



Rotary Youth Short-Term Exchange Programs (STEP)

Short-term Summer Abroad Exchange Programs: This foreign summer exchange program is ideal for students who have a spirit of adventure, but not ready to spend a whole school year abroad. Open to students ages 15-19 or 18-25 and ranges from several weeks to a few months, it usually takes place in the summer when school is not in session and does not include an academic program. A short-term youth exchange program typically involves a Rotary district-organized exchange of a son or daughter between two families, but they may also take the form of international youth camps or tours that bring together students from many countries. Because the time spent in the host country is relatively short, tourist visas and cheaper airfares make this extremely convenient and affordable!

Family-to-Family Exchanges

Typically, two families agree to send their son or daughter to be hosted in a foreign country by another family with a similar-aged son or daughter. This exchange starts with one student traveling to another country and spending 3-4 weeks with their host family, and then the two students travel together to the first student's home to be hosted for the next 3-4 weeks. Both families send their child and both families host the other child. The families should plan for the total exchange period to be around 2 months. However, the timing and length of stay is decided and agreed upon by the two families. Each family is vetted with background checks and interviews with the local Rotary club. Countries who partner in short-term exchanges include but are not limited to Spain, Denmark, Italy, France, Portugal, Sweden, Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, and Germany. Other options can be considered if students have specific requests.

International Youth Camps

These summer camps are mainly in Europe with camps also in India, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Canada and the US. Although technically not an exchange, camps enable cultural and social exchanges between youth from many different countries. Camps normally bring together participants of similar ages from 10 to 20 different countries and cultures. Each camp's theme and focus is different – the focus may be on sports, arts, peace-building, culture or sightseeing, but most contain a mix of several areas. All adults interacting with the students have been vetted with background checks and interviews with local Rotary clubs.

You can see a list of available camps and tours on the District 5500 Rotary Youth Exchange webpage (<https://rotaryd5500.org/page/rotary-youth-exchange>)

Program Costs

We are the lowest cost student exchange program, period! The program is completely administered by volunteer Rotary club members, keeping program expenses low. Costs vary depending on the district and country where the exchange occurs, so contact your local club or district for specific information. Typically, students and their parents or guardians are expected to cover the following expenses:

- Round-trip Airfare
- Travel Documents (Passports / Visas)
- Camp / Tour Registration Fees
- Spending money
- Travel Insurance
- Language Camp or Cultural Orientation (If required)
- Emergency Funds

A one-time application fee of \$50 is required to initiate the process with an additional \$350 to be paid when the student has been accepted into the program.

STEP Details and Timeline

If this interests you, please email youthexchangeofficer@rotaryd5500.org to ask questions of our Youth Exchange Chairperson and to let her know which type of Short Term Exchange Program you'd like to participate in through District 5500.

- Applicants must complete a short-term exchange application form at <https://yehub.net/S50-stapp>) and be sponsored by a local Rotary club and/or Rotary District 5500.
- Deadline to apply is February 15, 2024 for Summer 2024 opportunities.
- Interviews will be held after applications are complete prior to matching with families or forwarding applications to camps or tours.
- Family to Family Matching occurs February through April. Students and their families review and accept an potential match before match is finalized.
- Camp postings occur January through April. Camp applications are accepted on a first come basis and may fill up quickly.
- There will be an orientation for all STEP students and families in April.
- Travel dates occur from June through August of 2024. Exact dates are set by the families for Family to Family Exchanges and by the Camp/Tour provider for Camps and Tours.