

Engaging Youth

The Nuts and Bolts of Developing Future Leaders through Rotary Opportunities

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TriCon²⁰/₂₆

Meet the Speakers



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Laurie Marks
World Affairs Seminar

Our Objectives

Explore how to:

- **Build strong school partnerships**
- **Attract student interest**
- **Convert interest into sign-ups**
- **Improve attendance and long-term engagement**



Why Youth Engagement Matters...



Interact 

RYLA
ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS



rotary
youth
exchange

RYLA

ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS



Youth Motivations

- College applications and essays
- Career exploration
- Current relevance
- Engagement and experiences with like-minded peers
- Choice and active, purposeful in-person learning
- Inquiry about what interests them



World Affairs Seminar

LOGISTICS

- Carroll University, Waukesha, WI
- June 20-26, 2026
- \$995 Domestic, \$895 International
- Approximately 250 delegates
- High school students

CONTENT

- Global leadership, peacebuilding, community engagement
- Diplomacy simulation
- Panel discussions on foreign affairs and peacebuilding
- Careers with public impact
- Yoga, dance, talent show, field trips

AUDIENCE

- Civic and leadership clubs
- Honors students
- Model UN, Global Scholars, Debate
- Students looking to enhance their college application



RYLA

LOGISTICS

District 6220

- Manitowish Waters, Boulder Junction
- October 2-4, 2026
- \$500 per student
- 60-65 Attendees

District 6250

- Camp Upham Woods, WI Dells
- May 8-10, 2026
- \$250 per student
- 125-150 Attendees

CONTENT

- Activities focused on leadership, communication, ethical decision making, and teamwork
- Service project(s)
- Low/High Ropes Course
- Hiking and outdoor recreation
- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Building connections
- Dancing and fun!

AUDIENCE

- High School Sophomores-Juniors
- Returning students serve as youth counselors
- Rotary/Rotaract member counselors
- Rotary club volunteers/sponsors that serve meals

Strategies for Success!



Rotarian Support

Investment

- Don't wait to budget for youth programs
- Promote programs within your club
- Leverage connections with schools
(*more on how to do this in a minute*)

Engagement

- Volunteer, mentor, and speak
(RYLA counselors, drivers, advocates)
- Support student participation
(parents, rides, encouragement)



Securing School Support

Find Strong Contacts

- Principal, counselors, teachers, advisors, activity directors, etc.

Positioning Rotary Programs with Value

- Leadership development (not “another club”)
- Resume/college-building opportunity

Make it an Easy “Yes”

- Make a clear ask
- Minimal lift for staff
- Build long-term relationships vs one-off asks



Driving Student Interest

Awareness

- In-school presentations
- Peer-to-peer promotion (past attendees)
- Storytelling
- Mix traditional and digital communication

Keep it Simple!

Don't get stuck in the details.

Have a hook and make value easy to understand.



Driving Student Interest

Conversion

- Clear, simple application process
- Firm deadlines, a sense of urgency
- Parent influence
(especially for younger students)

Interest > Sign-Ups > Impact

Don't let the great awareness work go to waste.
Create a cadence for follow up.



Driving Student Interest

Impact

- Overcoming drop-off
- Pre-event communication cadence
- Create excitement before the event
- Remove barriers
(transportation, cost, fear of the unknown)

Lean into Value

Life changing programs, relatively low cost.



Delegate Voice – W.A.S.

“W.A.S. is one of the best experiences I have ever had. It connected me with so many people, and I made lifelong friends. I learned so much about our world, and how I could make a difference, even now. WAS helped me not only grow academically, but also as a person. I am so glad that I had the opportunity to attend.”

- Karishma, WAS delegate Alumni



Delegate Voice – RYLA

“RYLA was life changing for me. To see these people that had I just met become my friends and transform together is something that has impacted me forever. We saw real people become new or better leaders in such a short time. All of this was made possible because we were vulnerable but in a safe space with caring, smart and inspirational Rotary members.

- Rebecca, RYLA Alumni, Current Camp Director



Let's hear from *You!*

What's worked well?

What questions do you have?

Thank You!



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