

Rotary

District 5495



Rotary Youth Exchange

LONG TERM (YEAR LONG) YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Rotary Long Term Youth Exchange?

This Rotary sponsored and organized program sends America's best student ambassadors age 15 to 18½ to spend up to a year living with host families (usually 3) and attending school in a different country, learning a new way of living, a great deal about yourself, and the language of that country. You'll be an ambassador, teaching people you meet about your country. You can help bring the world closer – and make some good friends in the process. Rotary is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in its programs.

What countries can I go to?

Country choices change slightly each year but typically include Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, South Korea, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. Students are asked to consider 3 countries but may still be assigned to another. It will be important to be open-minded and adventuresome! Other countries may be available. Please inquire.

What is the process for acceptance?

Students submit preliminary applications by June 30th of each year, a full year before the start of the exchange. The sponsoring club will conduct student interviews. If the student passes the first interview, they will be asked to complete the full application by December or January. The district committee will make final decisions and country selections by March 1st. The full application does not guarantee placement.

What are the costs for the family/student/parents?

Rotary club volunteers administer the program at the local level, which helps keep costs low for students and their families. Costs will vary but students can expect that the year will cost between \$4000 - \$4500 minimum depending upon the country. Optional travel costs and personal expenses will be in addition but are not required.

- \$500 application fee: the only fee paid to Rotary to cover program costs. This fee is refundable if the application is withdrawn before March 1st. If the student is accepted into the program and they decide to pull out before departure, then this fee is NON refundable.
- Insurance: Students must pay for an international health policy or state/country health insurance. This varies from country to country. Most policies cost between \$500 and \$900 for the year. You may NOT provide your own insurance.
- Travel costs: students provide your own travel (plane/train/etc). We have a travel agent that can assist you. Note: 30-day excursion fares do not apply. These are 300+ day completely changeable tickets.
- Language School: many countries require an intense language school upon arrival. Costs vary.
- Passport: students arrange for your own passport.
- Visa: This is the "permission" to live in the country for a year. Cost varies by country.
- Optional travel programs: A wonderful way to see more of the country. Costs vary.

- Emergency fund: Most host countries require an emergency fund of \$500. This is refunded if not used.
- Personal expenses: phone calls, clothing, travel, entertainment, personal items, etc.
- Blue blazer: all students must purchase a navy blue blazer before departure to wear when representing the program.

What is the Time Line:

- Any time before the end of June: Preliminary applications due
- July-Aug: connect with sponsor Rotary club
- Sept-Oct: Start work on the remaining parts of the application, including medical, dental and finding host families for the student who will come here while you are away.
- Nov: application fee, Interviews
- Nov-Dec: Complete application
- Jan: Notification of country assignments
- Feb: Applications sent to host countries
- April: Outbound Orientation (Rotary sponsored)
- Around May: Guarantee Form returned from host district
- May-June: Rotary District Conference (Mandatory/Rotary Sponsored)
- March-June: Service Project/Second Orientation (Rotary sponsored)
- Around August: leave for assigned country (date determined by host district)

Will I get any credit for this year in my Arizona high school? How do colleges look at this experience?

Although this is an academic exchange and you are required to attend school, learn the language and make progress in your host country school, this does not guarantee you credit at your local high school. High school credit varies from no credit, several years of language class credit, to a full year of credits for the classes you take abroad. Work with your high school counselor to get the maximum credit benefit and know the requirements before you leave. To be safe, do not base your graduation on getting any credits for the year. Colleges love exchange programs and recognize the benefits. You will be a more well-rounded, culturally rich student by the end of the year and you will have great things to write on your college essays!! Do not expect to take your SAT while abroad or work on your college applications. If going on an exchange after your senior year you can apply to college and schools often grant a deferment once you are accepted.

May we visit our son/daughter while they are abroad?

Parents and siblings may visit usually after March of the exchange year and usually during the student's spring break or after they are out of school for the summer. This must be coordinated with the host district for approval ahead of time.

Can our family be a HOST FAMILY while our student is abroad?

For each outbound student we send, we are required to take one inbound student. This requires 3 host families for the year. We request that you take an active role in securing families by providing us with the names of 3 families who would agree to host (and enjoy hosting) a student...and you may be one of those families! Just ask your Rotary contact for more information. It's a great experience!

Any other questions: Please contact Donna Goetzenberger, 602-469-1293, 5495outbounds@gmail.com, OR Norm Samuelson, 928-273-0471, rye5495@gmail.com.

ABOUT ROTARY: Rotary is an international non-profit service club made up of volunteers who are passionate about "Service Above Self" and about promoting peace around the world through friendship and understanding.