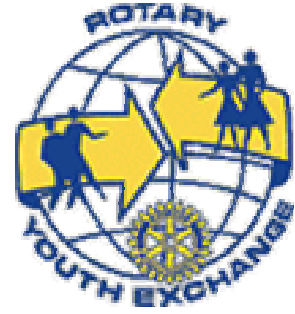


# Rotary Youth Exchange



## **YOUTH EXCHANGE IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAMS OFFERED BY ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**

### **Facts about the program and its goals:**

For over 20 years, Rotary District 9450 has played a major role with the Youth Exchange Scheme in Western Australia. From the 40 clubs in the district, 26 clubs are involved, allowing around 26 students to take part in the program. Only 60 students in the state are rewarded with a Rotary Exchange Scholarship. Through the program the students experience a new culture, learn another language and develop a cultural understanding of their host country and others that they visit. The program is an educational process which leads to the students gaining self confidence and self knowledge and developing international friendships and understanding.

### **Criteria and selection process of the students:**

The students undergo a detailed assessment in order to prove to the individual clubs and to the district that they have the qualities needed to become a rotary exchange student. The students begin with detailed application forms where they are required to write essays giving their opinion on current world and social issues and themselves as potential ambassadors. After receiving the applications, each club chooses one representative through an interviewing process. Further interviews are held at a district level by a panel made up of district committee members, previous host parents and returned

exchange students. The successful students are then chosen from the possible 250 who apply. The committee looks for students who are good all-rounders, have a sound academic record, are widely involved in the community and school and would act as good ambassadors for their country. The student must have an outgoing personality and an open mind. Support of the student's parents is also essential to the program. Through Rotary briefing weekends and outbound sessions, the students leave Australia with a good understanding of what to expect during their year, how to face any problem that may arise and how to act as an ambassador for both their country and for Rotary in Australia.

### **For further information please contact:**

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## **WHAT YOUR CLUB CAN DO**

### **You can send a student overseas.**

Your club could begin by becoming a sponsor club for a student who wishes to go overseas. This would involve your club choosing a student who you believe has the qualities of an exchange student and then keeping close contact with that student throughout the year, keeping them up to date with all that happens in Australia and be willing to help if any problems arise during the year exchange.

### **Your club can host a foreign exchange student for one year.**

Hosting a foreign exchange student involves, above all, ensuring their wellbeing and happiness during the year. The club will be responsible for finding host families for the student and providing a \$110 monthly allowance. Encouraging the student to be involved with the club, attending meetings and spending time with the families of the members is a large part of the exchange.

### **Sharing the hosting commitment with a country club.**

The responsibility of hosting a student can be shared between a country and city club. The student would spend around six months with each club and during this time the club would be responsible for finding host families, providing a monthly allowance and helping the student experience life as a city/country student.

### **Hosting an exchange student from a country club.**

Your club can take part in the program by inviting a student from a country club

to spend a short amount of time with your club, allowing them to see another side of Australian life. The student can be invited to stay for a week, a month or even more, giving your club the opportunity of being involved without taking full responsibility of a student for the year.

### **Organise a short term exchange (Up to 12 weeks).**

This is a cultural program allowing students between 16 and 22 years of age to spend up to 12 weeks living in another country. It is a family to family exchange with the club acting as a sponsor for the Australian student. If you are interested in supporting this program please see the pamphlet: STEP (Short Term Exchange Program).

### **Organising outings for your exchange student.**

The student benefits greatly from the club organising educational and social outings. Members are encouraged to invite the student to spend a weekend with their family, arrange work experience for the students or simply invite them to dinner. Such invitations educate not only the student but the families who share in the student's experience.

### **Organise for an exchange student to be a guest speaker at your club.**

The exchange students are eager to share their experiences, their life and culture with your club by being a guest speaker at one of your meetings. This enables your club to meet the students, learn of their experiences and find out more about the program first hand.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

### **Host an exchange student.**

Your family could become a host family to your club's exchange student for a period of 2 to 4 months. The exchange student becomes a member of the family, sharing in the life of the household and becoming a brother or sister to your children. Such an experience educates both the family and student allowing you to share in the culture of another country and way of life.

### **Take an exchange student away on holidays.**

It is difficult for exchange students to see Australia as it is so big and travelling on their own is both expensive and difficult. Inviting a student to share your holiday with you and your family allows them to see a part of Western Australia or even Australia that they would otherwise be unable to visit and your family can enjoy sharing their holiday with the student.

### **Inviting the student away for the weekend or to your house for a meal.**

You can play a part in the program by simply inviting the student away for the weekend or even to share a meal with you and your family. This enables the student to meet new people and your family to share in the experiences of the student and play a part in the program.

### **Become the exchange student's counsellor.**

To a student, their counsellor is someone they can turn to if a problem arises and is a friend they can rely on. The role of a counsellor is an essential and very rewarding one. The position involves you keeping close contact with the student ensuring all is well in terms of the student's host families, school, involvement with the club and the

student's travelling arrangements. To be a club counsellor it is not necessary to host the student. One must simply be a Rotarian who is close to the student and help make the student's year a happy and rewarding one.

### **Involve the exchange student in club activities.**

Encourage the club to play a large role in the life of its exchange student. Apart from the weekly meetings the student can be invited to fundraising events or any other projects the club undertakes. Whether as a member you choose to host the student or not, you can still be involved by showing an interest in the club-student liaison and involving the student in all of your Rotary activities.

### **Organise the exchange student to speak at schools and other venues.**

The exchange students have a lot to offer in terms of education people about another country and culture as well as Rotary International itself. Inviting the student to talk at your children's school or other possible venues is a great way of encouraging other to become involved in the program and to learn more about Rotary and its youth exchange program.

### **Involve your exchange student in local sport or recreational activities.**

Local sporting and drama club are a great way to involve the students at a community level and gives them a chance to meet others of their own age.



## **WHAT IS ROTEX?**

Rotex is a group of returned exchange students who, after spending a year away, come together as a support group for the exchange students being hosted by clubs in WA and for others who have been away and are now adjusting to life back home. Having been overseas and experiencing life as an exchange student, Rotex plays an important part in supporting and ensuring the happiness of the inbound exchange students.

## **WHAT DOES ROTEX DO?**

### **Student exchange briefings.**

Rotex also lends support to Rotary International in choosing the future exchange students. It assists with student interviews, briefing sessions where advice is given to the students on how they should prepare themselves for the year ahead and debriefing sessions when the students return. Rotex provides a support service in the re-adaptation of the students. The parents of Rotex members also provide a valuable service. Having had a child away on exchange they provide excellent advice to the parents of the outbound students and play a role in the briefing sessions for parents and students.

### **Mentor program.**

This is a program designed by Rotex to provide the best possible support to the exchange students hosted by clubs in the district. Each exchange student is

paired up with a member of Rotex who has returned from the student's country or is able to speak the student's native language. The Rotex member keeps close contact with the student, providing assistance and above all acting as a friend to the student and someone they can depend on. Students often turn to Rotex when they are homesick or have problems related to things other than Rotary.

### **Language assistance.**

Rotex provides assistance in English to any exchange students who are having difficulties in the first few months of their stay. We also provide assistance to those student who are going to other countries and require a basic knowledge of the language before leaving.

### **Fundraising, events organised by Rotex and the disadvantaged student fund.**

Rotex organises many events in order to bring the inbound students and those who have returned together. The Rotex Ball held at the Fremantle Prison in March was a great success and a weekend farm camp is held annually. Rotex is also involved in a great deal of fundraising and a cook book has been compiled with recipes collected from all over the world. The funds that Rotex raises go to the disadvantage student fund.

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