

OUTBOUND STUDENT AND PARENT ORIENTATION AGENDA

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What is Rotary?

- You've chosen to go abroad under the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. So let's talk first about what Rotary is.
- Rotary is an international service organization dedicated to the betterment of the human condition. (Service Above Self). There are over 1.5 million members worldwide in over 200 countries volunteering their time and money for local, regional and international projects. Youth Exchange is one area of service in the BIG picture of Rotary International with over 8000 yearly YE exchanges worldwide.
- We are committed to creating greater understanding among the peoples of the world—and to creating a more peaceful world for all of us. In Rotary International Youth Exchange we share our children—trusting that these brave young Ambassadors will form friendships that connect us and develop worldwide families of goodwill.
- Here is your first **ACTION ITEM #1**: Between now and the time you leave, try to attend a local Rotary meeting at least once a month and more over the summer. Really get to understand what Rotary is and what you are representing.

What does it Mean to be an Ambassador?

- You've chosen to go abroad under the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. This is very different than going out under a pay for your exchange program. You are going out as ambassadors of goodwill.
- As an Ambassador you represent your country, your community, your family and Rotary Youth Exchange.
- You will be judged by your appearance, your behavior (public and private), and what you say and how you say it. It is a challenging 24/7 job. Being an international ambassador is a serious responsibility. Your host country will judge America by you.
- Practice the Rotary 4-Way Test—Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Structure of RYE

- Each of you have an Outbound Counselor here (DCH). Here to help you complete paperwork, notify you about events, prepare you for your year, and to serve as a contact back home while you are abroad.
- You will have an Inbound Counselor in your **host country**. They are there to help you when you have problems. They are your liaison to Rotary. They will keep you advised of orientations and Rotary events.
- On each side there is also a District Committee like the one here that runs the program. **The "District Chairman" in whatever Country/District you are doing your exchange has the role of being the FINAL decision-maker.**

What Rotary Needs From You

- I am asking you right now to DO IT OUR WAY. Right now I am speaking to both the parents and students. If at the end of this meeting, you don't feel you can abide by our rules and our processes then please leave this program and find another exchange program that matches the way you want to do it. We are very serious about this. Some of the things we are going to ask you to do are tough. We don't ask them lightly. For most of you, this is your first exchange so please believe in us.
- The Youth Exchange volunteers spend incredible hours planning for your year as an Exchange Student. Your well-being, your joy of discovery and changing perspectives—your international friendships are all very important to us. We volunteer our time because we are passionate about this program. We want this year to be a wonder-filled experience that enhances your entire life. We are counting on you to listen and learn and embrace your new role of International Youth Ambassador from the USA.
- Because at the same time, we have a program to protect. One exchange student who doesn't follow the rules or who goes into this program with an attitude can ruin it for all future exchange students. It can make a host club or host family not want to participate any more. It has happened before and it is truly sad. Don't ruin it for the students who want to go in the future.

Timeline

- March/April –Your applications are sent to the hosting district committee in the country you are assigned to.
- April/May – That District Committee assigns you to a specific host club and sends your application to the Inbound Counselor for that country.
- April/May/June – Counselor reviews your application, decides if they are going to accept you. They complete a guarantee form. This form confirms their acceptance, identifies the school that has agreed to take you, and identifies your first host family. It also provides contact information for your Inbound Counselor, the Host Club President, and how much your stipend will be.
- April/May/June – the counselor sends the completed guarantee form back to their District Chair who then sends it back to us so we can give you the details. You will find out as early as April and as late as June. BE PATIENT! It will get here!
- May – mandatory attendance at the District Conference. This year it is in Kona, May 22nd – 24th at the Hilton Waikoloa. DCH will arrange travel.
- **ACTION ITEM #2** – save the date and make plans with your Outbound Counselor (DCH) to be there for that weekend. More information will come out mid-March.

Budget

- Good to take about \$1000 to start. Many countries require about \$300 emergency fund. Plan on about \$200 a month. Have a bank account here with a debit card so you can deposit money and they can take it out there.

- If you have money raising problems for your trip abroad, try to work with your sponsoring club here. Good Ways to Fundraise – get Rotary and Community Involved.
 - o Raffles
 - o Make dinner
 - o Make traditional dessert from your new country and sell at Rotary meeting for donations
 - o Other idea?

School

- **12 month academic exchange** – must attend school. It is a requirement of your Visa. The expectation is that the student will do their best academically.
- You **should** get credit for overseas classes. Consult early and often with your current school counselor to see what you need to do. Find out what you need to take there to show your new school and what you will need to bring back to get credit.
- Consider taking courses at the JC or going to summer school if you plan to graduate with your class when you return.
- Ask your current school counselor if you can use your exchange as your Junior or Senior project.
- Be prepared to struggle with school, particularly in the beginning. You will be sitting in classes for hours and hours without understanding what is being said. Use this time to work on your language skills.

Host Families

- You will generally have 2-3 Host Families
- Purpose is to give you exposure to different families. Not everyone in the same country is alike. Having different families gives you a better understanding of differences in people within the country.
- Communicate with them as soon as you get their contact information.
- Skype with them and your parents. Nothing eases nerves more than seeing and talking to the people who will be taking care of your child.
- Shortly after you arrive, review the First Night Questions with your host family.
- **Parents – talk with your Rotary Counselor about hosting yourself. Host Families are what make this program possible. Someone is doing this for your child. Do the same for the student who is coming here.**

Monthly Reports

- Monthly reports are due on the 10th day of the month following the month you are reporting on. We will send you a reminder email around the 1st of the month.
- Please complete these as soon as you get the reminder. We all spend a lot of time for this program and don't need to be chasing you down for these.
- Reports ask about how you are doing. What's going well? What isn't? Be honest so we can support you throughout your exchange.

Presentations

- You are required to do a presentation to Rotary in your host country about your life here.

- **ACTION ITEM #3.** Start working on your presentation now. Take pictures of home, school, city. Take maps, information from your Tourism Bureau or Chamber of Commerce.
- Your Rotary Club here may also ask you to do a presentation about where you are going. Work with your OB counselor on this.

Gifts

- Start collecting small gifts for host families and friends. Twenty or so small ones with a few special ones. Many people will be doing incredible things for you. A gift from America will show them how much you appreciate their kindness.
- Gifts are best if they are unbreakable, compact (fold flat), and special (e.g., t-shirts, calendars, small picture books).

Pins

- The packet we hand out contains 50 District 5000 pins (and a patch?).
- **ACTION ITEM #4** – You must have your jacket (with the patch sewn on) to wear at District Conference.
- In addition to district pins, you will want about 100 pins to trade with other exchange students, friends you make at school, Rotarians, and your family.
- Some ideas are pins with your city/county name on them. Hawaii pins. American flags made out of beads.

Medications

- Each country has its own regulations regarding how many months of medication can be brought into the country. In addition, some countries do not allow prescription medication to be shipped into the country.
- If you have medications you will need during your exchange, please research these regulations prior to your visit to avoid complications while you are abroad.
- Usually the best approach is to work with your doctor to get a year's supply to bring with you.

Parental Visits

- Visiting your child during their exchange can be a great experience for both you and the child. However it can also be very disruptive to the student's experience and/or to their hosts. **Therefore D5000 discourages parental visitation during the exchange year, favoring a post-exchange visit.** Post-exchange visits allow the student to focus as a guide and the host families/host club feel less pressured.
- **No planning for a visit involving the student should commence until the host family, host club, host district and D5130 have been advised of the parent's desire to visit and dates have been approved by the same. Visits should only be made after April and before the final weeks of the exchange. This Rotary program is provided for the benefit of the young ambassadors and their hosts. Visits from family, during the exchange are not intended to be part of the experience.**

- **FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS NOT IN THE STUDENT’S IMMEDIATE FAMILY ARE NOT TO VISIT THE STUDENT DURING ANY PART OF THE EXCHANGE.** There are no exceptions, even if the host family and/or host club authorize it.

Culture Shock and the Cycle of Emotions

- What is Culture? It is our total way of life, including how people think, feel, and behave. It is what is considered ordinary and normal.
- Every culture has its own rules. When the rules are broken, there are known consequences. When the rules are broken, there are known ways to make it right.
- In the new culture:
 - You don’t know most of the rules.
 - Everyone around you knows all the rules.
 - You don’t know what to expect of others.
 - Others expect unknown things of you
 - The Bottom Line - You will not always know what is appropriate behavior and will not know that you are doing something wrong.
- This is called **Culture Shock**. **Culture Shock** is unavoidable. It is the period of adjustment when you move from a familiar environment into an unfamiliar one.
- Getting through **Culture Shock** is a process that is predictable. Let’s look at the cycle of emotions.
- Stage 1 – The Honeymoon (2-8 weeks)
 - Differences are fascinating, not threatening.
 - You’re excited about all the new things around you.
 - You feel in control
 - Take advantage of your excitement and curiosity.
- Stage 2 - Disintegration (2-3 months)
 - Also known as the “Holy \$#@& stage
 - Become more and more uncomfortable
 - Begin to lose self-esteem and confidence
 - Homesickness increases
 - You wonder why you thought this was a good idea.
 - How to Cope
 - Take good care of yourself – eat well, sleep lots, get exercise
 - Stay busy
 - Find ways to be with others
 - Focus on improving your language
- Stage 3 – Reintegration (3-6 months)
 - Regain self confidence
 - May reject some things you don’t like about your home country
 - Your relationships are deepened and real, not superficial
- Stages 4 and 5 – Becoming Functional and Independent (begins around 9 months)
 - Success becomes the norm.
 - You are able to create meaning in normal situations

- o You get the rules of the culture.
- o You don't want to come home.

Language Discussion and Commitments

- If you ask any rebound, they will tell you they wish they had spent more time on the language before they left. Your exchange doesn't really start until you have a basic working knowledge of the language.
- You need to be fearless! During the last event, Renee asked you to change the language on your phones/computers. Who has done that? Why not?
- *Point out the How to Use Technology handout. Do not go over every point.*
- *Review Language Assignment*
- *Each of you should have sent me your plan for learning the language. Get in groups of 4 and share with each other what you plan to do. You'll have about 10 minutes. Then, each group share your ideas with the whole group.*
- *Parents – also get in groups of 5 or 6 and discuss what you can do as a family to support your student learning the language and plan to share with the group.*
- Debrief Questions
 - o **ACTION ITEM #6**– Commit to being fearless and write out your plan to learn the language before you go. Change the language on your cell phone to the language of the country that you're going to
 - o Parents – what can you do to help your student with language learning?

Insurance, Child Safety, and Certification

Insurance

- Travel insurance is mandatory. Rotary Intl. REQUIRES that all students travel with a minimum level of insurance protection covering medical, liability, accident and other events.
- Your host country consulate may request a Proof of Insurance Letter. We can provide this upon request. Feel free to contact me if, you are unable to obtain an answer to your insurance questions.

Child Safety and Certification

- The safety and wellbeing of our children is the number one priority for Rotary.
- In order to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange, each district must go through a stringent certification process. Examples of certification requirements are:
 - o Providing orientations like these to outbound and inbound students.
 - o Providing training for counselors and Rotarians involved in the program.
 - o Vetting host families to ensure they are appropriate and safe.
 - o Providing contacts for students in case they find themselves in an uncomfortable position.
 - o Sexual Harassment and Abuse training (at District Convention)

How to Succeed and How to Come Home Early

- The Success of your exchange is 100% up to you. It is all about your ATTITUDE. Here are some things you can do to make it the best.
 - **Be First** – be a person of action. Take every opportunity offered to you even if it doesn't sound like fun. It will be.
 - **Be Grateful** – remember everyone in this program is a volunteer. They spend their own time and money on you. Show your appreciation. Say thank you to someone every day.
 - **Be of Service** – help out around the house. Help out at school. Help out at Rotary events.
 - **Be Fearless** – try new things. Introduce yourself to new people. Eat new food. Speak the new language.
 - **Be There** – live in the moment. Limit communication with home. Participate with your host family. Do homework in public areas. Interact with lots of people. Don't narrow yourself down to just one girl or boy or hide in your room because you're sad.
 - Ideas on how to best communicate back home to let everyone know what you're up to without staying back home
 - **Be Considerate and Respectful** – ask permission, plan ahead, if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything.
 - **Be Communicative** – Talk with your host family about how you are feeling. Ask how you are doing and how you can be a better exchange student. Little things will become crisis if you let them build up. Watch body language. If it looks like your host parents are upset with you. Ask them about it. Talk with Rotary.
- Other ideas that will help.
 - Use your Rotary smile.
 - Take tons of photos
 - Open up and be outgoing
 - Respond to Rotary or IYWT (It's Your World Travel) correspondence within 24 hours.
- Why do Some Kids Come Home Early?
 - Every year 5% of exchanges end early. That's 1 in 20. Most likely one of you will come home early! How do you make sure that isn't you?
 - **Avoid Alcohol**
 - Most other countries are more relaxed about alcohol and teenagers. Still, there are rules – spoken and unspoken.
 - Drinking alcohol clouds your otherwise very good judgment.
 - If you drink at all, limit drinking to times when you are with your host family or Rotarians. Even then, limit yourself to 1 drink.
 - This may make you look like a geek, but not the kid who got sent home.
 - **Just Say No**
 - Use and trafficking of drugs is illegal in all countries even though they may be readily available and openly used.
 - Is even one puff worth your entire exchange?
 - **Driving**
 - Just don't get behind the wheel of a car. Not even in a parking lot. Motorcycles, motor scooters, etc. are off limits too. Most countries have great public transportation. There are lots of other ways to get around.

o **Communication**

- I can't emphasize this one enough. Talk with your host parents and Rotary about what's going on in your head. Trying to tough it out will just cause the stress to build up and for problems to get out of hand. If you're upset about something, talk to someone about it.

o It all comes down to 3 D's and a T

- **Don't Do Dumb Things**
- You know what is right and wrong. If you would get in trouble for it here, you'll get sent home for it there. Fair or not, you are held to a higher standard.

Next Steps, Assignments, Questions, Closing Statements

- Review and Sign Promise Letter
- Work on your Action Items
- Prepare to attend the District Conference
- Start attending Rotary meetings or events
- Questions?