

Rotary Youth Exchange



Short Term Exchange Program (STEP)

Purpose

Welcome to Rotary Short Term Exchange Program. This handbook explains:

- How to apply
- How to prepare for your exchange
- What is expected of the candidate and family during the exchange
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What is a Rotary STEP?

Rotary Short Term Exchange Program is a true family to family exchange. Your student will go overseas to spend 3-5 weeks with his/her host sibling and then your child will return home with his/her host sibling and spend 3-5 weeks with your family. RYE only exchanges with certified countries and are open to applicants between the guideline ages 15-18 years old, inclusive.

How to Apply

To apply go to www.ryeflorida.org, Summer Application.

RYE Florida

RYE Florida is a Florida non-profit, tax exempt corporation. We develop, implement and administer the district's long term (LTEP) and short term (STEP) exchange. We are a committee of volunteers working in conjunction with Rotary clubs and Rotary International to help achieve Rotary's vision of cultural understanding and to bring peace to the world.

Multi-District Resource Contacts



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STEP Coordinator

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Winter Spring Rotary Club



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STEP Assistant Coordinator

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Preparing to Go Abroad

Passport

If you have a valid passport, the expiration dates must NOT end within three months of the END of your exchange. If it does, plan on re-applying for a new one. If you do not have a passport at all, apply now. At least one parent should also have a valid passport.

Your Summer Match

When a suitable summer match is made by the Summer Coordinator, the families should immediately begin communicating with each other. Use email, Skype with video, Face Time, and other means of communications. Develop a clear understanding of the plans for family activities to be undertaken in each country. Communicate your goals and wishes for the exchange with the host family.

Itinerary

Before you arrange flights, inform the Summer Coordinator that you are prepared to move forward with your match. As soon as you have the arranged flight plans, email your flight itinerary to the Summer Coordinator at devi@ryeflorida.org.

Insurance

For your time abroad with RYE, you must be insured on a medical and liability plan. Rotary will supply your insurance for you with CISI insurance. This is included in your fee.

What to Pack

- Take clothes that fit a range of occasions including formal. (ex: pack one pair of dress shoes)
- Closet space abroad may be limited
- Remember appropriate plug adapters
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses bring an extra pair
- Carry essential numbers – handwritten – with you (host family, overseas coordinator)
- Avoid over packing – cars are smaller abroad
- Remember to bring host family gifts
- Carry medications with the original prescriptions
- Wear your heaviest clothing on the plane to save space in your luggage

Learn Something about your Host Country

Purchase a guide book about your country, the people, food, culture, etc. Download an app on your phone with phrases to practice prior to departure. Find places you would love to see during your exchange and let your host family know.

Gifts

You should carry with you a small gift of appreciation for your host family/siblings. The gifts do not have to be expensive but something from Florida is suggested. Examples are: postcards as thank you notes, Disney pins, American flags, Mickey ornament. Think about something that might be important to your host mother or father also. Thoughtful gifts are the best.

Guidelines for Host Parents

Treatment of Host Son or Daughter

Host parents, treat your host son or daughter the way you would treat your own child. Consider their safety and comfort while on exchange. If yours is a family where both parents work and your host child will have long periods alone, take the time to arrange for camps, clubs, neighbors, etc. to be able to help keep your child busy.

The host family is expected to pay for expenses considered family activities such as dining out, hotel costs, holiday trips, etc. For this reason, exchange families tend to plan activities that are roughly comparable. If you intend for your host child to pay for expenses, these must be voiced prior to the exchange.

While on Exchange

Host Family

You should ask your host parent what they would like for you to call them. Usually students call host parents by their first names. You might even ask them this question before you depart. The section on “First Night Questions” will provide more information on questions to ask.

Host families have different situations so you might have your own room. However, you should be prepared to share a room with our host sibling of the same gender as you. You will of course have your own bed.

Remember that your host family is under NO obligation to adjust to your ways or customs or to treat you like a special guest. You are expected to accept the normal discipline and supervision of the family and settle into their normal routine.

If problems do arise while on exchange, contact your host club counselor (if you have one) or your Summer Exchange District Coordinator.

Homesickness

After the excitement of new experiences, you may find yourself being homesick. Try to keep yourself busy and occupied with activities. An open discussion with your host family may help. Also, constant communication with your family back home may worsen your homesickness so try and limit this contact.

Be Present

Take the opportunities to join in a group or family activities. You are there to make new friends and experience new adventures. The more involved you become, the more present you will become in your exchange.

Have an Open Mind

An open mind should be kept on controversial issues such as religion, race, or politics. You should try to see the other point of view even if you do not agree. Be tactful when your host parents or siblings express views different from yours. But you must also be yourself. Someone who never engages in conversation or asks the question “why” can be seen as shallow. Share your thoughts on issues while being mindful of how it sounds to your host family. You don’t want to say something you wish you could take back.

Travel

You will be traveling to your host country alone but will be returning with your host sibling or vice versa. Prior to your departure you should make clear the plans for family activities to be undertaken in each country. Independent travel in

your host country without proper adult supervision is prohibited without prior approval from both host parents (this does not include a trip to an amusement park or museum). You may NOT make travel arrangements on your own.

Finances

For emergency use only, take and set aside \$100 US. You should also have cash for spending money at the airports while traveling. Having both a credit card and ATM card is a good idea. Some US banks offer credit cards with no foreign exchange fees.

Personal Behavior

Always remember you are an ambassador for Rotary Youth Exchange and should act accordingly. The manner in which you conduct yourself may determine if a host family would consider hosting in the future.

The 6-D's

- *Drugs* – students are not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Do not smoke.
- *Drinking* – is illegal for anyone 21 and under in the state of Florida
- *Driving* – NO student is allowed to operate motorized vehicles
- *Dating* – students must avoid serious romantic activities while on exchange. Students must abstain from any sexual activity and promiscuity.
- *Disfigurement* – students are NOT allowed to get any tattoos or piercings while on exchange ☒ *Dumb Stuff* – don't be the "ugly" American. Don't do stupid things. Don't break the law.

The 6-B's (written by Pauline Perreault- CEO of Jump Outta Bed, Inc.)

B First – Be a Person of Action

Take on interest in your host family. Practice your language prior to departure.

B Curious – I Seek to Understand

Ask why? Why are there cultural differences between you. (ex: why does your family eat beans for breakfast, why do take 16 classes at school). Share your culture with them. Cook a dish.

B on Purpose – I look for Opportunities Wherever I Go

Did your exchange happen by accident? Did you create your path? Your boat will take you from point A to point B on your exchange and you never have to lift a finger. But your most amazing experiences will happen when YOU are the captain of your boat. Take advance of simple, everyday events like a walk with your host mom or a bus trip to the grocery.

B of Service – I Give of Myself

Offer to walk the family dog. Make pancakes for your host family one morning. Learn about world news so you can engage in conversation. Be an ambassador- find out how you can make a difference.

B Grateful – I Focus on Things I can be Thankful For

My parents sacrificed so that I could do this. Use FL postcards to leave Thank You notes for little things people do for you. Share with your host siblings.

B Here NOW – I Live in the Moment

If you spend one hour a day on Facebook or Skype with friends and family back home then you've lost 2 full days of your exchange. Spend that time instead on watching TV with your host sibling or taking that walk with your host mom.

Manage your communication back home. Be excited every morning you wake up as the day will be filled with new adventures. Return with NO regrets. Keep a journal and write a small note each day of what you did.

To Be A Successful Exchange Student- How to you want to be remembered?

- Do not stay in your room all the time – find the balance ☒
- Say Thank You often – write thank you notes.
- Offer to help with dinner or cleaning the table after dinner.
- Try new foods even if you think you don't like them – at least you tried.
- Share with your host family – share your culture, your dreams and goals ☒
- Always let your host family know where you are.
- If your host parents are doing a project around the house – offer to help
- Your parents might work, so expect some down time during your exchange.
- Make your bed each morning and keep your room neat. Help coordinate your laundry.
- Don't spend too much time on the computer or phone. NEVER have your phone at dinner or during family time. If being driving by an adult, do not be on your phone
- Be nice.

. Rotary Clubs

You may attend a Rotary meeting abroad, so we suggest attending one here prior to your travels. Your Summer Exchange Coordinator can assist you with finding a club to attend. Often your sponsoring club will present you with a banner (flag) which you in turn will present to your club overseas. Please remember to wear business/church clothes when attending a Rotary meeting. You are a Rotary ambassador and should look and act accordingly

First Night Questions with a host family

1. What do I call you?
2. What do you want me to do in the house in addition to making my bed?
3. What is the laundry procedure?
4. Should I wash my own clothes?
5. Where should I keep my toiletries?
6. What time are meals?
7. Can I assist at mealtime with setting the table, etc.?
8. Are there areas of the house or community I shouldn't go?
9. What time do you usually awake?
10. What time do you usually go to bed?
11. Do my host siblings have any dislikes I should know?
12. Do you attend church?
13. Do you have wireless in your home? May I have the password if there is one?