



ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 SUMMER YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

October 15, 2020

To: District 5440 Rotary Clubs

From: Neil Harrison, Chair, Short-Term Youth Exchange Committee

RE: Rotary District 5440 Summer Travel Experience Program

Help to support peace by sponsoring a student for the Summer Exchange Abroad Program this Rotary year! STEP allows students aged between 15 and 19 to experience the challenge and opportunity of a foreign exchange without committing to a full year. "What You Need to Know" summarizes the program and is available on the District's website: www.rotary5440.org.

The program is an easy way to support youth program in your community. And it's so easy to sponsor a student. Your club *pays nothing* to sponsor a student for an exciting summer exchange. You spread the word; your Youth Counselor interviews applicants and their parents, and inspects their home; and you sign some simple forms. That's it!

What about Covid-19? The US student and their family must agree with their exchange sister/brother and their family that it is safe to travel to, and reside in, the exchange country. If either the US or foreign family requests cancellation because of Covid-19, the exchange will be cancelled at no cost to the student.

We wish you the best of luck in sponsoring your students this summer. A step-by-step guide to the process is attached. If you have any questions, please call me or email me at District5440.STEP@gmail.com.

Yours in Rotary,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Harrison".

Neil Harrison, Chair
Short Term Youth Exchange Committee
E-mail: District5440.STEP@gmail.com
307-760-3373

CLUB PROCESS (all documents referenced here are on the District website at <http://rotary5440.org/SitePage/summer-youth-exchange>)

1. Make certain your club Youth Exchange Officer/Counselor's (YEO) background check is current.
2. Read the document "**What You Need to Know**".
3. Announce the Program at each Rotary club meeting.
4. The Club's YEO may contact local high school counselors and foreign language teachers (we have had good luck with this "direct connection"). Provide them with the **STEP Application** to distribute to interested students. A proven technique is to hold an information session with students in foreign language classes. Surprisingly many students enjoy missing a class period and hearing about travel opportunities or this may be done during lunchtime. *Teachers and counselors are busy so you may need to be persistent!*
5. Submit the **STEP Press Release** (edited with your club information) to local radio, television and newspapers. Ask that they run it as a public service announcement at no cost.
6. Ask all applicants to complete **STEP Country Selection List** and prepare an essay on *Why I Want To Be An Exchange Student* and return it to you by the deadline that you set. This allows you to determine the feasibility of the exchange and to set up an interview with the student.
7. Arrange for interviews by the YEO or youth exchange committee with the students and their parent(s) in their home as soon as possible. Document and sign your interview on the **STEP Club Recommendation Sheet**. Keep this as a record of your interview; do *not* submit this with the application package to the District STEP Committee.
8. Once you approve students and families for the summer exchange program help them to complete the **STEP Application Form**.
9. Make sure that all signatures that are required from club officers on page 6 of the **STEP Application Form** and all information required on the **Guarantee Form**. The **Guarantee Form** section title "Host District and Club Guarantee" is to be completed by the foreign district and club.
10. Ensure that all persons living in the host family's home who are over 18 years of age complete *and pass* a Youth Volunteer background check at [Verified Volunteers](#). Provide all of them with your VV club code. *If any adult person fails to pass a background check there can be no exchange.*
11. Ensure the student and her/his family know they **must** purchase appropriate travel and medical for insurance for their trip abroad. The Outbound Orientation in April 2019 will explain the insurance program.
12. The host club YEO must ensure both inbound and outbound students know how to contact him/her or the club President (if the YEO is not available) and that they both have a copy of the Cowboy Country YE Crisis Management Team pocket card (available on request).
13. We suggest that during the exchange you invite both students to your club and ask the inbound student (with the help of the outbound student) to give a presentation about their country and home town to the club. The more people your inbound student gets to meet, the better they will understand our culture and take back with them a sense of international understanding. In addition, the more members have contact with STEP youth exchange students the easier it will be to recruit students for exchange programs in the future.