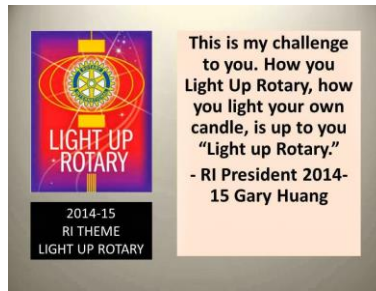


Guide for District 7850

*Judy Christensen
District 7850 RYLA Director
judith.christensen@uvm.edu*



Rotary International District 7850

What is RYLA?

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is Rotary's leadership training program for youth. RYLA participants range from age 15 to 30; however, most districts and their member clubs choose to focus on a specific age group. District 7850 has chosen participants completing their sophomore year as our target group (although as indicated below, freshmen and juniors may be considered under special circumstances).

As an award that must be earned, RYLA emphasizes leadership, citizenship, and personal growth. Selection of candidates begins at the Club level, but the award requires full participation in the District's 2½ day RYLA Conference held in June at Lyndon State College after which the participant receives his/her Rotary Youth Leadership Award from the sponsoring club. The District 7850 RYLA Program Goals are to:

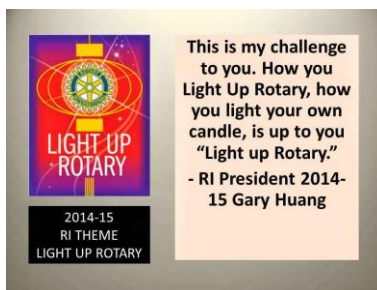
- demonstrate Rotary's values of service, high ethical standards, and world peace through a program validating Rotary's respect and concern for youth;
- encourage and assist young people in responsible and effective voluntary youth leadership by providing them with a valuable and effective training experience;
- foster continued & stronger leadership of youth by youth; and
- recognize and reward publicly young people who are rendering service to their communities as youth leaders.

History of RYLA

Originating in 1959 in Queensland, Australia, RYLA was created as a festival highlighting local youth organized in honor of a royal visit by Princess Victoria. The Rotary Youth Leadership Award Program was officially adopted by Rotary International in 1971. Conducted on a district level, RYLA offers Rotarians a special opportunity to mentor the developing qualities of leadership and good citizenship among young people in their communities.

RYLA and Rotary's New Generations Initiative

New Generations Service became Rotary's fifth Avenue of Service in 2010. It is defined in Article 5 of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution: **New Generations Service** recognizes the positive change implemented by youth and young adults through leadership development activities, involvement in



community and international service projects, and exchange programs that enrich and foster world peace and cultural understanding.

Who is eligible to attend RYLA?

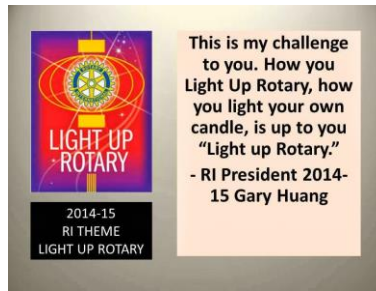
RYLA participants in District 7850 are students completing their sophomore year (approximately 15-16 years of age). While each local club may develop its own eligibility requirements for accepting applicants (see below), RYLA participants are generally young people who display or have displayed, or are potential candidates to display, the ability to assume a leadership role.

How can I become involved with RYLA?

District 7850's RYLA committee welcomes volunteers at a variety of commitment levels, from those who wish to help plan the weekend as a member of the District's RYLA Committee, to those who would simply like to attend a portion of the program to see what it's all about. Local club support is essential for publicizing the program and providing support for the selected participant(s) as outlined in the following section. So, whether you are looking for opportunities in your own town, or would like to get involved in the creation of the program, you can begin by speaking to your club's RYLA chair, or club president. At the district level, please contact RYLA Director Judy Christensen at judith.christensen@uvm.edu.

LOCAL ROTARY CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

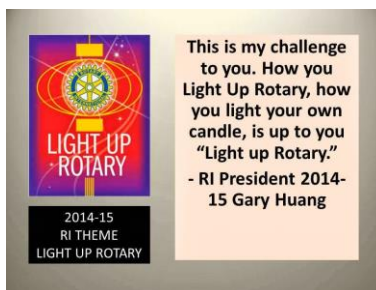
1. Select a RYLA Coordinator/Chair: This person serves as the club's primary liaison with the District RYLA Committee and is responsible for ensuring that the local club has a good selection and follow-up process. It is not necessary for the local Chair to attend RYLA although it is helpful!
2. Publicize the Program: The local Rotary Club's RYLA Coordinator should supply his/her local media with news releases describing the purpose and merits of the program and information to potential applicants/candidates about the local Rotary Club's application and selection process. This is a terrific way for local clubs to reach out to community youth;
3. Promote & Distribute Applications: The local Rotary Club's RYLA Coordinator should promote the program to young people through the local high school(s), churches, and youth groups and invite their youth to apply. Clubs will be given "posters" to help with this.
4. Complete a Selection and Follow-up Process: See below for guidelines!



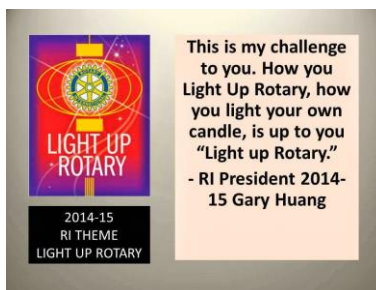
SUGGESTED SELECTION FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: The following steps are suggested, but not required. What is required is the Local Club has a selection AND FOLLOW-UP process that meets the 4 Way Test, is documented and can be clearly described to the District should the need arise!

1. Identify Community Partners to Help with Recruitment: Clubs may request help recruiting through a partnership with a guidance counselor or other staff member at the local high school or other community entities such as churches, youth service organizations or private schools. In coordination with your community partner(s), the local Club should follow this guide and work with community partner(s) to encourage applications from potential participants who are currently sophomores (10th graders) who may be or could become youth leaders. (In some cases, current freshmen – 9th grade - or juniors – 11th grade - may be considered.) However, your Club may accept application(s) directly from qualified candidates already known to the Club. Each Club can also decide whether or not to accept relatives of Club members as applicants.
2. Reviewing Applications and Interviews: Each club establishes its own application and interview process with participating high schools, churches and youth groups. It is suggested that recommendations from teachers or other community leaders are included with applications as a way to make the opportunity to participate in RYLA available to young people who have leadership potential, but may not be in the often chosen “popular” or “assertive” categories. In addition to reviewing applications, it is recommended that the local Rotary Club conduct interviews with all or some of the applicants (if the pool is too large and needs to be narrowed) in order to make direct contact with interested youth and to enhance the Club’s decision-making process. During the personal interview, no Rotarian or other adult should be alone in a room with the candidate(s). Note the candidate’s leadership potential, attitude and appearance. Open ended questions are helpful when exploring for evidence of leadership. Some examples of questions that may be included in an application form and/or used in the interview are:
 - What is your definition of leadership?
 - Can you identify someone, living or deceased, who you think is/was by your standards a good leader, and why?
 - What do you enjoy doing in school?
 - What do you enjoy doing when you are not in school?
 - Describe what you think the local Rotary Club does for/provides to your community?
 - Why do you want to attend the RYLA Conference?
 - What do you feel you could contribute to the RYLA Conference?



3. Selecting RYLA Participants: The selection of candidates is carried out by the local Rotary Club. Clubs may determine their own selection process, but finalists should be selected from a pool of candidates. The quality of the youth's application and teacher recommendation (or community leader recommendation if churches or other community groups participate) can contribute important information. By a careful review of the applications with recommendation letters and interviews, if possible, the field should be narrowed to two (2) candidates and at least one to two alternates. The goal for alternate selection is for the club to replace candidates who cannot attend with an alternate of the same gender whenever possible. In addition, if your Club wants to fund more than two participants, the District RYLA Committee may be able to accept your alternate(s) into the program if slots are available once all clubs have registered their participants;
4. Notification of RYLA Participants - Each Club should contact each candidate (including alternates) as soon as possible of his/her selection to attend the RYLA Conference, the avenue by which the award is actually earned. Speak to the candidate's parent(s) as well about this opportunity. Obtain a verbal commitment that s/he will attend the conference and follow-up your conversation with a letter or email. Inform each candidate that s/he will be contacted by the District's RYLA Committee in early May with information about the weekend in June. Be sure that your selected participant(s) knows the dates of RYLA to ensure it does not interfere with other end of school or family activities. **ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND THE ENTIRE WEEKEND FROM 8:00 AM ON FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY AT APPROXIMATELY 1:00 pm.** Give each candidate the name of the club RYLA contact and his/her contact numbers and respective addresses in case questions or problems arise. **IMPORTANT: Explain to each candidate and parents that specific information about what actually happens during the conference will not be provided to ensure that all RYLA participants are on equal footing with each other. However, the information being sent by the District RYLA Committee will contain what is needed for adequate preparation.**
5. Enrolling Candidate(s) & Payment - When the local Rotary Club selects its candidate(s), the Club must pay the fee per candidate and submit the proper District application forms by the established deadline to the RYLA District Registrar Larry Vars lvars@pjnoyes.com, P.O. Box 22, Lunenburg, VT 05906. The fee and forms will be available by District Team Training Seminar annually;
6. Engaging Candidate(s) - To better acquaint the candidate about the principles of Rotary service and to provide an opportunity for Rotarians in the sponsoring Club to meet their candidate(s), it is recommended to invite each candidate to attend a meeting of the sponsoring Rotary Club before RYLA begins. Also, consider inviting the participant to club events or service projects. It is very helpful to invite the parents (who might make good potential members!) as well. Remember that it creates a feeling of uncertainty on the part of the candidate(s) if you go months at a time without contact;

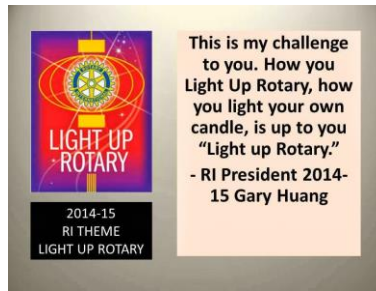


7. Preparing Candidate(s) - Verify that your candidate(s) have transportation to and from the RYLA Program. If it is not available, provide it. Stay active in your candidate(s) preparation for RYLA to ensure the participant(s) and parents can enjoy participation.
8. Celebrating Your RYLarians' Achievements and Maintaining Contact With Them – After your candidates have completed RYLA, they have “earned” the award and are now officially RYLarians! Invite your RYLarians’ back to a Club meeting preferably in the Fall when the experience is still fresh! Ask them to say a few words about their experiences and what they learned. The sponsoring Club will learn how their sponsorship dollars were put to beneficial use. The Club will also be provided with a certificate of completion for each RYLarian to either be presented during the meeting if they are available then or at a later date. The certificates will be provided to your Club by the District RYLA Committee. It is especially nice if the Club has each certificate framed. Be sure to place an announcement in your local paper! RYLA alumni make great future Inter/Rotaractors, GSE Team Members, and other Rotary youth programs. They can also help you recruit/select future RYLarians.

NOTE: Each club selects its candidates differently. Feel free to develop a process that suits your club’s requirements. The District RYLA committee trusts your judgment of the best possible youth leaders. If you have any questions, would like any assistance, or simply want to hear about what other clubs are doing, please contact District Chair Judy Christensen judith.christensen@uvm.edu, or attend a RYLA informational session at one of the District meetings in January or April.

Specific RYLA District 7850 Conference Information

1. A framework of the activities conducted during the weekend, and the District’s goals for these activities can be obtained from District Chair, Judy Christensen. The District RYLA Committee asks that you provide only basic information to the participant(s). Our goal is for all participants to start on the same footing and to approach the weekend with curiosity and courage!
2. The District provides each RYLarian with a comprehensive introductory packet upon enrollment by the club. This packet provides important information about RYLA Goals and Expectations as well as introductory information about weekend activities. It also includes a Packing List so that no participant will arrive unprepared. If your RYLarian does not receive this packet within 2 weeks of registration, please contact Registrar Larry Vars at lvars@pjnoyes.com.
3. Rotarians are welcome to come to any and all parts of the RYLA weekend in order to observe their participant(s) or simply to learn more about the program.



4. Parents are discouraged from attending any part of the RYLA weekend that is outside of the established visiting time. We have found the participant(s) have difficulty settling in to the weekend when under the eye of a parent. We welcome parents, and any relatives or friends, to join us for Brunch on the Sunday of RYLA, and to stay for a presentation of the weekend and the motivational speaker.
5. All overnight guests (including Rotarians) staying on campus must submit to an annual background record check, and must receive prior approval from the District Committee (as they are the only ones who will know whether or not there is housing available for additional guests on campus).
6. The RYLA District Committee cannot accept participants who **cannot** commit to staying for the entire length of the program, Friday morning to Sunday afternoon. The weekend activities involve significant team building activities requiring the involvement of all participants. Likewise, it completely changes a team dynamic to lose a member before the end of the program. The District team advises anyone encountering a difficulty in this with a candidate to make any discussions around scheduling conflicts into a lesson on Rotary's Four-Way Test especially with regard to is it fair to all concerned?
7. The District cannot refund any tuition paid for a RYLArian should the candidate be unable to attend, even due to sickness or family emergency. We encourage clubs to maintain vigilant contact with their finalist(s) so that this situation can be avoided. We also encourage clubs to choose alternates, and maintain active communication with those alternates, so that easy substitutions can be made without a loss of money to the club.
8. The District asks that clubs try to have an alternate(s) who are of the same gender as the selected candidate(s) so that should last minute changes arise, housing can still be secured on campus for the alternate.
9. RYLA is a "break-even" endeavor for the District, meaning the cost charged per attendee is used solely to pay the cost of the program and not to raise funds.

Still have questions or have suggestions?

Please contact District Chair Judy Christensen judith.christensen@uvm.edu!