



Rotary Youth Exchange



BECOME AN EXCHANGE STUDENT, AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE



- ▶ Live abroad for a year
- ▶ Stay with ~3 different families
- ▶ Experience school in a different culture
- ▶ Learn and Dream in a different language
- ▶ Become independent and self-sufficient
- ▶ Understand how to live inter-dependently, knowing when to ask for help and when to provide it
- ▶ If you are interested, or know of someone who may be interested in being an exchange student, please contact dschwalm@gmail.com to learn more

The Rotary Youth Exchange program is a program that promotes Peace through Understanding. By living abroad with up to three host families for a year, and going to school like any other student, you immerse yourself a totally different culture, and are able to see the world though an entirely different light. You learn to think and dream in a different language, and to see cul-

ture differences not as something odd or strange, but as an incredibly beautiful characteristic of humanity. You will meet exchange students from all over the world, and create bonds with your host parents every bit as precious as the ties you have with your own friends and family. It is an extraordinary opportunity for an extraordinary year.

Many of our forms, links and other information can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/ryed6490/>



The Friendships you make with other exchange students are profound. Very few people will ever understand your experience like another exchange student. Within hours, you often form a bond that feels like it has existed forever.



FAQ:

Who can apply? Any student between the age of 15 and 17 (when measured in August*)

* Some countries have more restrictive age policies than others, and so if you near the boundary, you may need to pay close attention to the age requirements. For example, some countries will not take students who turn 18 years old during their stay.

How long will I be gone? 11-12 Months.

You will spend an academic year overseas, leaving in August, and returning in June or early July. This is typically your Junior, or Senior year, though some Sophomores and “Gap-year” (between High school and College) exchanges can happen.

With whom will I live? Where will I stay?

You will typically live with three host families, each for about 3.5 months. Although there are variations on this pattern (sometimes only two host families take a student), having 3 different perspectives about how people live is an incredibly experience. Besides the culture of your country, you are exposed to three “mini-cultures” that are an important part of the exchange. While living with your families, you are treated as one of their own, sharing in their life and the way they run their families.

Where can I go?

There are dozens of countries where Rotary hosts exchanges. You will provide a rank order of your preferences, and Rotary tries its best to match you to the country of your choice, but there is no guarantee. However, as any “Rebound” (student who has returned from an exchange) can tell you, it really doesn't matter where you go ... once you've spent a year there, it was the “best” place you ever could have been.

Countries include: *Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Czech/Slovak Republic, Columbia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, Germany, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela**, and others depending on year.

* Some countries, such as Venezuela, have exchanges suspended due to political uncertainty.

Do I get credit for school? How will I apply for college if I am gone?

These are excellent questions, and are largely up to you, your parents, and your guidance counselors. Often, students get credit for the classes they take abroad ... sometimes full credit, sometimes partial. Often, spending a senior year abroad will mean applying for college while away. **Planning ahead** is key to making sure these things go smoothly.

Why should I bother to give up one of my few years of High School to live abroad?

If you ask this question to a recently returned “Rebound”, they will talk your ear off, and perhaps break out in tears. It is hard to express the amazing growth one goes through on a full year abroad. Your perspective about yourself, the world, your culture, and all the people around you changes. Your ability to be independent and inter-dependent expands. Your ability to see into the needs of others and to understand people who are different from you is transformed and deepened. In short, it will be challenging at times, it will be exhilarating at times, and it will be one of the most (if not the most) intense years of your life.

When is the deadline for applying to go abroad? Last half of October

Applications can be submitted through September and into October. However, your local, sponsoring club should interview you near the end of August or beginning of September so that you will have time to fill out the application, and be set for the November interviews at the district level. Your year abroad would then start the August after those interviews.

How much does it cost? Costs can range from \$6000-\$8000 depending on country.

Most of the cost is for the airline ticket and insurance. A couple of things to note: The cost of the RYE program is often half of other programs, since it is run by all volunteers. Also, the USDA estimated that in 2006, the average middle class family spent \$10,610 to support one teenager for a year. The savings in food and auto insurance can be substantial. None the less, it is a significant financial commitment.

*There may be a tax deduction available depending on the tax code.