

Rotary Districts 7475 & 7490
RYLA University 2026
June 29 – July 2, 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

What is RYLA?

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is a Rotary International program. It is an intensive leadership experience where young people develop their skills as a leader while having fun and making connections with fellow students, community leaders, inspirational speakers, and peer mentors. The program combines classroom and physical activities designed to develop team building and reliance on others. Locally it is managed by Rotary Districts 7475 & 7490 in cooperation with the Rotaract Club of Leadership and Service who conduct the RYLA University 2026 program.

Who Pays for RYLA?

Participants are sponsored by local Rotary Clubs. The sponsoring Rotary club pays a \$550 scholarship per participant. This includes food, lodging, session materials and all activities. Be sure you know which Rotary Club is sponsoring your attendance.

Can I Pay for my son/daughter to attend RYLA?

No. Students are selected and sponsored by your local Rotary Club. You may contact your club to see if they are sponsoring RYLA students this year. To find a local club, or if your local club is not participating in the RYLA program, [click here](#), then complete and submit the form.

Where does RYLA take place?

RYLA University 2026 will be held at Drew University, 36 Madison Avenue, Madison New Jersey 07940. Part of the RYLA experience is to give students an introduction to college life by using university facilities including, dorms, meals, classrooms, recreational space, etc. Additional information including directions can be found on the Drew website at <https://drew.edu>

Will I have my own Room?

No. You will be staying in a college dormitory. There will be 2 students in each dorm room with shared bathrooms. The dorms are male-only and female-only based on sex at birth. If different arrangements are requested, please note the request on your application form.

Do I get to choose who I share a room with or who I'm in a group with?

NO. Students do NOT get to choose their groupmates or roommates. We intentionally separate friends and/or students from the same school. It is part of the RYLA learning process.

Refunds and Cancellations

Due to the advanced preparations required, RYLA registrations are non-refundable. The scholarship may be transferred to another qualified candidate approved by your Rotary club. Your local club may request that you pay back the scholarship fee if they are unable to transfer it.

What is the start and end time of RYLA?

RYLA check-in is Monday, June 29 from 9 AM – 10 AM. The program ends Thursday July 2 at 5 PM. Please make arrangement for drop off and pick up at these times. Participants are expected to attend for the entire program.

Can I drive to Drew and is there parking?

NO. Students are not permitted to bring their own vehicles to RYLA. Please make arrangement for someone to drop off and pick up.

The goal of RYLA is to teach leadership skills. Components of RYLA will include:

- ✚ Fundamentals of leadership
- ✚ Ethics of positive leadership
- ✚ Importance of communication skills in effective leadership
- ✚ Conflict management and problem solving
- ✚ Building self-esteem and self-confidence
- ✚ Elements of community and global citizenship
- ✚ Rotary's purpose of service to the community and world

Who Supervises

RYLA University 2026 will be supervised by the members of the Rotaract Club of Leadership and Service and Rotarians from local Rotary Clubs. Rotarians or other non-Rotarian volunteers that will transport RYLA participants or otherwise may have unsupervised one-on-one contact with participants are required to complete Rotary International youth protection courses and undergo a background check.

RYLA University follows the “Rule of Three,” meaning that one-on-one contact is avoided by having a minimum of three people together on any occasion.

What is Rotary?

Rotary International is a volunteer organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace around the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotary club members belonging to 35,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas. One focus of Rotary is youth development. Rotary sponsors RYLA and provides the scholarships to encourages leadership development.

When should I apply to participate in RYLA?

RYLA Applications are accepted beginning March 1, 2026. There is a 120-student capacity. Deadline for applications is May 15, 2026, or when the program reaches enrollment capacity. Register early!

What if I am ill or cannot attend and need to cancel at the last minute?

If you cancel after May 31, 2026, students/family will be expected to reimburse your sponsoring Rotary Club \$550, the cost of participation. After May 31st your participation/payment is guaranteed and must be paid regardless of if you attend or not. Your local club may have standby participants that could take your place, in which case you would not be asked to reimburse your club.

Can my parents or friends visit me at camp?

No. Parents and friends are welcome only at the check-in and check-out times. Visitors are not permitted to be onsite during the actual RYLA program. Everyone at RYLA is thoroughly screened to ensure participants are safe. We do not allow anybody to be involved with RYLA that hasn't been through Rotary's screening process. We encourage all participants to take as many photos as possible to share with friends and family.

What if I have a medical condition or other reason why I would not be able to fully participate?

Be sure to discuss this with the RYLA Registrar in advance of your participation. Every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodations for any participant who has a special need.

Will there be recreational activities?

RYLA University 2026 is an active program. There are many active team building and learning activities that include a moderate level of physical activity. Additionally, there will be group recreational activities outdoors or using Drew's gymnasium.

May I bring my guitar or other musical instrument?

You're welcome to bring an acoustic guitar, strum-stick, harmonica, or other portable, relatively quiet instrument; however, there is no guarantee that you'll have a suitable opportunity to play it. You are solely responsible for any loss or damage, just as with all other personal property you bring with you.

May I leave the Drew Campus to go into town?

NO. Students are required to remain on campus and with the RYLA group from the start to end of the RYLA program. The program is based on full participation from June 29 to July 2. If you have any conflict that would require you to arrive late or leave the program early for any reason, **DO NOT REGISTER.**

Emergency contact information and procedures will be provided to participants and their parents in the event of an unforeseen occurrence.

Are there vegetarian or gluten-free options for food?

All meals are served cafeteria style. Vegetarian and Gluten free options are available. If you have special dietary needs, be sure to let RYLA organizers know in advance. Students will be expected to manage their own food needs.

What should I bring?

- Sleeping bag or bedding for twin bed and your favorite pillow.
- Toiletries include soap – towels etc.
- Sneakers and comfortable clothing there will be activities in the gymnasium as well as outdoor training and exercises. Often times you will be sitting on the ground outside or the carpeted floor of a classroom.
- Sweatshirt as all classrooms and common areas are air conditioned and cool.
- Any medications listed on your registration form.
- Approved personal items.

What not to bring?

Do not bring anything valuable. The RYLA program is not responsible for any lost, misplaced, or stolen property.

Do I need to bring any spending money?

All program expenses are covered by the program fee. You will need extra money only if you want to buy some snacks or other items at the bookstore.

What is the age limit for RYLA?

RYLA is designed for high school juniors (those students finishing their junior year), though we may be able to accept a sophomore or senior into the program with advance approval. All participants must be under the age of 18 for the duration of the program. You cannot turn 18 until July 3, 2026.

Are there any expectations after I complete the RYLA program?

Yes, use the skills that you learn. Your local Rotary club may ask you to attend a local Rotary meeting and provide feedback about your RYLA experience.

What is Rotary's Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth?

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Contact Bob Law, RYLA Registrar, at bob.law.7475@gmail.com.