



ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 SUMMER YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

QUICK START GUIDE

(Updated September 1, 2018)

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 of 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. Although there is *no financial cost to the sponsoring Rotary club* each must have a youth counselor and complete some simple forms.

Exchange Opportunities

Student may exchange to countries in Europe, North Americas, and Asia that have an active summer exchange program. These six countries have the most active programs and virtually guarantee that they can find an exchange for any student from our District. We have successfully exchanged with all of them in recent years:

Belgium	Italy
Finland	Spain
France	Thailand

Students may request another country but *we may not be able to arrange an exchange with that county*. While it is possible to exchange to the Southern hemisphere (e.g. Brazil or Australia), students and their parents should be aware that the foreign student would probably visit with you during *their* summer break which occurs in December and January and that they may then need to attend school here.

Exchanges are arranged between District 5440 and a 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.

The STEP Program may be most useful for younger students, such as freshmen and sophomores, who may want to use a summer exchange as a STEPping stone to a year-long Long Term Youth Exchange in the future.

ABOUT STUDENT SAFETY

The safety of both our and the foreign student is a primary concern. Each Host Club both here and abroad provides a Youth 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 persons over the age of 18 living in the applicant’s family’s home must 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.

Application packets must be received by District Youth Exchange Chairman by December 15, 2018 for exchange in the summer of 2019. Our goal is to have all students matched by March 15, 2019. *We accept 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>.