



# ROTARY DISTRICT 5400 YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

**Type of Exchange:** Rotary Youth Exchange is a true one-to-one exchange. Rotary sends out an American student for every foreign student taken in exchange. The District 5400 Rotary youth exchange program is a long-term high school exchange program which lasts for an academic year. During your stay, you will attend high school and live with one or more host families — in some cases as many as three different families.

**Eligibility:** To qualify, Rotary requires that you be between the ages of **15 and 19\*** (*see below*), be in the upper third of your academic class, be of good character and emotionally stable and be in good physical health. Most importantly, you must be able and willing to be a good ambassador. Students who will graduate from their high school the same year they leave on their exchange are acceptable in the program so long as they meet the age requirements and are accepted by the host country.

*\*Districts worldwide develop their own rules, particularly regarding age. Some districts have more restrictive rules than Rotary requires. Remember, where there's a difference, the district rules apply to all students of that district. For example, a district might require a student to be no younger than 16 years of age to participate, or a district might require that students not be more than 18 years old at time of departure. You would have to fit within their guidelines to have an exchange in such districts. Flexibility is the key in those situations.*

Since some host countries require that the U.S. students still be attending school, if you will already have graduated from high school, it's important for you to be flexible in accepting a host country that doesn't have that limitation.

**Your Responsibilities:** All students are ambassadors of the Rotary club that sponsored them and of their country. You are expected to follow the Youth Exchange program rules, be open to new experiences, and strive to learn the language of the host country. So long as airline fares don't take a terrific jump, you and your own family will pay a "One Price Fee" a flat fee of approximately \$6,000. This includes round-trip air transportation, a Rotary blazer, personal cards, health insurance, language camps if required, administrative fees, incidental expenses and visa expense (except for students to Finland, France, Spain, Poland, Slovakia etc., who must make a personal visit to the consulate in San Francisco or Los Angeles – students must pay their own travel expense for such trips). You and your parents will be responsible for your passports plus clothing and additional spending money while abroad as well as an emergency fund for your use during the year.

**You Must Help Find Host Families:** This is a true exchange program which means that whichever country you are sent to, will send us a foreign exchange student in return. The local Rotary clubs will host those students and provide a Rotary counselor, school enrollment and a monthly stipend. Rotary requires multiple host families and you will be required to provide a list of three potential host families and submit this along with your country preference form. (If you are willing, you may list your own family as one of the possible host families.)

**Rotary Responsibilities:** Rotarians work to take care of the logistics of the exchange. As all youth exchanges are carried out at the local level, the local Rotary club and district will arrange school enrollment, tuition and other educational matters with the local secondary school. All program volunteers are devoted to the safety of the students, and the host club and district maintain policies and procedures to protect the students. Local Rotarians also introduce the student to the other club members and organize some social and cultural functions for the student to attend.

**Language Skills:** ALL COUNTRIES REQUIRE THAT STUDENTS MAKE A REAL EFFORT TO LEARN THE BASICS OF THEIR LANGUAGE BEFORE THEY ARRIVE. Furthermore France and Germany prefer students who have studied their language for a minimum of 2 years prior to arrival. Consequently, as soon as you know your host country, you will be required to develop an Intensive Language Learning Plan which will start immediately and continue until departure. You will be required to make your best effort to achieve functional fluency prior to departure.

**Interests and Personality:** You should have an inquiring mind, be actively interested in your own environment and be a generally well-rounded individual. You should be outgoing, well-adjusted and have a good family relationship.

**Personal Appearance and Habits:** If you smoke, you might not be approved for an exchange by District 5400, since Rotary International officially discourages smoking by exchange students. “Green hair, nose studs and similar unusual dress” are also actively discouraged by Rotary. Keep in mind that you will be an ambassador for Rotary and the United States and may be sent to very conservative countries and families.

**Vegetarians:** Some countries are reluctant to accept vegetarians, and we aren’t able to send vegetarians to Argentina for example. Applicants must provide full details of any dietary restrictions in their applications.

**Children of Rotarians:** Sons and daughters of Rotarians are eligible to be exchange students, although they won’t receive preferential treatment in the selection process. Their application will be considered equally with all other applications.

**Host Countries:** The Rotary Youth Exchange program offers the widest variety in international destinations when compared to other exchange programs. As a Rotary student, you will have an opportunity to exchange with countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

**Monthly Allowance:** For long-term exchanges, the hosting club or district appoints a Rotarian counselor and arranges a monthly allowance for the student. The Rotarian counselor maintains contact with the host family and the student throughout the exchange. While Rotary International offers support to local Rotary Youth Exchange programs through publications and suggested guidelines, Rotary districts and clubs run their programs independently of Rotary International. Therefore, each club or district program has its own specific rules for youth exchange participants to follow.

**Club Interviews:** You will need to fill out a preliminary application provided at the end of this brochure. Please submit it to your local Rotary club prior to September 15, 2015. Your local Rotary Club will evaluate your application and set up local interviews in late September. If approved by the local club, you will need to fill out the long application as specified below. Candidates approved at the local level will be invited to a second interview at the district level.

**District Interviews:** Once approved at the local level you will be contacted by District 5400 outbound coordinator with details concerning the long term application and dates for the final selection interviews. These interviews will take place November 8, 2014 in Buhl, Idaho. Participation is mandatory for students wishing to go on exchange and their parents. Prior to the District interview you must fill out and submit the long application. You will need to get a medical examination and dental examination as part of this application. While you're waiting for the club interview, please get your medical and dental appointments... don't delay!

[IMPORTANT: You need FOUR original copies of the long application all **SIGNATURES IN BLUE INK.**]

The District Youth Exchange Committee will interview all recommended applicants and their parents in November in Buhl. The District Committee may, for reasons which it considers valid or on the basis of assessment of a student at the outbound orientation, disapprove that student's application or suggest that student apply in a future year.

**Orientation:** In accordance with Rotary and State Department requirements, **Students, and at least one parent, MUST attend the outbound orientation** at the Rotary District Conference in Sun Valley. [*IMPORTANT: Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the student's exchange.*]

**Costs:** Rotary Youth Exchange is one of the least expensive international exchange programs open to high school-aged students. Because volunteers in Rotary clubs and districts administer the Rotary Youth Exchange program, you will not have to pay fees to an agency to arrange an exchange. Room and board while you are away will be provided by your host families, and your host Rotary club will finance the tuition for required academic programs. Also, on long-term exchanges, your host Rotary club will provide you with a modest monthly allowance.

District 5400 has a "One Price Fee" policy, under which all outbound students pay a flat fee of approximately \$6,000 for the Outbound Exchange. The sum of \$1,000 of the total

fee must be submitted to the District Youth Exchange Committee immediately upon acceptance into the program (November or December). The balance shall be paid in installments in accordance with District 5400 guidelines.

The flat fee covers the cost of:

- Round trip airfare with a 12-month open ticket
- Event costs for outbound interviews, McCall Weekend and District Conference
- Medical insurance coverage
- Rotary Blazer
- Language camp if required by host country

**Consular Visit Costs:** If you go to Finland, France, Spain, Poland or Slovakia on your exchange, please be aware that you will be required to make a personal visit to the consulate in San Francisco or Los Angeles to obtain your visa. Arrangements for this trip and visa can be through our travel agency, *It's Your World Travel*, but you will be responsible for travel expenses for this trip.

**How to Apply:** If you are interested in becoming a Rotary Youth Exchange student, please contact your local Rotary club. Once you have contacted a club, you will then be directed to the Rotary Youth Exchange chairperson in your area to get a preliminary application form. The local club will conduct a preliminary interview with you. If you are accepted by the local club, then you will fill out the long application form\* to submit to the district committee. Once you have completed your application and been interviewed and accepted by the District 5400 committee, the application process is complete. Rotary will then arrange your exchange. **\*[FOUR COPIES ARE REQUIRED AND ALL MUST HAVE ORIGINAL SIGNATURES IN BLUE INK]**

**When to Apply:** For long-term exchanges, selection takes place in the fall prior to the year you will make your exchange. If you wish to travel abroad during your junior year, for example, you will apply in September of your sophomore year. If you are wondering why it is necessary to apply so early, once you are selected, your sponsoring Rotary club and district will work to prepare you for your year away. You will be guided through a series of orientation sessions so you'll be ready for your new life in a new country.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Do I have to speak the language of the country I want to visit?** In most cases, no... not in advance. However, once you know your host country you will be assigned an intensive language learning program which you must fulfill prior to departure.

**Why do I live more than one family on the long-term exchange?** In most study abroad programs, students only get the chance to live with one host family. Rotary policy requires "more than one" host families. Because the main goal of the Rotary program is to promote peace and understanding among the different cultures of the world, you will

gain greater insight into the ways of your host country by living with more than one family.

**Can I work while I am abroad?** No. As a Rotary Youth Exchange student, you will have a student visa that enables you to live for an extended period of time abroad. Student visas expressly prohibit you from working at a paying job at any time during your stay.

**Will I be able to play sports or participate in extracurricular activities while I'm away?** Organized sports and extracurricular activities are different from country to country. If you are interested in playing a particular sport or practicing a certain extracurricular pursuit, be certain to discuss it with your host Rotary club. Your host club will then try to enroll you in whatever form of organized extracurricular activity you wish.

**How are host families selected?** Host families are selected in much the same way you are selected as an exchange student. They must complete an application and an in-home interview with the individuals coordinating Youth Exchange in their area. Host family parents do not have to be Rotarians, but many Rotary club members apply to serve as host families.

**Where can I go on my exchange?** Exchanges occur between our Rotary district and other Rotary districts where we have exchange relationships. Currently we offer exchanges with districts in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Americas and Asia. You will be able to choose as many as six different countries for your exchange year and conversely you may specify specific countries where you are unwilling to go. We honor those choices.

**Are there any program rules?** Program rules generally consist of common-sense stipulations, such as no driving of motor vehicles, no drunkenness, no illegal drug use, and no romantic entanglements plus the need to obtain special permission for travel while on an exchange. Generally, as a Rotary Youth Exchange student, it is your responsibility to:

- Abide by all the program rules of your host Rotary club and district.
- Accept the supervision of the host district, host club, and host family.
- Act as an ambassador of your own country.
- Be open to new experiences and cultural differences.

Although Rotary International offers support to local Rotary Youth Exchange programs through publications and suggested guidelines, Rotary districts and clubs run their programs independent of Rotary International. Therefore, each club or district program will have its own specific rules for students to follow. Students accepted into the program sign and agree to abide by a list of program rules prior to their departure from home. While the host Rotary club will discuss all program rules with you, you and your parents

may wish to review the program rules to be sure everyone has a clear understanding of what is expected.

**I'm looking for university-level exchanges. Does Rotary have any programs for me?**

Rotary Youth Exchange is a secondary program only. A different Rotary Program, the Ambassadorial Scholarships of The Rotary Foundation, may have an opportunity that fits your needs. This program sponsors several types of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students as well as qualified professionals pursuing vocational studies.

*Didn't find the answer to your question? Contact a Rotary Youth Exchange committee member for additional assistance.*

*[REV 8/15/2013]*

# Preliminary Outbound Student Application

## Rotary District 5400 Youth Exchange Long-Term Program

***Yes, I am interested in representing my country as an exchange student!***

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Year in school \_\_\_\_\_

Your interests, activities, hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your extracurricular activities at school: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Non-native languages you have studied (with number of years studied): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your past travel experiences: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons you wish to become an exchange student: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you hope to accomplish during and after your exchange? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do your parents support you in your quest to become an exchange student?

**Yes**

**Unsure**

**No**

Parents' or Legal Guardians' Signatures \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to your LOCAL ROTARY CLUB**

*Questions?*

*Call Marty Cullen 208-890-6465 or Mike Markley 208-861-8879*