



DISTRICT 6420 SHORT TERM YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM OUTLINE -2009-2010

WHAT IS IT?

In addition to Rotary International's "flagship" Long Term Youth Exchange Program, in which a student spends one year abroad, Rotary also sponsors Short Term Youth Exchange opportunities to experience the culture of another country. In this program, students from different countries are paired, each to spend half the summer with the other in that student's home.

Participants must be age 15-19 at the time of the exchange, typically arranged during the summer months so that each student can spend 4-6 weeks with the other student and his/her family.

The students select the countries with which they would wish for us to arrange an exchange match, prioritizing their list, and we endeavor to provide a match with their top choice. We suggest that selections for this program be limited to countries in the northern hemisphere, so that exchanging students' school summer vacation schedules are similar.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Each student must apply through, and will be sponsored by, a local Rotary Club. The application is to be TYPED and submitted to the applicant's local Rotary Club between December 1 and January 1. The local Club will review the application with the student and family, make certain that it is complete, and if acceptable will submit the completed application (four original, signed copies) to the District between January 1 and February 1. The District may request further information and/or an interview with the student and family before or after initial approval of the application.

The local Rotary Club will also conduct a home visit to assure that the applicant's home is adequate for the hosting of the foreign student with whom the applicant will be paired for exchange.

Each Club Youth Exchange Officer and all household members over 18 must have and pass a background check, which will be processed by our committee, at District expense.

EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS AND ORIENTATION

Once the fully completed application is submitted and approved, we will initiate contacts with Rotary Districts in destination countries by February 1 or as soon as fully completed applications are received; We would hope to confirm the availability of an exchange "match" by March 1. Next in sequence, the District will host an Orientation Seminar in March, for both Short Term and Long Term Youth Exchange participants. As a condition of participation, every Short Term Youth Exchange Student, and at least one parent, is required to attend from Friday Evening through Saturday evening (the program extends into Sunday for Long Term participants). Exchange students are also asked to attend the Rotary District Conference, on Saturday afternoon and evening of the event, usually around the last weekend in April, to meet and visit with other exchange students

and to participate in a flag ceremony presented by all inbound and outbound exchange students.

The schedule of each Short Term Exchange, and with which family the first part of the exchange will occur, will be determined by the exchanging students and their families, generally for a four week stay in each home. The schedule is generally outbound approximately June 15 – July 15, Inbound approximately July 15 – August 15, with some students electing to reverse the order of inbound/outbound, or to slightly extend their travel dates to experience the end/beginning of each student's school year.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT OUR DISTRICT WILL BE ABLE TO ARRANGE A MATCH FOR EACH APPLICANT ! If we are unable to arrange a match, the un-used portion of their application fee will be refunded.

PROGRAM COSTS – FEES, TRANSPORTATION & INSURANCE

The applicant and his / her family are responsible for all program fees, insurance, and travel costs, unless all or some part of same are voluntarily covered by the sponsoring Club.

Program costs include our District Application Fee, presently \$200, which covers overhead for postage and telephone contacts, printing costs, exchange (business-type) cards, badges, and registration fees for the District Orientation Seminar, (including meals but excluding hotel room costs), and participation at the Rotary District Conference at the end of April. In the event the exchange does not occur, all unused program application fees will be refunded.

Insurance may be verified to the District for international travel by writing from the family's insurance carrier, or by the purchase of a specific international health care policy. "Vacation policies" are available through many travel agencies.

Travel costs include the student's guaranteed round-trip ticket to the destination country / region, to be arranged by the family with a travel agent or reputable on-line company, and sufficient spending money for activities, local travel and souvenirs.

At the Orientation meeting, students and parents will meet with Rotary's certified travel agency and will have the option of using their services, for lower rates and Rotary-specific informational guidance.

The District Youth Exchange Orientation Seminar is generally held in early March at the Rock Falls Holiday Inn. Short Term Exchange students and their parents are required to attend Friday evening through Saturday evening; Long-Term Participants remain for programming on Sunday as well. Tentatively, District Chairs and committee members will meet at 5:00 pm for discussion and dinner. Registration will be from 6 to 7:00 pm, followed by introductory remarks and discussion of travel issues for all students and parents. The evening will end with a pizza party for the students. Saturday from 9 – 10 am we will share important Rotary information for the students to prepare them for participation in Rotary meetings and events. Our Short Term students and parents will then have separate sessions from 10-12 regarding the structure, rules, and mechanics of the Short Term Exchange Program, including the requirements and expectations for the Inbound aspect of the exchange. Students will also be given tips on preparing an appropriate slide show regarding their home and family for presentation abroad. There will be a full-group luncheon and speaker. The afternoon program will include a condensed look at US politics and world sentiment, as it may affect our students overseas, and specific country discussions in which both inbound and outbound exchange students will be able to share information regarding their intended exchange. There will then be a group dinner, followed by a mandatory session regarding youth protection and safety, ending the Short Term Students' required participation in the Seminar.

CLUB SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

The Rotary Club's role as sponsor is to promote the availability of Rotary's Long- and Short-Term Youth Exchange opportunities; to screen candidates and determine whether they would serve as appropriate ambassadors of good will representing Club, community and country; to determine whether the student's household is also an appropriate place to host the inbound Exchange Student; to have a Youth Exchange Officer within the Club to serve as our contact person (thus also becoming a YEO committee member for our District Program); to assure that the application is fully completed before it is submitted to the District Committee; and to provide contact support as needed throughout the application and exchange process. The Club may also, voluntarily, choose to pay the student's \$200 application fee and/or provide a travel scholarship or allowance, to help cover other outbound travel or inbound hosting costs. The Club is encouraged to pre-arrange a meeting date for the outbound student to present their intended Program to the Club before their departure, and to pre-arrange a meeting date to host both students while the foreign student is visiting.

Rotary Exchange Programs offer students, families and our own Rotary Clubs an extraordinary opportunity to share a truly international experience!

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE YOUTH EXCHANGE
OFFICER OF YOUR LOCAL ROTARY CLUB**

**YEO'S MAY CONTACT DISTRICT 6420
SHORT TERM EXCHANGE CHAIRPERSON
SCOTT SHORE, (815) 339-2398, shores@ivnet.com**