

What is Rotary Friendship Exchange?

The Rotary Friendship Exchange Program provides a means through which Rotarians in one part of the world can experience life in another country or culture. Its goal is to advance international understanding and goodwill through person-to-person connections across national boundaries.

There are two types of Friendship Exchanges. The first is the Visitor Program in which individual Rotarians, often accompanied by family members, spend a few days in a Rotarian home in another country. The second is the Team Program in which Rotarians, often couples, typically ten to twelve in number, visit several communities in the host district for a period of time up to four weeks. The number of persons on the team and the length of stay are flexible; the districts involved agreeing on those details before the exchange occurs. Districts are also encouraged to consider arranging uni-vocational Visitor and Team exchanges, those in which host and guest Rotarians share the same occupation. Both types of programs are coordinated by district Friendship Exchange committees and both are carried out at no expense to Rotary International.

Who May Apply?

Rotarians and their immediate families are eligible to participate in the Visitor Program. Involvement is limited to Rotarians and their spouses in the Team Program. The Rotarian family member must participate in the exchange for spouses and children to be eligible.

How Long Does a Friendship Exchange Last?

In the Visitor Program, the length of stay is usually three to four days. However, the host club determines the nature of the exchange, the number of host families involved and the length of each stay. As the Team Program operates on a district level, participants stay for a few days with each family for a total time of approximately four weeks. Both districts must agree upon the length of a Team exchange.

How Does a Rotarian Apply for Rotary Friendship Exchange?

Potential guest Rotarians must apply through their club president, who will inform them of the status of the Rotary Friendship program in their district. Participating districts appoint a Friendship Exchange District Chairperson who coordinates the program. This chairperson is responsible for contacting other RFE chairpersons and/or club presidents to establish exchanges.

To become hosts, Rotarians must communicate with the club president, who will then contact the Rotary Friendship Exchange District Chairperson. Rotarians who have participated as guests will be anxious to serve as hosts when Rotary visitors come to their community.

Participating districts develop their own standards for participant selections. In order for a district to participate in Rotary Friendship Exchanges, there must be consent of two-thirds of the clubs in the participating districts, with the approval of the District Governor of all districts involved, and with the understanding that no liability is attached to Rotary International.