

Rotary Motto: "Service Above Self"

About Rotary:

Rotary International (RI), formed in 1905, is a humanitarian service organization. It is non-political and non-religious organization. <https://www.rotary.org/en>

Rotary's International Youth Exchange Programs promotes the Rotary goal of advancing international understanding, goodwill, and peace -- one student and one exchange at a time.

Rotary International partners with the US Dept. of State (DOS) as part of the diplomacy mission of the DOS, as well as with issuance of US entry visas, etc. Rotary's program is respected as a well administered international youth exchange program. Local level administration is volunteer.

Local Level Youth Administration:

- Club Sponsorship: local Rotary Club(s) sponsor (including financial) exchange student
- Club partners with local families who volunteer to house / host student
- Student rotates 3 host families in one high school over course of one academic year
- Student commits to Local and District Rotary requirements during exchange year
- Area Local Clubs / Rotary District 5580 falls under administration of Central States Youth Exchange: <https://www.csrye.org/>

Each participating club assumes the following responsibilities:

- Identify host high school early (ideally Jan. of host exchange year): Assure school that Rotary is partner with the school, as well as with host families, in facilitating a successful exchange year for the student. *(Host high school may have minimum English requirements/Students understand high school diploma not guaranteed, varsity sport participation not guaranteed, etc.)*
- Financial:
 - School lunches/all school fees such as activity fees, yearbooks, etc.
 - Monthly stipend (~\$100+)
 - Averaged ~\$2200/year (Years 2016 -2020 – Fargo, ND, Schools)
- Identify and assist host families, provide orientation and support
- Provide two committed individuals to fulfill the following roles:
 - **Youth Exchange Officer (YEO):** serves as liaison between Rotary, high school and student ensuring Rotary rules implemented, host high school paperwork completed in timely manner for visa application, etc. YEO serves as contact for medical correspondence: Students carry excellent health insurance. Takes student to sports physical (and necessary/unscheduled doctor visits if available). Conducts monthly contact with student and host family to ensure successful exchange - reports contact into Central States Youth Exchange Database
 - **Counselor:** Serves as advocate for student. Visits each host family home within 30 days of placement to ensure host family, as well as student, are managing the adjustment
- Host Club ensures compliance with RI and District 5580 policies
- Provides transportation for student to mandatory District level youth exchange events

Host Families:

- <https://www.csrye.org/host-families/>
- Complete online application: Requires references and background check
- Provide room and board
- May provide input on preference for boy or girl if family is identified early in placement process
- Exchange student may share bedroom with same gender sibling – preferably close in age
- Assist student in becoming a part of the family, school, and community
- **Treat the student like a member of the family, not as a guest**
 - “First Night Questions” critical: provided to host family during their orientation prior to arrival
- Maintain communication with the local Rotary Club via Youth Exchange Counselor & YEO
- Assist with typical challenges: language acquisition, friendships, culture shock, local customs, etc.
- Encourage school-related activities (music, drama, sports, other clubs, etc.)
- Facilitate successful academic year: school attendance, missed academic work etc.
- Rotary will take the student out of school at times (~3’x in academic year)
- Families with young children also make great host families. Need not have teenagers in the home
- Single parents/single adults of the same gender as student may serve as host families (a bit more additional screening, but not cumbersome)

The most effective host families are:

- Flexible and able to adapt to having someone new in the home
- Good humored and able to put a problem or situation into perspective
- Patient and willing to work through common misunderstandings
- Willing to engage in different activities and visit places outside the home
- Interested in a variety of topics of conversation, culture, and recreation

Youth Exchange Students:

- Students will be carefully selected and well prepared – Rotary attracts high quality students
- Students must be age 15 to 18.5 upon arrival in USA
- Selected students are eager and excited to:
 - Learn language of host country; discover host culture, **represent their countries**; become part of a new host family and community

Misc. Student Details:

- Winter Gear – clubs may help with providing
- Sports Physical & Possible Vaccination(s) are not covered by insured – club(s) pays (~\$50 - ~\$120) depending on if a required school vaccination such as meningitis etc. is needed at Public Health
- **Cell Phone:** Host family **NOT** required to provide phone. Student may be added to a Rotarian’s plan or to a host family’s plan. Student reimburses for monthly cost of cell phone from their stipend. Because home country phones are locked to US plans, Rotarians often provide old smart phones for temporary use.
- Student signs document prior to departure from home country stating they understand there is no guarantee of the following: US high school diploma; participation in varsity sports (might have to play JV); they are not allowed to hold a job/formal work, although they can babysit/do yardwork etc.