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# 2024-25 Orientation: Rotary Youth Exchange

For Host Families and Club Volunteers

Updated March 28, 2024





# Agenda

- What is Rotary & Rotary Youth Exchange?
- Youth Protection
- Expectations of Host Families
- The Exchange Cycle
- Support System & Events Calendar
- Expectations of Students & Disciplinary Process
- Expectations of Host Clubs



# What is Rotary International & Rotary Youth Exchange?

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## About Rotary International

Rotary is the first service organization in the world. It was formed on February 23, 1905 by Paul P. Harris who hosted the first Rotary Club meeting in Chicago.

Today there are

- 1.2 million Rotarians in over 200 countries and geographical areas
- Over 46,000 clubs organized in in 529 geographical areas known as Rotary Districts

The Rotary Motto is ***Service Above Self***

Learn more at [rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org)



## Rotary District 5400

District 5400 (D5400) covers Southern Idaho and includes two clubs in Oregon (Baker City and Ontario)

- District 5400 has 41 clubs and about 1,500 members
- Learn more about our activities and get involved:

Go to **helpinglocal.org** for club and service project information

Go to **rotary5400.org** for news, programs information, and details on specific clubs



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# Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE)

*Rotary Youth Exchange builds peace one young person at a time.*

- In 1927, the Rotary Club of Copenhagen, Denmark, initiated the first Rotary Youth Exchange.
- In 1975, Rotary made RYE an official program.
- In District 5400, participation goes back to at least 1983; probably earlier.
- Each year, about 9,000 participants globally
- Here in the U.S., the program supports the Dept of State's Public Diplomacy Initiative



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## How does RYE work?

- Short-term exchange (STEP)  
exchange summer exchange: age 15-19
- Long-term exchange (LTEP)  
school year exchange: age 16-18
- D5400 RYE [video on YouTube](#). (~10min)
- Recruitment ongoing; deadlines in the Fall
- We seek early commitments from clubs so we know how many we can send/receive the following year. (Ideally 10-12 months prior to beginning the hosting year.)







## Characteristics of Rotary Exchange Students

Outstanding young people, age 15-18½ upon arrival

Carefully selected and well prepared

Most speak English well

They are anxious and excited to better learn our language, discover American culture, represent their countries, and become part of your family and the community.





## Our Exchange Countries

Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Ukraine (inbound only)

Other countries under consideration for the future, including Hungary, Mexico, and/or Paraguay



# Jargon

**Inbound** - students who come here from other countries

**Outbound** - students from our district who leave the country

**Rebound or ROTEX** - past participants of the program

**Host Club** - when a club agrees to host a student, they also agree to pay the monthly stipend, to recruit host families, and oversee the student's experience here.

**YEO & Counselor** - The Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) and counselor or key roles within a host club.

**District Youth Exchange Committee** - this program is organized at the district-level and we have volunteers who help with the entire effort (spanning all participating clubs)

**YEAH** - our database for the Youth Exchange program.

**Inbound / Outbound Coordinators/Chair** - district volunteers who focus on inbound and outbound details

**District Youth Exchange Chair** - Coordinates with district and club volunteers, creates the budget, and guides the program

**District Governor** - Every year, we get a new district governor, who volunteers to lead the district (and “the buck stops here” for all district activities.)

**Youth Protection** - we have a defined youth protection policy and requirements for training for anyone who comes in regular contact with youth in our programs

**Responsible Officer** - this is our primary administrator for compliance with U.S. Department of State regulations.

**WESSEX** - Western States Student Exchange - our certification with the U.S. Department of State is established and maintained through our membership in WESSEX.

**NAYEN** - North American (Rotary) Youth Exchange Network. We are members and get best practices for our program - some training originates from NAYEN.



# Youth Protection



## **Youth Protection Policy Statement**

District 5400 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their abilities, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come in contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.



# Youth Protection - incidents and allegations

If a situation occurs, treat students with respect; be aware of your tone and voice and the manner of their reactions. Listen, support, do not blame, remain calm, do not promise to keep secrets and explain the necessity to inform youth leadership and youth protection volunteers.

Contact Rotary leaders as soon as reasonably possible.

We follow the District 5400 Youth Protection Policy & Procedures and the Rotary International Handbook

- Details on Rotary International's Youth Protection approach and policies can be found on their [Youth Protection webpage](#)
- District 5400's [Youth Protection Policy can be found here](#) on our Rotary5400.org website

Full link to Rotary Youth Protection site: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/youth-protection>

Full link to Rotary District 5400's Youth Protection Policy:

<https://clubrunner.blob.core.windows.net/00000050014/en-ca/files/homepage/2021-youth-protection-policy-for-d5400/D5400-Youth-Protection-Policy-2021.pdf>

# Physical Interactions

Always get consent by asking the other person if it is okay to engage in any type of physical contact, especially with a child — even to engage in a hug. And remember that consent can be withdrawn at any time. Children should feel comfortable saying no. Understanding what kinds of physical contact are acceptable can foster a positive and safe environment that protects both young people and adults.



## Acceptable physical interactions (if culturally appropriate and with consent)

- Hugging from the side
- Patting on the shoulder or back
- Shaking hands
- Small gestures of approval, such as a hand gesture or clapping of hands





## Unacceptable physical interactions (with or without consent)

- Hugging with full body contact.
- Kissing on the lips
- Showing physical expressions of affection in an isolated location
- Sitting on someone's lap
- Wrestling
- Carrying someone on your back or shoulders
- Tickling
- Massages
- Offering any form of physical affection that is unwanted
- Touching the bottom, waist, chest, or genital areas
- Making sexual contact of any kind

# Verbal Interactions

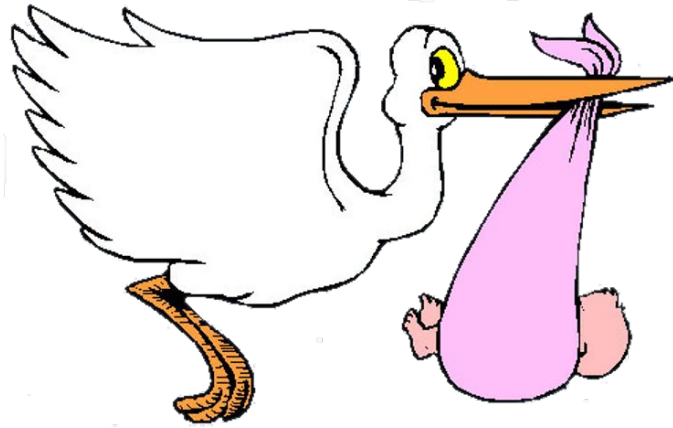
Keeping verbal interactions between adults and youth appropriate is just as important as maintaining appropriate physical boundaries.

 <b>Acceptable verbal interactions</b>	 <b>Unacceptable verbal interactions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Jokes in general</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calling someone names</li><li>• Adults discussing sexual encounters or their personal problems with youth participants</li><li>• Adults asking youth to keep secrets of any kind</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Discriminatory or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming or belittling someone</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate youths</li><li>• Making negative remarks about a participant or their family, culture, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or background</li><li>• Commenting on or complimenting a person's body or body development</li></ul>





# Expectations of Host Families



**Congratulations!  
It's an exchange student!**

**We simply couldn't  
do this without you, so  
thank you!**



## General Expectations of Host Families

1. Assist the student in becoming a part of the family, the school, and the community.
2. Treat the student as a member of the family, not as a guest.
3. Maintain communication with the local Rotary Club.
4. Clearly communicate your family expectations to the student.
5. Help with typical challenges such as language acquisition, friendships, culture shock, local customs, etc.
6. Provide room and board, including lunch.
7. Provide an ear to listen, a shoulder to cry on, a hand to depend on



# Sibling Relationships

There can be positive and negative aspects to having host siblings.

## The Positive:

- Can set a good example for the exchange student
- Might be a protector and a listener
- Could introduce the student to friends and activities
- Can help with language acquisition

## The Negative:

- Jealousy
- Withdrawal from family and the exchange student
- Anger leading abuse/harassment
- Relations that go beyond normal boundaries of siblings



## Sample Host Family Rules

Having clear family rules is very helpful.

- Be on time.
- Let family know where you are.
- Observe curfew.
- Do school homework.
- Use telephone and computer at agreed upon times.
- Help with chores (cleaning dishes, yard work, etc.).
- Participate in family activities.



## Religious Activities

1. Religious practices or beliefs deserve sensitive attention and respect.
2. Religious activities may require discussion. Hosts:
  - a. Can encourage & assist student participation in host & student religious activities.
  - b. May not force student to participate in religious activities.
  - c. May not attempt to affect a religious conversion to the host family religion.
3. All parties are encouraged to enjoy sharing religious beliefs and practices.



## School

1. J-1 visa has stipulations related to school placement and attendance.
2. Students must perform to their abilities - do their best
3. First host family is involved with registration; all families to monitor student's school performance while hosting
4. Hosting club will pay school fees
5. Encourage students to participate in clubs and extracurricular activities
6. Student eligibility for competitive sports is not guaranteed; sports and extracurricular fees are to be covered by the student





## Finances - Student

1. Students receive an allowance (usually \$150/month) from their host club
2. We ask that they have access to emergency funds from their natural family, but sometimes they bring an emergency fund that the host club will manage (this is actually very rare)
3. Having a student bank account is uncommon, but it's okay to do this
4. Students pay for their own clothing, cell phone, sports fees, and optional Rotary tours



## Finances - Host Family Covers Some Expenses

1. We ask that the host family provide day-to-day routine expenses
  - Room and board, laundry detergent, toothpaste, soap, etc.
  - Regular family activities like movie tickets, out to eat, family trips
2. Students can be asked to cover extraordinary expenses including:
  - Clothing, postage, activities with their school friends
  - Sports fees and extracurricular activities
  - Family vacations - discuss in advance so student can plan



## Insurance and Medical Needs

- We require that students have a Rotary-endorsed insurance plan
- These plans have \$1 Million limits and include medical and dental, as well as travel features such as repatriation, medical evacuation, and related coverage
- Students and their natural families are responsible for medical expenses.

**NOTE: Be very careful not to sign as a guarantor for medical expenses.**



## Medical and Dental Care

1. Make sure to keep Rotary leaders informed about medical treatment; some things need to be reported to Rotary International or to the Department of State.
2. Check to see about Rotary connections for Doctors and Dentists - we can often get quicker service and better deals on behalf of the students.
3. For significant treatment situations, please let Rotary leaders do the communicating to student's family and home district. We have a specific process and hierarchy we need to follow.

**NOTE: Be very careful not to sign as a guarantor for medical expenses.**



## Other considerations for Host Family

1. Cell phones - we require students to have a cell phone and to pay for it themselves
2. Computer usage - monitor heavy usage and note that we cannot take away computer and cell phone privileges (as a regulation for J-1 Visa)
3. Isolation - sometimes okay; sometimes not
4. Host Country Language - help might be needed
5. Travel Rules - refer to district rules; can get complicated - especially out of state travel; review rules and work with Rotary leaders well in advance of all travel



# The Exchange Cycle



## Arrival and Settling In

1. Welcome your student at the airport - all future host families and club and district volunteers encouraged to attend this as well.
2. First Night Questions
3. Have a welcome party about a week after arrival - invite future host families and Rotary volunteers
4. Encourage involvement find ways to help the feel part of the family immediately; don't let them retreat to their room





## Being the FIRST Host Family

1. Excitement - everything is new
2. Culture shock - major adaptations
3. Language struggles
4. School arrangements
5. Set the standards for the year
6. Make sure to use the [First Night Questions](#) and [Second Day Questions](#)



## Being the MID-YEAR or SECOND Host Family

1. Transition issues - use the [First Night Questions](#) and [Second Day Questions](#)
2. New family practices
3. Language and culture begin to click
4. Holiday season and holiday break can spur homesickness
5. Spring and Summer tours ticket purchases occur during this time; however, they impact the last host family - make sure to coordinator travel dates



## Being the LAST, End-of-year Host Family

1. Transition issues - use the [First Night Questions](#) and [Second Day Questions](#)
2. Comfortable with language and culture
3. Big events like Prom, graduation, tours, and departure
4. Preparing for separation can be emotional
5. Students can begin to push the envelope on travel requests and rules in an effort to squeeze in all the experiences they can before returning home
6. We ask that they return home by June 15 or else get permission from District Chair to stay longer; see rules for more details



## Year End

1. Preparing for separation can be challenging for students and host families. This is okay; it's normal
2. Reverse culture shock is a real thing that students experience after returning home from an exchange. More information is available on this topic
3. The more successful the exchange, the harder the re-entry process will be and this is completely normal.
4. Maintain contact
5. You will probably see them again



# Support System & Program Event Calendar



## Important Events for 2024-25

Make sure to add these events to your calendar to help your student plan for them

- **Aug 23-25, 2024: Inbound Orientation.** Mandatory Event for Inbound Students to be held at Camp Sawtooth, North of Ketchum. Transportation Provided; students need to be excused early from school.
- **Oct 11 & 12, 2024:** Service Projects & Social events tentatively being planned. Optional for students.
- **Dec 7, 2024:** Outbound Student Interviews in Boise. Optional event for Inbound Students.
- **Jan 31- Feb 2 or Feb 7-9, 2025:** Winter Retreat and Outbound Training in Boise. Mandatory event for students.
- **May 2-4 2025:** Rotary District 5400 Conference in Twin Falls. Mandatory event for students.



## Rotary's Support System for Host Families & Students

You can contact any volunteer at any time with questions and concerns. We work hard to make sure we get the right people involved. In general, here are the roles for the people you will most likely interact with:

- **Club Counselor** - serves as the student's steadfast advocate and supporter. They can help navigate all the day-to-day things.
- **Club Youth Exchange Officer (YEO)** - sometimes the same person as the counselor; makes sure host families are vetted and training, that student is connected to the club
- **Inbound Chair** - works with all Inbound students as a resource and monitors behavior concerns, rules compliance, training, event organization
- **District Chair** - monitors entire program, compliance, budgeting, liaises with overseas partners, and works with volunteers to find ways to continually improve everyone's experience.





## Keep these contact names on hand

Make sure you have the contact information for District Chair, District Inbound Chair, Club Counselor, and Club Youth Exchange Officer

- Laura Spencer, RYE Inbound Chair:  
208-761-4624, [laura.ryeboise@gmail.com](mailto:laura.ryeboise@gmail.com)
- Mike Markley, RYE Chair  
208-861-8879, [mike@markley.com](mailto:mike@markley.com)
- Lauren Murdoch, RYE Vice-Chair  
208-681-5809, [lksmurdoch@gmail.com](mailto:lksmurdoch@gmail.com)
- Nancy Chinn, RYE Administrator  
& State Dept-Designated Responsible Officer:  
208-272-0007, [nkchinn@msn.com](mailto:nkchinn@msn.com)
- Club YEO and Counselor will differ for each student



# Expectations of Students & Disciplinary Process



## General Expectations of Students

- Adapt positively to host family.
- Attend school regularly and take school work seriously.
- Work at developing good friendships.
- Learn the host language and culture.
- Be an ambassador of their country & a representative of Rotary.
- Follow Rules and Conditions agreed to in the application, including no drinking, no driving, no dating, and no drugs
- Follow Rotary District 5400 rules.



## General Expectations Students (continued)

- Participate in Rotary & community activities
- Submit required reports to Rotary when requested
- Return home by June 15, with within 1 week of returning from tour
- Avoid employment - Rotary & visa rules.  
*Note: Student may do yard work or babysit for extra money, but may not hold a regular job.*
- Limit communications with natural parents & friends back home.
- Adhere to Rotary district policy regarding travel and overnight stays, as well as visits by natural parents, family or friends



## **Student Role as Ambassador**

Students are expected to act as ambassadors of their respective countries.

Students project an image of their country:

- By their attitude
- By their behavior
- By their appearance
- By their willingness to be of service



## Disciplinary Process

Willful infringements on the Rotary and District 5400 rules results in a disciplinary process. We use a yellow card and red card system.

- A yellow card is a warning.
- A red card results in an early return to the student's home country.
- After receiving one yellow card, the second infringement will result in a red card.
- Some rules -- such as those related to breaking United States laws lead to an immediate red card.
- Decisions for issuing yellow cards and red cards are made by the District 5400 Youth Exchange Chair, in consultation with Inbound Coordinators, Counselors, and YEOs, and will be communicated in writing and through discussion with the student.



# Expectations of Host Clubs



## General Expectations of Host Clubs

- Appoint Rotary Volunteers.
- Select suitable host families.
- Obtain copy of student insurance card, proving purchase of Rotary approved insurance.
- Help with school arrangements.
- Maintain at least monthly contact with student and host family.
- Keep in a secure place the Passport and other government papers, if requested by student
- Provide monthly allowance.






## General Expectations of Host Clubs (continued)

- Bring student to Rotary club meeting regularly and pay for meals.
- Involve student in Club service, social activities and lives of club members.
- Provide transportation to Rotary events per district policy.
- Meet with student & school officials to discuss credits, graduation options, and participation in school activities, such as extracurricular activities.
- Inform host family of the Rotary YE philosophy, rules and regulations.
- Familiarize host families with strategies to deal with cultural differences and practices.
- Inform host families they must advise Rotary of any and all material changes in status of the host family, including changes in address, finances, employment and criminal arrests.



# In Closing

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- This program simply wouldn't exist without our generous host families and dedicated volunteers. We are taking on the legal and moral obligation for other people's children for purpose of building world citizens and world peace. This is a big task that requires love, patience, and diligence. And it's so much fun. Thank you for being part of this.
  - Rotary Youth Exchange program leaders are here to help you and the student have a meaningful and safe year
  - If issues arise, we cannot help if we do not know - please utilize the support network we have in place



## Questions? Contact us any time

- Laura Spencer, RYE Inbound Chair  
208-761-4624, [laura.ryeboise@gmail.com](mailto:laura.ryeboise@gmail.com)
- Mike Markley, RYE Chair  
208-861-8879, [mike@markley.com](mailto:mike@markley.com)
- Lauren Murdoch, RYE Vice-Chair  
208-681-5809, [lksmurdoch@gmail.com](mailto:lksmurdoch@gmail.com)
- Nancy Chinn, RYE Administrator  
& State Dept-Designated Responsible Officer:  
208-272-0007, [nkchinn@msn.com](mailto:nkchinn@msn.com)

Make sure to utilize your Club Counselor and Youth Exchange Officer for questions too.