

## DISTRICT 5610 FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE

Friendship Exchange is one of the only International Exchange programs in Rotary that Rotarians can participate in. Because of tax laws many exchanges and scholarships are not available to Rotarians or their families. However, in a Friendship Exchange a Rotarian and their spouse or friend are able to fully participate. The exchange consists of a team of 10 to 12 people traveling to another Rotary District around the world and touring there for 2 weeks. During this time they are hosted in Rotarian homes, visit many Rotary meetings and projects, and see the country or area from the local's view. The team is taken to the things that the local people think are important and would like to share. It really gives you a chance to learn about the customs, foods, etc of the area. Things that you usually miss as a regular tourist. On these exchanges you typically pay your transportation to and from the country and for small gifts that you bring for the hosting Rotarians. You may also pay for some meals, transportation and entrance fees depending on the exchange plan. Then the district that is visited sends a team to the country that they just hosted and those who participated in the exchange are responsible for hosting the returning team. Hosting on either side means providing home stays, food in restaurants some times, paying for entrance fees and providing transportation around the district. Some of these hosting duties may vary depending on the specifics of the particular exchange.

Friendship Exchanges are an amazing way to make lasting friendships around the world. I also think that they are a great beginning to peace in our world as we learn more about each other, begin to understand each other and build lasting relationships.