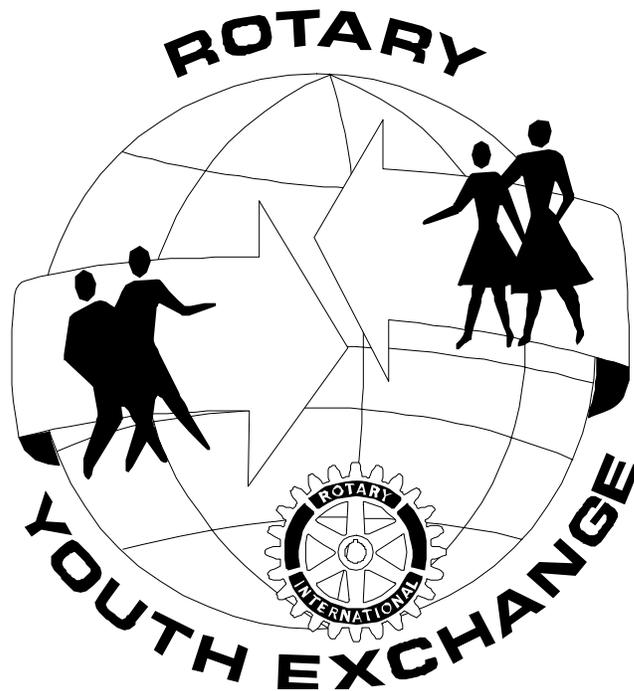


# Rotary International YOUTH EXCHANGE District 7170 OUTBOUND PROGRAM



Information Book for  
Students and Parents

[www.rotary-youth-exchange.com](http://www.rotary-youth-exchange.com)

# FOREWORD

This Outbound Program handbook has been developed by the District 7170 Youth Exchange Committee to supplement and complement the orientation sessions you attend to prepare for, and successfully complete your exchange year. Your Outbound Program handbook is intended to serve as one-of-several resources to help you get the most out of being a Rotary Exchange Student.

This booklet contains the subtitle “Information Book For Outbound Students **and Parents**” and is intended to serve as much as the parents’ resource as it is for the student. You should share it with your parents now, but take it with you when you go abroad, along with other information you will receive during the final Orientation Session in June.

All of the information contained in this handbook is presented and discussed during the Orientation Programs held before your exchange year begins. We encourage both parents and students to become familiar with the contents of this handbook before the final orientation meeting, and use this information to stimulate questions and surface concerns while we have the greatest opportunity to address them. And once the exchange year begins, both should refer to the handbooks on a regular basis.

We hope that you will find this handbook both informative and helpful during what will be the greatest year of your life.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

**To further international goodwill and understanding** by enabling students to study first-hand some of the problems and accomplishments of people in lands other than their own.

**To enable students to advance their education** by studying for a year in an environment entirely different from their own, undertaking the study of courses and subjects not normally available to them in their own country.

**To give students opportunities to broaden their outlook, and grow,** by learning to live with and meet people of different cultures, creeds, and colors, and by having to cope with day-to-day problems in an environment completely different from the one they have experienced at home.

**To have students serve as ambassadors for their own country** by addressing Rotary Clubs, community organizations and youth groups in their host country; and by imparting as much knowledge as they can about their own country, its culture, and its problems, to the people they meet during their year abroad.

**To provide sufficient time to study and observe another country's culture**, so that upon returning home students can pass on the knowledge they have gained by addressing Rotary clubs and other organizations, and assimilate the positive aspects of being bi-cultural into their everyday living.

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# SECTION I

## GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION FOR THE OUTBOUND EXCHANGE STUDENT

### PREPARATION

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

Your exchange year will be 10-12 months long, and could begin as early as July, and could end as late as the beginning of the following August. However, most exchange students depart for their host country in mid-to-late August, and return home the following June. Ask your Country Contact about the normal departure date for your country, discuss with him or her about your plans for summer school, summer job, etc. and find out if your host country has a specific date you need to arrive by, for language camp or orientation.

You are associated with two Rotary districts and two Rotary clubs; your **sponsoring** district (we are District 7170) and Rotary club in your hometown; and the **host** district and Rotary club in your host country. Although the youth exchange programs and rules for districts are similar, **the host district and club guidelines take precedence over those of the sponsoring district.** The host district, host club and host families are responsible for each student's cultural, spiritual and physical well-being and may set their own rules and guidelines, which may be more or less restrictive than those we apply to the students we host. You should become familiar with those rules and guidelines before, or immediately upon your arrival in your host country.

#### MAKING CONTACT WITH YOUR HOST CLUB AND HOST FAMILY

As soon as you are notified of the name of the Rotary club that will be hosting you, you should write to the host club counselor and first host family, giving them information about you, including your interests. Include a photo of yourself, especially if you have changed your appearance at all from your application photo. You should use this letter as an opportunity to ask about school, school clothing/uniforms, climate, activities, etc. Every opportunity should be taken to exchange correspondence with the host family before departing, as this helps tremendously in the initial settling-in period in a new environment.

## GIFTS

You should be thinking about gift items for host families and people who will host you for weekends and other special visits. The gifts need not be expensive, but should be thoughtful and something distinctly American, preferably local to your community. A **Gift Suggestions** list is included in the appendix.

You should have a special present to give to each of your host families soon after your arrive. Also remember birthdays and holiday presents for all the members of your host families. You don't necessarily need to take all such gifts with you when you leave home (often you will need time to learn what will make a great gift for members of your host family). These gifts should be selected and given with warm thoughtfulness.

## LEARNING YOUR TARGET LANGUAGE

Most likely, you will be hosted in a country where the native language is not English. **YOU must make a conscientious, disciplined effort to learn your host country's language as quickly as possible.** Speaking and understanding the language is the key to acceptance in any country, even in countries where English is a commonly-learned "foreign language."

There are several things you can do to learn your target language; get language tapes or CDs and begin now; enroll in language classes; reading out loud. You learn a language one word at a time, so try not to become overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge. Set small, achievable goals.

## PREPARE TO BE AN AMBASSADOR

During your exchange year, you will meet many people who only know America and Americans through the lens of a movie or TV camera, and who think anywhere in "New York" is New York City. As an exchange student, one of your roles is to help people change these misconceptions. To do that, you must understand our country, our culture, our government and our politics.

Become as knowledgeable as you can on these topics before you begin your exchange year. Review **Tough Questions** for some thought-provoking questions that you are likely to be asked in your host country. Consider these as examples, and think about how you would answer these and similar questions about life in the USA.

Locate a good map of New York State (roadmaps are good for this purpose) that you can take with you to show friends and host families where you live. You will also need a map of the United States, to show people where you live compared to other well-known US cities. Understand travel distances – in hours – from your home to other places in the US, and relate that to distances between cities in your host country.

You also need to become familiar with your host country **before** you arrive there. Read as much material as you can about your host country, including CultureGrams ([www.culturegrams.com](http://www.culturegrams.com)) and travel guides. Make a special note of cultural attributes described in these resources, consider how they differ from your culture, and why. Use any other resources you have access to – the internet, school and public libraries, magazines and newspapers – to learn about current events, history, government and politics, etc. for your host country, and especially for the region you will be living in. Purchase two maps showing the cities and topography of your host country, preferably in detail – one to take with you and the other to leave at home, so your family can locate places you mention in your letters.

## PRACTICAL THINGS

### Passport and visa

Apply for your United States passport now, if you don't already have one. If your passport is valid, the expiration date must be no earlier than six months after you expect to return home from your year abroad. A "raised seal" birth certificate is needed to apply for a passport; if you don't have an original birth certificate, you will need to contact the county clerk in the county and state where you were born to secure one. A passport can be applied for at any county clerk's office or your local post office.

The requirements for a visa (permission granted by the entry country for a non-citizen to enter) varies by country, so the travel agency and the host Country Contact will be able to guide you through the process of securing a visa.

## TRAVEL RESERVATIONS

Once your departure date and arrival airport (in host country) are known, work with the travel agent to purchase the required **round-trip** airfare. **You must have "open-return" round-trip airfare as a requirement of the exchange program.** Although airline rules and regulations differ, most airlines will issue the return flight tickets for a specific return date (next summer), and allow one

change with no or a low cost change fee. Inform both your Country Contact and those in your host country (host club YEO, host family, etc.) of your departure/arrival dates and times as soon as the information is known. If you have paper tickets, safeguard them both before and after departure, since they are just like money and will be very difficult to replace if lost. Some host clubs may ask to hold your tickets as a safeguard upon your arrival; if you keep your return tickets, make sure you know where they are.

## FINANCES

Your host Rotary club will provide you with a monthly spending allowance, generally equivalent to \$50-\$70 USD, depending on the relative cost of living in that country. This may or may not include money to pay for school lunches or for transportation to and from school. Your host family will provide lodging and meals. You will need money for personal expenses, travel, clothing and entertainment. The amount of spending money you will need – and have available – will likely depend on your own circumstances as well as the community and families you stay with. Two general guidelines should always be kept in mind

Be willing and able to “pay your own way” for travel and entertainment with host family and friends; don’t expect to be treated as a guest at all times; and understand when it is appropriate to offer to pay for meals, entertainment tickets, etc. when offered such opportunities.

Do not spend money freely or lavishly when those around you do not have the resources to do likewise. Don’t be labeled “the rich American” who throws money around.

You and your parents should check with your bank about setting up an internationally-accepted credit card or ATM debit card such as VISA, which will provide you with an easy and inexpensive way to deposit funds here and withdraw funds in your host country without incurring interest charges or high transfer fees. Having a credit or debit card will mean you will not need to travel with a large amount of money. Travelers Checks also should be investigated, especially as a source of “emergency money” or to provide your host club or district with the emergency fund that they may require. Take extra precautions to protect credit cards, Travelers Checks, and cash from theft, especially when traveling, and make sure you and your parents know what to do in the event you lose these items.

Become familiar with the monetary system of your host country before you depart, and understand the “exchange rate” for conversion to US currency. In

many foreign countries, the buying power of the US dollar is greater than here, but the cost of some items may also be much greater than at home. Before you leave, you and your parents should establish a budget for your spending money, and you should follow that budget carefully so that you don't run out of money before you run out of exchange year.

School fees or tuition, if any, will be paid by the host Rotary club. However, if you take a university course or a community program, you may have to pay those costs yourself. School books may or may not be provided free. You will likely have to buy notebooks, pens, pencils, etc. You may also have to wear a school uniform. Tutoring and language training is at your expense, and some districts will require that you attend a language camp or program upon your arrival.

Parents and relatives should not send personal checks to students overseas. They are often difficult to cash, and foreign banks frequently will charge a high fee for accepting checks drawn on a US bank for deposit, while holding the deposit as unavailable while it clears through the international banking system. If it is necessary to send money to a student other than through use of a debit or credit card, consider using International Postal Money Orders, which have guaranteed delivery, have a nominal fee, and will provide the student with cash in the local currency.

Many Rotary districts, including District 7170, require exchange students to arrive with an **emergency fund** of about \$300 USD that is held by the host club for safekeeping, and can be used to cover emergency medical expenses, unpaid bills incurred by the student etc. Your host district will provide you with instructions on this fund if applicable.

## BANNERS, BUSINESS CARDS AND PINS

Your sponsor Rotary club should give you several club banners for you to present to the host country Rotary clubs that host you for functions. You will usually receive one of their banners in return to bring back to your sponsor club.

We will provide you with business cards with your picture and USA address to give to people you meet. These cards also have the name of the host country and room for you to enter your current host family address.

## TELLING ABOUT YOU

During your year, you will be asked to speak from time to time. This will include, at the very least, requests to speak to your host Rotary club and in your school. However, there will likely be other opportunities to talk about your life in the US or what you are experiencing/enjoying during your year as an exchange student. Because of that, you should have two or three prepared speeches (about 15 minutes each) for your club and school, plus one other general presentation.

We recommend that you take video, or a CD or slides of your family, your home, your community, and places of interest in the US, for use in making presentations to Rotary clubs, school classes, church groups and others in your host country.

You should also put together one or more good quality photo albums to show host families and other people you visit, such as for dinner and weekend outings. Photo albums are good conversations starters, and your selections should be well thought out, keeping in mind what might be of interest to people in your host country.

You should include pictures of:

- Your family, home, community
- Special interests you have, such as school, sports, theater, music
- Special local sites in your community, including historic and scenic points of interest near your home
- National points of interests, including a cross-section of New York State. Make sure that you know what each of these pictures show, and can describe the location

## INSURANCE

All District 7170 sponsored exchange students must be covered by a medical/accident insurance policy meeting US Department of State standards. Certain districts we exchange with require students they host to purchase domestic (host country) insurance. We require that students going to these countries also purchase the insurance we require of all other outbound students, to insure that you have complete medical coverage. Discuss the policy coverage we have available with your Country Contact or our Insurance Contact.

## OTHER PREPARATION TIPS

### LUGGAGE

Luggage selection and packing requires good planning, since most international airlines impose both weight and quantity restrictions for checked-in luggage as well as size restrictions for carry-on luggage. Find out from your travel agent the specific requirements that you must comply with. Also consider that you may be traveling during your exchange year, very possibly by train or bus, and smaller, lightweight luggage may be more appropriate for those shorter trips.

### WHAT TO PACK

While the climate and other factors in your host country will determine what type of clothing you will need, plan from the beginning to limit the quantity of clothing that you take with you. Do not attempt to pack all the clothing that you own; you will soon find that a) they may not be “in style” in your new country; b) they don’t fit because you have gained/lost weight; or c) there is no place in your new room to store them all.

### YOUTH EXCHANGE BLAZER

A blue blazer will identify you as a Rotary Exchange Student and draw attention to you in a positive way, and is always suitable when the occasion calls for “dressing up.” But don’t pack your blazer, wear it when you depart for your host country. Many students report that, by wearing their blazer and youth exchange pins while traveling, their passage through customs and immigration is made easier, officials are happy to offer help, and you become instantly “recognizable” by your hosts on arrival. District 7170 will provide you with a Rotary Youth Exchange patch to sew on your blazer.

### MEDICAL RECORDS

You should ask your physician for a new prescription for medications you must take that can be filled in your host country. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, a copy of your lens prescription, or even a spare set of glasses, can help avoid a big problem in the event your glasses are lost or broken.

## ARRIVAL AND SETTLING IN

Arrival will be one of the high points of your trip; the fulfillment of all your planning. There will be an inevitable let down when the excitement subsides. We know your hosts will make every effort to welcome you into the family, but remember that you are the one who must adjust. This quality of flexibility was one of the criteria considered in selecting you, and you must be prepared to exercise it to the fullest. Communication is critical to establishing an understanding of expectations. Look over the **First Night Questions** several times before you actually arrive; then make sure you have asked the questions or been provided with the answers as you become part of your first host family.

## FACING THE CHALLENGES

Know that things will be very different in your host country and you will be the “outsider” who will have to adjust. This means, for example, tolerating what may seem like silly questions about the USA, or doing things as part of the family which you might not do at home. You may find that people in your host country rely more on public transportation and less on automobiles to go places, and you should be prepared to not rely on your host parents to “get you around.” You may also find it difficult to conform to discipline that is different and perhaps more restrictive that you are use to ---but remember, you are the one who must adjust. See **How to Cope With Culture Shock**

## YOUR ROTARY COUNSELOR

The host Rotary club will appoint a counselor to advise and help you. Your host counselor typically will:

- Help select suitable school subjects
- Help coordinate social and Rotary club activities to introduce you to the community
- Help arrange suitable banking and other financial matters, and see that you receive a monthly allowance from your host club
- Help you resolve problems of any kind

You should make a point of taking the initiative to be in contact with the host Rotary counselor weekly, especially during the early stages of your exchange. If, by chance, problems develop which the counselor is unable to resolve, you should contact the host club president or hosting district youth exchange committee member (hosting Country Contact or Committee Chair). If these channels are unsuccessful, you should contact your D7170 Country Contact or any other member of the D7170 Youth Exchange Committee for assistance.

You will be provided with a complete listing of the D7170 YEC. You are strongly encouraged to contact us if problem-resolution with the hosting club and/or district is not successful. But also understand that we will not provide a “second opinion” or attempt to reverse a decision made by the host district simply because you do not like their decision. However, we will help you work through difficulties and problems if you keep us informed. **Please remember; WE CANNOT HELP YOU IF WE DO NOT KNOW THERE IS A PROBLEM!**

As a minimum, your country contact expects to receive three reports from you – Mid-October, January and April, describing your activities and experiences. Report forms were provided to you for that purpose, but letters to your country contact with more in-depth information are always welcome. We will treat your reports confidentially.

## HOST FAMILIES

**The hosting arrangements are entirely the responsibility of the host Rotary club.** The usual arrangement is for you to be hosted by 2 to 4 different families, for three to four months each. If problems do arise on the host family level that you cannot resolve with the family, you should first consult with the host Rotary club counselor, then the host district chairperson, or the host country contact, before elevating the problem to your D7170 country contact.

**Students: you must, at all times, remember that it is your responsibility to adjust to the host family environment.** The host family is under no obligation to adjust to you, or to treat you as a “special guest.” You are expected to accept the normal discipline of the family and settle into their routine, not the routine you have been used to back home.

In most families, you are expected to call your host parents by their name or title, Mom and Dad for example, not Mr. and Mrs. Discuss this very soon after you first meet your host parents, and arrive at something that is comfortable for everyone.

Discuss the household rules and duties with your host family. Some families do not expect much from their children, while others divide household tasks, including kitchen help and house cleaning, among everyone. Accept willingly and cheerfully whatever is assigned to you. You will find that a clear understanding of responsibilities will go a long way in creating smooth sailing.

## HOMESICKNESS

Very few students escape at least one bout of homesickness. Early in your exchange there is the excitement of a new land, people, school, surroundings and being the center of attention. This will change as “normalcy” sets in. You’ll miss the little things about home. You are being bombarded by a strange language throughout the day. Often unable to communicate, and learning new customs, you may begin to wonder if you will make it through the next 10 or 12 months. Know that this feeling will soon pass.

### **What are the symptoms to look for:**

- Feeling lousy for no reason
- Losing your “cool” over things you would normally shrug off
- Staying in your room where you feel secure
- Physical discomfort; headaches, upset stomach, uneven menstrual cycle

### **What to do:**

- Talk. Share your problem with a sympathetic host parent, your counselor, or another student
- Keep busy. Get involved at school, in your host family activities, in the community

### **What *NOT* to do:**

- Mope around; gloominess is highly contagious
- Eat your way to happiness; you will only gain weight and then feel worse
- Decide to “go home;” this is the last resort. You will never grow if you just “cut and run” when things get tough. If you talk it out and keep busy, it will soon pass
- Call home and “unload” on Mom or Dad. In all likelihood, your feelings will improve in a day or two, while you’ve put your parents on “red alert!” Don’t do that to them!!!

## PARTICIPATION

**You will gain the most from the exchange if you participate to the fullest. This means sharing in family life, school life and the community life.** If you play a musical instrument, you can get together with other musicians in the school or community. If you are good at a particular sport, play it if possible. Contribute whatever talents you have, whenever possible. Be willing to take the initiative for finding activities to do and in asking people about their jobs, interests, etc. The best way to get people to be interested in you is to show interest in them.

Always say “YES” if someone asks you to go someplace or do something, even if it is something you dislike. If you say “NO,” you may never be asked again. **Use the resourcefulness and creativity which are among the qualities we sought in choosing you as an exchange student.**

## BE PREPARED TO ADAPT

Though most host families will do their best to make you feel at home, you must adapt to their ways, not the reverse. You will be in a different social and political climate and should be discreet in your social and political observations and statements. You should try to see their point of view even if you do not agree. **Above all, you are expected to be tactful and diplomatic when your hosts express views contrary to your own.** You should be particularly diplomatic when expressing opinions on religion, race or politics. Things may be different but that does not make them wrong, or better or worse.

## USING YOUR NEW LANGUAGE

No matter how much you have studied the language of your host country before you arrive, you will still have a long way to go to be fluent. Speaking and understanding the spoken language is the key to acceptance in any country. Without language ability, you will always be considered an outsider.

Everyone hesitates in saying strange sounding words aloud. If you learn to laugh at your mistakes, you will learn the language more quickly. Everyone will appreciate and applaud your efforts and forgive your mistakes. It is a compliment to your new friends and host family when you speak their language.

Beware of the “English Trap.” Much of the rest of the world learns English as their “foreign” language, and you may find family and friends will, and perhaps even be eager, to converse with you in English. Do not let this crutch become a barrier to your developing fluency in the new language. And like everyone that has gone before you, the day will come when you suddenly realize that you understand this new language. Or, as an even truer measurement of your new skill, you will awake some morning and realize that you have been dreaming in your new language!

## LETTER WRITING

Exchange students write two types of letters. One is the *newsy correspondence* to family, friends and your sponsoring Rotary club. You should also write at least once during your exchange to your school here in D7170, perhaps to a language teacher, to share your experiences and help with recruiting future exchange students from your school.

The other type of letter is the *Thank You* note for people who invite you to their homes or take you to places and events in your host country. **We cannot over-emphasize the importance of a little thank you note.** Take with you a supply of local picture postcards and use these as thank you notes. Postcards require limited writing, can be completed and sent quickly, and provide those who you thank something special from your home country.

## TELEPHONE AND EMAIL USE

Recent developments in the international telephone market make it impractical to provide specific guidance on long-distance carriers. There are numerous carriers anxious for your business, and many offer calling card features that will allow you to call home for essentially the same cost as a call initiated from your home to your host country. But local telephone service, and the cost of “local” calling, may be considerably different than what you have been accustomed to at home.

**However, we strongly discourage frequent phone calls to and from home,** and recommend that calls be limited to a monthly frequency, and for special occasions like holidays and birthdays. Besides representing a significant expense (even at the best international rates), extensive use of the telephone may impose a hardship on or be disruptive to your host family. Many cultures do not rely as heavily on the telephone as do Americans. Lastly, experience has shown that students who call home often, or are often called from home, frequently end up relying too much on “home” and do not “connect” with their host families and host country, thus delaying or even preventing the kind of adaptation and immersion that a successful exchange requires.

**The same is true for over-reliance on email and instant message as means of too-frequently communicating with family and friends.** To get the most from your exchange year, you must be a **Participant**, not a **Reporter**. Occasionally, thoughtful letters home describing some of the more significant places and things you recently experienced will provide your parents with

keepsakes they will cherish and be able to share with others, and show them that you are having the “experience of a lifetime.”

## VISITING

One of the **Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange** you agreed to as part of your application to the Exchange Program relates to visits during your exchange year: visits from family, other relatives, and your friends. While there are few absolutes, common sense and the experiences of the many exchange students who preceded you prove that visits by your family are best limited to the final two or three months of your exchange year.

**We discourage visits by friends at any time during your exchange.** Visits by your peers often create inconvenience and disruptions for the host family, and may re-create adjustment problems you successfully solved in the beginning of your exchange year.

On the other hand, we would encourage a well-timed visit to you by your family, if that is possible. The important element is the timing of your family’s visit, and specifically toward the end of your exchange year. Visits while school is in session will disrupt your school attendance, and during holiday breaks will detract from your experiencing the holiday practices of your host family, especially during the Christmas, New Year and Easter holidays. By delaying your family’s visit to your host country until near the end of your exchange year, you will have acquired fluency in the language and knowledge of the country. At that time, you will be an excellent tour guide and translator, and will be able to introduce them to all of your host families and new friends.

## RETURNING HOME

While it may seem like a long way off now, eventually you will find yourself saying goodbye to your host country and returning home – at least in time to attend the Welcome Home Picnic in early August. Most exchange students say that this time arrives all too soon, and they are not ready to leave their new families and friends when that time comes.

Returning exchange students also tell us that the adjustments they encounter returning to the USA are as challenging, if not more so, than the cultural adjustments they faced just a short year before.

This handbook refers you to several articles written by people who understand what you may go through upon returning home. Keep these articles in mind as your year comes to an end, and read them as part of your return preparations. It is often said that a one-year exchange program really last for three years; one to prepare for your exchange; one for the exchange year itself; and a third year to fully reflect on the first two, and become comfortable with the **new, bicultural YOU!** The members of District 7170 Youth Exchange Committee recognize this, and will be here to help you with this return adjustment if needed.

## **AND FINALLY - -**

IF YOU NEED TO DISCUSS SOMETHING, please contact your D7170 Country Contact. Understand the Rotary Youth Exchange Support System available to you. This begins with your host family, your host Rotary club counselor and club president, and the country contact in your host country. Remember that you must comply with the rules and regulations that they establish for the students they host. Your D7170 country contact and members of the D7170 YEC cannot change those rules or give you permission to disregard them but we can help you with other matters and problems that may be impacting your exchange. Your country contact will get in touch with his or her counterpart in your host country for further information, and, if needed, help to solve your problem. **Please do not try to solve problems all by yourself.** Because this is an international program, there may be cultural and/or Rotary subtleties of which you are unaware. There may also be long-term implications of your actions or behavior affecting future exchanges. So, please call or write, and give us the opportunity to demonstrate that we are truly concerned about you, and want your exchange year to be a great success.

Other Resources:

**[How To Cope With Culture Shock](#)**

**[Characteristics of a Good Youth Exchange Ambassador](#)**

**[It's Time to Go Home](#)**

**[Exchange Student Jitters – It's Time to Board The Plane](#)**

**[So You Think You're Home Again ... Thoughts on Returning Home](#)**

**[Travel Policy for Outbound Exchange Students](#)**

**[Student Security Procedures](#)**

**District 7170 Youth Exchange Program  
Exchange Student Protection Policy  
Information for the Outbound Exchange Student**

Your safety is the first priority of all of us involved in the Rotary International Youth Exchange Program. We hope the following information will help you keep yourself safe.

Please read carefully the **Guidelines for Safeguarding the Welfare of Youth Exchange Students**. This paper will help you understand some of the dangers concerning abuse, and what you can do to avoid them.

The **Important Information** form has important contact information, and should be carried at all times. Before you leave for your exchange year, try to fill in all of the blanks. Your Host Club Counselor in your hosting district should be able to help you complete the form. Give a copy to your parents before you leave. Keep your copy with your travel documents, in case you have a flight change, or find yourself in a situation that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

The **Exchange Student's Bill of Rights** should reassure you about trusting your own feelings. You know what feels right and wrong to you, and your Bill of Rights supports your right to protect yourself.

Your **Personal Safety Code** will help you know how to conduct yourself under certain circumstances.

In addition, please learn the **Three "R's" of Youth Protection**

- a. **Recognize** that anyone could be a child molester and be aware of situations that could lead to abuse.
- b. **Resist** advances made by child molesters to avoid being abused.
- c. **Report** any situation where you feel uncomfortable to host parents or other trusted adults.

It is important for you to have the name and contact information for your sponsoring Rotary District Counselor, and the sponsoring Rotary District Chairperson. Send monthly reports home to these contacts so that they can know how you are doing.

Before you leave home, set up a "secret message" with your parents to be used in an extreme emergency if you feel you cannot talk freely with them.

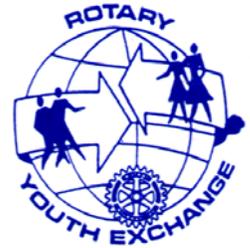
Appendices to be Attached:  
Guidelines for Safeguarding the Welfare of Youth Exchange Students  
Important Information Form  
Exchange Student's Bill of Rights  
Personal Safety Code

RI D7170



# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 7170  
Central New York State, USA  
Youth Exchange Committee



## GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING THE WELFARE OF YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS

### FORMS OF ABUSE

#### Sexual Abuse

Either boys or girls can be considered to be sexually abused if exposed to:

- sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex or fondling
- the viewing of pornographic books or videos
- taking part in the making of videos or pornographic photos.

#### What to look for:

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in genital area
  - stomach pains
  - discomfort when walking
  - unexplained sources of money
  - inappropriate drawings, language or behavior
  - aggressive or withdrawn behavior or fear of a particular person
  - reluctance to discuss changes in behavior or attitude
- 

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning. In certain situations, abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the young person's body.

#### What to look for:

- unexplained or untreated injuries
  - injuries on unlikely parts of the body
  - cigarette burns, bite or belt marks, scalds
  - fear of host parents being contacted, going home or receiving medical advice
  - flinching when touched
  - reluctance to discuss injuries
  - covering arms or legs
- 

#### Neglect

Where adults

- fail to meet a young person's basic physical needs, e.g. food, warmth and clothing

- constantly leave a young person alone or unsupervised
- fail or refuse to give a young person love, appropriate affection or attention

Neglect may also occur during organized activities if young people are placed in an unsafe environment, are exposed to extreme weather conditions or are at risk of being injured.

**What to look for:**

- poor personal hygiene
  - constantly hungry
  - inappropriate clothing or dress
  - constantly tired
  - lonely, no friends
  - noticeable loss of weight
  - disheveled appearance
- 

**Emotional abuse**

This form of abuse includes:

- persistent lack of love or affection
- frequent shouting
- taunting
- over-protection which can lead to poor social skills

Emotional abuse may include situations where host parents, coaches or organizers subject young people to criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

**What to look for:**

- over-reaction to mistakes
  - sudden speech disorders
  - extremes of emotions
  - self-mutilation
  - sudden weight loss or pain
- 

**WHAT TO DO IF AN EXCHANGE STUDENT TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE**

- Most importantly, listen attentively and let him/her know it was right to tell someone about his/her worries.
  - Stay calm and make sure that the exchange student feels safe and knows that he/she is not to blame for inappropriate behavior by others.
  - Explain that you have to tell someone else about the abuse.
  - Only ask questions that establish what was done and who did it. Do not jump to conclusions or promise to take a specific action until the situation is thoroughly investigated.
  - Make detailed notes of what the student said and the date and time of your conversation.
  - Contact the District 7170 Child Protection Officer immediately.
  - Don't worry that you may be making things worse by reporting your concerns. Few things are worse than allowing child abuse to continue.
-

## **EXCHANGE STUDENT PROTECTION CODE FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICERS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

### **Do:**

- treat all young people with respect and be aware of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner
- remember that it is okay to touch young people in a way that is not intrusive or disturbing to him/her or to observers.
- make sure that any allegations are recorded and acted upon, according to District 7170 Youth Protection Policy.

### **Do Not:**

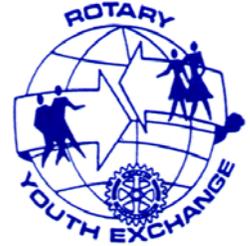
- engage in rough physical games including horseplay
- use physical force in any way, especially as a form of punishment
- touch a young person in an intrusive or sexual manner
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even as a joke

### **Try to Avoid:**

- spending too much time alone with a youth exchange student. Such situations may lead to misunderstandings.



# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL



District 7170  
Central New York State, USA  
Youth Exchange Committee

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sending (Sponsoring) Rotary District # \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Country Contact. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Host Rotary District # \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Country Contact. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Club Chairperson. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Club Counselor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Exchange Student Protection

Officer: Michele Hughes. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # 756-4739 \_\_\_\_\_

First Host Family \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

My passport number is: \_\_\_\_\_

In an emergency I can phone for:

Police \_\_\_\_\_ Fire \_\_\_\_\_ Ambulance \_\_\_\_\_

These are telephone numbers local to your host country. You will need to ask for this information.

To telephone home, I need to dial the following numbers:

Int'l Code    Country Code    Area (City)Code    My phone number

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# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 7170  
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Youth Exchange Committee



## **EXCHANGE STUDENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS**

When feeling threatened, you have the right to:

- Trust your instincts or feelings
- Expect privacy
- Say no to unwanted touching or affection
- Say no to an adult's inappropriate demands or requests
- Withhold information that could jeopardize your safety
- Refuse gifts
- Be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants
- Run, scream, and make a scene
- Physically fight off unwanted advances
- Ask for help
- Report any situation in which you feel threatened to your Host Club Counselor immediately.

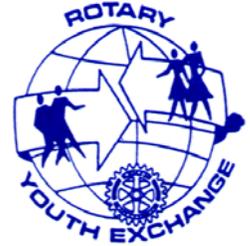
From the Boy Scouts of America Guide to Safe Scouting

D7170



# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 7170  
Central New York State, USA  
Youth Exchange Committee



## PERSONAL SAFETY CODE

- If you have a problem or are worried about something, always tell someone you trust about it, such as your host parent, host club counselor or host club chairperson. Don't suffer in silence!
- Always pack your own suitcase and never carry items abroad for others.
- When you go out, plan what you would do and where you would go if you got lost or had a problem – a shop, restaurant, police station or library.
- Before you leave your home country, make sure that you have your Important Information form, supplied to you by your Host Club Chairperson.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you will be home. Be sure to call your host parents if your plans change while you are away from home.
- If you are out at night in a city, stay in places with streetlights. Wherever you are, make sure that you don't get separated from your friends.
- If you need to use a public toilet, go with a friend.
- If you do get lost or separated, follow your plan – or go to a shop or place where you will be seen by lots of people to ask directions.
- If someone you don't know talks to you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, walk away.
- Keep your host family's address and telephone number with you at all times.
- Always keep enough money with you to make a phone call.
- Always arrange for someone to pick you up; don't go home alone.
- Make sure you know who is coming to pick you up. Never get into a car with someone you don't know.
- If you are on a bus or train and someone makes you feel uncomfortable, move to a seat near the driver.

- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly
- Be sensitive to local codes and customs.
- Think things through carefully before you act and do not take unnecessary risks.

**DISTRICT 7170 SUPPORT SYSTEM  
FLOW CHART**

\_\_\_\_\_

Student

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Host Parents  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Club Counselor Club Chairman  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
District Country Contact  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
District Chairperson  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Michele Hughes - Youth Protection  
Officer 607- 756-4739 Home  
607- 758-4118 Work

In situations requiring immediate attention, initial contact with the Protection Officer can be made by any one on this list.

## **SECTION II**

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF OUTBOUND EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT -- AS A PARENT**

Your son or daughter is about to embark on an exciting, enlightening, and sometimes scary journey that will most likely be different than anything he or she has experienced at any other time in their life. You have already done most of the preparation this young person needs to be a successful exchange student, through all you have taught and developed in your child. We have accepted this person to be an ambassador to another country because of the personality characteristics and aptitudes he or she displayed in the application and during our interview process. We believe your son or daughter can handle the challenges of living in another culture, with families different than yours, and with different rules, guidelines, and controls than those at home, and we will do all we can to prepare your child for the changes he or she will likely experience. Much of his/her success will depend on how you help him or her prepare for these adjustments during the next few months, and how you act -- or react -- to the feelings and emotions your son/daughter will very likely experience before, during, and after this exchange year. While we certainly do not know your child as well as you do, we do know how hundreds of "typical" exchange students from past years have reacted to these changes, and offer this information to parents as an aid to you.

#### **FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Exchange students have to make many decisions on their own during the year abroad, and in many cases, decisions they have not had to deal with before. You will not be there to make those decisions for your son or daughter. The host family and host Rotary club, will, to some degree, assume this role, but your son/daughter will likely have more independence and choices to make than at home. Please recognize that he/she is going through a period of great change and adjustment, but must deal with that change without relying on you, several thousand miles away.

Your son or daughter will need your support and encouragement. It is perfectly normal for exchange students to have bad days and experience homesickness. If you are sensitive to this, you will be able to reassure him/her that these reactions are perfectly normal. Encourage him/her to keep busy and get involved. These feelings will pass. If he/she has poured out frustrations in a letter to you, know that by the time you receive it, those feelings have likely

passed. You should not react to what your son or daughter was thinking a day or week ago. **Please do not react to an unhappy letter or e-mail by picking up the telephone.** People are doing their best to help and will be most supportive, and your youngster must learn to solve his or her problems without help from home. It has been our experience that parents who become overly involved with their child's problems often make it difficult for the exchange student to have a meaningful exchange, as it undermines the student's own self-confidence. Experience has also shown that a letter from home expressing your confidence in his or her ability to succeed will have a positive and lasting effect.

We strongly recommend that exchange students and parents limit telephone contact to no more often than monthly, in addition to special occasions, such as birthdays or holidays. Frequent calls to or from home can interfere with establishing a good relationship with the host family, and can hinder your son/daughter's adjustment and assimilation into the host country's culture. E-mail and "instant messaging" present a challenge that is possibly even greater than that of the telephone for negatively impacting his/her assimilation. We stress throughout the orientations and exchange year that extensive communications back home keep the exchange student mentally "connected" to home, family, and friends, and therefore "disconnected" from where they are. Such contact can delay, or may completely prevent the exchange student from becoming "part" of the culture of the host country. Students who spend much of their time exchanging messages with family and friends back home become *Reporters* instead of *Participants*. Important relationships with host families and new acquaintances cannot develop under those conditions, and your youngster may find acceptance by people in the host country more difficult when "home" has a major role in his or her life.

Recognize that the educational system in most countries is different than what your son or daughter is accustomed to. The level of teacher-student relationship, student responsibility, and classroom regiment will likely be quite different than in your community. While exchange students must attend school as a condition of the exchange, the real educational benefit is learning to live in a new and different environment, and students often think they are not "learning" anything in the classroom because of language barriers or teaching styles, especially during the early phases of the exchange. If your son/daughter complains that courses are too easy (or too difficult), or school is boring, please recognize that he or she may really be confronting other challenges such as a new language, making new friends and being accepted by classmates. While American high schools have many clubs, teams for every sport and season, and band, orchestra, choirs etc., most foreign

secondary schools are primarily academically-oriented; sports and social activities usually take place outside of school and are organized on a community or club level. The school your son/daughter attends may offer a more -- or possibly less -- rigid curriculum and fewer social and sports-oriented opportunities than he/she is used to at home. Acknowledge that school will be different; but not “better or worse” than home.

## **VISITING**

Intended visits to your son/daughter and his/her host country by you, other relatives, and especially his/her peers during the exchange year should be given careful and cautious consideration. Untimely visits and visits by friends can create problems and disruptions for host families, and may re-surface “separation” problems your young person successfully solved in the beginning of the exchange year. Visits can also interfere with school attendance, or disrupt host family holiday plans when school is in recess. To avoid these problems, we include in the *Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange* that were agreed-to by both the exchange students and their parents, restrictions on visits -- specifically during the first three quarters of the exchange year and during major holidays. On the other hand, we encourage parents to visit during the **final quarter** of the exchange year, if a visit to your son/daughter’s host country is possible for you. By that time, he/she will be fluent in the language, knowledgeable of the host country and its culture, and will serve as an excellent guide and translator. We specifically ask that you and your son/daughter discuss all intended visits from family with the entire Rotary Support System (host family, host Rotary club counselor, and District 7170 Country Contact) before visitation plans are finalized. Please understand that these requirements are intended to provide for a successful exchange, for both your young person and those who follow; and that violations have, and will, subject the exchange to an early termination.

## **AND FINALLY**

There is obviously no way we can *guarantee* that every exchange student will enjoy a completely successful year. But we do our best to help them prepare for, and experience, a year that most students who preceded them describe as “the best year of my life”. We can tell you that the percentage of “unsuccessful” exchanges is very small, and very few exchange students return early or without some positive aspects from the experience. Through our selection and assignment process, we have already aligned your son/daughter for a successful year; with your involvement in his/her preparation and orientation, a successful experience is very likely.

IF YOU WANT TO DISCUSS ANYTHING ABOUT THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM OR YOUR STUDENT'S EXCHANGE, **please contact your student's District 7170 Country Contact, or any other member of our District Youth Exchange Committee.** We are here, 24 hours a day, to provide answers and advice, or to simply offer a sympathetic ear. We will get in touch with the host country co-correspondent for further information and help, if appropriate.

**Please do not try to solve problems or attempt to make special arrangements affecting your son/daughter's exchange on your own.**

Because this is an international program, there may be cultural and/or Rotary subtleties that are not apparent to you, and there could be long range implications affecting future exchanges. Instead, please give us the opportunity to address a situation, and develop a solution that will benefit your young person as well as the exchange program. We are concerned for your child's well being, and will keep that as a priority.

**Your support and cooperation are essential elements in the success of your student's exchange year.** Your son or daughter must realize that it is not easy to be an exchange student. Recognize that it is also not always easy to be the **parents** of an exchange student. We have confidence in your son/daughter's maturity and judgment to make the decisions necessary to live and grow successfully in a strange and totally different environment. We ask you to share that confidence – the rewards will be worth the worry! You will be amazed by how much he/she develops and matures during the exchange year. Your encouragement and support, and the confidence you show, are integral parts to this growth.

# **APPENDICES**

OUTBOUND PROGRAM

REFERENCE MATERIAL  
AND  
ARTICLES

# What is Rotary?

## The History of Rotary

Rotary was started on February 23, 1905 in Chicago, Illinois, the world's first and most international service club. The founder of Rotary was attorney Paul P. Harris (1868-1947), who gathered with three others to discuss his idea of a group of businessmen from different professions getting together periodically to become better acquainted. They decided to limit membership to one representative of each profession and to rotate the meeting site among each member's place of business, to acquaint each other with their various vocations and to promote business. The rotation of meeting places is the source of the name "Rotary."

Club membership grew rapidly. The second Rotary Club was founded in San Francisco in 1908. When clubs were formed in Canada and Great Britain, in 1912, Rotary became an international organization.

Since 1905, the ideas of Paul Harris and his friends have become ideals which have been accepted by people of practically all nationalities, and of many political and religious beliefs. Today there are Rotary Clubs in Austria and American Samoa, in Brazil and Brunei, in Italy and India, in Scotland and South Africa - in some 168 countries. The universal acceptance of Rotary principles has been so great that there are now more than 28,000 Rotary clubs, with a membership of over 1.2 million men and women.

## Rotary Motto and Themes

Rotary International has adopted as its motto, "*Service Above Self*". A second theme of Rotary is "*He profits most who serves best.*" Additionally, each year, the Rotary International President coins a theme for that Rotary year.

Rotarians throughout the world quote the Four

Way Test of the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

## Rotary in Central New York

Each of the more than 28,000 Rotary clubs in the world is a member of Rotary International. Rotary is divided into 521 Districts, each of which is headed by a District Governor. We are District 7170 which consists of 45 clubs in Central New York. The first Rotary club in our part of the state, the Rotary Club of Binghamton, was organized in 1912, just seven years after Rotary began in Chicago.

Our District includes the Binghamton and Cortland area, and stretches from Trumansburg to Waverly, to Hancock, to Stamford.

The District Governor, and all officers of Rotary on the international, district or club level, serves for a Rotary fiscal year that runs from July 1 to June 30.

A number of district-level committees are organized to provide sponsorship or support for Rotary functions and initiatives that involve Rotarians from across our District. The Youth Exchange Committee, or YEC, is an example of a District Committee. Committee members represent a cross-section of the communities in District 7170, and perform many functions for the Youth Exchange Committee and our Inbound and Outbound Exchange Students, including the role of Country Contact, the point of contact with a representative of the Youth Exchange Committee in the approximately two dozen Districts and countries we exchange with.

### **The Rotary Foundation**

In 1917, the Rotary Foundation was established. The Rotary Foundation is a philanthropic trust promoting further understanding and friendly relations between peoples of different nations. The Foundation sponsors the largest scholarship program in the world and is supported purely by voluntary contributions from Rotary Clubs and Rotarians.

The Rotary Foundation has eight working programs and a budget of approximately \$45-\$50 million (US) each year. These programs include Ambassadorial Scholarships, Rotary Volunteers, The 3H program (for Health, Hunger and Humanity), Rotary Peace Conferences, World Community

Service, Special Grants, and two others that you may encounter during your exchange: Group Study Exchange, and Polio-Plus.

Group Study Exchange involves paired districts in different countries sending teams of 4 or 5 business or professional men and women for a 4- week period of study and discussion with their counterparts in the other country. Polio-Plus is Rotary's plan to eliminate polio from the world by the year 2005, Rotary's 100th birthday.

### **Rotary at the Local Level -- The Rotary Club**

The "personality" of each Rotary club is a reflection of the community it serves and the membership of that club. Even within our own District, club size ranges from less than two dozen members to more than two hundred members, and while all Rotary clubs meet weekly, some meet for breakfast, some meet during lunch, while others meet for dinner. Some Rotary club meetings are quiet and "serious", keeping to a tight schedule so the members can return to work on time, while other club meetings are less formal and structured. Some Rotary clubs conduct much of their service project business during their weekly meetings, while others carry out most of this planning "outside" their regular meeting time. You will likely find that the Rotary club hosting you will be very different from the Rotary club sponsoring you, and both will be different from other Rotary clubs you may have the opportunity to visit during your exchange

year. But Rotarians around the world all share the common philosophy of Service to Others, and as an exchange student, they are there to help you be a successful exchange student.

As with most organizations, Rotary clubs are lead by officers who are elected by the membership for one year terms, beginning on July 1, the

beginning of the Rotary Year. The officers include the Club President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and/or President-Elect, and Directors. Rotary clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program generally appoint a Youth Exchange Officer, or YEO, to oversee that program, and that Rotarian, or another member of the host Rotary club, will be designated as your Club Counselor.

# Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange

As a Youth Exchange student sponsored by a Rotary club and/or district, you must agree to the following rules and conditions of exchange. Please note that districts may edit this document or insert additional rules on the reverse side if needed to account for local conditions.

## **Strict Rules and Conditions of Exchange — Violations will result in student's immediate return home.**

- 1) Obey the Laws of the Host Country — If found guilty of violation of any law, student can expect no assistance from their sponsors or their native country. Student will be returned home as soon as he/she is released by authorities.
- 2) The student is not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Medicine prescribed by a physician is allowed.
- 3) The student is not authorized to operate a motorized vehicle of any kind which requires a federal/state/provincial license or participate in driver education programs.
- 4) The illegal drinking of alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. Students who are of legal age should refrain. If the host family offers a student an alcoholic drink, it is permissible to accept it under their supervision in their home.
- 5) Stealing is prohibited. There are no exceptions.
- 6) Unauthorized travel is not allowed. Students must follow the travel rules of the Host District.
- 7) The student must be covered by a health and life insurance policy agreeable to the Hosting District.
- 8) The student must attend school regularly and make an honest attempt to succeed.
- 9) The student must abide by the rules and conditions of exchange of the Hosting District provided to you by the District Youth Exchange Committee.

## **Common Sense Rules and Conditions of Exchange — Violations will result in a district review and restrictions. Severe/Consistent disregard for these rules will result in being returned home.**

- 1) Smoking is discouraged. If you state in your application that you do not smoke, you will be held to that position throughout your year. Your acceptance and host family placement is based on your signed statement. Under no circumstances are you to smoke in your Host Family's bedrooms.
- 2) Become an integral part of the Host Family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a student of your age and other children in the family. Respect your host's wishes.
- 3) Learn the language of your host country. The effort will be appreciated by teachers, host parents, Rotary club members and others you meet in the community. It will go a long way in your gaining acceptance in the community and those who will become lifelong friends.
- 4) Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events. Show an interest in host family and Rotary activities to which you are invited. Volunteer to get involved, do not wait to be asked. Lack of interest on your part is detrimental to your exchange and can have a negative impact on future exchanges.
- 5) Get involved in your school and community activities. Plan your recreation and spare time activities around your school and community friends. Do not spend all your time with the other exchange students.
- 6) Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counselors and school personnel in choosing friends.
- 7) Do not borrow money. Pay any bills you incur promptly. Ask permission to use the family telephone, keep track of long distance calls and reimburse your host family each month for the calls you make.
- 8) Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary club or district with proper adult chaperones. Other travel must be approved by the host district contact, host club, host family and student's own parents/legal guardians in writing exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability. Students may not travel alone or accompanied only by other students.
- 9) If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or to an event, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go.
- 10) You must show proof of proper immunization.
- 11) Students should have sufficient financial support to assure their well-being during the exchange year. Your hosting district may require a contingency fund for emergency situations. It must be replenished by the student's parents/guardians as it is depleted. Unused funds at the end of the exchange will be returned to the student. These funds must be turned over to your Host Rotary Club upon your arrival and is not meant to cover day-today expenses.
- 12) Any costs relative to a student's early return home or any other unusual costs (e.g., language tutoring, tours, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the student's own parents/guardians.
- 13) Students must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to the host district and student's parents/guardians.
- 14) You will be under the Hosting District's authority while you are an exchange student. Parents/guardians must avoid authorizing any extra activities directly to their son/daughter. The Host Club and District Youth Exchange Officers must authorize such activities. If the student has relatives in the host country or region, they will have no authority over the student while the student is in the program.
- 15) Visits by your parents/guardians, siblings and/or friends while you are in the program are strongly discouraged. Such visits may only take place with the host club and host district's consent and only within the last quarter of the exchange or during school breaks. Visits are not allowed during major holidays, even if occurring during school breaks.
- 16) Avoid serious romantic activity. Abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity.

# **GIFT SUGGESTIONS**

Calendar towels  
Stamps, stamp pins  
Balloons, specialty types  
T-shirts, all kinds (available at Champion Outlet stores)  
Notepaper with American art scenes etc.  
Picture post cards  
Silver items (Oneida Silversmiths)  
Revereware (small items at Rome outlet store)  
Craft show items  
Tapes of American music (make your own)  
I Love NY items (call 1-800-I LOVE NY)  
American flags, buttons, pins  
Jacket patches  
SU Basketball National Championship T-shirts, hats, etc.  
Museum items (Ft. Stanwix, Ft. Ontario, Salt Museum, art museums)  
Books, magazines  
Christmas stockings and ornaments  
Calendars with American scenes  
Commemorative spoons, plates etc.  
Recipe cards, books, measuring spoons & cups (Remember the rest of the world is metric)  
Maple syrup and sugar  
Small children's toys  
Bumper stickers  
Posters  
Coins  
Advertising and commercial freebies (Local industries and your Chamber of Commerce are good sources of supply)

# TOUGH QUESTIONS

Many exchange students report being “put on the spot” by their peers, host parents, family members, and Rotarians during their year when they are asked questions about the United States’ politics, environment, economy, society, etc. They are often caught off guard and often feel that they disappoint their questioners and in turn show their lack of knowledge. We have listed here some tough questions that have been asked of prior students. We leave it to you to search out the answers before you leave. It is your responsibility as D7170’s Youth Exchange “ambassador to.....” to be knowledgeable of what is “going on at home.” Read your local newspapers, the NY Times, Newsweek, Time, US News & World Report, etc.

Your hosts and others you meet abroad have an honest interest in knowing and learning more about the USA. Few ask questions to criticize (although it may sound that way), and few ask questions to make you uncomfortable or to test you (although that also may be your impression, especially if you are not prepared). These questions are meant to start you thinking and learning about USA culture BEFORE you go. If you take the time you will:

- < learn things about your culture and why you do some things that you never knew
- < be better able to compare your new culture with your own and appreciate the similarities and differences
- < find yourself able to converse easily with adults and peers you come in contact with abroad without having to worry about what you are saying or their drawing the conclusion that “here is another uninformed American.”

## The Questions:

1. What is your family life like? Is it true that your mother rules the house and that you never eat together as a family? What are your family values?
2. Why do Americans put their old people in nursing homes rather than take care of them at home like we do? Isn't this another example of the poor value Americans put on families?
3. Are Americans really happy? All we see on TV and in your movies is divorce, husbands and wives cheating on each other, killing and crime, drugs, cults. Is it really not safe to walk downtown at night? Is that why you built all those shopping malls?
4. Why do the different races in America all distrust and hate one another? Why do the white people treat the blacks so badly? Why do you keep the Indians on reservations in such poverty?
5. We have a lot of American exchange students here, and most of them are not well informed. Some can't even tell us where they live in relation to cities that we have visited in the US. Why is that?
6. Your election is coming up. Tell us a little about each of the presidential candidates.
7. Did you read about our country before you came? Tell me some of the things you learned about our government and how we handle health care. What are some things you'd like to know more about?
8. We are going to take you to our capital next weekend. Can you tell me anything about it?
9. This summer, my wife and I are going to visit New York City and also plan to visit your capital in Albany. What should we see and do? How far is it to Albany from NYC? Is it easy to find? Can we go by train or should we drive? Will we be able to visit your legislature, see your governor? What is his name?
10. What is your school like? You've been here a few months now; compare your school with ours. Which one do you like better? We have been told that our schools are more difficult because we give our students more responsibility to learn. You have to attend school, but you don't have any national exam to get into university like we do. What do you think?

11. Is it true that many Americans cannot get medical care because they do not have insurance and cannot pay for the health care? Why don't you have a national program like we do?
12. The USA is known as the richest nation in history. Why do you have such poverty in the midst of plenty? US scientists are among the best in the world and yet you have all these problems? Why?
13. You Americans seem to waste a lot of energy and we have to pay more for gas and oil because you waste it. How would you change things to make Americans more energy conscious?
14. What is the Peace Corps? What do they do nowadays? Are they really just young people trained to be government agents and spies?
15. Why do you keep pressuring Cuba when you have worked at having improved relations with most of the other remaining communist countries? Is Castro really that bad?
16. Many of my friends say that the human rights position you take with other countries is hypocritical. It seems that way when I look at how you discriminate against minorities. Do you think your country is being fair and just?
17. Were you in favor of the US invading Iraq for its oil?
18. What do you think of President Bush? Do you think that former president Clinton should have been impeached?
19. When will the US invade North Korea? Why?
20. With all the money in the US, why don't YOU help countries like Brazil who have serious problems? Instead of invading Iraq for its oil, you could spend the money helping people in poorer countries.
21. Were you afraid of SARS when you traveled to this country? What are people in the US doing to help stop SARS? What do you know about SARS?
22. Why don't Americans care what the rest of the world thinks about you?

### **Responding:**

There are many more questions that may be asked. In addition to being knowledgeable, you also need to consider how best to respond when asked. The following are a few recommendations to help you avoid confrontation and argument Remember - no one ever really wins an argument. Avoid getting drawn into one.

- < Start out your response with "I'm not sure I understand your question but I think..."; "...yes, but I think..."; "...you may be right, but another way to look at it is....."; etc.
- < Avoid these discussions when you are in a hurry. You need time to think out your responses.
- < Use examples whenever you can as they help to illustrate a point and usually are more easily understood, especially when there is a language barrier.
- < Remind them that what they see and hear on TV, radio and in the newspapers is a distortion of America just the same as what we see is a distortion of their country, and that both of you need to learn from each other what the truth is from your respective perceptions.
- < Give your questioner time to explain himself and try to have an open discussion. Remember that each of your cultures and backgrounds are DIFFERENT and neither is right or wrong, black or white. Chances are you can reach a mutual understanding.

# **E**xchange Student Jitters - Stress

## **It's Time to Board the Plane**

You have made the preparations, studied the culture and language, attended the orientations, packed your bags and the day of departure is upon you. Your emotions are peaking and the questions in the back of your mind are forcing themselves out and giving you that queasy feeling in the pit of your stomach. What is it? The experts call it “**travel stress**”.

You have landed in your host country, met your family, traveled to your “home”, unpacked in your “new” bedroom and you may not feel just right. You may feel some anxiety, you’re tired and may assume it’s jet lag. What is it? The experts call it “**travel stress**”.

If you recognize the symptoms, you can deal with them. Jet lag is real and can take a toll on you. Your biological clock has been upset. Day is night and night is day. Your body hormones may also be out of balance.

Emotionally, whether you realize it or not, (and you probably don’t) you are under a lot of stress. You have left your family, friends and familiar surroundings behind you. You may have been apprehensive about the flight, your personal safety, will you be met, will you be accepted, can you cope with the new culture, etc. Some of us are secure, some insecure, with most of us in the middle. You may be worried about being able to eat the food, learn the language, adjust to no car, make new friends, attend a new school, how will you get around with no car, adjust to different social and economic standards, accept more restrictive discipline, where is the mall.

Not knowing what to expect next may throw you off balance. All in all, you have a suitcase full of emotionally stressful issues.

Often the jet lag and stress results in physical ailments or discomfort. Indicators include feelings of anxiety, insecurity and fear. You may have trouble sleeping, or you may be extraordinarily tired and sleep for hours. Women often have irregular menstrual cycles. Upset stomach, light-headedness, bowel upsets, headache, crying jags or a combination of these is not uncommon. You may find yourself continually thinking of home and homesickness sets in. It’s all natural and to be expected. The question is how are you going to deal with this unwanted baggage that seems to have accompanied you. Sure, you remember those Rotarians telling you about travel stress, but you only half-listened and thought they were exaggerating for effect. But now you’re thinking, maybe they were right. And so now that you have it, that “travel stress” thing, let’s deal with it.

## **Dealing with it -**

First, recognize it for what it is and remind yourself that 10,000 other exchange students are probably in the same boat. Remember it is temporary and can be overcome.

Start preparing a day or two before you leave, and on the plane and in the car on the way to your host family’s home.

\* Go to bed earlier if you will be traveling east and later if traveling west to begin your body’s internal clock adjustments.

- \* Avoid alcohol, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers prior to departure.
- \* Wear loose, comfortable clothing and shoes. To help prevent your feet from swelling, get up and walk around the plane occasionally. Massage your limbs, neck and shoulder muscles.
- \* Avoid stimulants such as tea, coffee and other caffeine products before and during the flight and do not smoke.
- \* Drink plenty of non-carbonated beverages such as water or juice on the flight to keep yourself well hydrated. This helps overcome the drying effect and the poor quality of the re-circulated air.
- \* Practice deep breathing exercises to get added oxygen. Breathe in through your nose to expand your diaphragm, hold it for 3 seconds, exhale through your mouth. Repeat 10-15 times every hour or so.

Once you have arrived, establish a regimen and daily schedule for your new environment. It is helpful to exercise, whether you've done so at home or not. Walk, jog or run around your new neighborhood. Learning all the new things, especially language, is tiring. A nap after school and time to relax is often helpful. Take some time to read, write in your journal or to home, listen to music or take some time to get to know your host family. Consciously establish a daily and weekly routine to keep yourself busy, to give your days order and to help you relax.

The time it takes to adjust to your new surroundings will vary with every individual. The initial adjustment may take some people a few days while others will be up and ready to go in 24-48 hours. Realize that it takes time. Once the initial excitement wears off, you may experience a reoccurrence. But you can take control and get back on an even keel. Try not to dwell on your situation. Avoid worrying or putting unrealistic expectations on yourself such as "I will beat this feeling by tomorrow". This can cause things to get worse. Let nature take its course.

## **Summary -**

Travel stress is real and can be successfully dealt with. Travel stress includes jet lag, emotional and physical manifestations. Support is available within yourself, your host family, Rotary Club members, and your Country Contacts.

## **Stress reducing suggestions -**

- \* Recognize the symptoms
- \* Reduce the effects by preparing before and during the trip
- \* Take time to let your body and mind adjust to your new environment
- \* Seek out someone you feel comfortable with and talk. Let them know how you feel so that they can be supportive. Remember you are new to them too.
- \* Establish a regimen for yourself and keep busy.

- \* Include time for exercise and relaxation in your daily schedule.
- \* Work off frustrations, “take the dog for a walk”. Cool off before you complain.
- \* Don’t blow things out of proportion nor make an issue of small events. Be gracious and good humored.
- \* Get involved in family, help with dinner preparation and clean-up and household chores.
- \* Volunteer to take out the garbage. Become a viable, involved member of your new family as quickly as possible.
- \* Avoid competing with your host siblings. They were there first and may view you as an intruder and resent your presence in their space.
- \* Quickly learn to say “please”, “thank you”, “I’m sorry”, “I don’t understand”.
- \* Don’t be afraid to make mistakes - and you will. A sense of humor and the ability to laugh at yourself will go a long way.
- \* Relax, be yourself.

Ray Allen, D7150 Rotary Youth Exchange 5/96

# HOW TO COPE WITH CULTURE SHOCK

by Arthur Gordon

As the world grows smaller, as ever-increasing numbers of people travel, work or study abroad, more attention is being focused on a kind of silent sickness that often afflicts the inexperienced traveler or the unwary expatriate. It's the loss of emotional equilibrium that a person suffers when he moves from a familiar environment where he has learned to function easily and successfully to one where he has not. The term used to describe this malady is "culture shock".

The effects of culture shock may range from mild uneasiness or temporary homesickness to acute unhappiness or even, in extreme cases, psychological panic, irritability, hyper-sensitivity and loss of perspective are common symptoms. Often the victim doesn't know what's the matter with him. He just knows that something's wrong -- and he feels miserable.

Most experts in inter-cultural communication agree that the basic cause of culture shock is the abrupt loss of the familiar, which in turn causes a sense of isolation and diminished self-importance. "Culture shock", says anthropologist Kalvero Oberg, "is brought on by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. these signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not."

According to Dr. Oberg, these cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions or customs, are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind on hundreds of these cues, even though we may not be consciously aware of them. "When an individual

enters a strange culture," Dr. Oberg says, "all or most of these familiar cues are removed. he or she is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of goodwill he may be, a series of props has been knocked out from under him."

Sometimes the transition to an alien culture has an immediate impact. A short term American visitor to certain Eastern European countries may find himself dismayed or depressed by living conditions that seem perfectly normal and acceptable to the people of that country - toilets with no seats, for example, or even more primitive bathroom facilities. It may come as a real shock to a teenager from Texas to find that hamburgers are non-existent, or, that local hairdressers never heard of plastic curlers.

More insidious is what might be termed delayed culture shock. Often when a person takes up residence in a foreign country there's a period of excitement and exhilaration when everything seems new and challenging and fascinating. If one has friends or business connections one may be asked to dinner, taken sight-seeing, made much of -- at first. Also, in the beginning similarities between cultures are more apparent than differences. Almost everywhere people live in houses, go to work, relax on week-ends, do the shopping, eat three meals a day and so on. All this seems reassuring.

It's not until this honeymoon period ends that the newcomer begins to realize that there are endless subtle differences that leave him facing a host of perplexing problems. Many of these problems never bothered him at home, because they solved themselves almost automatically. Now, to his increased dismay, he finds that he has language troubles, housing troubles, money troubles, transportation troubles, food troubles, recreation troubles, perhaps even health troubles. All of these things drain away his reservoir of good-

humor and equanimity. Having his laundry done may become a major struggle. Making a telephone call may be a small crisis. It may seem to him that people say yes when they mean no and promise to do things which they never do. Time may be regarded quite differently by the people among whom he finds himself. So may space, in some countries people like to stand very close together when they converse, in others this violates a deep-rooted sense of privacy.

Underlying all these difficulties is the uncomfortable feeling of not really belonging, of being an outsider. In changing cultures, the newcomer has inevitably changed his own status. At home he was "somebody", or at least his place in society was established and recognized, here he is relatively "nobody". As a foreigner, he is a member of a minority whose voice counts for little or nothing. He may find that his homeland, so important to him, is regarded with suspicion or dismissed as unimportant. In short, as one observer put it, he finds himself in "circumstances of beleaguered self-esteem".

A mature, confident person may be able to shrug off these circumstances. But if the newcomer is insecure or sensitive or shy, they may seem overwhelming. Furthermore, as troubles pile up and he begins to look around for help, he may conclude that the natives of the country in which he finds himself are either incapable of understanding his plight or are indifferent to it. This in turn triggers the emotion that is one of the surest signs of culture shock: hostility to the new environment. The victim says to himself, "These people don't seem to know or care what I'm going through. Therefore they must be selfish, insensitive people. Therefore I don't like them."

Inevitably this reaction tends to increase the isolation of the unhappy visitor because people sense his antagonism and begin to avoid him. When this happens, he may seek out other disgruntled souls, usually expatriates like himself, and find melancholy relief in criticizing all aspects of the host country. These discussions almost never lead to any honest evaluation of the

situation or awareness that the difficulty may lie in the attitude of the critics themselves. They are simply gripe-sessions in which the virtues of the home country are exaggerated almost as much as the alleged failing of the country being visited. As Dr. Oberg says, "When Americans or other foreigners get together to grouse about the host country and its people, you can be sure they are suffering from culture shock."

Sometimes the victim of culture shock may go to the other extreme, surrendering his own identity and trying to imitate all the customs and attitudes of the alien culture. Or he may try to solve the problem by withdrawing into himself, refusing to learn the native language, making no effort to find friends among the local people, taking no interest in their history, art, architecture, or any other aspect of their culture. While in this state of mind he may display a variety of unattractive symptoms. One is a tendency to over-react to minor frustrations or delays or inconveniences with irritation or anger out of all proportion to the cause. Another is to be unduly suspicious, to think that people are out to cheat or swindle him because he is a foreigner. Yet another is over-concern about cleanliness, an unwarranted conviction that water, food or dishes are unsanitary when in fact they are not. Often the person is unaware of the extent to which he is displaying these symptoms.

He does know, however, that he is miserable and that the casual remedies recommended to him --- patience, hard work, mastery of the language and so on -- don't seem to do much good. Sometimes he will develop a marked degree of over-dependence on people from his own country who have passed through their own period of culture shock and are residing successfully and happily in the host country. If they in turn can display wisdom, patience and understanding of his symptoms, they often are able to shorten the span of his misery.

One reason the unhappy expatriate gravitates toward his own countrymen is that in their company he can at least feel sure of being

understood. Underlying much of his confusion is the fact that even if he speaks the language of the country there remain endless opportunities for misunderstanding. All experts in communication emphasize the fact that language and voice are by no means our only form of communication, they are supported by hundreds of gestures and facial expressions that are easily misinterpreted.

Yet another stumbling block that compounds the problems of culture shock is the tendency of many people to think of members of other cultures in terms of stereotypes. The excitable Arabs. The amorous French. The touchy Italians. The lazy Latinos. The volatile Hungarians. The materialistic Americans. Some psychologists think that anxiety-prone people cling to stereotypes because it lessens the threat of the unknown by making the world predictable...and what the victim of culture shock needs desperately is a familiar, predictable world.

Almost always, fortunately, symptoms of culture shock subside with the passage of time. The first sign of recovery may well be the reappearance of the victim's sense of humor; he begins to smile or even laugh at some of the things that irritated him as much at first. As familiarity with local language and customs increases, his self-confidence and self-esteem begin to return. He comes out of his shell and makes tentative overtures to the people around him – and as soon as he starts being friendly, they stop seeming hostile. Slowly he progresses from a grudging acceptance of his surroundings to a genuine fondness for them and becomes proud of his growing ability to function in them. In the end, he wonders what he was so unhappy about in the beginning.

Is it possible to shorten the duration of culture shock or minimize its impact? The experts think so. Here are three suggestions they offer to anyone planning a stay in a foreign land.

\* First, be aware that such a thing as culture shock exists, that it will probably affect you one way or another, but that it doesn't last forever.

\* Next, try to remember, if and when you become thoroughly disenchanted with your surroundings, that the problem probably isn't so much in them as it is in you.

41. Third, accept the idea that while it may be somewhat painful, culture shock can be a very valuable experience, a mind-stretching process that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight into yourself and wider tolerance for other people.

If it happens to you, don't think that you're strange or abnormal. If you had a happy life back home, why shouldn't you miss some aspects of it or feel a sense of loss? You'd be abnormal if you didn't.

If it happens to you, don't sit around being negative and critical, this just prolong and deepens your gloom. Try to keep busy. Arrange something pleasant to look forward to. Set goals for yourself – learning ten new foreign phrases each day, for example—and stick to them.

If it happens to you, try not to be judgmental. everyone has an ethnocentric tendency to think that his own culture is superior to all others. Actually, any culture is a good culture if it provides an environment that meets basic human needs.

If it happens to you, force yourself to look for the best, not the worst, in your situation. People who go around looking for trouble usually manage to find it. Train yourself to enjoy the diversity of people and cultures, not fear it or shy away from it.

Recently in Russia two members of an American tour-group at different times during the day bought a candy bar from a booth in a railroad station. Each was given his change in the form of chocolate wafers. One American, disturbed by this departure from the familiar, felt that he was being victimized and protested vehemently. The other, charmed by what seemed to him a quaint and delightful custom, regarded it as a novel and

Appendix F  
refreshing experience and even bragged about it to his fellow tourists. The first American, it seems reasonable to say, was far more a prisoner of his own culture, than the second.

In sum, before he leaves home the visitor to a foreign land should make up his mind neither to resist the culture in which he finds himself nor surrender to it. What he needs to do is fight or grope or inch his way toward a new and flexible personality, a personality that retains its own

cultural identity but recognizes the right of members of other cultures to retain theirs.

If that new personality can help him toward a better understanding of himself and of others, if it can enable him to communicate easily and convey warmth and understanding and goodwill across the culture barricades, then the pain of culture shock will have served its purpose, and the recovered victim will truly have the best of two worlds.

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# **C**HARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD YOUTH EXCHANGE AMBASSADOR

You have just accepted a significant challenge and the responsibilities of being an “ambassador”:

## **of America of American youth of your family of Rotary**

The real success of your exchange year is determined by the tact and manner you exercise.

We have great confidence in you to do a good job, otherwise, we would not have selected you.

Here are some of the essentials learned over the years that will make your year successful.

- 1. Review the “First Night” questions provided with each host family the first evening before you have time to do “something wrong” which you will regret and get you off to a bad start.**
- 2. Become part of your host family. Adapt to them. Comply with the rules, whether you agree with them or not. Remember, it’s all part of a learning experience.**
- 3. Keep your room clean and neat and accept your full share of the work – and the fun.**
- 4. Be loyal to your host families. Do not criticize them to others. Treat them as you would your own family here at home.**
- 5. Be sensitive to the use of the bathroom, laundry, etc. Use them when you don’t inconvenience others and use hot water sparingly. Clean up after yourself.**
- 6. Take a keen interest in other people. Ask lots of questions. Be a good listener.**

**7. NEVER compare anything in America such as our school system, government, industrial efficiencies, homes, standard of living, etc. as being better than what is found in your host country. You should provide information when asked, but do not be judgmental. It is different, but not necessarily better.**

**8. Do not express an opinion until you know what you are talking about.**

**9. Keep in close contact with your host Rotary Club. Ask to be on their club mailing list. Make a point of getting to know the members and ask them questions about themselves, their families, business, interests etc. Ask to attend their meetings if they don’t ask you.**

**10. Above all else, do not sit on problems you cannot solve on your own. Talk to the appropriate individuals: your host parents, your host club counselor, your host club president, your D7150 Country Contact. All your problems can be resolved – view them as unresolved challenges and opportunities. There is always a solution. Some solutions just take longer to find.**

**11. Your first priority should be to make yourself available for involvement with Rotary clubs, club members and host families. All other interests should receive a secondary priority.**

**12. Always express your thanks to anyone who does something for you. If they took the time and interest to do something for you, then you can take the time to show your appreciation.**

**13. When you return home, tell the facts about your year’s stay. If you have some constructive criticism, tell us so we can improve the program. But please do not do this at the Welcome Home Dinner.**

**14. Each country has different customs, values, and mannerisms. Be sensitive to them. Adjust to them. The adjustments are all part of the exchange experience.**

**15. Remember – what you say and do can effect future exchanges with that country.**

**This will be one of the most memorable years of your life. Enjoy it to the fullest! Good Luck and best Wishes!**

# QUESTIONS FOR “FIRST NIGHT” WITH HOST FAMILY

1. What do I call you? “Mom”, “Dad”, or given (first) name?
2. What am I expected to do daily other than:
  - a. Make my bed
  - b. Keep my room tidy
  - c. Clean the bathroom up after I use it?
3. What is the procedure about dirty clothes? Where do I keep them until wash day?
4. Should I wash my own underclothes?
5. What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
6. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
7. Where can I keep my bathroom accessories?
8. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings?
9. When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
10. When are mealtimes?
11. Do I have a regular job at meal times? Set, clear, wash, dry the dishes; the garbage?
12. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
13. What areas are strictly private e.g. your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?
14. May I put posters and pictures in my room? On the wall? How do you want things hung?
15. What are your feelings about my drinking alcohol if offered by you?
16. What time must I get up weekday mornings?
17. What time should I get up weekends and holidays?
18. What time must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
19. What time must I be in on school nights if I go out? (Exceptions by special arrangement).
20. What time must I be in on weekends if I go out?
21. What dates are the birthdays of family members?
22. May I have friends stay overnight?
23. What are your rules on entertaining friends in my room?
24. Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?

25. What are the rules about phone calls? Local?, Long Distance?, Overseas? How and when may I pay for calls I make? How do you want me to keep track of my pay telephone calls?
26. What are the rules about access to the Internet and e-mail (if there is a computer in the house)? Are there time limits or time periods that use is permitted or prohibited?
27. May my friends call me? What times are not good?
28. What is the procedure about posting mail?
29. Do any of you have any pet dislikes? e.g.. chewing gum, music types, being late, wearing curlers or a hat at the table, being interrupted while reading, etc.
30. How do I get around our community? bus, bicycle, be driven, riding with friends, etc.
31. What about transportation to the mall or movies?
32. May I play the stereo or TV?
33. May I use kitchen appliances? Microwave? Dishwasher? Stove?
34. What are your expectations about going to church?
35. May I smoke? Where? (Rotary discourages smoking in general and forbids smoking in bedrooms)
36. If I have something bugging me, how do you want me to handle it?
  - a. Write a note explaining it
  - b. Ask for a heart to heart discussion
  - c. Tell my counselor
  - d. Keep it to myself and live with it
37. How often can I go out during the week?
38. Who pays for “family event” expenses? me? you? (movies, sports events, concerts/shows )
39. Can I use the shampoo and tooth paste or buy my own?
40. What do I do about school lunch? Buy? Bring from home?
41. Are there any eating habits or foods I need to discuss? I don't like \_\_\_\_\_.

**In general, ask about those things you feel are most important the first night, and then other over the next few nights. Try to always keep an open and honest line of communication with your Host Family and Rotary counselors.**

# HOW TO FILE AN INSURANCE CLAIM

**(Applies to Students who purchase Insurance through District 7170 only)**

**American International Companies  
Through CISI BOLDUC  
POLICY NUMBER: GLB 9024420**

All students who are insured under this program have been provided a claim form, policy, and Insurance Identification Card. If additional forms are required, write to:

CISI BOLDUC  
River Plaza  
9 West Broad Street  
Stamford, CT 06902-3788  
Or Telephone: 1-800-303-8120, Ext. 5137

**SEND ALL MEDICAL CLAIMS TO:**

**CISI BOLDUC  
River Plaza  
P.O. Box 15701  
9 West Broad Street  
Stamford, CT 06902-3788**

Telephone: 1-800-303-8120

Fill out Section A completely. Be sure to give the name and address of the **current** host family. Sign and date in the lower part of Section A.

If the student is a minor (under age 18), a host parent should sign the claim form to insure that the claim is not delayed due to lack of Authorization acceptable to the insurance company.

Note: be sure that all questions are answered or an "N/A" (not applicable) is entered in the blanks to show that you have not overlooked anything.

Section B should be completed by the medical service provider unless you are attaching an itemized bill showing the services provided and amount paid. Itemized bills should clearly indicate the charge or payment. Attach any bills you have, whether you have already paid them or not.

Be aware that the policy has deductibles which you and your parents are responsible for paying.

If filing a claim from outside the USA, be sure to mail the claim "AIRMAIL". Otherwise it takes weeks to reach the USA and payment will be delayed. If the payment has not been received in about one month, call the claims department at the appropriate telephone number to determine what is holding up the payment. They may just need more information, which you can give them over the phone.

Claim payments will be made by check in US dollars. Make sure you have a way to cash or deposit the claim check. Also consider where you will be living four to six weeks from the time you send the claim to the insurance company; you don't want it arriving at your host family after you have returned home.

If you have problems contact the District 7170 Youth Exchange Committee member listed as the Insurance Contact, or your Country Contact.

# Rotary District 7170 Youth Exchange Program

## Student Security Procedures

- 1 Know your area. Ask yourself:
  - a. Are there terrorist groups where I am?
  - b. Do they target Americans?
  - c. Are they liable to be violent?
  
- 2 What should you do
  - a. Be aware of your surroundings
  - b. Avoid large public gatherings
  - c. Try to blend in with your local surroundings. In other words, be a good exchange student.
    - i. Adapt and then assimilate into the culture.
    - ii. Wear clothes that are more of the local culture.
    - iii. Be careful not to spend a lot of money or carry around a lot of money.
    - iv. Understand that in some countries, blending in will be impossible.
  - d. Be “unpredictable”. Vary your daily routine.
  - e. Don’t be the “ugly American”. Accept that other ways may be just different.
  - f. Remove yourself from confrontational situations.
  - g. Upon arrival, contact the American embassy/consulate and tell them:
    - i. Who and where you are.
    - ii. That you are a Rotary Exchange Student.
    - iii. That you expect to be there for one year.
  - h. In some countries, expect to have to register with the local police – DO IT!
  - i. Maintain regular contact with Rotary Counselors in your host country and home.
  - j. Know where your passport and return tickets are. **DON’T CARRY THEM WITH YOU!**
  - k. Concentrate on learning the language and culture of your country before you depart.
  - l. Follow the rules and laws of your host country, host family and Rotary.
  - m. Expect that people you come in contact with may disagree with US actions.
  - n. If threatened – tell your support contacts.

Appendix J

- 3 What should you NOT do:

- a. Don't "hang out" with groups of other Americans (bus stops, nightclubs, bars, etc.)
  - b. Don't be an obvious American (don't wear US flag pins, t-shirts, caps, etc.)
  - c.
  - d. Don't get involved in demonstrations, peace marches or other political gatherings.
  - e. Do not take sides.
  - f. If there is trouble, don't panic. You'll need your wits.
- 4 What to do if there is a crisis there or in the US.
- a. Check in with your Host Rotary District YE Counselor or Chairman.
    - i. Let them know that you are OK.
    - ii. Ask them what the procedures will be during the crisis.
    - iii. Follow the procedures to the letter. If you are told not to go outside after dark, DON'T!
  - b. Contact your Sponsor Rotary District YE Country Contact.
    - i. Let them know that you are OK.
    - ii. Let them know what the procedures are for your District.
  - c. Contact your parents and let them know that you are OK.

# I T'S TIME TO GO HOME

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## Context

You're sitting in "your" room. In any case, it's the room that you've come to know as your own. You have, after several months, adjusted to your host culture. You probably feel as if you have finally become a member of this new culture. You have made friends, gone to school, become a member of a family. Many people don't even believe that you are a foreign student.



Remember how you felt when you first arrived in this new place? You knew that you would experience "culture shock," but you had no idea just how intense those feelings would be. For the first part of your year you had moments where you wanted nothing but to go home. But you stuck it out. You don't know when it happened, but one day you realized that you had made it. You woke up from a dream in another language. You were mistaken for a "native" in a restaurant. You forgot certain things about your country. You changed.

Now it's almost time to go home. Once again, you are on a roller coaster of emotions. You are excited to see your family and friends again, but at the same time you are filled with feelings of anxiety and fear. You are starting to experience the initial phase of "re-entry shock."

## What to Expect

Because no two people are exactly alike, it's hard to predict exactly what you will go through when you return home. It's important, however, to anticipate and to prepare yourself for the possibilities. If you feel that you have adjusted well to your host culture, if you feel that, in many ways, you have "become" American or French, or Belgian, or German, or Mexican, etc., you will most likely have a more challenging time coming home. It is ironic that the more "successful" you have been as an exchange student, the more difficult it will be for you to adjust to being American again. Just as you survived and

indeed excelled as an exchange student, so too will you re-adjust to being back home.

## This isn't Home!

You have probably constructed all kinds of mental pictures about what coming home will be like. You know that you have changed. Be prepared for things at home to have changed as well. Your siblings have grown, your friends have moved on, your parents may have renovated the house. The home that you return to can never really measure up to the "home" that has existed in a dream-like quality in your head for all of these months.

A valuable aspect of living in another culture is that it provides you with another perspective of your country. What you have learned about the U.S. while you have lived abroad may, in fact, be negative. You may find, especially for the first month or so back home, that nothing is as you remembered and nothing is as wonderful as it was in your host country. You may find that most Americans are too consumer-oriented, too fast-paced, too overtly friendly, insincere, or too whatever. You may feel as if you just want to withdraw and day dream about your host country. Don't.

Know that, in time, you will readjust. Try not to constantly complain to your friends and family. Remind yourself how you felt the first month or so of your exchange. Reread your journal. It may help keep your perspective.



## You're a Different Person

Be prepared. Your parents may not recognize you at the airport. You may have put on weight, changed your hairstyle. You have physically matured. You have adopted the fashions of your host culture. For the past few months, you probably didn't want to "look" like an American. And now you don't. You may want to send a current photo of yourself to your family. That way how you look when you come home won't be a tremendous shock for them!

You have changed inside as well. You are not the same person you were before you left. You have experienced many things. You have learned so much about others and about yourself. Your insights have been challenged and broadened. You will now see the world from another perspective, and you won't even realize how much your insights and values have changed until you come home. It is important that you understand that those back home have not experienced what you have. Your friends and family will not necessarily appreciate being told that they have silly habits, or that what they eat is disgusting, or that you disapprove of how they do or see things. You must remember to be diplomatic and not negative.

It is true that sometimes you will feel isolated and misunderstood. Your friends and family will tire of hearing about your year abroad. They will become exasperated every time you bring up your host country. They may tune you out. Try not to wallow in self-pity. Don't withdraw. Keep the lines of communication open with your family and friends. They can't understand what you're feeling if you don't tell them. Keep in touch with your friends and family in your host country. Try to make contacts with other exchange students. They will be valuable resources and provide support for you.

## Readjusting Socially

When you first arrived in your host culture, you probably stood out. Everyone recognized you as American. You dressed funny, your

accent was strange, or you could hardly speak the language at all. Sometimes you may have felt like a freak. It took some time, but you were finally accepted by your peers in your host culture.

Friends back home have written to you or may even have visited. To some extent they have kept you informed about what's going on back home. There is no way that you could possibly know everything, and you will find that you are a bit behind on the social scene back home.

Styles will have changed, different music will be on the radio, slang expressions will be different, new people will be popular. Once again, you may find yourself feeling like an outsider. Some people will think that you're really cool, while others may make fun of you. In fact, you may find that you don't have a lot in common with the people who were your best friends before you left. Prepare yourself for this; readjusting to social life can be a difficult process for you. Realize that, in some ways, you can reinvent yourself. You have developed a different personality as a result of your year abroad. Embrace the new you. You have gained valuable insight and maturity--others will surely come to appreciate this about you, especially if you appreciate it about yourself.

## Is That English You're Speaking?

You have been immersed in the language of your host country and you may have difficulty expressing yourself appropriately in English, at least for the first few weeks back home. You will have forgotten words, expressions, slang. You may "go blank" when trying to communicate. It may be frustrating sometimes. Sometimes, though, it will be amusing to you and to your loved ones. Utilize the process of re-learning English as a way to re-establish relationships. This way, others will feel as if they are contributing to your successful readjustment. If you have lived in a country where English is spoken, you have most likely developed an accent that is unique to that



country. You have learned different terms different slang, new expressions. Some people back home may find your new way of speaking to be interesting and unique. Others may think that you're "faking it" or that you have a superior attitude. Don't be discouraged. Others will adjust to your new language mannerisms, and you will soon fall back into an American accent. Remember, all of these adjustment processes require time and patience.

It's important to note that you have developed different non-verbal habits as well. How closely (or not) you stand to someone, the gestures that you use while speaking, how you move your eyes, whether-or-not you make eye contact and with whom, how frequently you touch others, all of these patterns of non-verbal communication may be different for you now. Americans generally maintain a greater spatial distance when interacting than do Western Europeans and South Americans, for instance. Females in Japan do not maintain eye contact with males in the same ways as American females do. You may find that your patterns of non-verbal communication send different "messages" back home. Be aware of this. You will soon re-adjust your movements to your surroundings.

## What to Do

### Expect the Unexpected

As soon as you realize that coming home will be different from what you had imagined, you will have made an important step. Most likely, by now, you are an expert on change. You have experienced many ups and downs and felt like you were on a roller coaster. You have adapted to many kinds of changes and you have succeeded. Realize that change is inevitable and can ultimately be beneficial to you and to your life. See change as a teacher, as yet another adventure for you to experience.

### Your Health Matters

For the first two weeks back home, you will be exhausted, both physically and

emotionally. It may be tempting for you to jump into a busy schedule of parties, get-togethers and reunions. Try to "take it slow" for awhile to give yourself time to readjust. You may also feel depressed and anxious from time to time. These feelings are inevitable results of re-entry. They are also temporary. In time you will feel more comfortable with and relaxed in your surroundings.

### Be Open in Your Communication

Some of the frustrations that you will feel as a result of your re-entry can be remedied with thoughtful and open communication. You will occasionally feel out-of-place and misunderstood by your friends and family. Discussing how you feel in a loving way will better ensure that you receive the support you need. Being constantly critical and negative will only serve to further alienate you from your loved ones.

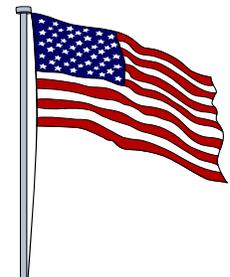


### Create a Balance

You now have a dual identity, a bi-nationality. You are part American, but in very real ways, you are also French, German, Austrian, Mexican, etc. Realize how wonderful that is. You will never be "just" your culture again. You have been exposed to a whole new world of being and seeing.

## YOUR NEW WORLD

Take a mental inventory of those things about being American that are important to you and combine them with those things that you value about your "own" cultural identity. Be proud of who you are. The experiences that you have had will make you a more well-rounded person and a more sensitive member of our global community.



**Good Luck and Welcome home.**

# **S**o You Think You're Home Again:

## **Some Thoughts For Exchange Students Returning "Home"**

By Dennis White, Ph.D.

### **Initial Culture Shock**

Remember what it was like those first few weeks and months going abroad? It was new, exciting, often confusing, and always changing. And while your whole year may have been exciting, it wasn't always pleasant. You probably became irritated with and even hostile to your host culture when the deeper differences between your culture and their culture became apparent. As you began to develop real language skills, and you better understood fundamentally different cultural values, you began the slow process of adapting. Eventually, maybe only at the end of your stay, you began to realize how you could really fit in - adapting fairly well to your adopted culture, while maintaining your own native cultural identity. You became bicultural. And then, just when it was getting good, the year was over and you had to go "home".

Most people who live abroad for an extended time go through similar successive stages of culture shock. These stages are generally recognized as being:

1. Initial Excitement or Euphoria.
2. Irritability and Hostility.
3. Slow and Gradual Adaptation
4. Eventual Adjustment to Biculturalism

If your experience was anything like this, you learned that culture shock is not just adjusting to jet lag and different food. It is an on-going process of developing increased cultural competence, by being "shocked" by differences, adjusting to them, learning new skills and eventually adapting. And when you prepared for going abroad, you had some expectation that you would experience culture shock. It is not possible (or even desirable) to avoid culture shock, but at least anticipating it made it somewhat easier - and kept you from thinking it was all your fault, or all the new culture's fault.

### **Reverse Culture Shock**

As you return home, you are likely to experience some very similar, but possibly surprising reactions that are part of what is known as reverse culture shock, or re-entry shock. In the first few weeks back, many people feel the effects of jet lag, general exhaustion from lots of changes, fatigue from an overdose of welcome home parties and trying to do and see everything and everyone at once. This flurry of activity can cause a significant degree of disorientation where it is difficult to tell exactly what thoughts and feelings you are having.

But mixed in with all of this are two distinct and often conflicting reactions. One is the same excitement stage as in initial culture shock. It may be very exciting to be back, to see family and friends, to tell about your adventures and to do things you have missed for a year. When this reaction occurs, it fairly quickly wears off and is replaced by the second stage of culture shock - irritability and hostility. This stage often comes much more quickly than in initial culture shock, and can be much more severe and disturbing. It also may be the first reaction you have to coming home, with no excitement stage at all.

There are several reasons that you may not feel excitement at all, or for very long.

Remember, when you went abroad initially:

1. You wanted to go.
2. You expected and looked forward to learning about different things.
3. You were warned to expect culture shock.
4. Though you may have been sad to leave family and friends, you knew it would not be forever - you were coming back.

Now that you are returning at the end of your exchange year:

1. You may not want to come home.
2. You may expect things to be just like they were when you left (or at least that things will be very familiar)
3. You may not have been sufficiently warned about reverse culture shock (or you don't think it would happen to you).
4. You may be very sad to leave friends and family in your host culture because you know there is a possibility that you will never see them again.

If reverse culture shock is so unpleasant, why not try to avoid it? Because it is impossible if your exchange year was successful. In fact the extent to which you immersed yourself in your host culture, and truly adapted, is probably the best indicator of how much reverse culture shock you will experience. People who don't have much trouble readapting to their native culture probably didn't get very involved in their host culture. They didn't change much, so they don't have to re-adjust much.

### **The Extent Of Change**

If your exchange year was a success, you have changed in ways that you probably cannot describe, or completely understand yet. You have become a skilled world traveler. You are a skilled bi-cultural person. You can actually get along quite well, not just be a tourist, in another culture. You have learned to think of things differently by looking at the world from someone else's point of view long enough to really understand it. In a sense, you have become a citizen of the world, so it may be more than a little confusing to think of where "home" is.

Some of these things will probably happen to you. You will find yourself thinking or dreaming in your new language. You will try to explain something to someone back home and not be able to give a precise translation of what you are talking about. You will talk to your parents about one of your host parents, calling the host parent "mom" or "dad". You will think your hometown is very small, or that your friends think in "small" ways.

So don't be too surprised if your family and friends seem a bit uncomfortable with you. They probably are, because you aren't the same person who left them a year ago. Don't underestimate how much you have changed and how strange you may seem to those who knew you before. You may be very proud of your independence, self-confidence and internationalism. But they may see you as self-absorbed, critical of everything and not interested in fitting in.

Remember that those around you may have changed as well, if not in the same ways you have. If you are expecting things to be the same, you will have more of a shock than if you are looking for changes. Your friends have had a year of growing and maturing and your family situation may have changed (deaths, divorces, moves, job changes). You missed some important events in their lives, just as they missed some important ones in yours. Even those things that haven't really changed may seem quite different, because you see them differently.

Though you may love your native country more than ever, you are also much more likely to be critical of it, and question common cultural practices that you took for granted before you left.

### **Ways To Deal With Reverse Culture Shock**

The single best thing you can do is to anticipate and accept that you will experience some degree of reverse culture shock. The worst thing you can do is to deny it, or try to avoid it. People often try to deny it because they think there might be something wrong with them if they admit it. It is, in fact, very normal, and you will have more problems than necessary if you try to deny it.

More than anticipating and accepting reverse culture shock, you can actually view it as a positive, if sometimes painful, growth experience. It is and can be the completion of the circle of change in an intercultural experience. I like to think of it as the third year of your exchange. The first was the year preparing to go abroad. The second was the actual exchange. The third is the year when you can more completely appreciate the changes you have made, the readjustment to your native culture, and the fact that you will be bi-cultural for the rest of your life. In subsequent years you will have times when you experience reverse culture shock, and when you feel like you just got home again, but it will never be as shocking an experience as that first year back.

You can also help yourself by talking about your feelings as often as you can. You may wear out lots of initially sympathetic ears doing this. You may notice that you seem to have an almost incessant need to talk about your experiences. Your friends, especially, may get impatient with you, so you may need to learn to be selective with whom you share your experiences. There is often a conflicting urge to keep it all to yourself because you think people won't understand or don't care, or because you think that talking about it in the past tense confirms that it is over - and you don't want to accept that. (Many students don't completely unpack for months, for the same reason - they don't want to admit that it is over.) Of course, that's the issue - it's over and it isn't. The experience is over, but not the memories and the impact on your life.

Sometimes it's best to find other recently returned students, or even people who have been back for years. You can tell how this feeling lingers when an exchange student, Peace Corps Volunteer or missionary starts talking about their experience, even if many years ago. They get excited, they can't stop talking, and they get a glassy, far-off look on their faces. Don't underestimate your parents as listeners. Sometimes they are the only ones who will politely listen as you tell a story for the hundredth time. But however you do it, talk. It is in this way that you can help others understand you, and more importantly, learn to clarify your thoughts and feelings and better understand yourself.

You can also make things easier for yourself by trying not to make too many big decisions, unless you absolutely have to. Don't be impatient with yourself if you have trouble making decisions. Your goals in life may have changed. Because you have a new perspective, some of the plans you made a year or more ago may not seem as relevant now. Remind yourself, your family, and friends that you are going through a period of adjustment, and it may take time for you to sort things out.

Finally, don't be too concerned if the course of your reverse culture shock doesn't seem to follow the pattern described here. Each of your experiences abroad was unique, and so will be your re-entry. While your year abroad was

probably of great value to you, you might not have had the same emotional attachment to people that other students describe. So you may not have as much trouble letting go of those attachments and getting on in life with new and renewed friends. Going on to college or university is also quite different than returning to high school and some of the issues are different for these two situations.

### **Feeling “At Home”**

Reverse culture shock subsides, though it never disappears. Eventually you will come to terms with yourself and your “new” native culture, incorporating the fact that you are now a member of another culture as well. You can learn to be at peace with true bi-culturalism. This is the ability to move from cultural practice to cultural practice, with skill, as the situation calls for it. And while you may somewhat sadly come to accept that you can never truly come “home” again, you can learn to feel “at home” in the world at large.

*Dr. Dennis White is a clinical psychologist, returned Peace Corps Volunteer and Rotarian in District 6220, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, USA. He has worked in many exchange programs dealing with preparation for exchanges as well as returning home. He is a program consultant to the District 6220 Rotary Youth Exchange Program as well as to the Central States RYE Program. He has written several other articles on the exchange experience and produced a 45-minute videotape on the same topic. He is frequently contacted to discuss re-entry problems by students, parents and Rotarians. He may be reached at*

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# **T** ravel Policy For District 7170 Outbound Exchange Students

**The Rotary Youth Exchange program is a cultural and educational exchange, NOT a travel exchange.** Each hosting district has its own rules for travel, and all D7170 Outbound students must live by the rules of the host district. The host district and District 7170 Youth Exchange Committee, host Rotary club and host parents are responsible for students while on exchange. Everyone must know where students can be reached in case of emergency or a message from home.

Exchange students should have no expectations of being tourists. The host Rotary club and host parents are under no obligation to provide travel experiences nor permit them. However, some travel through the generosity of, and with the host club, individual Rotarians and host families is encouraged. **Under no circumstances shall students make their own travel arrangements and then expect the host club and host parents to agree. Exchange students must comply with this policy, and host parents are asked to enforce it. Violations of this policy may be grounds for terminating the exchange, and returning the student to his or her home country immediately.**

**IN ALL CASES, THE STUDENT MUST POSSESS WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE NATURAL PARENTS AUTHORIZING TRAVEL DURING THE EXCHANGE YEAR.**

**Individual travel approvals will depend on rules of the host district. There will be no travel allowed that has not been approved by your host district, host parents, and host rotary club counselor in accordance with these rules.**

**UNACCOMPANIED TRAVEL IS NOT ALLOWED.**

## **VISITS FROM HOME**

Under no circumstances will travel be allowed with siblings, friends from home, former exchange students. All travel must be accompanied by an adult approved by the host club or district. Visits from parents from home must be approved and coordinated by the hosting district.

**UNAUTHORIZED TRAVEL WILL RESULT IN THE STUDENT BEING RETURNED HOME**