



ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 SUMMER YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

QUICK START GUIDE

(Updated August 29, 2017)

WHAT IS STEP?

Rotary International through Rotary District 5440 sponsors and facilitates a Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) for students aged 15 to 19. This is a family to family cultural visitation program between a student in this District and a foreign student and usually occurs in the summer months – June to August, coinciding with our school summer vacation. A student from our District visits a student and lives with their family in another country for approximately 3-4 weeks. The foreign student then visits our student and their family for approximately 3-4 weeks. Depending on the preferences of both the US and foreign families, the exchange may occur in reverse order with the foreign student visiting our District first.

Each host family pays all costs for their student to participate in the exchange. Therefore, there is no financial cost to the sponsoring Rotary club. However, clubs must have a club youth counselor and complete some simple forms.

Exchange Opportunities

Students may exchange with a wide range of countries in Europe, the Americas, and Asia in the Northern hemisphere. Students may be able to exchange with any of the following countries:

Austria	France	Switzerland
Belgium	Germany	Taiwan
Czech Republic	Italy	Thailand
Denmark	Mexico	Turkey
England	Norway	
Finland	Sweden	

While it is possible to exchange to the Southern hemisphere, parents and clubs should be aware that the foreign student would probably visit the District during their summer break which occurs in December and January.

Exchanges are arranged between District 5440 and the Rotary District in the target country. While every effort is made to place our students with a host family in their first choice country, this is not always possible. Generally, it is not necessary for our student to be able to speak the local language in the target country or for the foreign student to be fluent in English.

Any student between the ages of 15 and 19 may benefit from the STEP Program. It may be most useful for younger students, such as freshmen and sophomores, who may want to use a summer exchange as a STEPing stone to a year-long Long Term Youth Exchange in the future.

Student Safety

The safety of both our and the foreign student is a primary concern. Each Host Club both here and abroad provides a Counselor – who must pass a background check – who is the Rotary point of contact for the local family and the incoming student. In addition, all District host family members over the age of 18 living in the home are required to pass a background check and the applicant's home is inspected but a representative of the sponsoring club.

TAKE A STEP FORWARD

A complete application includes:

1. **STEP Application checklist**
2. **STEP Country Preference Form**
3. **STEP Application**
4. **STEP Rules Form**
5. Copy of existing **passport** or proof of application for a passport.
6. A filing fee of \$130.00, payable by the student's family to District 5440 Youth Exchange. Half will be refunded, if no placement is made. There is no refund if the student withdraws.

Deadline for complete application packet to be received by District Youth Exchange Chairman is January 15, 2018 for exchange in the summer of 2018. Our goal is to have all students matched by April 1, 2018, if not earlier. We can take applications any time before the deadline.

All application materials can be found at: <http://rotary5440.org/SitePage/summer-youth-exchange> or by clicking on the "Summer YE program" link on the Rotary District 5440 Website: <http://rotary5440.org>.

DISTRICT ROTARY CLUB PROCESS

1. Make certain your club Youth Exchange Officer and Counselors have an up to date background check. See how to do this on the Application Checklist.
2. Read the **STEP Program Information Sheet**.
3. Announce the Summer Youth Exchange Program at each Rotary club meeting.
4. Contact your high school counselors and foreign language teachers (we have had good luck with this "direct connection") during September, October, November and December. Send them the PDF electronic copy of the **STEP Program Information Sheet** and a completed copy (edited with your club information) of the **STEP Press Release** for posting on school bulletin boards and in the school newspaper. Provide them with the **STEP Application** to distribute to interested students. *You may need to be persistent!*
5. Follow-up with the high schools every 1 to 2 weeks. Counselors and teachers have many other tasks and a frequent gentle reminder is usually necessary to get the word out to students. A proven technique is to hold a sort information session with students in foreign language classes. Many students enjoy missing a class period and hearing about travel opportunities.
6. 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.
7. Once you get interested applicants **STEP Country Selection List** and 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.

8. Arrange for interviews with the students and their parent(s) in their home as soon as you can. Document and sign your interview on the **STEP Club Interview and Recommendation Sheet**. This sheet does not need to be submitted with the application package to the District STEP Committee.
9. Once you approve students and families for the summer exchange program work with them to complete the **STEP Application Form** including the information and signatures on the first page of the STEP Guarantee Form and all other documents listed on the **STEP Application Checklist**.
10. Assist all persons living in the host family's home who are over 18 years of age complete a Youth Volunteer Affidavit and mail it to the District Youth Protection Officer for processing. Scan and send the completed application package together with the application fee of \$130 to the Short Term Youth Exchange committee chair at district5440.step@gmail.com and snail mail the original to Neil Harrison, 417 North Sherwood Street, Fort Collins, CO 80521. Should we, for some reason, be unable to place an applicant, half the application fee will be refunded.
11. Ensure the student and her/his family know they must purchase appropriate travel and medical for insurance for their trip abroad.
12. The host club youth exchange counselor/coordinator/officer must ensure both students have know how to contact him/her or the club President (if the counselor is not available) and that they both have a copy of the Cowboy Country YE Crisis Management Team pocket card.
13. Invite both students to your club and ask the foreign student to make a presentation about their country and home town to the club. The more people your guest 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 a STEP exchange next year.