



RYLA
(Rotary Youth Leadership Awards)

The purpose of the program is to recognize young people who have demonstrated leadership skills or show the potential to be leaders, and provide them with an opportunity to explore and further develop these skills with other with similar capabilities.

During the 3 Day Conference Participants will ...

- Explore their own style and strengths
- Learn skills that will enable them to be aware of and to address community needs
- Interact with adult role models who are active in their professions and community
- Develop and learn leadership skills
- Have a lot of fun!

GOALS:

- To Learn and Incorporate New Concepts of Leadership and Citizenship.
- To have Opportunities to Express Ideas and Concepts.
- To Feel and Give Acceptance of and to Each Other.
- To Experience the Joy of Learning Teamwork.
- To Become Comfortable in Expressing Opinions in a Supportive Group Environment.
- To Meet New Friends and Learn How to Reach Out and Make New Friends Without the Usual Conventions (cliques, etc.).
- To be Challenged to "Return to Serve" your Community.
- Great Experience to add to College and Work Resume

**LEADERSHIP.
TEAMBUILDING.
COMMUNICATION.
PRESENTATIONS.
DISCUSSIONS.
RYLA.**



"I now have the confidence and knowledge to lead groups."



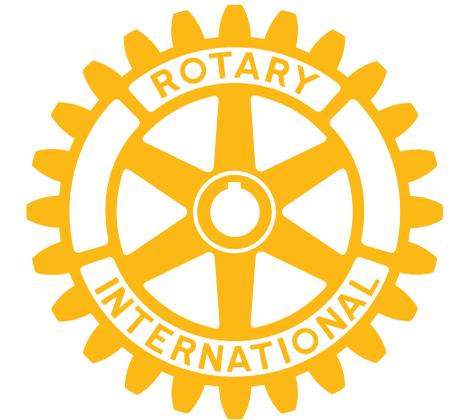
"This was an incredible experience I will never forget."



"This trip gave me much more confidence in myself..."



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Session 1: March 12-15, 2026

Session 2: April 9-12, 2026

leadership conference for high school students

Rotary 
District 6440
The Home District

All selected students will be sponsored to attend by their local Rotary Club

WHAT IS RYLA?

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards - or RYLA - is a not-for-profit training program for leaders and potential leaders (Freshman-Senior). As a RYLA participant, you will attend an all-expense-paid, three day camp. You will be joined by talented young people like yourself from other communities in your area.

The sponsoring Rotary clubs involved in organizing the event determine the specifics of each RYLA program. All programs emphasize leadership skills, personal development, and citizenship. RYLA goes to great lengths to make sure the three day weekend is fun and recreational as well as educational for all involved.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Outdoor Problem Solving
- Dance
- Skits
- Campfire
- Team Building Activities
- Low Ropes Courses

RYLA 2026

Held at Edwards Camp & Conference Center in East Troy, Wisconsin, dates for 2026 are:

Session 1: March 12-15, 2026

Session 2: April 9-12, 2026

FEATURED SPEAKERS



RICK METZGER: His instant rapport with audience comes easily from the social and communications skills developed as a retired professional athlete and high school athletic coach. Rick's personal achievements as an eight time National NASA Bench Press Champion, an American

record holder in drug-free power lifting, and a four time gold medalist at the World Cup of Power Lifting, have all equipped Rick to deliver a fast paced, high energy program that enlightens, entertains and empowers all who hear him.



TOM CARROLL: In 2017, Tom left the business world as a C-Level Executive, at a 12-billion-dollar company with 68,000 employees, to focus his time on developing future leaders. He is a sought-after motivational speaker and coach on a variety of leadership topics – change

management, service, team development, innovation, strategic planning, and mindfulness.

Tom holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Illinois State University. He is a 200-hour certified yoga instructor and meditation teacher. Previous to his business experiences at RR Donnelley, he worked clinically at a social service agency serving children and families, and at a hospital focused on people with neuropsychological issues.

He has served on many not-for-profit Boards including North Central College, the Chicago Public Library Foundation, the Naperville Area Humane Society, Naperville Community Television, and the Chicago YMCA. Tom lives in Bloomington, Illinois where he teaches Leadership Development at Illinois State, Yoga and Meditation at Advocate' Integrated Wellness Center and consults on a variety of leadership topics with start-ups and other organizations.



PARTH BHANSALI: Parth is a Director of National Accounts in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) industry, an Executive MBA Candidate, a Groupon alumnus, and a licensed Realtor® in Illinois. His decade-long involvement as a counselor with Rotary International's youth leadership program has created a foundation

for his commitment to community service. As an Emerging Leader with Interfaith America since 2012, Parth combines his corporate experience with a passion for fostering interfaith dialogue. He has shared insights on business and interfaith cooperation at global events, including the 2021 G20 Interfaith Youth Forum and multiple sessions of the Parliament of the World's Religions.



ERIN POMPA: A native of New Jersey, Erin Pompa has dedicated over 20 years to education, empowering students and educators to shift negative thoughts, build resilience, and strengthen mental well-being. With a Master's in Dance Education from New York University, she

served as Dance Director at Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts for 15 years and as an adjunct professor at Berkeley College, teaching The Art of Creativity. Erin is certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid and trained in DCR Recognizing and Responding to Microaggressions. Her extensive background in education, the arts, and curriculum design fuels her ability to create engaging, high-energy presentations that stick.

As the founder of TruthSpeaks 365, Erin is on a mission to ensure every student and educator experiences the kind of real, courageous conversations that change lives.

Additional speakers with inspiring stories include:

**JOEY FEINSTEIN, MS. ERIN CAHILL,
JOHN HUSTON & WHITEY KAPSALIS**



SEAN NELSON
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SEAN NELSON is the Volunteer RYLA Conference Chairman. Sean has been a Wheaton Noon Rotarian for 29 years and has been the conference Chair for the previous 24 years. During that time, the conference has doubled in participation and is nearing capacity. Sean believes that the speakers at the conference are arguably the best that participants might ever have an opportunity to hear . . . at any price! Sean is the former CEO for the Illinois YMCA Youth and Government & Youth For Understanding. Rotary Clubs sponsor 100% of the students selected to attend. If interested in more information about RYLA please feel free to contact Sean directly.

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