



From a Rotary Exchange Student

Exchange is about learning. It's not as simple as learning whatever is taught in school, though. It's about learning how to listen, how to speak, how to think. Learning who you are, who your friends are, the type of people you want as friends. Learning how to trust your innermost feelings, and how to find those feelings in the first place. It's about learning what's really important to you, and learning what you really don't give a damn about.

Exchange is about how to tolerate, how to accept, how to like, and how to love. Learning how to give as well as you receive, and how to trust that everything will even itself out on it's own. It's about learning that your mom & dad do have the right answers sometimes and that your kid sister isn't such a dumb little kid anymore.

Exchange is about learning how to treat people as people, not as stereotypes. Learning that sometimes a kiss isn't just a kiss, sometimes it means more, sometimes it means less. Learning how to achieve, how to succeed, how to accomplish. It's about learning how to not come in first place and still be proud, and about coming in last and learning how to admit that you could've been better.

Exchange is about learning that large parties don't necessarily mean a good time. Learning that loneliness doesn't go away in a crowd, and that sometimes it's OK to be by yourself on a Friday or Saturday night. It's about learning that your lunch time crowd does not constitute your popularity, and that popularity is all a matter of perspective. It's about learning that boredom is simply laziness of the mind, and watching 3 hours of TV every night is not quality relaxation time.

Exchange is about learning how to pack a bag and how to pack a room full of way too much stuff. It's about learning that people probably like you a whole lot more than they'll ever tell you, and that it's your responsibility to make sure your friends know how much you appreciate them. It's about learning that simply doing what you're supposed to do isn't enough. You need to put forth twice the effort in order to fully grasp whatever is sitting in front of you. It's about learning how to make people smile.

Exchange is about learning how to miss people enough to not stick them in the past, and how to not miss them so much that it keeps you from moving into the future. Learning how to motivate yourself and motivate others. Learning what the phrase, "make do", means, and how to use it to seem as if you're not simply "making do". It's about learning 25 different ways of saying "we made it", and swear in all the different languages of other Exchange Students.

EXCHANGE IS ABOUT LEARNING; LEARNING HOW TO LIVE!!!