

Testimonials
from
Exchange Students
and
Host Families

WE ♥ YOUTH EXCHANGE

Rotary



**Youth Exchange
District 5910**

For information about the Rotary Youth Exchange Program,
please contact:

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**What former
Rotary Exchange Students
and Host Families
say about their experience**

A Letter to Students
from Reid (Lake Conroe), who spent a year in Spain

Dear Prospective Exchange Students !

First off, congratulations on making it to this informational meeting! You have taken the first step in which could be the best experience of your life.

Last year at this time I would never have imagined that I would be here in Catalonia, Spain right now. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity cross my path later on in the year and am so glad that I took the first step into being an exchange student.

So far I've been here for 1 month, 11 days and have loved every second I've been here. I've visited the majority of the attractions in Barcelona, taken a bus to Madrid to meet 40-50 other exchange students from around the world, gone to the beach and countless other activities. This morning, I went with my host Aunt and Uncle on a hike to some of the nearby mountains where we stopped at various churches and castles dating back to the 15th and 11th century. On top of all this I'm concurrently perfecting my spanish and learning Catalan as I'm living in a Bi-lingual region of Spain. When I return I'll be trilingual!

Now I'm sure some of you out there aren't sure if you'd be willing to give up your senior year/year of high school, take a gap year, or something else. For me, I was looking forward to my senior year. I would've been Drum Captain in our Drumline, President of the Interact Club, participated in Homecoming/Prom, Graduation, Senior Trip and had a good year with all my friends. I can already tell you if my exchange ended today for some reason, I wouldn't trade it for anything. Being here now is so much more than you can imagine, it's something you have to experience.

Que vagi bé!

Reid



A Letter to Parents
from Reid (Lake Conroe), who spent a year in Spain

I would highly recommend doing youth exchange!

I know there are college study abroad options and the University of Texas has some great ones but none are going to be as immersed and rich in experience as the Rotary Long-Term Exchange will be.

Being a parent of an outbound/exchange student can be tough as well and I'm sure you have many questions/what ifs and more about Rotary Youth Exchange and you aren't alone! My parents were very worried at the thought of me living with 'strangers' and many things going wrong but after getting to know Rotary they calmed down and saw that there was nothing to be worried about.

I myself became exposed to Rotary as a freshman and have been seeing everything they do for 4-5 years now and can also say you have nothing to worry about. Rotarians will take care of you and your son or daughter as if they were their own.

Reid



**A Letter from Courtney (League City),
who spent a year in Germany**

Mr. and Mrs. Mattingly

I am having the time of my life! My host family is so great and I have met sooo many people! School is great. I have made so many German friends and I already think some of them will for sure be lifelong friends.

My German has gotten so much better since I arrived! I can now hold a basic conversation pretty well with anyone, although I still have much to learn.

I am playing on a softball team in my village which is super fun! I also go to zumba every Thursday with some girls from my school.

I live in a pretty small village so I don't have any other exchange students really close to me, but on the weekends some of us sometimes meet in Bonn or Köln to hang out for the day. This past weekend my host parents took me to Belgium!! It was so much fun! We went to Bruxelles and they showed me all of the significant buildings and monuments there. And then that evening we walked through La Grande Place and that was utterly amazing. Hearing the French language, seeing all of the beautiful little shops, and of course the aroma of fresh Belgian waffles being cooked just made the experience so breathtaking and wonderful!

I love being an exchange student!

Courtney

(January 14, 2014)



**What Mayra (Dickinson) said
after being in Brazil for only two months**

Being in a foreign place forces you into an "identity searching" crisis. I have had to really think about what I believe in, stand for, and prioritize.

I have seen poverty. A different kind of poverty. One with no hope. No help. A lonely, invisible, ghostly kind of poverty.

I can say that my heart has become increasingly fragile in the past two months. I have learned new kinds of compassion and empathy.

I can also say that I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that participating in this exchange has been the best decision that I have ever made.





**This is what Merida wrote from Germany
shortly before she came home**

From: Merida (Outbound to Germany)
Sent: July 05, 2006
Subject: Its almost over!



Dear Rotary,
I'm doing super...at the moment at least.
My emotions have been crazy.
Sometimes I cry my eyes out because I don't want to leave my
new friends or family here ...
and then other times I cry for joy about seeing my "real"
parents, friends, all of you,
This year was amazzzzzzzing, simply WONDERFUL
...but home is always home!
Lots of love,
Merida

THANK YOU a million and one times for making this year
possible for me. It means the world to me !!!!! Thank you !

Exchange Students





And this is what students from other countries say
about living in Texas



Pauline from France (2013-14)
(unsolicited Facebook post)



I can't believe I have been in my dear Texas for 5 months already, I realize how much the time go fast. I found my place in this new country, I found friend for the life. Now I am at the half of my exchange and now I am starting to speak their language I just have to enjoy each seconds , each day with all the wonderful person who are with me. Thank you to the Rotary International to live a dream became true.



Natalia from Spain (2013-14)

(unsolicited Facebook post)

Today, January 15, is my 5 months anniversary in USA. In this 5 months I had the best experiences of my life and I just want to say thank you Rotary for make this year possible. Of course that I miss my family, my friends, my home... But I think that is being the best year of my life. I'm meeting amazing new people, I'm learning a new language, a new culture... And all the memories that I'm making here are irreplaceable. Also I've met other exchange students from around the world and they are being like my second family. I cannot describe with words how thankful I am with Rotary to hie me this opportunity that not all the people have. Today is also a sad day because 5 months means that half of my exchange is done, means that today start the countdown to go back to Spain, and that make me sad. For all of this I'm not going to waist my time here, I'm going to exploit the time that I have as much as better possible.

Once again thank you Rotary for give me this opportunity, for make my dream possible.



Coni from Spain (2012-2013)
shortly before she went home

I feel gratitude to Rotary, for making this exchange, what I always wanted, a dream come true.

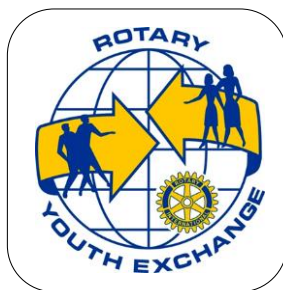
In almost 11 months, I have faced more obstacles than I ever have gone through but I have learned and grew more than

I did in 17 years. I met people and made friends all around the world and overver, and I had experiences that I will never forget.

I could never express in words how thankful I am to all the people that made these 11 months the most special in my life.

After being a Rotary Exchange Student, there is nothing that will make me fall.





For the advancement
of international
understanding,
goodwill and peace
around the world



Joan



Yesterday at 11:06 PM • Bryan, TX •

Rotary Youth Exchange is amazing! Tonight, we listened as our daughter **Emma** (just home from her RYE year in Japan) worked with our Japanese exchange student daughter **Chihiro** (arrived less than a week ago) to translate a Japanese fable for our family and guests. This is important stuff. Intellectual challenges. Cultural understanding and friendships for a lifetime. I feel so blessed and want to encourage all to get to know and support Rotary.





Marine from Belgium (2013-14)

(unsolicited Facebook post)

Six months can change a life.
Six months seem fly as fast as a night time
when you live a daydreaming.
Six months of unique expériences ,
exceptional meetings, surprises without
limits, memories for ever.
Six months which brought back in myself
some feelings I thought I had left for ever in
my dream of child.
Six months while I find me back.
Six months which prove me I'm able to
accomplish great things even outside of a
classroom.
Six months without any homesick day.
Six months , awesome meetings, families so
different but both so adorable and warm-
hearted.

Six months , 5 kg after and a huge amount
of unique memories in my head I just want
to say THANK YOU to everybody who
makes that dream my reality <3

I LOVE MY FAMILIES (American and
Belgian)
I LOVE TEXAS
I LOVE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL



Marine is back !!! :D
Thank so much for everything you... See M



Josephine

Yesterday at 2:53 PM

I just dropped **Marine** off at the airport for her flight back home to Belgium... This is a sad day for me as I have grown very fond of her and I will miss her a lot. It has been an awesome experience for both of us. If any of you have the opportunity to host an exchange student, I would recommend it highly!!!!

24 Likes 3 Comments

Like

Comment

Share

Marine

Yesterday at 7:53 AM · Edited

Because it's so sadly true ... Every good thing has a end :(
Wait... so much rain this morning ! It looks like Texas is crying for my departure ;)
But I promise I'll be back as soon as possible !
Thanks to everybody ! If my year was a success it's because of you guys !
I'll never find a way to thank you enough !
You have changed my life ! You have changed me ! You offered me the adventure of my life ! I'll never forget you !

24 Likes 4 Comments

Like

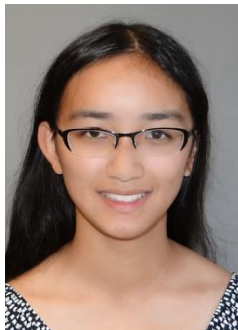
Comment

Share

**The 2018-2019 Texas Students
who are spending a year in another country**



Irma
College Station
France



Marit
Nacogdoches
Germany



Annemarie
Huntsville
Italy



Vivian
Huntsville
Germany



Regan
Friendswood
France



Geena
League City
Brazil



Willie
League City
Spain



Dearest Shelley,

A simple present I could think of,
Nothing much of a cost,
But all I could give is an effort of hard work,
In making a simple poem for a mother like you.
I don't know if you would call this a poem,

But whatever you would like to name it,
This is just for you,
A poem, from my compassion.
A poem, that I think I could call,

Not perfect I can say,
But truly this came from my heart,
So read it with all your might.

A Mother for a Year?
Believe it or not, I have a mother for a year
I'm not from her womb,
Not even of the same raised,
But she is a mother that I can always call.

A mother with a pure heart,
Who have always been contented with her love ones,
And that the only things she cares is to take care of her family,
And... to live life with raquet ball.

She is beauty itself, I can always say,
For she is a lovely creation by God,
A woman who was given life to share the graces,
and always ready in reaching out a helping hand.

~~~

Now my short poem has ended,  
I hope you'd like it,  
Not much of the work of Shakespeare or E.E. Cummings,  
But a work of a daughter who loves you so.

~~~

Grateful and joyful, I am to be here with you,
To experience the love from you and your family,
A mother and a friend that will be cherished,
For this moment in my life I am here with you and your family.

~~~

Thank you so much and happy birthday!!!  
Maraming salamat po at maligayang kaarawan!!!



*..... for the best year of our life !!*

# Awards for Study Abroad

## Rotary Youth Exchange – District 5910

### Rotary Award covers:

Host family

Food

School tuition

Monthly allowance

**Award Value: \$20,000+**



***If you are 15 to 18 ½***

***You could be in...***

***one of these pictures!!!***

### Participants pay for:

Airline Ticket

Insurance

Preparation costs

### **For information**

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or call 936-295-6606



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