



## District 6880 Rotarians,

It is time to start planning for the 2026 RYLA Program! This year, RYLA will be held from Sunday, July 19, 2026, to Thursday, July 23, 2026, on the beautiful campus of University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama. Applications for the 2026 RYLA Program are attached; these are due NLT April 30th.

What is RYLA? Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA) is an intensive leadership program for young people ages 15-17. Organized by Rotary District 6880, RYLA allows participants to learn new skills through civic engagement and personal and professional development opportunities. Talented high school students are chosen from among their peers to attend a series of outdoor activities, leadership training events, seminars, etc., each July.

The RYLA program enables young people to debate issues of professional responsibility and human relations, improve leadership and communication skills, learn about businesses and institutions, and meet Rotarians while having fun and making friends. For young adults, RYLA provides the opportunity to refine skills and explore pertinent topics with their peers and elders.

### **RYLA emphasizes leadership, citizenship, and personal growth, and aims to:**

- Demonstrate Rotary's respect and concern for youth by developing youth leadership skills and recognizing those who are making a positive difference in their communities
- Instill a lifelong commitment to service in young people and connect them with ongoing opportunities to serve through Rotary
- Fulfill Rotary's commitment to youth service by empowering young people through leadership development
- Provide an effective training experience for selected youth and potential leaders
- Encourage leadership of youth by youth

**See for yourself what RYLA is all about:** Our friends at District 6760 RYLA created a short video in 2025 that shows what we will be doing at RYLA learn more at: <https://vimeo.com/1093355443>

### **When and Where is RYLA?**

**The 2026 RYLA program will be held from Tuesday, July 19, through July 23, 2026, at the University of South Alabama, in Mobile, AL ([www.southalabama.edu](http://www.southalabama.edu)). The schedule will be:**

Sunday, July 19	12:00 – 2:00 pm	Check In
Mon – Wed	8:00 am – 10:30 pm	RYLA Activities All Day
Thurs, July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Closing Ceremony and Departure

### **How do Participants Apply?**

To apply for the 2026 Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA), potential participants should submit all of the following:

- A completed digital application

- A copy of the student's (or parent's) Health Insurance Card
- Fee payment (\$750 each; paid by the sponsoring Rotary Club; Payable to 'District 6880- RYLA')

Completed applications can be mailed by April 30th to:

District 6880 RYLA Committee  
 c/o Mike Sledge  
 PO Box 1063  
 Robertsdale, AL 36567

### **Application Process/Timeline**

Jan 30th	Application materials made available to District 6880 Rotary Clubs
Feb 1st	Rotary Club provides application materials to prospective RYLA applicants
March 1st	RYLA applicants turn application materials in
April 30th	Rotary clubs turn applications and \$750 payment to RYLA Committee
May 15th	District RYLA Acceptance letters sent to selected participants
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	RYLA program begins with check-in at 12:00
July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	RYLA program ends with graduation ceremony held at 9:00 am Departure at 11:00

### **Who is Eligible?**

Students entering the **11th or 12th grade**, who attend high school or home schooled within the boundaries of Rotary District 6880 are eligible. Students entering the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of high school in the Fall 2026 may be considered; however, entering 11th and 12th-grade students will be given priority.

### **How Much Does It Cost....And Who Pays?**

The cost of the 2026 RYLA program is paid for by the sponsoring Rotary Club and is \$750 per participant. Payment should accompany a completed application, be made payable to 'District 6880 Youth Services, and be mailed by April 30th to:

District 6880 RYLA  
 c/o Mike Sledge  
 P.O. Box 1063  
 Robertsdale, AL 36567

Cancellations on or after May 15<sup>th</sup> will result in no refund of any payment made. Any student that "No Shows" is responsible to reimburse their sponsor club the full cost of tuition.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Sledge at 251-367-0976 or [6880ryla@gmail.com](mailto:6880ryla@gmail.com).

Yours in Rotary,

**Mike Sledge**

District 6880 RYLA Chair

**Mary Kathryn McKenzie**

RYLA Programs Director

**Suzy Sledge**

RYLA Exec. Secretary

**Memorie Martinez**

RYLA Logistics Director