.**

**It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers  
to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of  
and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of  
children and young people with whom they come into contact.**

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# IMPORTANT ROTARY CONTACTS

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Rotary Club Meetings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Time Location

## **HOST MOM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

## **HOST DAD**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

## **HOST CLUB YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address at Home Place of Business

## **HOME COUNTRY OUTBOUND COORDINATOR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Cell Phone e-mail address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

## **HOME COUNTRY DISTRICT CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Phone Work Phone Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address e-mail address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Business

### **Host District YE INBOUND COORDINATOR**

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Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
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Address	e-mail
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### **Host District CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER**

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Name	Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone
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Address	e-mail
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### **Host District YE CHAIR**

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Name	Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone
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Address	e-mail
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### **Sponsor District YE REBOUND COORDINATOR**

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Name	Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone
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Address	e-mail
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# Introductions

## ***The History of Rotary***

Rotary was born on February 23, 1905 in Chicago, Illinois, the world's first and most international service club. The founder of Rotary was attorney Paul P. Harris (1868-1947), who gathered with three others to discuss his idea of a group of businessmen from different professions getting together periodically to become better acquainted. They decided to limit membership to one representative of each profession and to rotate the meeting site among each member's place of business, to acquaint each other with their various vocations and to promote business. The rotation of meeting places is the source of the name "Rotary".

Club membership grew rapidly. The second Rotary Club was founded in San Francisco in 1908. When clubs were formed in Canada and Great Britain, in 1912, Rotary became an international organization.

Since 1905, the ideas of Paul Harris and his friends have become ideals which have been accepted by people of practically all nationalities, and of many political and religious beliefs. Today there are Rotary Clubs in 170 countries. There are more than 31,000 Rotary clubs, with a membership of over 1.2 million men and women.

## ***Rotary Motto and Themes***

Rotary International has adopted as its motto, "*Service Above Self*". A second theme of Rotary is "*He profits most who serves best*". Additionally, each year, the Rotary International President coins a theme for that Rotary year.

## ***The Rotary Foundation***

The Rotary Foundation is a philanthropic trust promoting further understanding and friendly relations between peoples of different nations. The Foundation sponsors the largest scholarship programs in the world and is supported purely by voluntary contributions from Rotary Clubs and Rotarians.

The Rotary Foundation has eight working programs and a budget of approximately \$45-\$50 million (US) each year. These programs include Ambassadorial Scholarships, Rotary Volunteers, The 3H program (for Health, Hunger and Humanity), Rotary Peace Conferences, World Community Service, Special Grants, Group Study Exchange, and Polio-Plus.

## ***Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Multi-District***

Rotary has been involved in youth exchange for a long time. However, prior to 1972, any exchange program was essentially a "District to District" exchange. Multi-district organizations involved in youth exchange were rare. What began as two districts working together in the great lakes area in the late 1960's, evolved in 1972 as the Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Multi-District. At that time, there were eight districts working in cooperation with one another. Today, we are 18 districts, geographically located in Ontario, Canada, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois and Indiana.

## ***Rotary at the Local Level -- The Rotary Club***

The “personality” of each Rotary club is a reflection of the community it serves and the membership of that club. Rotary clubs meet weekly throughout the year; some for a breakfast meeting, others during lunch. Some Rotary club meetings are quiet and “serious”, staying to a tight schedule so the members can return to work on time, while other club meetings are less formal and structured.

Exchange students often find that the Rotary club **hosting** them will be very different from the Rotary club **sponsoring** them, and both will be very different from other Rotary clubs they may have the opportunity to visit during their exchange year. But Rotarians around the world all share the common philosophy for Service to others, and as an exchange student, they are there to help provide a successful exchange experience.

As with most organizations, Rotary clubs are lead by officers who are elected by the membership for one year terms, beginning on July 1. The officers include the Club President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and/or President-Elect, and Directors. Rotary clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program generally appoint a Youth Exchange Officer, or YEO, to oversee that program. Another member of the host Rotary club, will be designated as the exchange student’s Club Counselor. This Rotarian serves as the primary liaison between the Rotary club, the exchange student and the host families.

### ***Terms you should know:***

Sponsor Club	- Your HOME Club has sponsored you as an OUTBOUND Student
Sponsor District	-Your HOME district AND CSRYE are sponsoring you as an OUTBOUND
Student Host District	- The district in your destination country where you will live as an INBOUND
Student Host Club	- The club in your destination city where you will live as an INBOUND Student

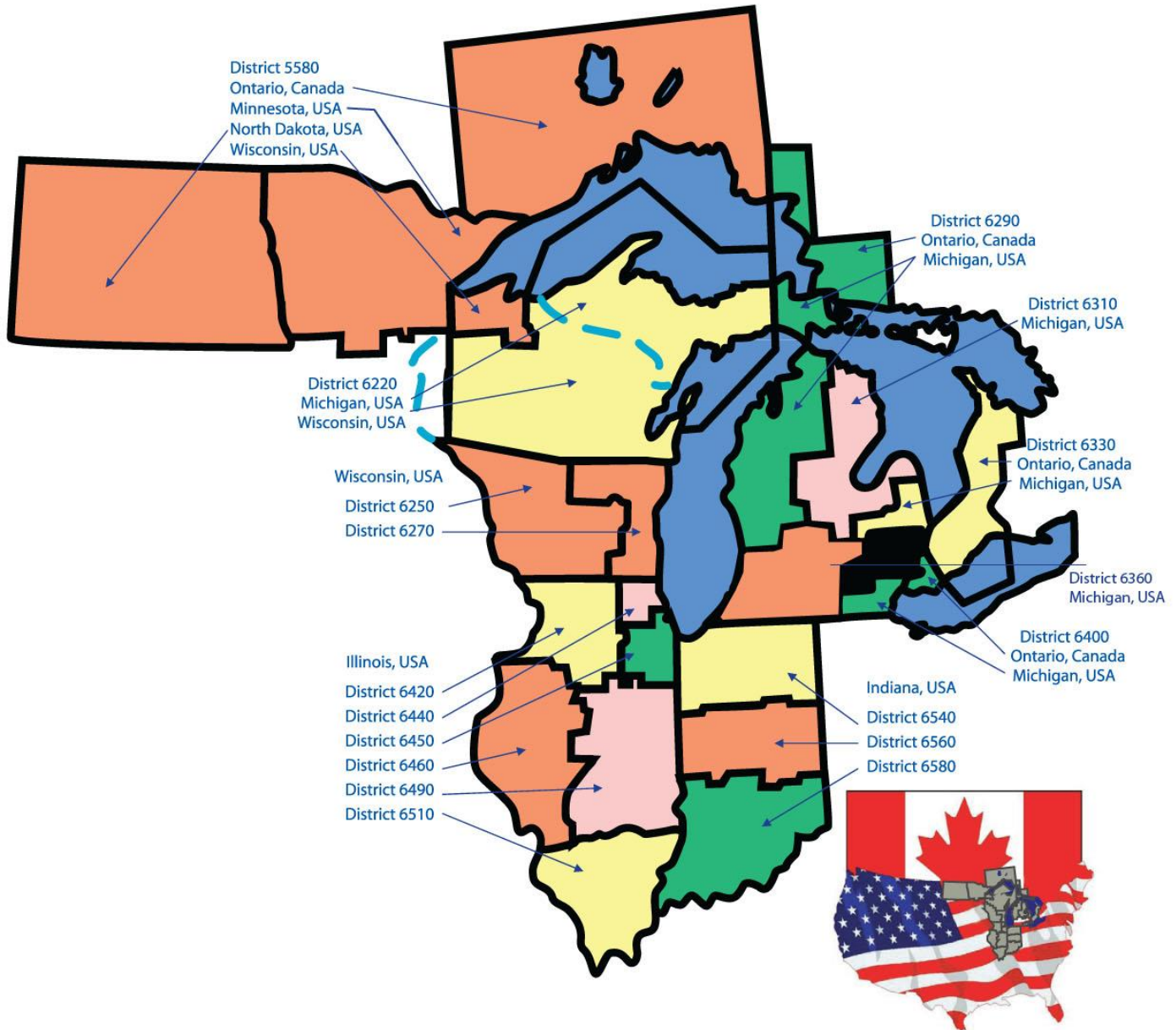


## *Map of Our Multi-District*

# Central States Rotary Youth Exchange, Inc

Serving 18 Districts in

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin  
and Ontario, Canada



## ***Our Mission***

**Rotary International CSRYE Programs** are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all our Youth Exchange Students, both inbound and outbound.

We recognize that all young people have the right to freedom from harassment and abuse.

We ensure that all our staff and volunteers are carefully selected and trained and accept the responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.

Each district responds swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of harassment and/or abuse, and by providing adults and young people with the opportunity to voice any concerns that they may have.

Each District appoints individual Exchange Student Protection Officers who will act as the main point of contact for parents, children, host families, and outside agencies.

We ensure that access to confidential information is restricted.

We periodically review the effectiveness of our Student Protection Policy and activities.

# ***The Rotary International 4-Way Test***

**of the things we think, say or  
do:**

**1. IS IT THE TRUTH?**

**2. IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?**

**3. WILL IT BUILD GOODWILL & BETTER  
FRIENDSHIPS?**

**4. WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL  
CONCERNED?**

# **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE**

## ***Objectives of the Academic Year Program***

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to different cultures. The world becomes a smaller, friendlier place when we learn that all people – regardless of nationality – desire the same basic things: a safe, comfortable environment that allows for a rich and satisfying life for themselves and for their children. Youth exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures, thus planting the seeds for a lifetime of international understanding.

- Communities all over the world have much to gain from the continued success of the youth exchange program.
- Students learn firsthand about the challenges and accomplishments of people in other countries.
- Young people mature as individuals as their concept of the world grows.
- Host clubs, families, and their communities enjoy extended, friendly contact with someone from a different culture.
- Exchange students return home with a broader view of the world and a deeper understanding of themselves.
- Young adults assume leadership roles that are shaped, in part, by what they learned during their exchange experiences.

## **Student Protection**

## ***Harassment Policy***

CSRYE and Rotary International take seriously our role to protect students from harassment or abuse. With Rotary, you can be assured that there is help nearby no matter where you happen to be around the globe. We have established an international guideline for Protection of Students from Harassment or Abuse.

As an addition to this handbook, you have been provided with training on our protocols and procedures, in the event you experience harassment or abuse during your exchange experience.

When you arrive in your host country, you will be given additional training on the safety procedures that you can follow during your exchange experience overseas.

With that training, you should be provided with names and phone numbers of Rotarians and victim assistance programs that will provide safety and assistance if needed.

If you do not understand your rights, or need further help, you should contact a trusted Rotarian immediately.

While Harassment and Abuse are very serious issues, you also need to be sensitive to the fact that there is a potential for misunderstandings in cross-cultural situations. What might be acceptable conduct in one country may be offensive in another. Customs, gestures, and manners all differ greatly among the many cultures represented in our inbound youth exchange class, and even between the American and Canadian cultures. Communication from you is important in resolving problems before they get out of hand. However, when a problem reaches the level of 'harassment,' then it is time to take action.

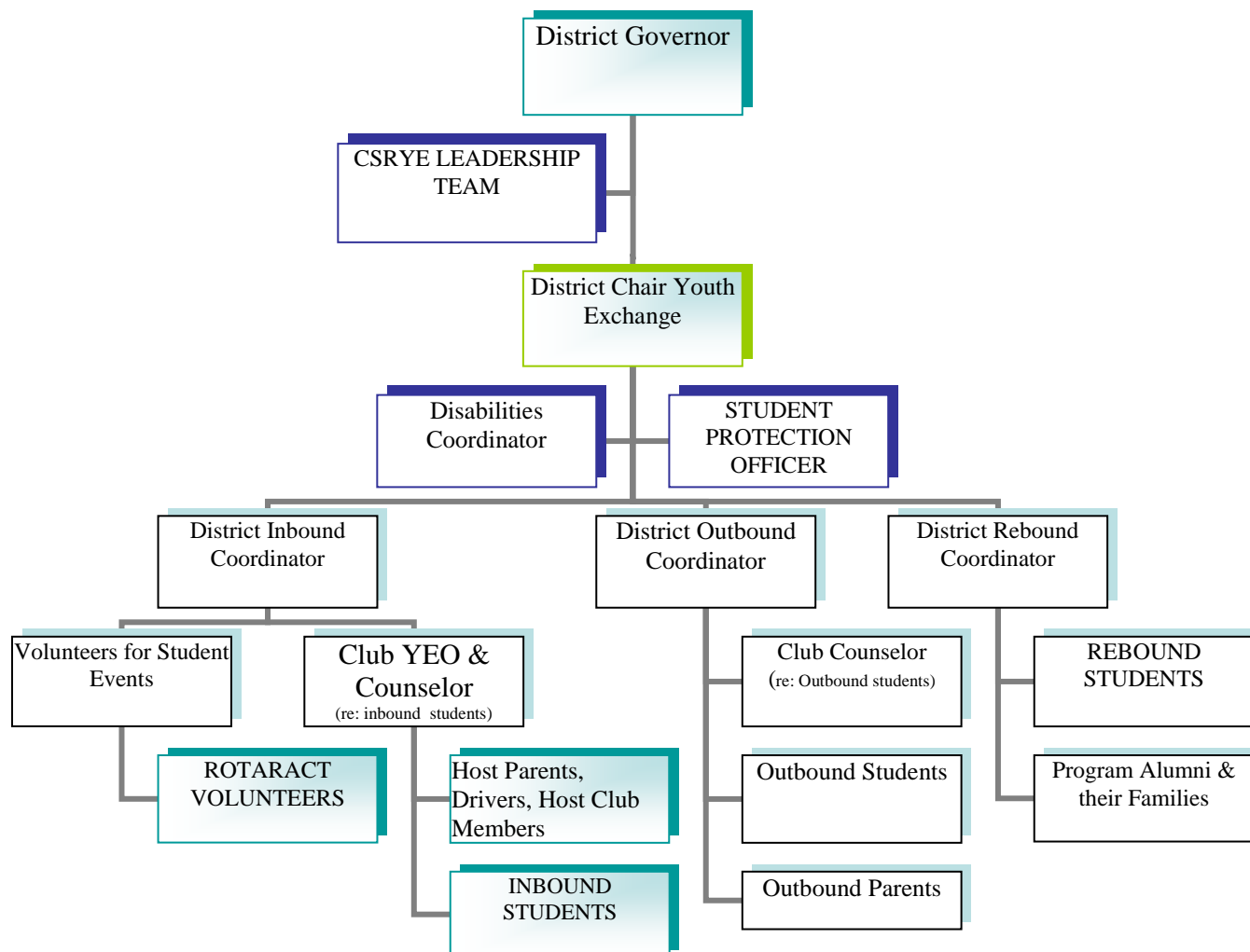
**At all times, you can be assured that we have taken every precaution to make this exchange year a rewarding and pleasant life experience. We are always here to help and to guide you through problems, whatever they may be.**

## ***Rotary Support System Model***

<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>WHEN NEEDED</b>	<b>CONTACT FREQUENCY</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>Host Family</b>	Every Day	Daily	Your first point of contact with most simple needs. For problems, you will need to use your host club YEO in conjunction with your host family.
<b>Host Club YEO</b>	Structuring your year, planning activities.	Bi-Weekly/Monthly	This is your Rotary contact for host family arrangements, allowances, rules, travel permissions, meeting attendance, etc.
<b>Host Club Counselor</b>	Problems, Successes, Social Occasions	Bi-Weekly/Monthly	This is your advocate for solving problems when things go wrong –to provide advice, support and help when needed.
<b>Host District Coordinator</b>	Routine Reporting, serious problems.	As Needed	If reports are required, make sure you complete them.
<b>Host District Chairman</b>	Unresolved problems, routine reporting	As Needed	
<b>Sponsor District Coordinator</b>	Routine Reporting, serious problems not solved by previous channels.	Monthly	Monthly Reports MUST be sent. This is NOT the first person that should learn of a problem you are having!
<b>Sponsor District Chairman</b>	Very Serious Problems	As Needed	
<b>ROTEX</b>	Advice and support	As needed	Will not be able to help with technical issues. They are for your emotional support and mentoring only.
<b>Sponsor Club YEO</b>	Preparation and then report about your experience.	Monthly	You should write to your club regularly to tell of your experiences.
<b>Parents</b>	Routine, non-YE problems, health emergencies	Regularly – on a SCHEDULE	LIMIT e-mail and phone contact. Write letters instead of e-mailing and phoning!

# Program Structure

## *Rotary Youth Exchange Leadership Chart*



## *Overview of Your Exchange Year*

### What To Expect

Your exchange year will be 10-12 months long. It could begin as early as July and will end in July the following year. However, MOST exchange students depart for their host country in mid- August, and return home the following June. You will be given instructions by your host country. Many have a specific date you need to arrive for language camp or orientation

Although the youth exchange programs and rules for each district are similar, the host district and club guidelines take precedence over those of the sponsoring district. The host district, host club and host family are responsible for each student's cultural, spiritual and physical well-being and may set their own rules and guidelines, which may be more or less restrictive than those we apply to the students we host. You should become familiar with those rules and guidelines before, or immediately upon, your arrival in your host country.

## ***General Information for Youth Exchange Candidates***

Welcome to Central States Rotary Youth Exchange (CSRYE) Multi-District! Central States consists of 17 Rotary districts within the Rotary International organization. CSRYE is organized for the sole purpose of providing a better exchange experience for students, families and clubs.

### **To be selected for exchange, you must meet the following MINIMUM standards:**

**AGE:** You must be between the ages of 15 ½ and 18 ½ at the time of departure.  
(Departure is between July and September of the year following your application.)

**GRADES:** Your GPA must rank in the upper half of your class.

**SPONSOR:** You must have a sponsor Rotary Club.

Recruitment begins in August of each year, for departure the following year (July-September). Applications are online. Your sponsoring Rotary club will provide you with the link on the web that will give you access to the outbound application. It is an electronic application and must be completed on line. Applicants are first interviewed locally. If sponsored, you are interviewed by District. Once selected by district, no later than the end of November, your application is sent to CSRYE to begin the overseas assignment process.

You must be open to learning a new language and a new culture. Each applicant is asked to complete a preference list of 12 'top choices' from among approximately 45 countries. We try very hard to send students to one of the countries high on their lists, but we make no guarantees.

PRIOR foreign language training is helpful, but not a requirement. You are matched based on a variety of criteria which includes personal achievements, individual goals, and personality. If you feel you must go to one country and that country only, then this is not the program for you.

While overseas, you are NOT on an extended vacation. You are expected to adjust to your new home, as a member of your host family and a student in your new high school. In addition, you are expected to participate in your HOST Rotary Club activities, and very likely will be invited as a guest speaker to more than one engagement during your year abroad.

You will begin your preparation studies immediately upon acceptance into our program. There are MANDATORY training events, which will be scheduled by your sponsor district. This may mean giving up an important social activity during your time of preparation OR losing your placement as an exchange student. In addition, family support is critical. Your parents will be required to attend one or more training events as well. Ask your district officer for the dates and locations that will apply to you.

In the meantime, begin your journey by getting to know the Rotary organization.... through online searches, visit [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org), your district website, talk to current or former Rotary exchange students, join Interact (if available), or visit with local Rotarians in your sponsor club.



## ***What Happens Next?***

After you have been accepted into the exchange program by your sponsor district, your application goes on ahead of you to begin planning your year abroad.

1. **Central States Rotary Outbound Coordinator.** Your application is thoroughly reviewed to make certain that it is complete. If any documents are missing, your district chairman will be in contact with you to get those turned in immediately. Deadlines exist here and can affect your continuation in the program. Once your application is considered complete, the placement decision is made and your file is sent overseas for acceptance.
2. **Host District Inbound Coordinator.** Your application is reviewed overseas, and a host club will be matched with you.
3. **Host Club Youth Officer.** Your application is reviewed, host families are offered the opportunity to get a 'first look' at who you are, and local schools are considered. Several 'local' signatures are required to show that you have been 'invited' to live in your host city. This step in the process takes the longest. There are several formalities that must be handled, and your patience is going to be needed while you wait for news about your assignment. Once all the signatures and invitations are obtained, your acceptance papers will be sent to us.
4. **Host District Inbound Coordinator.** Your completed invitations are reviewed for accuracy and your welcome package is prepared. Every district does its own 'welcome package'. Some give you only basic information about the name of your city and what date you should arrive. Others will send you detailed information about your host district. Whatever that means, your assembled 'welcome package' is returned overseas at this point.
5. **Central States International Correspondent.** Your welcome package is copied and your assignment is documented by CSRYE. Your file is then mailed out to your sponsor district officer.
6. **Sponsor District Outbound Coordinator.** Your file is copied and the originals are mailed to you.
7. **YOU** will receive your welcome package. Instructions will be included with this package. If you haven't already made contact with your hosts, NOW is the time to do this. You should also be corresponding with our CSRYE travel agent, make an appointment with the embassy, and get your travel plans in order. From this point forward you will be guided by your HOST country to finalize your plans.

### **Important Note:**

It might be as early as April or as late as July before you hear something. Your patience is likely to be tested in this process. Not all cultures operate in the same time-conscious manner as ours. While you are waiting you have plenty of work to do, in order to be prepared for going overseas for an entire year.

## ***Academic Credit for Your Year of Study Abroad***

As soon as you have been selected for exchange, talk to your high school academic counselor. Although you will be studying in a high school overseas, Rotary can not guarantee credits towards graduation back home.

You might consider taking required courses in advance of your departure, or make special arrangements for summer school after your return.

You should ask about the possibility of at least earning foreign language credits during your time away, perhaps with a test upon your return to document your level of foreign language skills.

Even though most schools will not guarantee credits ahead of time, you should bring back a copy of your high school transcripts from the time you were out of the country. If available, obtain a copy of your student handbook or ask your school in your host country for course descriptions.

The more information you bring home with you, the better your chances are of being granted school credits for your studies. It is important to note that acceptable passing grades are going to be necessary for you to make a good case. Your high school at home is the FINAL authority on this decision.

### **FOUR IMPORTANT POINTS**

- All Rotary Exchange Students **MUST** attend school during the exchange year
- Correspond with your assigned school prior to departure
- Return with documentation of attendance/completed classes
- You must work with your home school for class/credit transfers

## ***Responsibilities: YEO, Counselor & Student***

**Your Rotary host club will appoint a Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) and a counselor for you.** If you do not have a Rotary-appointed counselor, you should find an adult advocate. Your YEO and counselor should NOT be host parents. When you arrive, you should ask your hosts who your YEO and counselor are, and make contact with them in person if they do not contact you. All Rotary officers are unpaid volunteers who work with the program because they support the meaning of youth exchange.

The following are basic international guidelines for YEO's Counselors & Students:

The following are basic international guidelines for YEO's, Counselors, and Students:

### **YEO Responsibilities (Administrator)**

1. To confirm who the host parents will be during a student's stay. To arrange the date and time of changing host families.
2. To orient the host parents & students as to their responsibilities.
3. To arrange for schooling and introduce student to principal/teachers.
4. To look after student emergency fund and other important papers.
5. To check that insurance coverage is suitable to the local situation and to ensure that activities (such as sports) are covered.
6. To introduce and integrate student into the Host Rotary Club and ensure that student is invited as a guest to meetings and other activities.
7. To be sure that students receive monthly allowance from the host club on time.
8. To deal appropriately with any unresolved difficulties between students and host families and school.
9. To give permission for travel and other situations in which permission is due, and to ensure that permission has been obtained from natural parents, host parents, and school.
10. To find out the dates of the required meetings – and to arrange for transportation.  
Students should be told of these events well in advance, to help avoid schedule conflicts.
11. To obtain appropriate funds from the host club to cover travel, food and board expenses for student attendance at required meetings.
12. To notify students of any Rotary-approved tours for exchange students in which they might be able to participate.

## Counselor Responsibilities (Advocate/Friend)

1. To meet with students once or twice per month, to give students sound advice, and to deal with any problems, fears and worries that students may have.
2. To advocate for a student when he/she is having difficulties at home or at school
3. To help a student with self-discipline if he/she goes off track.

## Student Responsibilities

1. **Ask for a list of what is expected.** If not written, this can be done verbally and students can write down the points.
2. **Use the counselor when student needs a shoulder to lean on.** It will keep the relationship between students and host families less complicated.
3. **Show appreciation for all that hosts do for students.**
4. **Keep counselor & YEO informed of all student activities.**
5. **Always speak the TRUTH to the YEO and Counselor!** Students need their trust and their guidance.
6. **Discuss problems while they are still small.** Don't wait until things are out of hand before talking to someone.
7. **Accept the decisions and discipline of the YEO and Counselor with grace....even if a student disagrees.** He/she is guiding the student in the place of natural parents.
8. **Do not play YEO, your counselor, and host parents against one another.** Make friends – not adversaries!

IF a situation arises that you feel you need to speak to a counselor of your gender, ask if this can be arranged.

IF you and your counselor have a clash of personalities, or if he/she seems too busy for you – contact your YEO or Club President and ask if it is possible to change counselors. If that is not possible...then try hard to make the best of things. Adapt your personality and help build the bridge between you.

IF all else has failed – contact your Inbound Coordinator -- write, e-mail, or call. Almost anything can be sorted out with the assistance of the District Inbound Coordinator.

# ***Miscellaneous Program Details***

## **Student Attendance at Rotary Meetings**

Depending on your host country assignment, students are generally invited to attend some Rotary meetings with their local club. You will AT LEAST be asked to make one presentation to your host club. Your club counselor or YEO should provide you with information about the day, time and location of club meetings.

Your host club may also expect you to participate in special events. As a young ambassador, you become an important part of these activities as well.

During the year, all students will be required to attend some District meetings in your host country. If you do not understand what is expected for attendance at Rotary events, ask your Youth Exchange Officer and/or your District Chair.

## **Finances**

### Family Costs

- Round trip unrestricted airline ticket to country (must be purchased through CSRYE travel agent)
- Sponsor District-Directed costs for health insurance and training
- Passport & Visa for your travels
- Any required language camps (as directed by your host district)
- Purchase of a Rotary blazer (as directed by your sponsor district)
- Emergency fund as directed by your host country (usually \$300-\$500 U.S.)
- Sufficient spending money for personal expenses, clothing & entertainment
- Country trip at end of the year (optional)

\*The amount of spending money you will need, and have available, will likely depend on your circumstances and families you stay with. Two general guidelines should always be kept in mind:

- Be willing and able to ‘pay your own way’ for travel and entertainment with host family and friends. Don’t expect to be treated as a guest at all times and understand when it is appropriate to offer to pay for meals, entertainment tickets, etc when offered such opportunities.
- Do not spend money freely or lavishly when those around you do not have the resources to do likewise. Don’t be labeled as ‘the spoiled kid’ who throws money around.

### Rotary

- Room and board with pre-screened host families in host country (host club)
- Monthly allowance equivalent to \$75 minimum (or equivalent ‘buying power’) in U.S. currency (host club)
- Any required tuition for high school education in your host country (host club)

\*Your sponsor club may offer additional support at their discretion. This varies by district and by individual club policy.

## Passport and Visa

Immediately upon acceptance into the program, you should apply for a Passport, if you don't already have one. If you do have a valid passport, the expiration date must be no earlier than six months after you expect to return home from your year abroad. A "raised-seal" birth certificate is needed to apply for a passport.

The requirements for a visa (permission granted by the entry country for a non-citizen to enter) varies by country, and our travel agency and Rotary contacts will be able to guide you through the process of securing a visa.

Working to earn income is prohibited while overseas. Your visa restricts this.

## Travel Reservations (Airlines)

Once your departure date and arrival airport are known, work with our travel agency to arrange the required **round-trip** airfare. **You must have "open-return" round-trip airfare as a requirement of the exchange program.** Although airline rules and regulations differ, most airlines will issue the return flight tickets for a specific return date and allow one change with no- or a low-cost change fee. Inform your Sponsor District and those in your host country (Host Club YEO, Host Family, etc.) of your travel itinerary as soon as the information is known. Safeguard your tickets both before and after departure, since they are just like money and will be very difficult to replace if lost. Some host clubs may ask to hold your tickets as a safeguard upon your arrival. If you keep your return tickets, make sure you know where they are.

## The Rotary 'Uniform' – Your Youth Exchange Blazer

Your Rotary Blazer will identify you as an Exchange Student and draw attention to you in a positive way. It is always suitable when the occasion calls for "dressing up". But don't pack your Blazer; wear it when you depart for your host country. Many students report that, by wearing their blazer and Youth Exchange Pins while traveling, their passage through customs and immigration is made easier, officials are happy to offer help, and you become instantly "recognizable" by your hosts on arrival.

*Canadian Students wear Burgundy*

*USA students wear Black or Navy Blue*

Your Sponsor district will guide you in purchasing your jacket.

## Banners, Business Cards, Pins

Your Sponsor Rotary Club should give you several Club Banners. They can be presented to the host country Rotary clubs which host you for functions. You will usually receive one of their banners in return, to bring back to your sponsor club.

You should arrange to get some flag pins and other items to exchange with or give to people you meet during your exchange year. Area politicians, your local chamber of commerce, and state/provincial tourism bureaus are good resources to ask for supplies – or purchase at reduced rates.

Your district will assist you with printing Business Cards with your picture and home address to provide to people you meet. These cards also have the name of the host country and room for you to enter your current host family address.

## **Prepare To Be An Ambassador**

During your exchange year, you will meet many people who only know your home country through the lens of a movie or TV camera. As an exchange student, one of your roles is to help people change these misconceptions. To do that, you must understand our country, our culture, our government, and our politics.

Become as knowledgeable as you can on these topics before you begin your exchange year. Locate a good roadmap that you can take with you to show friends and host families where you live. You will also need a map of your country, to show people where you live compared to well known cities. Understand travel distances -- in hours -- from your home to other places, and relate that to distances between cities in your host country.

You also need to become familiar with your host country **before** you arrive there. Read -- and re-read good material about your new home. Make a special note of cultural attributes. Consider how they differ from your culture, and why. Use your resources -- the internet, school and public libraries, magazines and newspapers, etc. -- to learn about current events, history, government and politics, etc. for your host country, and especially for the region you will be living in. Purchase two maps showing the cities and topography of your host country, preferably in detail -- one to take with you and the other to leave at home -- so your family can locate places you mention in your letters.

## **Prepare a Presentation**

Most host Rotary clubs and some high schools in your host country will ask you to speak to them. You should have a fully-prepared 15-minute talk about you, your home town, your region, and your sponsor Rotary club. You should bring a power point presentation or slides or photos -- and have them ready before departure. You may be presenting this in another language later in your exchange. It might also be wise to have more than one talk prepared. You may be asked back for a second or third talk to your host Rotary club.

You should also put together a good quality photo album to show host families and other people you visit, such as for dinner and weekend outings. Photo albums are good conversation starters, and your selections should be well thought out, keeping in mind what might be of interest to people in your host country.

## *Rotary Youth Exchange Outbound Student Calendar*

MONTH	PHASE	WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING	REMINDERS
JULY- AUGUST	TRAVEL & HONEYMOON	Get busy. Remember that these first few weeks are your chance to make life-long friends. It is not the time to be shy. Take it all in and get to know your surroundings. Meet your Rotary Club members. Find your routine. Work on your language skills. Identify your cultural mentor.	Watch the phone calls and e-mail
SEPTEMBER	END OF HONEYMOON / START OF ADAPTATION	Start with good habits. Write in your journal every night. Mark on a calendar what you did every day. Answer the phone from time to time. Get to know your host parents. Learning the language is your priority. Watch for homesickness. Use your support system. Keep busy. Cook an “American meal” for your host family.	Write home
OCTOBER	ADAPTATION	Homesick? Don’t call home! Talk to your Rotary or Rotex support people. Don’t dump it on your parents. Get out of that funk. Break the routine a little every day to keep things fresh. Avoid spending long amounts of time by yourself. Having trouble with the language? Find someone to talk to; a host sibling, a “cultural mentor”, or even your Rotary Counselor. Give and take. Make a trade; host language for English.	.
NOVEMBER	ADAPTATION	Have you made many friends yet? If not, get out there and mingle. Remember, you want to make as many people miss you as you can when you leave. There is nothing better to make you stop thinking about yourself than to help someone else. If you are feeling a little lost, find someone in need and give him/her a hand. You will get it back 10X. You might hit a language plateau here. Keep working the language. Try something new. Speak at your Rotary Club. If you move host families, you might have another challenge. Make the best of it. Teach them about Thanksgiving.	Send Holiday presents home early. By November 15 <sup>th</sup> .
DECEMBER	ADAPATION/ ASSIMILATION TRANSITION – HOLIDAY BLUES	Time to stay focused. You need to get through the period from the end of November until January 1 <sup>st</sup> strong. Don’t get hung up with missing the holidays at home. Keep Rotex in mind here. They will help. The more you contact “home” though, the worse it will be. Tell your host family how you celebrate the holidays.	Keep phone calls and e-mails “home” down.
JANUARY	ADAPTATION/ ASSIMILATION	Now for the good stuff. You should feel good speaking the language and you should have made some friends. Make the most of it. From now on, you are on a roll. Hey! Where’s my report!	
FEBRUARY	ADAPTATION/ ASSIMILATION	You should be busy now. Friends, school (for most of you) and lots of activities. Don’t forget host families (including the first one).	Call your host counselor and check in with him/her
MARCH	ASSIMILATION	Are you giving as well as taking? Don’t just be doing your own thing. You speak the language and you know some people. You fit in. Use it to help other people. Speak to little kids in schools, volunteer in your community, teach someone English, help with your Rotary Club’s projects. This is the part of the roller coaster ride when you get to let go of that safety bar, put your hands in the air and scream as loud as you can. This is “The Monster Hill” of your exchange.	<b><u>Make your flight reservations home.</u></b> Don’t rush home, but don’t stay too long. Don’t arrive just a few days before Summer Conference!



APRIL	ASSIMILATION	Are your parents visiting? Plan it out for them. Remember, you are the one who is in charge of their having a good experience. Let them into “your world”. Introduce them to your host family, your host Rotary Club, your friends and your town. Let them see you as the mature tour guide, master of the language. They aren’t coming? No problem - you have a lot going on. Dig in and make the most of it because this time is fleeting! Hey, don’t you owe someone a report?!!	
MAY	ASSIMILATION & RE-ENTRY ANXIETY	This should be as good as it gets; you love your host country and you are starting to get that dreaded re-entry anxiety. It has to happen, you know that. Don’t waste one second wishing it won’t. Spend as much time as you can with friends, host families and the people you will miss most. You can spend time with Americans and other exchange students when you get home so spend what little time you have with people who you won’t see for a while.	Make time for your host families!
JUNE	ASSIMILATION & RE-ENTRY ANXIETY	Get ready to leave. Make sure that you are not putting off spending time with people. If you want to buy things to take with you, start early. Don’t go rushing around the night before you leave. You will be cheating your friends and family out of your time. Leave gracefully. Don’t leave a mess. Pay your obligations. Return what you’ve borrowed. Say “thank you” as many times as you can.	Read “So You Think You’re Home Now”
JULY	RE-ENTRY & REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK	Pack early. Get rid of things that are just clutter. Make sure you have your passport, tickets and that your bank account is closed (if you had one). Exchange money. Don’t come home with a lot of foreign money you might not need for a while. Have some local currency with you in case you need it at the airport. Have some US\$ with you for when you land in the US. Enough to get a meal or two. Remember, the success of an exchange is measured in the number of tears when you leave; yours and theirs. Smile when you get back to the US. Thank your parents for your year. Spend some time with them before you go running around finding your friends. Spend at least two days home before connecting with your friends.	RETURN FOR SUMMER CONFERENCE  START WORKING ON YOUR ROTARY REBOUND SPEECH.
AUGUST	REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK	Get into your new life here. Listen to what you are saying. Are you being critical about “home”? Are you telling everyone you can find about your year or are you keeping it to yourself? Have you referred to your friends as “Those stupid kids?” or “Those stupid Americans” at all? Are you keeping busy or are you moping around the house missing “home”? Was it really easy for you to come back? Do you not miss your host country? Think about why that is so. Get ready for school to start. Make little steps each day to get back into this culture. Talk to Rotex and to your District and Club Counselors about what you did and what you are doing now. Remember that the deeper you were able to assimilate into your host culture, the longer it will take you to find that “bi-cultural balance” between your host country “self” and your American “self”. This is the start of your third year as an exchange student.	Contact your Sponsoring Club and offer to do a program on your exchange.  Let your District Counselor know what your plans are for the following year. Help us continue to build the program!

# Student Rules & Expectations

## *Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange*

As a Youth Exchange Student sponsored by a Rotary Club and/or District, you must agree to the following rules and conditions of exchange. Please note that individual districts may establish additional rules, as appropriate to the needs of students in their area.

**Rules and Conditions of Exchange — Violations will result in a district review and restrictions. Severe/Consistent disregard for these rules will result in being returned home.**

<p>1) Obey the Laws of the Host Country — If found guilty of violation of any law, student can expect no assistance from their sponsors or their native country. Student will be returned home as soon as he/she is released by authorities.</p> <p>2) The student is not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Medicine prescribed by a physician is allowed.</p> <p>3) The student is not authorized to operate a motorized vehicle of any kind which requires a federal/state/ provincial license or participate in driver education programs.</p> <p>4) The illegal drinking of alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. Students who are of legal age should refrain. If the host family offers a student an alcoholic drink, it is permissible to accept it under their supervision in their home.</p> <p>5) Stealing is prohibited. There are no exceptions.</p>	<p>6) Unauthorized travel is not allowed. Students must follow the travel rules of the Host District.</p> <p>7) Limit your use of the internet and mobile phones, as directed by your host district, host club and host family.</p> <p>8) The student must attend school regularly and make an honest attempt to succeed.</p> <p>9) The student must abide by the rules and conditions of exchange of the Hosting District provided to you by the District Youth Exchange Committee.</p> <p>10) Students are not permitted to be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.</p>
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Smoking is discouraged. If you state in your application that you do not smoke, you will be held to that position throughout your year. Your acceptance and host family placement is based on your signed statement. Under no circumstances are you to smoke in your Host Family's bedrooms.</li> <li>2) Become an integral part of the Host Family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a student of your age and other children in the family. Respect your host's wishes.</li> <li>3) Learn the language of your host country. The effort will be appreciated by teachers, host parents, Rotary club members and others you meet in the community. It will go a long way in your gaining acceptance in the community and those who will become lifelong friends.</li> <li>4) Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events. Show an interest in host family and Rotary activities to which you are invited. Volunteer to get involved; do not wait to be asked. Lack of interest on your part is detrimental to your exchange and can have a negative impact on future exchanges.</li> <li>5) Get involved in your school and community activities. Plan your recreation and spare time activities around your school and community friends. Do not spend all your time with the other exchange students.</li> <li>6) Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counselors and school personnel in choosing friends.</li> <li>7) Do not borrow money. Pay any bills you incur promptly. Ask permission to use the family telephone, keep track of long distance calls and reimburse your host family each month for the calls you make.</li> <li>8) Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary Club or district with proper adult chaperones. Other travel must be approved by the host district contact, host club, host family and student's own parents/legal guardians in writing exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability. Students may not travel alone or accompanied only by other students.</li> <li>9) If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or to an event, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go.</li> <li>10) You must show proof of proper immunization. See page 4, question 5--- Immunizations.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11) Students should have sufficient financial support to assure their well being during the exchange year. Your hosting district may require a contingency fund for emergency situations. It must be replenished by the student's parents/guardians as it is depleted. Unused funds at the end of the exchange will be returned to the student. These funds must be turned over to your Host Rotary Club upon your arrival and is not meant to cover day-to-day expenses.</li> <li>12) Any costs relative to a student's early return home or any other unusual costs (e.g., language tutoring, tours, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the student's own parents/guardians.</li> <li>13) Students must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to the host district and student's parents/ guardians.</li> <li>14) You will be under the Hosting District's authority while you are an exchange student. Parents/guardians must avoid authorizing any extra activities directly to their son/daughter. The Host Club and District Youth Exchange Officers must authorize such activities. If the student has relatives in the host country or region, they will have no authority over the student while the student is in the program.</li> <li>15) Body piercing or obtaining a tattoo while on your exchange, without the express written permission of your Natural parents, host parents, host club and host district, is prohibited for health reasons.</li> <li>16) Visits by your parents/guardians, siblings and/or friends while you are in the program are strongly discouraged. Such visits may only take place with the host club and host district's consent and only within the last quarter of the exchange or during school breaks. Visits are not allowed during major holidays, even if occurring during school breaks.</li> <li>17) Avoid serious romantic activity. Abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity.</li> <li>18) Talk with your host club counselor, host parents, or other trusted adult if you encounter any form of abuse or harassment.</li> </ol>
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#### **Additional Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange:**

A-Interscholastic activities and sports cannot be guaranteed. Regulations in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Canada are not all the same. B-students should not expect to receive a high school diploma for participating in this program, as that is entirely up to the local schools.

## Student Declaration

IN CONSIDERATION of the acceptance and participation of the applicant in such program, the undersigned APPLICANT and his or her PARENTS or Legal GUARDIANS, to the full extent permitted by law, hereby release and agree to save, hold harmless and indemnify, all host parents and members of their families, and all members, officers, directors, committee members and employees of the host and sponsoring Rotary Clubs and Districts, and of Rotary International, from any or all liability for any loss, property damage, personal injury or death, including any such liability which may arise out of the negligence of any such persons or entities, which may be suffered or claimed by such applicant, parent or guardian during, or as a result of, the participation by the applicant in such Youth Exchange program, including travel to and from the host country.

WE GIVE PERMISSION for any and all medical care as identified in the "Permission for Medical Care and Release of Medical Records and Liability" which we have signed and which may be deemed necessary or advisable for the treatment of any illness or injury suffered by applicant.

Having read and understood the "Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange" on both sides of this page, we each agree to abide by these rules and conditions and understand that any violation may result in abrupt termination of the exchange, and we further agree that the host Rotary club and host Rotary district shall have final authority in enforcing these rules and conditions and any other rules and conditions which may be imposed with due notice.

**(Signature on all copies must be original and written in blue ink)**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant) (Print name)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Father/Guardian) (Print name)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mother/Guardian) (Print name)

In the presence of Sponsor Rotary Club Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Print name)

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month) (Year)

*CSRYE Rules & Conditions Revised 08/2017*

# *The Four D's*

## Cardinal Rules for Youth Exchange Students

**There are many situations in which you can find yourself on a plane home...early.** The most obvious cause would be if you break the laws of your host country....*that is if you are not in jail.* The Four D's address offenses that can get you into trouble and might result in your exchange being terminated.

**DRUGS -** Any association with drugs, drug users or drug dealers will violate the intention of and spirit of youth exchange. If you find yourself in the company of anyone who falls into this category – get out of the situation as quickly as you can. You were selected because you are a leader. Do not behave like a follower.

**DRINKING** – In some countries, alcohol may be consumed at meals. If offered by your host parents in this circumstance, you may accept.

Regardless of the legal drinking age in your host country, you are not permitted to drink alcohol with friends at parties or in bars. Alcohol abuse may be grounds for termination of your exchange year.

**DRIVING** – **You cannot drive any motorized vehicle while on exchange.** Your health insurance will not pay for injuries while driving any motorized vehicle. This includes cars, motorcycles, scooters, farm vehicles, power boats, snowmobiles, personal watercraft, etc. You can not afford to be involved in an accident in which you are the driver. *Do not take this risk. You will not be covered by your insurance.*

**DATING** – You should not become romantically involved during your year abroad. It will lead to emotional stress, and will take away from the objectives of your year...which is to meet many people and enjoy many activities.

## ***Going to School***

**ALL ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND FULL-TIME SCHOOL AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY AND TO TAKE ALL PRESCRIBED TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS.**

Even if you have completed high school in your home country, do not ask or expect to be enrolled in college or university classes.

Although academic school credits are not the primary objective of our program, the attitude of school officials towards granting you time off for other activities will vary. There may be Rotary functions and Rotary-approved travel that will help to broaden your education.....but you must discuss these events with your Rotary YEO and your school principal in advance. You should establish ahead of time, what the policy will be for you to take time off from school.

As an American or Canadian exchange student in a foreign school, you will be fairly obvious and you will be considered a representative (i.e. an ambassador) of your country by teachers and other students. Your behavior – good or bad – will be noticed. Be respectful of your principal and your teachers. Obey the school regulations, even if other students do not.

You will be expected to complete homework assignments the same as any member of your school class. Language may be an obstacle...but nobody will ask you to do more than your best.

Be aware of dress code and customs of your fellow students. You may be different, but respect those around you.

Be aware that schools are places in which drugs, sexual harassment, and violence are not uncommon.

Not all students are nice and some may try to take advantage of you. Be friendly – but choose your friends with care. Avoid the “wrong crowd” and situations that might lead to breaking the law. You can be prosecuted for crimes in your host country, the same as any other resident of that country. Rotary can not protect you from this.

**Participate in school and sports activities outside of the classroom. It is the best way to meet others and begin healthy friendships.**

Avoid spending too much time with other exchange students – though they will be the most “comfortable” group for you in the beginning. You need to stretch out of your “comfort zone” and make local friends with whom you can better integrate into your host culture.

Although you are there to learn their language and culture, be prepared to accept every opportunity to give talks about your country in your school and in other places within the community. Most of the people you meet will probably never have the chance to visit your home country, but they may be interested to know about it.

When you speak – do so carefully. Avoid making “good-bad” comparisons that might embarrass you or hurt others.

Ask your teacher, YEO, and/or counselor to help you prepare a talk if you are asked to give one.

# *Travel*

## **Travel Guidelines**

**The intent of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is to provide students with an academic year abroad – which will encompass cultural and language immersion.** Travel is a privilege, not a right. A host family may invite a student to travel with them. However, not every host family has plans to travel or has the ability to pay for travel.

### **Keep these things in mind:**

Remember that you have traveled a long way just to reach your host country.

You will come to understand and meet the people better if you concentrate on your host town and area.

Your host parents want you to enjoy your stay, but like any natural parents, they may not have time or money to travel often.

You can have fun in your new surroundings. This is a wonderful opportunity to see and learn in another country and another culture. Travel is not the objective.

Immerse yourself in the ‘every day’ things. This is what the cultural experience is all about! Simply taking a walk around town to look at the buildings may provide an interesting surprise for you!

## **More on Travel**

You are not permitted to travel outside the Rotary District, except when being taken by a Rotarian, a Rotary host family or an adult person pre-approved by Rotary.

Trips organized through school and approved by the Rotary club and host family are permissible.

Rotary-sponsored functions are permissible – and sometimes expected. If you plan to participate in a Rotary-approved student tour, then you are responsible for the costs involved.

You must not travel outside your city of residence alone

You are not permitted to take ‘road trips’ with friends.

You must not hitch hike at any time.

You must not phone or write to any other Rotary club and ask to be hosted.

Rotary exchange students can not travel in aircraft other than a scheduled flight on a recognized airline.

If you have an opportunity to travel, we ask that you show sensitivity to other exchange students who may not have the same opportunity. It’s OK to share your trip but not to boast.

At the end of an exchange, students are to travel home **by the most direct route** unless being met by natural parents in your host city. **If you are returning home through the Rotary program – you cannot make any stopovers or side trips along the way.**



If parents wish to pick you up at the end of exchange you may do some traveling from there. The Club YEO and District Chair must be informed. You must be aware of your visa expiration date. In this case, Rotary is no longer responsible for you at the time that your natural parents arrive. Your exchange will officially end....and you are then considered a “tourist” overseas. You should check on whether your health insurance coverage will still apply while you are traveling at the end of the year.

Other relatives may pick students up only with Rotary approval and written permission from natural parents.

Any exceptions to travel rules must have written and signed approval of student’s natural parents, Host District YE Chair, Host Club and Host Family.

Rotary’s greatest concern is for student safety. Please respect the precautions that have been established. You might know of other programs in which students have more freedom to do as they wish. The Rotary Program, however, is oriented to structure and a student’s best interests are in mind at all times.

If you were to explore the pros and cons of Rotary and other programs, you will likely discover that Rotary has a powerful reputation for producing young adults who go on to become leaders in their home communities and countries. We feel very secure with the structure and guidelines we have established for International Youth Exchange.

### **How To Arrange Special Travel Approval**

1. First obtain permission from the Rotary YEO
2. Students and YEO will be required to provide this information to the District:
  - A. Who they will travel with (must be accompanied by adults)
  - B. What they are doing (purpose of the trip)
  - C. Where they are going (destination address and phone number)
  - D. When they will travel (beginning and ending dates)
  - E. An emergency phone number during travels
  - F. ALL additional information that will describe their plans

**IF CROSSING AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER, YOU MAY NEED SPECIAL DOCUMENTS. You will get those from the HOST DISTRICT CHAIRMAN.**



## ***Communications with Friends & Family at Home***

### **Computer and Internet**

Discuss with your host family and/or teacher what the guidelines are for using the computer and what the guidelines are for using the internet. Be sure you understand time limits.

When setting up an email account, it is most helpful during the exchange year to include your name in the address as it makes it easier for people to identify you immediately.

It may be important that you check your email regularly to be sure you receive any announcements from your exchange coordinators. For example, the Inbound Coordinator may use email to send you the questions for your monthly report.

Other than basic responsibilities, the computer and use of the internet should be kept at a MINIMUM. Chat rooms are convenient but should be used for short visits only. Naturally you want to tell friends and family at home all that's happening the first weeks of your exchange but you will adjust faster and easier if you write down your experiences in a journal. If you are chatting with old friends and parents all the time, you haven't really left home yet.

### **Cell Phones**

Some host families may provide you with a cell phone for the convenience of the family, though they are not expected to provide you with a cell phone. The cell phone must go back to the host parents when students move to another family. The next family will set their own rules for cell phones.

If a host family gives you a cell phone as a gift, you must return it when you move to the next family unless your next host family and your YEO gives approval for you to keep it.

If you want to purchase your own cell phone, check with your Rotary officer on what is considered 'acceptable use' policies in your host district. It can easily interfere with your adjustment.

Be sure to check with your school as to rules for cell phones. Many schools prohibit the use of cell phones on premises.

### **Visits from Natural Parents**

Your host district will have restrictions on parent visits. If your parents intend to visit you while you are abroad, you must check with your district officer about their specific guidelines. At the very least, your parents can not visit you until near the end of your year (usually April or later). Family visits for our inbound students are not allowed during holiday times. It is of great cultural significance for a student to experience holidays with their host culture...and it is also very meaningful for the host country and host families to share these celebrations with their "adopted" son or daughter.

It is our experience that students regularly suffer severe culture shock for a second time after parents depart for home and leave the student behind to finish the year. It is most stressful for the student who must re-experience the pain of separation. However, host families and youth exchange officers are also exhausted with effort to help these students who are suffering – because the emotional changes will include anger, resentment, withdrawal and deep sadness....(similar to the stages of grief).

**PARENTS: If you are tempted to 'bend' or break this rule** –remind yourself that you are going to hurt your son or daughter by a mid-year visit. We are very sincere and firm in this opinion. You will risk ending your child's exchange year by breaking this rule.

# Health & Medical Issues

## ***Insurance***

All CSRYE exchange students are covered by a medical/accident insurance policy which meets Rotary International standards. The premium is paid for out of your program fees. Certain Districts we exchange with require students they host to purchase domestic (host country) insurance.

There are certain limitations and deductibles with all insurance policies. Students are responsible for any medical fees not covered by the insurance. Insurance coverage provided through CSRYE is effective from your date of departure to your date of return home. Instructions for filing a claim are available Online at [www.csrye.org](http://www.csrye.org)

Your Rotary policy has some unique coverage that you may find important. Some examples include:

1. A worldwide travel assistance hotline. Carry this information on you while you are traveling. You might need it if you are delayed in a foreign airport with nobody to help you.
2. Reimbursement for airfare for a parent to join you if you are hospitalized and need your family's assistance while overseas.
3. Reimbursement for emergency return fees, should it be necessary to return home due to a family emergency.

## ***Vaccinations/Immunizations***

Most countries require you to carry proof of your vaccination record with your essential papers. Advice on which vaccines you should have can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Travel Pages on the internet. They have different sections that address particular regions around the world, and lists of the countries that are included in each region. Each travel page summary suggests which vaccinations to boost, which new vaccinations to have and which medications to carry. Some vaccines must be taken several weeks before departure. Consult with your physician SOON. [www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm)

The CDC is responsible for pointing out ALL the potential risks, however remote, and they also offer sound advice for avoiding risks. The most frequently reported illness is 'traveler's diarrhea' and there is a special section on 'Food and Water' that discusses this.

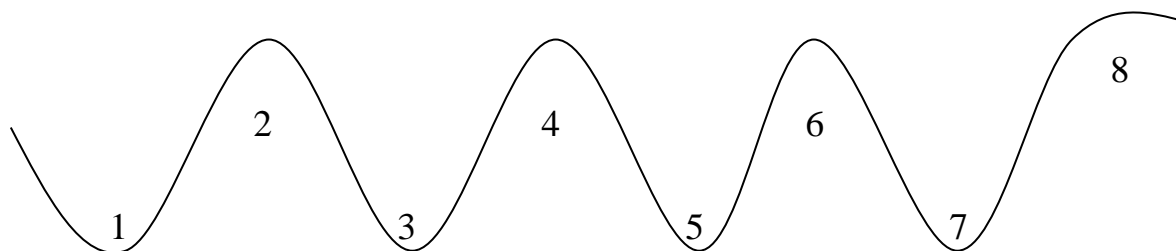
## ***Medical Records***

You should ask your physician for a new prescription for medications you must take that can be filled in your host country. If you wear glasses, a copy of your lens prescription, or even a spare set of glasses, can help avoid a big problem in the event your glasses are lost or broken.

## ***Make a Plan for Emergencies***

Prior to departure, discuss family wishes in the event that there is an emergency during your year abroad – such as illness or death in the family. You should try to anticipate your wishes and those of your family if you are confronted with a situation in which your early return home is a consideration. There have been occasions when a student has had to be told by phone of a death of a friend or family member, though they are not necessarily expected to come home. Most often, when a student is called home for a family emergency, it is not an option to return to your host country. Any emergency that causes you to leave should be very serious.

# The Exchange Cycle



## **1. Application Anxiety**

## **2. Selection/Arrival Fascination**

*Elation  
Expectation*

## **3. Initial Culture Shock: 1-6 Months**

*Novelty wears off*

*Characteristics:*

*Sleeping Habits*

*Disorientation*

*Language difficulties*

*Fatigue (Mental/Physical)*

*Eating*

## **4. Surface Adjustments**

*After initial "down"*

*Settle in:*

*Language improves*

*Navigate culture*

*Friends*

*Social Life*

## **5. Mental Isolation**

*Frustration increases*

*New sense of isolation*

*Boredom*

*Lack of motivation*

*Unresolved problems*

*Language problems*

## **6. Integration/Acceptance**

*Begin to examine society*

*Accept surroundings/self*

## **7. Return Anxiety**

*Preparation for departure*

*Realize changes*

*Desire to stay*

*Results:*

*Confusion/Pain*

*Breaking of bonds*

*No promise of renewal in future*

## **8. Shock/Reintegration**

*Contrast of old and new*

*Family/friends*

*Difficulty to accept change*

*Not the center of attention*

*Others not interested in experience details*

*Reorientation*

***Exchange Student Jitters:***  
**STRESS – It's Time To Board The Plane!**

You have made the preparations, studied the culture and language, attended the orientations, packed your bags and the day of departure is upon you. Your emotions are peaking and the questions in the back of your mind are forcing themselves out and giving you that queasy feeling in the pit of your stomach. What is it? The experts call it **“travel stress”**.

You have landed in your host country, met your family, traveled to your “home”, unpacked in your “new” bedroom and you may not feel just right. You may feel some anxiety, you’re tired and may assume it’s jet lag. What is it? The experts call it **“travel stress”**.

If you recognize the symptoms, you can deal with them. Jet lag is real and can take a toll on you. Your biological clock has been upset. Day is night and night is day. Your body hormones may also be out of balance.

Emotionally, whether you realize it or not, (and you probably don’t) you are under a lot of stress. You have left your family, friends and familiar surroundings behind you. You may have been apprehensive about the flight, your personal safety, will you be met, will you be accepted, can you cope with the new culture, etc. Some of us are secure, some insecure, with most of us in the middle. You may be worried about being able to eat the food, learn the language, adjust to no car, make new friends, attend a new school, how will you get around with no car, adjust to different social and economic standards, accept more restrictive discipline, where is the mall.

Not knowing what to expect next may throw you off balance. All in all, you have a suitcase full of emotionally stressful issues.

Often the jet lag and stress results in physical ailments or discomfort. Indicators include feelings of anxiety, insecurity and fear. You may have trouble sleeping, or you may be extraordinarily tired and sleep for hours. Women often have irregular menstrual cycles. Upset stomach, light headedness, bowel upsets, headache, crying jags or a combination of these is not uncommon. You may find yourself continually thinking of home and homesickness sets in. It’s all natural and to be expected. The question is how are you going to deal with this unwanted baggage that seems to have accompanied you. Sure, you remember those Rotarians telling you about travel stress, but you only half listened and thought they were exaggerating for effect. But now you’re thinking, maybe they were right. And so now that you have it, that “Travel Stress” thing, let’s deal with it.

## ***Culture Shock***

Most people who move to a new culture experience a series of emotional ups and downs while they are living there, especially during the early months when most major adjustments are taking place. The emotional low points that go along with adaptation to a new culture may cause you some anxiety. These 'down periods' are an indication that you are experiencing culture shock.

Culture shock is a reaction most people feel when they are cut off from familiar ways of communication and interaction with others.

Culture shock is not always easy to notice. It usually builds up slowly, challenging a person's sub-conscious belief that the way they have always done things in their homeland is the 'right way' to do things.

**Common symptoms of culture shock include:**

- **Over eating**
- **Boredom**
- **Easily Upset**
- **Isolation**
- **Homesickness**
- **Sleeping too much**
- **Idealizing Homeland**
- **Inability to Concentrate**
- **Unexpected Crying Spells**
- **Negative attitude toward foreign country**

Most people react to culture shock in any of three typical ways:

1. They try to make other people do things *their* way
2. They isolate themselves from the culture
3. They learn to adapt

The first two reactions are entirely normal and common, but in the long run they do not offer the opportunity to absorb more than just a small part of the new culture. In addition, the first two make it nearly impossible for you to be successful and can result in major adjustment problems.

**The third reaction is much more desirable. We try to encourage our students with the motto,  
"It's not right, it's not wrong, it's just different!"**

In order to get you on the right track when dealing with culture shock, we suggest the following:

- It is important that you recognize the symptoms.
- When you see the first signs, try to focus your energy in more positive directions.
- Get more involved in family activities, such as preparing the meal, walking the dog, raking the yard, washing the car, shopping for groceries, etc. It is important that you get involved and stay involved.
- Remember that your daily life will only get better!

We encourage students to limit their telephone calls home to no more than one or two a month and to limit e-mails. Frequent contact with family and friends back home can delay your adjustment. Your natural parents should be made aware of these suggested limitations. It is important to have their support for this, especially in the early months.

You will certainly have periods of homesickness, especially around special holidays. Plan to share some of your special celebrations with your host family. This can be a wonderful learning experience for everyone and will ease any loneliness you are feeling.

## ***MORE ON CULTURE SHOCK***

The culture shock stage begins roughly at the end of the first month and extends sometimes until the fourth month. Seasoned host families report that a student experiencing culture shock might:

- Dread going to school because classmates are ‘unfriendly’
- Lash out in anger because of an innocent remark at the dinner table; or make a retreat to the bedroom for hours.
- Long for family and friends back home who “really understand.”
- Withdraw at times, become irritable, ignore rules or exhibit unusual shyness.
- Describe confusing or threatening situations as “stupid” or “dumb.”
- Complain about feeling unloved or unjustly criticized.
- Escalate minor squabbles with other family members into standoffs.
- Find it difficult to hold normal conversations.

### ***Things You Can Do to Survive This Period***

Discuss the meaning of culture shock with your family and talk about your feelings. Remind yourself that culture shock behavior is normal. (Sometimes students think this only happens to “weak” or “immature” students). Remember these points:

- It’s OK to miss home and to feel sad. Sometimes talking about it helps the pain go away. So if you want to talk, go to your host family – or find a nearby friend.
- Culture shock is normal. It can be difficult to be away from home for a long period of time.
- Your host family can never take the place of your real family, but they care for you very much. You can depend on their support.
- Get out of your room and get active!
- Call or e-mail home less frequently. You might initially feel better after talking to family, but an hour later, you will feel more homesick.
- Limit e-mailing or calling international friends no more than twice a month.

### ***Serious Warning Signs***

#### ***You may need to ask for help!***

- Excessive sleeping or insomnia
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Prolonged acute depression
- Constantly feeling sick and/or feeling like you do not want to go to school
- Excessive calls or e-mail home
- Excessive calls or e-mail from parents
- Perpetual Feelings of anger towards others
- Serious problems with your host family
- Beginning to feel you **MUST** go home
- Suicidal thoughts, feelings or actions.

***Please talk to a trusted adult near you IMMEDIATELY!***

# Survival Guide

## Finance Tips:

You and your parents should check with your bank about setting up an international credit card or ATM debit card (such as VISA), which will provide you with an easy and inexpensive way to deposit funds here and withdraw funds in your host country without incurring interest charges or high transfer fees. Having this card will mean you will not need to travel with a large amount of money. Travelers Checks may also be investigated, especially as a source of “emergency money” or to provide your host club or district with the Emergency Fund that they may require. Take extra precautions to protect credit cards, Travelers Checks, and cash from theft, especially when traveling, and make sure you and your parents know what to do in the event you lose these items.

Become familiar with the currency of your host country and understand the “exchange rate” for conversion to your home currency. The buying power of your dollar will vary, and costs for needed items may be significantly different than what you consider as ‘the norm’. Before you leave, you and your parents should establish a budget for your spending money, and you should follow that budget carefully so that you don’t run out of money before you run out of exchange year.

If you take part in any alternative education program, you may have to pay those costs yourself. School books may or may not be provided free. You will likely have to buy notebooks, pens, pencils etc. You may also have to wear a school uniform.

Preparing Yourself

Continued

## Learning Your Target Language

With few exceptions, you will all be hosted in a country where the native language is not English. **YOU must make a conscientious, disciplined effort to learn your host country’s language as quickly as possible.** Speaking and understanding the language is the key to acceptance in any country, even in countries where English is a commonly-learned “foreign language”.

There are several things you can do to learn the language: get language tapes and begin now; enroll in language classes; reading out loud. You learn a language one word at a time, so try not to become overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge. Set small, achievable goals.

## Luggage

Luggage selection and packing requires good planning. Most international airlines have strict rules for checked and carry-on luggage. Find out from our travel agent the specific requirements. You may be traveling during your exchange year, very possibly by train or bus, and smaller, lightweight luggage may be more appropriate for those shorter trips.

## Pack Selectively

Don’t overload! Don’t run out and go shopping for new clothes prior to your departure either. In most countries, you will want to make some clothing purchases to meet the climate or the styles of the area. Your style and size will likely change quickly when you reach your destination.



## Make Contact With Host Club And Host Family

As soon as you are notified of the name of the Rotary club that will host you, you should write to the host club counselor and first host family, giving them information about you, including your interests. Include a photo of yourself, especially if you have changed your appearance at all from your application photo. You should use this letter as an opportunity to ask about school, school clothing/uniforms, climate, activities, etc. Every opportunity should be taken to exchange correspondence with the host family before departing, as this helps tremendously in the initial settling-in period in a new environment.

## Gifts

You should be thinking about gift items for host families and people who will be your host for weekends and other special visits. The gifts need not be expensive, but should be thoughtful and something distinctly American/Canadian, preferably local to your community.

## Gift Suggestions

- *Stamps, stamp pins*
- *Balloons, specialty types (not inflated!)*
- *T-shirts, all kinds*
- *Notepaper with regional art scenes, etc.*
- *Picture post cards*
- *Craft show items*
- *Tapes or CDs of music (make your own)*
- *Flags, buttons, pins*
- *Jacket patches – national, regional, local*
- *Books or magazines*
- *Christmas stockings and ornaments*
- *Calendars with cultural scenes*
- *Commemorative spoons, plates, etc.*
- *Small children's toys*
- *Bumper stickers*
- *Posters*
- *Coins*
- *Advertising and commercial freebies (from local industry, chamber of commerce)*
- *Calendar towels*
- *Items from locally focused industries*
- *Items from local tourist locations*
- *Sports logo items*
- *Playing cards with cultural scenes*

*And especially ...*

- *Banners from your sponsoring Rotary Club*

You should have a special present to give to each of your host families soon after you arrive. Also remember birthdays and holiday presents for all the members of your host family. You don't necessarily need to take all such gifts with you when you leave home (and often will need time to learn what will make a great gift for members of your host family), and parents back home can help with this. These gifts need not be expensive, but instead selected and given with warm thoughtfulness.



# Survival Guide

## ***Your Host Families***

**Rotary Youth Exchange is an entirely volunteer program.** Families volunteer to host a Rotary exchange student – and must be approved by the Host Club. All are hosting because they want to. Families often make special arrangements to have you in their home. A host brother or sister may have temporarily given up their room or agreed to share their space

Clubs do not provide financial support to host families.

**You should expect to be treated as a family member.** Honor the household rules and make your best effort to adapt to their lifestyle and show respect. Be flexible and understanding. If you do not understand what is expected of you – don't be afraid to ask. You are not a guest. For the moment this is *your* family.

The first few weeks may be difficult, depending on how different things are. You may be homesick. This is normal and we do expect our host parents to be as understanding as possible. But, most of the problems that arise in the youth exchange program are due to the student being unwilling to adapt to their new environment. It is important that you understand how to compromise.

The most important person in your exchange will probably be your first host mom. Seek her advice and listen to what she has to say. What you learn from your first host family will be the foundation for your relationship with others. She is also the one that will be asked the most questions about you.

Most host clubs will have two or three families planned for your stay. There are 3 reasons for this:

1. To give you an opportunity to experience several different family lifestyles
2. To give more than one family the opportunity to know you
3. To spread the cost of supporting you

If you have developed a good bond, it is sometimes difficult to change host families. Every family is different and one may be more 'comfortable' for you than others. Try not to make comparisons and take time to get to know your second and third families.

Be respectful when you speak about your families to others. Gossip travels quickly and it is easy to cause hurt feelings. Try to appreciate whatever your host families do for you.

## ***Sample Questions to Ask Your Host Family***

In general, ask the questions that you feel are the most important the first night, and then ask the other questions over the next few days. Remember, when in doubt, ask, and always try to be open and honest with your host family and your Rotary YEO. Good communication is essential for a successful exchange.

1. What do I call you?
2. What am I expected to do daily, other than make my bed, always keep my room tidy, and clean the bathroom every time I use it?
3. What is the procedure for dirty clothes?
4. Where do I keep clothes until wash day?
5. Should I wash my own clothes and underclothes?
6. Should I iron my own clothes?
7. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine at any time?
8. When is a convenient time for me to use the shower/bath (a.m. or p.m.)?
9. Where may I keep my toiletries?
10. May I use the family's bathroom toiletries (toothpaste, soap, etc.) or am I responsible for purchasing my own?
11. What time will meals be served?
12. What can I do to assist at mealtimes (help prepare meals, set the table, wash dishes, empty garbage)?
13. May I help myself to food and drink any time or should I ask first?
14. What areas of the house are strictly private (parent's bedroom, study/office)?
15. May I put pictures or posters in my room?
16. May I rearrange my bedroom?
17. What are your rules for me with regard to alcohol and smoking?
18. Where can I store my suitcases?
19. What time must I get up (on weekdays, on weekends)?
20. What time must I go to bed (on school nights, on weekends)?
21. What are the rules for going out at night and at what time must I be home? Can exceptions be made if I ask in advance?
22. May I have friends spend the night or visit during the day?

Sample questions to ask your host family  
Continued

23. What are the rules about me using the telephone? Must I ask first?
24. May my friends call me?
25. May I call my friends?
26. May I make long-distance calls?
27. How do you want me to keep track of the costs of my telephone calls?
28. What is the procedure for mailing letters? What address do I use for my incoming mail?
29. Do you have any dislikes, such as chewing gum, wearing a hat or curlers at the table, loud rock music or smoking?
30. Do my host brothers and sisters have any dislikes?
31. What are the dates of your birthdays?
32. What are the transportation arrangements (car, bus, bike, walking, etc.)?
33. May I use the stereo, TV, computer, etc. at any time? What are the rules for computer and internet use?
34. What are the rules about attending religious services?
35. Would you like me to phone home if I will be more than 30 minutes late?
36. When we go out as a family, should I pay for my own entrance fee, meals, etc.?
37. What arrangements should I make for school lunch? Does the Rotary club pay for my lunch?
38. Does the Rotary club pay my cost of travel to school?
39. Am I to attend Rotary club meetings? If yes, how will I get there?
40. What else can I do around the house (yard work, help clean, babysit)?
41. Please tell me how to interact with the house servants (where applicable).
42. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

## ***Tough Questions That May Be Asked of You***

Many exchange students report being put "on the spot" by their peers, host parents, family members, and/or Rotarians during their year when they are asked questions about home country politics, environment, economy, society, etc.. You can be caught off guard.

It is your responsibility as a Youth Exchange "ambassador" to be knowledgeable of what is "going on at home". Read a variety of newspapers, magazines, watch a variety of news channels, etc. Information is available at school and community libraries and on the Internet.

Your hosts and others you meet abroad have an honest interest in knowing and learning more about your home country. They rarely ask questions to criticize, make you uncomfortable or to test you (though that also may be your impression if you are not prepared).

These questions are meant to start you thinking and learning about your culture BEFORE you go. They represent actual questions that our prior students have been asked while overseas.

### **The Questions:**

1. What is your family life like? Is it true that your mother rules the house and that you never eat together as a family? What are your family values?
2. Why do you put old people in nursing homes rather than take care of them at home like we do?
3. Are Americans really happy? All we see on TV and in your movies is divorce, husbands and wives cheating on each other, killing and crime, drugs, cults. Is it really not safe to walk downtown at night?
4. Why do the different races all distrust and hate one another? Why do the white people treat the blacks so badly? Why do you keep the Indians on reservations in such poverty?
5. Your election is coming up. Tell us a little about each of the candidates.
6. Did you read about our country before you came? Tell me some of the things you learned about our government and how we handle health care. What are some things you'd like to know more about?
7. We are going to take you to our capital next weekend. Can you tell me anything about it?
8. What's your school like? You've been here a few months now; compare your school with ours. Which one do you like better? We have been told that our schools are more difficult because we give our students more responsibility to learn. You have to attend but you don't have any national exam to get into university like we do. What do you think?
9. Your citizens seem to waste a lot of energy and we have to pay more for gas and oil because you waste it. You all drive big cars, have lots of appliances, live in your own homes, and you don't seem to care about the rest of us on a day to day basis. How would you change things to make your citizens more energy conscious?
10. What is the Peace Corps? What do they do nowadays? Are they really just young people trained to be government agents and spies?
11. And, currently, anything and everything about Iraq, Afghanistan, the War on Terrorism, North Korea, the Middle East, etc., etc., etc.

## **Responding:**

There are many more questions that may be asked. In addition to being knowledgeable, you also need to consider how best to respond when asked. The following are a few recommendations to help you avoid confrontation and argument. Remember, no one ever really wins an argument. Avoid getting drawn into one.

Start out your response with "I'm not sure I understand your question but I think..." " ...Yes, but I think..." " ...you may be right, but another way to look at it is..... ;"

Avoid these discussions when you are in a hurry. You need time to consider your responses.

Use examples whenever you can, as they help to illustrate a point and usually are more easily understood, especially when there is a language barrier

Remind others that what they see and hear on TV, radio and in the newspapers may be a distortion, just the same as what we see may be a distortion of their country, and that both of you need to learn from each other what the truth is from your respective perceptions.

Give your questioners time to explain themselves and try to have an open discussion. Remember that each of your cultures and backgrounds are DIFFERENT and neither is right or wrong.

## ***Seven Lessons We Can Learn In Intercultural Communications***

Adapted from 'Figuring Foreigners Out' by Craig Storti

"We learn from experience that not everything which is incredible is untrue"

-Cardinal DeRetz

1. When you go abroad, or meet people from abroad, try to entertain the notion that they might be very different from you. If it turns out they aren't, all the better. If it turns out they are, score one for your side.
2. What you think of as 'normal human behavior' may only be cultural. Before you project your 'norms' onto the human race, consider that you might be wrong.
3. Familiar behaviors may have different meanings. The same behavior – saying 'yes' for example – can exist in different cultures and not mean the same thing. Just because you've recognized a given behavior, don't assume, therefore, that you have understood it.
4. Don't assume that what you meant is what was understood. Check for signs that the other person did or did not understand you.
5. Don't assume that what you understood is what was meant.
6. You don't have to like or accept 'different' behavior, but you should try to understand where it comes from.
7. Most people do behave rationally. You just have to discover the rationale.

## ***Tips on Preparing Your Presentation***

### **Organize Your Thoughts**

List topics you want to include.

Ask yourself “What would I want to know about?”

Outline a few items from each topic

Choose items you know well

Choose items you like.

Write a note card about each topic

Just the main points – not a word for word speech

Speak from your experiences

Stories enrich the understanding

Best speeches convey emotion or passion about your subject

### **Practice #1**

Choose a subject

Stand and talk for two minutes about:

Something you like to eat

A television program you watch

A movie you have seen recently

Someone you like or admire

### **Practice #2**

Talk about how you felt when you found out which country you were going to.

Immediate reaction of you and your family

Who did you tell and why?

Research you did next

What was your biggest fear?

### **Prepare Your Visuals**

Consider creating a short and long version in Power Point

Include photos for interest

Get photos from your local Rotary Club

Depict lifestyle, events that can be described

Verify that similar technology exists at your destination

Videos are nice – but be careful of the technology

Video formats are not standard worldwide

Send a video or DVD to your host family to see if they can read it

DON'T let the video tell your story

## Tips on Preparing Your Presentation Continued

### **Get Your Audience Involved**

Best speakers are memorable because the audience participated and had fun  
Teach a phrase or a song  
Prepare a favorite food or snack  
Ask for questions  
    It's OK if you don't know the answer

### **Have Fun**

Try something different  
Wear a costume  
Play native music or your favorite song

*\*Consult with your host club's exchange officer for guidance on what is acceptable in their culture*

Smile – Make it Natural!

### **Other Speaking Details**

Breathe  
Let go of the podium  
DO speak into the microphone  
Speak slowly. Enunciate distinctly  
Get assistance with translation if you do not speak the language well.  
Speak so the person in the back of the room can hear you  
Look around the room at different people

### **Practice BEFORE you go**

Give your presentation to your HOME Rotary Club before you leave – or to a smaller group of Rotarians or other exchange students

Ask for ways to improve your presentation

Be willing and ready to accept advice

### **Your Impact**

Youth Exchange presentations enhance Rotary Clubs and Rotarians  
Your Message promotes World Peace  
Your Message encourages the club to continue to support exchange  
Your expression of Thanks is remembered



# ***The Twelve Commandments Of Youth Exchange***

- 1. Adapt or fail**
- 2. Ask or remain ignorant**
- 3. Smile at every opportunity**
- 4. Be lively and active**
- 5. Be punctual**
- 6. Plan ahead**
- 7. Be considerate of your hosts**
- 8. Give 100% of yourself and expect nothing in return.**
- 9. Maintain a neat appearance and keep your surroundings orderly**
- 10. Strive to earn the respect of others**
- 11. Learn and share**
- 12. Say 'No' when it is appropriate**

## **Dealing with it -**

First, recognize it for what it is and remind yourself that 10,000 other exchange students are probably in the same boat. Remember, it is temporary and can be overcome.

Start preparing a day or two before you leave and on the plane and in the car on the way to your host family's home.

- Go to bed earlier if you will be traveling east and later if traveling west to begin your body's internal clock adjustments.
- Avoid alcohol, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers prior to departure.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and shoes. To help prevent your feet from swelling, get up and walk around the plane occasionally. Massage your limbs, neck and shoulder muscles.
- Avoid stimulants such as tea, coffee and other caffeine products before and during the flight and do not smoke.
- Drink plenty of non-carbonated beverages such as water or juice on the flight to keep yourself well hydrated. This helps overcome the drying effect and the poor quality of the recirculated air.
- Practice deep breathing exercises to get added oxygen. Breathe in through your nose to expand your diaphragm, hold it for 3 seconds, exhale through your mouth. Repeat 10-15 times every hour or so.

Once you've arrived, establish a regimen and daily schedule for your new environment. It's helpful to exercise, whether you've done so at home or not. Walk, jog or run around your new neighborhood. Learning all the new things, especially language is tiring. A nap after school and time to relax is often helpful. Take some time to read, write in your journal or home, listen to music or take some time to get to know your host family. Consciously establish a day and weekly routine to keep yourself busy, to give your days order and to help you relax.

The time it takes to adjust to your new surroundings will vary with every individual. The initial adjustment may take some people a few days while others will be up and ready to go in 24-48 hours. Realize that it takes time. Once the initial excitement wears off, you may experience a reoccurrence. But you can take control and get back on an even keel. Try not to dwell on your situation. Avoid worrying or putting unrealistic expectations on yourself such as "I will beat this feeling by tomorrow". This can cause things to get worse. Let nature take its course.

## **Summary -**

Travel stress is real and can be successfully dealt with. Travel stress includes jet lag, emotional and physical manifestations. Support is available, within yourself, your host family, Rotary Club members, sponsoring district Country Counselor.

## ***Thriving – Not Just Surviving***

### **Approaching an Intercultural Experience Positively**

#### **Make Sure You Are Physically and Emotionally Prepared**

**Being immersed in a new culture takes a lot of energy.** Make sure you get enough rest so you can get up in the mornings with the rest of your host family.

**Pay Attention to your exercise and healthy eating habits and follow a routine that works for you. Expect to gain weight** but don't be fussy when it comes to food. It is the change in environment and food preparation practices that cause the weight gain. For the duration of your exchange, experience the food variety and enjoy what is new and different. When you return at the end of the exchange year, any weight gain you suffered will probably come off easily.

**If you become ill – even if it's only a sore throat - tell your host parents immediately.**

#### **Work to Remain Positive and Take Responsibility For Your Words and Actions**

The intercultural writer, Margaret Pusch, notes that the three skills critical to being effective in an overseas experience are:

- The ability to manage psychological stress
- The ability to communicate effectively
- The ability to establish interpersonal relationships

“Cross-cultural experience is stressful and cultural ‘fatigue’ does occur: in fact it is argued that it is only with this fatigue that one is receptive to understanding and accepting cultural differences.” (Ken House D5060) But, when that happens, you may surprise yourself with your own negative behaviors. Manage those feelings and keep them under control.

You should realize that the subconscious “values” and “assumptions” which guide our thinking and actions are unmistakably “North American.” Understanding the basis of our culture is a starting point for understanding another culture.

**There is a common saying among Youth Exchange Volunteers:**

***Nothing is better or worse – just different!***

## ***Writing Home***

**Students: You may be having fun – but your parents NEED to hear about it, too!**

Because you have probably always lived at home, it is unlikely that you have ever considered writing letters to your family. However, it is a blessing that your family will enjoy during this exchange and, again, when you begin your college years and perhaps move away from home in adult life.

The telephone, e-mail and internet chats are “convenient” alternatives – but most certainly are less personal and less comforting. A personal – handwritten letter – is priceless. (Tell your parents the same thing...they should write to you with pen and paper.)

**Write regularly – make them detailed.** Besides the comfort it provides to your family – it will also be a permanent memory of detail that you are definitely going to forget as the months and years pass by. When you return home – your parents and relatives may be willing to return your letters to your care – in order to add to your memory book.

A variation of this advice: Write a daily journal on letter paper – instead of in a book. Note the dates and number the pages carefully. Every week or two – mail the letters home, along with photos or clippings. Your family can enjoy the exchange at a distance – and when you return home – you can place the letters in a bound journal or scrapbook.

Another former student – Karen Connelly – spent 1986 as an exchange student in Thailand at the age of 17. In 1993, she published “Touch The Dragon – a Thai Journal”. Her book won the prestigious Governor General’s Award for Non-Fiction in Canada. In 1994, it reached #1 on Canada’s Best Seller’s Non-Fiction List. Her book was later appeared in The Readers Digest and in a television series.

OK – you may not publish your own personal journal.....then again, maybe you will. But if you record nothing more than digital pictures or some rolls of film, you will regret it later. So.....PROMISE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY THAT YOU WILL WRITE REGULARLY!

Of course, you should call home when you arrive at your destination and assure your parents that you are safe. Use the telephone to say ‘happy birthday’ to family members – or to OCCASIONALLY hear their voices. But definitely write about the things that you wish to remember.

## *Miscellaneous Tips for Your Year*

1. Attend as many meetings of your host Rotary Club as possible. Attend their functions; expect to help with events. If Rotary meetings conflict with personal plans, the Rotary function must take precedence. Always accept personal invitations from Rotarians before visiting with friends.
2. Dress neatly and appropriately, especially for Rotary functions (wear your Rotary jacket!)
3. Greetings and farewells are very important in all countries. Acknowledge everyone when you arrive or leave (on a daily basis.) You will find differences in customs between your peers, your host families, and other social groups. For instance, teens often simply speak a greeting (“Hi” or “Hey”); families often hug or pat a shoulder. At Rotary meetings most people will shake your hand.
4. Ask your host family to tell you if you do anything which they see as inappropriate or objectionable. You might offend someone with a gesture or a phrase that means something entirely different in your home culture as it does here.
5. Use good language at all times, in order not to offend anyone. Swearing and telling dirty jokes does not enhance your own or your country’s image.
6. Use of the bathroom is an area of potential misunderstanding. Make sure your use of it fits in with the rest of your host family. If you take lengthy showers, there may not be hot water for others.
7. If you become ill – even if it’s only a sore throat – tell your host parents immediately. Always consult your host family before visiting a doctor.
8. Saying “thank you” is very important in most cultures. Make sure you thank people who take you places and do things for you. A “thank-you” note may be expected- at the very least it is especially appreciated.
9. You may or may not be expected to attend church with your host family. Try to fit in with what their expectations are and maintain an attitude of respect towards religious practices in your host families. Be sure to share your religious expectations with them; they will appreciate and try to accommodate you.
10. By using appropriate manners and behaviors in your host family, you will make it easier for your host parents to be good hosts. Consider the situation from their point of view whenever you can.
11. Maintain a wide circle of friends of all ages. This will ensure that you learn as much as you can about your new culture.
12. You will probably gain weight! Don’t be fussy when it comes to food – it doesn’t matter. It is the change in environment and food preparation that causes the weight gain. Dare to try the foods and enjoy what is new and different about them. You will enjoy the experience and you can rest assured that when you return home at the end of the exchange year, any weight gain you suffered will come off easily.
13. You may accumulate a lot of souvenirs during your exchange year. Plan on sending small boxes home by regular mail, in order to avoid expensive overweight charges on your return flight home. Check with your airline to determine what your luggage weight limits are; they are very strict. Also, be informed about customs regulations – they are changing almost daily. If you are carrying things home with you, list all purchases and pack them together to expedite your time spent in customs.

“If it is to be – it is up to me.”

# The Reports

## ***Monthly Report to Your Host District***

Your host district is required to keep a record of your exchange activities during the year. They must have a monthly report from you in order to accomplish this. Your reports are due on the last day of every month and then a final report is due a few days before you return home.

If you can make the time, please do send postcards and letters, newspaper clippings and e-mails about your experiences. Those are always fun to get and share with other Rotarians.

Near the end of the year, please be certain that you communicate your return plans; the date you are leaving and your travel itinerary.

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### **REPORT GUIDE**

This report covers the months of: \*\*\*

Include: Your Name / Name of Host Rotary Club      YEO's Name and Phone Number  
Host Family's Name/ Phone # / Address      Your E-mail address (if changed):

Tell us about your life here. These are some ideas of the things we want to hear about:

1. What you are doing in school: new subjects, clubs, sports, and friends
2. Your Rotary activities: meetings attended, speaking, travel to other clubs, Rotarians I've met.
3. My relationship with my counselor, (are you getting regular contact with him/her?)
4. Is your host club taking the time to know you?
5. Your personal experiences: Have you had any illnesses, problems with host families, problems in school. What solutions have you found?
6. Your social activities: Have you gone to any social events, parties, dances, theatres?
7. Travels?
8. Visits with other exchange students?
9. Church activities?
10. What are you learning? What do you like here? What don't you like here?
11. Include newspaper articles about yourself.

## ***Reports to Your Sponsor District***

E-Mail or Write to your District Outbound Coordinator OR your District Chair, as you have been instructed.

## ***Change of Host Family***

Keep us updated on where you are living.

1. For Your DISTRICT: A note by e-mail is sufficient – but be sure to include the Name, address and contact phone numbers of your new host home. We need this information in case of an emergency.
2. For Central States Multi-District: Go online to our website – [www.csrye.org](http://www.csrye.org) Complete the change of address form. We need this information for mandatory reporting to Rotary International and \*Your Host Country Government.

*\*Students placed in the USA only. The Canadian Government does not currently require updates from us.*

# Final Departure Checklist

## *Are You Really Ready To Go?*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Do you have your passport and visa?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Do you have your travel plans completed? Are your airline tickets for Round trip airfare, and do you have an “Open Return” or option to reschedule?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Have you corresponded with your first host family and your host Rotary club? Have you provided them with your departure and arrival information?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What language preparations have you made? Do you have a dictionary for your new language? Can you introduce yourself in your new language? Can you ask for directions, pronounce your host family’s name, and ask “where is the bathroom”?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Do you have 35 mm color slides and a photo album with 20-30 good pictures of you, your family, your home, your school, your town, and interesting places you have visited? Have you rehearsed for making a presentation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Have you made arrangements with your parents for transferring money to you, and have you established a budget? Have you become familiar with the monetary system and US \$ exchange rate for your country?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Have you thought about how you will handle the inevitable homesickness and loneliness that you will experience?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Have you selected appropriate gifts for your host families? Do you have some small tokens of appreciation to give those who invite you to their homes or to other events? Do you have thank you notes or postcards to say “Thank You”?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do you have your Rotary Business Cards and your Rotary Blazer?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do you have several Club Banners from your Sponsor Rotary club to present to the Rotary clubs you visit?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Have you done your “homework” on your host country, and have you become familiar with its culture, history, politics, geography, and where it is located?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Have you prepared yourself to ask the most important questions of your new host family upon your arrival in their home?

*If your answers to these questions are “yes” ----  
you are ready to go!*

# Returning Home

*Rotarians believe that the future of our world is in the hands of our young students.*

## **You are tomorrow's leaders.**

Your year will FLY by (although it may not seem so at the beginning.) When you return, you will have a wealth of experiences and a new language and culture to share with your homeland. PLEASE talk about the positive things you have learned to your family, your friends at school, and your sponsor Rotary club.

We believe that the more we send our young ambassadors abroad, the greater opportunities we will have to foster understanding between our cultures and people around the world. Your success will be our best advertisement. Through you and other Rotary students, we seek to make peace around the globe and you have now become an important factor in helping us to achieve those goals.

## **You are expected to return home PRIOR to Summer Conference.**

The Summer Conference event is an important opportunity to begin your re-adjustment back into your home culture. It won't be an easy transition, especially if you have had a good year abroad. We are regularly asked for 'special permission' to 'skip' summer conference as a Rebound student. This is always strongly discouraged, and for good reason. Your re-adjustment is as or more important than your cultural adjustment at the beginning of your year.

We like to remind our students that the end of your exchange year is NOT the end of anything. It is a new beginning. Right now, it might feel like the single most important thing in your life. But it is only the FIRST of many great things to come.

You will be making a transition from student to teacher. Summer Conference is your first assignment in your new role.

Make sure you contact us with your return flight information. We will be waiting for you!