



June 6, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, Rotary Youth Exchange Officers and Counselors, and District 6250 committee members,

I am saddened to share the news with all of you that Central States Rotary Youth Exchange, of which District 6250 is a member, has made the decision to suspend the Rotary Youth Exchange program for the 2020-21 exchange year. This does not impact our current winter inbound or outbound students nor will it necessarily impact the STEP program for summer 2021.

I am sending you a copy of the Central States letter which describes the basis upon which this decision was made. Primary among the reasons impacting our district is the fact that many high schools have already indicated they will not be able to accept inbound students this coming year as they do not yet know how their school year will be designed. Also, many international borders are closed, including the USA/Canada border. Central States includes Rotary districts that share students between both countries. Also, we do not know when the USA will resume issuing J-1 visas, when it will be safe to travel abroad and when we can expect any student exchange to resemble a normal exchange. Having worked with this program for many years, I know that among the things that make this experience life-changing and rewarding is the opportunity to attend school, participate in extracurricular activities and sports, travel with host families and participate in Rotary activities, such as the Rotary tours that are offered both here and abroad. As a result of the coronavirus, we do not know if any of these will be possible this coming fall.

If you are a student who is already approved to go outbound, we will honor your accepted placement for this year for 2021-22 if you wish to delay your departure by one year and are within the age requirements. Our country correspondents are working with countries abroad to determine if their partners are willing to extend the age requirements a bit, but it is likely that you would need to be less than 18.5 when you depart. If you have already been assigned a host family and wish for us to see if that placement can continue, please let me know so I can share that information. There will be some updating required of your application for next year but that will not need to occur until later this year.

Whether or not you choose to participate a year from now, we will be refunding your expenses paid minus the amount already expended for your book, language learning program, T-shirt and district interviews. If possible, we would love to see each of you participate in 2021-22. We also hope to recruit additional outbound students to participate in 2021-22. A member of our district RYE team will be in touch by phone over the next few days to talk with each of the students who had planned to go outbound this coming fall. This will give us an opportunity to talk about your future plans and to answer any additional questions you might have.

If you represent one of the Rotary clubs who was assigned an inbound student already for 2020-21 please let me know if your club would like to host that student next year should the student choose to participate in the program during 2021-22. Also, please thank the host families that you have already contacted and let them know about the decision to suspend the program. These future inbound students will be notified that we will be suspending our 2020-21 program by the Central States country correspondents who will notify their trading partners of

the decision made last night. We will work with Morgan Data to see that you are refunded your commitment fee for 2020-21 (\$525). I will be soliciting new commitments for 2021-22 in early fall when we have a better idea what the following year will look like. I was so very excited that we had 25 clubs agree to participate for this coming year and do hope that each of you will be willing to commit again for the following exchange year!

If your Rotary club hosted an inbound student in 2019-20 your club will be refunded the portion of your flat fee that covered the costs associated with the Central States Summer Conference held in Grand Rapids, MI in July, which totals \$400. Grand Rapids this year will be a virtual conference and open to all of you. Conference planning is underway but it looks like there will be activities on Friday afternoon/evening, July 10, 2020, for rebound students and their parents. On Saturday, July 11 the focus will be on welcoming messages, the flag ceremony and the variety show. All students should watch for emails from CSRYE to let you know about auditions for the show. This summer will provide a wonderful opportunity for all those involved or interested in Rotary Youth Exchange to tune into the conference to see the presentations. There will be no charge and no driving to Michigan to get a glimpse of what the Central States Summer Conference offers to our students, parents and Rotarians!

Please be patient with us as we work to process refunds. Also, please talk with your clubs about hosting an inbound student for the 2021-22 school year. All, please participate in the upcoming virtual CSRYE conference this coming July. If you have specific questions that are not answered here, please feel free to contact me at [janmbv@gmail.com](mailto:janmbv@gmail.com) or at 608-576-7508.

I wish each of you the very best and thank you for your commitment to Rotary Youth Exchange.



Jan Bonsett-Veal  
District 6250  
Youth Exchange Chair