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**Western Iowa and Eastern Nebraska**

**Preliminary Application Instructions (2024-2025 School Year)**

**To: Students who are 15-18 1/2 years old when they leave on the exchange**

Each year, Rotary International provides thousands of students your age with the opportunity to experience the cultures and customs of people in other countries. Students are given the opportunity to grow as individuals while their concept of the world grows too. Local Rotary Clubs serve as sponsors for students. During your exchange, you will live and attend school in a foreign country for 10 to 12 months, you will live with local host families and serve as an "ambassador" representing your family, your school and community, and the United States. If you decide to participate, you will return with a broader view of the world and a deeper understanding of yourself.

***Who is eligible?***

* The program is open to students who are 15 through 18 ½ years old on the date when they leave the United States.
* You should have a good scholastic record and be of good character. Note: placement of students who have graduated is limited to specific countries, as some countries will not accept students who have graduated.
* You need not have studied any specific foreign language to be accepted.

***What does it cost?***

* The Rotary Youth Exchange Program is one of the least expensive exchange programs. The cost for Rotary District 5650 is $5,000. This covers direct costs involving the application, plane fare, visa, health insurance required by the host country, and orientation weekends. (Other programs cost as much as $20,000 to $30,000). *Need-based scholarships are available*.
* Your host Rotary Club will provide free room, board and schooling. The Rotary Club in your host country, besides providing host families for your stay, will give you a monthly allowance of approximately $80-100 buying power in its currency to help with day-to-day spending and incidental costs.

***What does “Service above Self” Mean?*** Rotary’s motto is “Service Above Self.” We apply this motto to our youth exchange students. Prior to leaving, we expect you and your parents to be heavily involved in recruiting the host families for the inbound student who will attend your school. While on exchange, Rotary expectations include participating in club-based service activities if they present themselves. Upon your return, we ask that you stay connected with Rotary by making presentations about your exchange to Rotary clubs including your sponsoring Rotary club, and to prospective exchange students. We also ask that you help your sponsoring club advise prospective outbound students.

***How and when do I apply?*** It involves a four-step process.

1. *Preliminary application.* Contact your local Rotary Club to inform them of your intentions. (If necessary, contact Bob Rauner, District 5650 Youth Exchange Committee Chair, [drbobrauner622@gmail.com](mailto:drbobrauner622@gmail.com), who can help you contact your local Rotary Club.) Complete this application plus section A (Personal Information) of the long-term application on this link: (<https://clubrunner.blob.core.windows.net/00000050075/en-ca/files/sitepage/application-and-interview/long-term-application/RYE-Application-LT-2020.pdf>).
2. Provide two school references (section H of long-term application), and obtain a copy of your high school transcript for grades completed. Your club will need this information before it interviews you. Most clubs will accept applications through mid-November. Also email a copy of the application to Bob Rauner, District 5650 Youth Exchange Committee Chair ([drbobrauner622@gmail.com](mailto:drbobrauner622@gmail.com)).
3. *Local Rotary Club Interview.* Your local Rotary club interviews you and your parents. **Interviews occur through mid-November.** If your local Rotary club decides to sponsor you, it will sign your Preliminary Application. Each student needs to be sponsored by a local Rotary club. (Finding a local Rotary club to sponsor you is a big step because any club that sponsors you is expected to host an inbound student. Hosting an inbound student is a major commitment for any Rotary club.) Affiliation or ties with Rotary neither helps nor hinders your selection.
4. *District Interview.* The District 5650 Rotary Youth Exchange Committee will also need to interview you and your parents in Lincoln at the district interviews, **tentatively scheduled for Dec. 9-10**. Students stay for the evening with the other interviewing students, plus current and former exchange students. Decisions on acceptances are made during the weeks following the interview weekend.

***How does Rotary Prepare its Exchange Students?***

* **Outbound orientation starts with the mandatory District Interview in Lincoln.**Informational sessions will better acquaint you with our program and its requirements. You will also meet current exchange students from other countries and former exchange students from our region (usually referred to as Rotexes).
* *Orientation February 23-25, 2024 at Nebraska Youth Camp in Kearney, Nebraska.* This mandatory orientation includes topics that are particularly important for parents such as details about travel and obtaining a visa. Parents attend the Saturday orientation with students, and then the students again stay overnight with the other interviewing students, plus current and former exchange students
* *Webinars in January, March, and April.* These webinars cover additional topics and last one to two hours.
* *Outbound Camp in June, runs Wednesday through Sunday, date TBA, in Tulsa, Oklahoma*.Students attend an outbound camp that gives them the opportunity to practice doing many of the things that they will need to do during their exchange. Rotary District 5650 drives the students to and from the camp.

***Are there additional obligations/expectations?***

Unlike a number of other youth exchange organizations, Rotary does not require your family to host a student in your own home. However, we highly encourage it, as families also benefit from the experience and gain a better understanding of their own student’s experience. Finding qualified host families is crucial to the success of our overall program. ***Therefore, we require you and your family to take responsibility in helping your sponsoring Rotary club find host families for the foreign student who most likely will be attending your school.*** *At a minimum, Rotary expects you to help find the first host family for the inbound student by March 1st.*This requirement may be waived if we are unable to place a student in your school. Your family also may want to consider serving as a host family during the year before you leave on your exchange to get a better understanding of Rotary Youth Exchange. Seeing the hosting side of an exchange before you leave can help optimize your own exchange experience.

Additional information can be found at:

* District 5650 website: <http://www.rotarydistrict5650.org/SitePage/youth-exchange> ;
* Rotary International Youth Exchange website: <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-programs/youth-exchanges>



Bob Rauner

Rotary District 5650 Youth Exchange Chair

[Drbobrauner622@gmail.com](mailto:Drbobrauner622@gmail.com)

**Western Iowa and Eastern Nebraska**

Preliminary Application Form 2024-2025 School Year

You can fill out this electronic form in Microsoft Word. If you do not use Microsoft Word, please type your answers. Email your application to Bob Rauner, District 5650 Youth Exchange Committee Chair ([drbobrauner622@gmail.com](mailto:drbobrauner622@gmail.com)) and your local Rotary Club

**Local interviews** for students and parents should be conducted by sponsoring clubs September through mid November. First make arrangements to interview with your local Rotary Club. **Homeland Security and Rotary International regulations require parents and students to participate in these interviews**. Students will depart for their respective countries the following summer in late July to early September.

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| **About You** |
| **Full Name**       Date |
| Address |
| Date of Birth       Age    Phone (AC+)       Email |

|  |
| --- |
| **About Your Parents** (Biological or Adoptive, not step-parents) |
| **Father**       Phone (AC+)       Occupation |
| Address       Email |
|  |
| **Mother**       Phone (AC+)       Occupation |
| Address       Email |

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| --- |
| **About School** |
| **School**       Grade |
| Hours spent on homework daily       Languages studied |

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| --- |
| **About Your Personal Habits and Health** |
| Do you smoke?       Do you drink alcohol?       Have you used drugs? |
| Describe your health. If you are currently receiving any medical treatment, please describe the treatment and list any medications you are taking. |

The focus of Rotary Youth Exchange is on providing students with an opportunity to be a student in a country with a different culture. The program is not specifically designed to provide an exchange with a particular country. In many cases, District 5650 will be able to match a student with one of the student’s top choices, but in other cases this may not be possible. Rotary District 5650 cannot guarantee placement of an exchange student in a particular country in part because normally a student is part of an exchange in which a foreign Rotary District and foreign Rotary Club will be sending a student to District 5650. There are times when exchanges with a particular country are simply not available or will not work because of the reciprocal nature of most exchanges. Nonetheless, the following information will help District 5650 in arranging your exchange:

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| **Information About Possible Host Countries** |
| List in order your top five choices of country for an exchange. |
| List the two languages you are most interested in learning or improving during your exchange. |
| List any countries to which you would be unwilling to be assigned. |
| List any languages that you would be unwilling to try to learn. |

If selected, I agree to the rules of the program and accept the supervision of the host District, club and family. I agree to correspond with my sponsoring club on a regular basis.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Student Applicant)

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| **Signatures of Parents Required** (Biological or Adoptive, not step-parents) |
| Signed       Date |
| (Parent/Guardian) |
| Signed       Date |
| (Parent/Guardian) |