

rotary
youth
exchange

Rotary
District 5500

APPLICATION PROCESS

Q: How do I begin the application process?

A: D5500's Long-term (academic) Exchange Program is completed online using the YEAH Hub. You can open an application and complete it over time. To find the YEAH Hub, copy this address into your browser: https://yehub.net/cgi-bin/S50_get.cgi?pgid=apob0

Q: Am I eligible to be a Rotary exchange student?

A: The Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) program is open to high school students between the ages of 14 and 17.5 years in the year before departure. Applicants must be at least 15 years old (and no more than 18.5 years old) at the time of their departure for exchange in August/September.

It does not matter whether your parents are members of a Rotary Club - the program is open to children of Rotarians and non-Rotarians alike.

Exchange student candidates must be self-confident, friendly, adaptable, and adventurous, willing to learn a foreign language, and have above average grades in school.

A local Rotary Club must sponsor you. The District RYE Committee will assist you in finding a sponsoring Rotary Club unless you already have identified one yourself.

Q: What is the long-term program?

For an amazing, life-changing experience, there is nothing like the long-term exchange. Students spend an academic year in another country, becoming fluent in the language and immersed in the culture, and developing friendships that will last a lifetime.

Participants attend high school and may or may not get credit back home for courses taken. Universities may recognize the value of exchange programs, with credit for language ability and greater acceptance rates! Each student will likely have more than one and usually up to three host families through the year, to broaden the experience and see the variations that exist in all cultures.

It takes a special teen to consider him or herself capable of spending a year abroad, but the rewards and experiences are unlike anything you may ever know again. If you think you can do this, don't let the opportunity pass you by.

Q: Do I get to choose my country?

A very popular question. And the answer is... yes and no. The countries we exchange with are those we know run top-quality programs--and we re-evaluate them each year. There are a limited number of exchanges available with each country. When allocating countries, we take into account the Hosting Countries specific requirements as well as your preferences. We ask you to select three preferred countries. Many students will get one of their three choices. But remember, flexibility is a vital characteristic for a successful exchange student. That starts right at the beginning.

Q: Do I have to know another language?

No, not at all. Naturally, it would help to have some familiarity with the language of the country you go to, but we don't limit the program to those who are already bi-lingual. In fact, one of the great benefits of the program is quickly gaining fluency in another language.

Typically, our students have some fluency in 3-4 months, even without any previous knowledge of the language! But we strongly recommend that all participants start learning their target language as soon as they are selected for the program. The more of the language you know up front, the better your experience will be.

Q: Will I get school credit for my exchange year?

This is always a tough question because it varies from school to school and country to country. You should sit down with your school counselors when you apply and when you know what country you are going to for your year. You may want to take summer school courses before and after your exchange to graduate from high school on time. Pre-planning makes a big difference.

Q: Is there any future advantage?

Yes! Past history has indicated that having the Rotary Exchange Year on your resume and applications carries more weight in many cases than your class ranking, Universities are looking for students that are going to successfully complete their studies and graduate. By completing a full year exchange in another culture, you are showing them that you have the "right stuff". Future employers will take similar views of your year's experience, not to mention the benefits of becoming bi-lingual or bi-cultural!

Q: What if I have problems during my exchange?

The design of the Rotary Exchange program is such that if you have problems we have the resources to help you solve them, starting with a Rotary Club right in the community in which you are living. You will have multiple avenues of help available to you to resolve any problem that might come up. Rotary International and Rotarians in general take very seriously our responsibility for the safety and security of all Rotary exchange students, both inbound and outbound. In November 2002, the Board of Directors of Rotary International adopted the following Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:

"Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact."

Q: Do my parents have to host an inbound student?

Parents of long-term outbound students are not required to host. However, we certainly encourage it. Many, of course, choose to do so, partly because they have an empty room, but also so they can experience some of what their child is going through. We encourage that, but we also recognize that not all families are able to host. In reality it is the other side of exchange and for parents often the most rewarding part. Quite often you will have lifelong links with students from other countries who have stayed with you. We do ask outbound students and their families to help find host families in their own communities, to accommodate the inbound student that will be hosted by their Rotary Club. After all

Rotary Youth Exchange relies heavily on the goodwill of people all around the world. That is why it is an exchange!

Q: OK, bottom line, what does it cost?

Probably a lot less than you think. You see, Rotarians are all volunteers, so there are no salaries or commissions paid to the people who administer this program. It does cost money, though, to make the arrangements, present the orientations, provide student materials and supplies, and more. There's also the cost of airfare, insurance, and other travel expenses.

Rotary exchange students spending a year abroad are provided with a monthly allowance from their host Rotary club. This is usually the equivalent of \$100 US dollars but may vary by location. If you want or need spending money beyond that, it is up to you and your natural parents to provide it. Of course, you do not have to pay for room and board or school fees. All students are required to maintain a sum in an Emergency Fund with their host Rotary Club. This is typically the equivalent of \$500 US dollars. The Emergency Fund money is there for unexpected expenses (i.e., medical, dental, telephone). If it is used during the year, it must be replenished by you or your parents. If it is not used, it will be returned to you at the end of your exchange year.

Keep in mind that while you are living at home here in Southern Arizona, it does cost money. Think of this cost being offset while you live in a host country. More info about costs please go see “About-Exchange Program – Academic Exchange Year Program Costs”.