

## Rotary Youth Exchange Program

Hello, my name is **Charlotte Marique** and I come from Belgium as a Rotary Youth Exchange student. Peter has asked me to introduce the next speakers. You may ask why? Well this is New Generations and so here I am.

Rotary Youth Exchange is a really exciting time for Rotarians and the students who come from - and go to - overseas countries - a new culture, a new land, and a new people. Please welcome Josh Ralph and Steven Chan who went to quite different countries and had quite different experiences.

Good morning, my name is **Joshua Ralph**, and I did a Rotary exchange in northern France in 2010. Australian connection with northern France, WW1, many war cemeteries, three close to my house. These have a serene sense of calm, and a beautiful tranquillity. In winter, snow covered graves gives the feeling of the film Joyeux Noel. The didgeridoo enabled me to gain access to certain important ceremonies - e.g. 1st July with army generals from around Europe; Fromelles with Prince Charles, Remembrance Day, wreath-laying ceremony. Badge presentation from Generals - show badges on blazer. These are just some of the amazing things I have experienced on exchange. Best year of my life, an opportunity like no others, and I'm still learning things from exchange today. Thanks to Rotary for the amazing experience, thanks for opportunity to share just a few memories.

Hi, my name's **Steve**. I was sponsored by my club Roseville Chase, to experience an exchange year in Taiwan, last year. Throughout the year, exchange students would definitely be able to experience new cultures and cultivate memories through the rollercoaster one would call 'an exchange year'. One such experience I had on my rollercoaster in Taiwan was that no one could tell where I was from. Whenever people asked where I was from and I replied 'Australia mate' there'd be this look of shock on everyone's faces. I've been thought to be from leading Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, China and random European countries such as France and Germany. An exchange student even thought I was from Iceland. I mean Iceland, really? I guess they must have a lot of Asians in Iceland.

But I loved it. Once people had gotten over the fact that I was from Australia, questions came pouring in. The most popular was always about our national animal, the kangaroo. I'd always be asked 'Are there kangaroos in the wild?' and I'd reply, 'yea'. 'And they jump on two legs, yea?' 'Yea'. 'How do you ride them to school, with a saddle?' '...Yea'.

My Asian camouflage also definitely helped improve my Chinese. Taiwanese people aren't very shy when it comes to practicing their English. They would literally jump you on the street, stop you and demand your life story. Whenever I would hang out with my exchange student friends we would always get verbally attacked by Taiwanese people. They'd come up and introduce themselves and they would always do it in a semi-circle format for some reason. They'd go to my first friend 'Hi, nice to meet you. Welcome to Taiwan.' My second friend: 'Hi, nice to meet you. Welcome to Taiwan'. They'd make their way around the circle then come to me, '你在这里做什么?' which translates to: 'what are you doing here?' Conclusion.