

Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE): Through RYE, Rotary International hopes to create a more interconnected and understanding world. One of Rotary's primary goals is promoting global peace, and we believe that if students experience different cultures and meet people from all over the globe, they will be more understanding of foreign people and countries in the future, and that this understanding will lead to a more interconnected and peaceful world. RYE is a true exchange program, in that for each student a Rotary Club sends abroad, they receive a foreign exchange student in return. Rotary International has been operating the RYE program for over 50 years, and almost 10,000 students participate annually.

RYE operates two exchange programs:

- Long Term Exchange Program (LTEP): Students spend 10-11 months (a school year) living abroad. LTEP students live with 3 different host families (~3.5 months each) and are required to attend high school.
- Short Term Exchange Program (STEP): Typically, 8-12 weeks (1/2 in foreign country, 1/2 in home country) with a foreign student. This is a direct family-to-family exchange where both young people are together during the whole exchange, typically over the summer.

Cost: The fees below include round trip airfare, costs associated with coordinating your student visa, room and board, school tuition/fees, health insurance, a language learning program, multiple trainings and orientations, and some RYE swag! - everything a student needs to get there and back again. A monthly stipend of spending money for the student is also included.

- LTEP: US\$7-10K depending on country and optional tourist trips.
- STEP: US\$3-4K depending on country and optional tourist trips.
- RYE is one of the most cost-effective youth exchange programs in the world, approximately 25-30% of the cost of commercial programs. This is because RYE is non-profit and entirely run by Rotary volunteers. In addition, RYE offers a lot of value that other programs don't, such as an emphasis on local service projects and opportunities for the students to get involved in community events through their host Rotary Clubs. In addition, our safety and support network is unique.
- For those families that cannot afford these fees, additional financial support may be available that can offset part to all the cost.

Safety and Support: RYE students have the backing and support of both their home Rotary Club and their host Rotary Club, which means that there is a large group of dedicated adult volunteers looking after the welfare of the students. All Rotary Club members and host families who work with RYE students have undergone youth training and background checks, and there are dedicated Rotary Club members who check in with each student regularly and file reports on their status and welfare. In addition, Rotary Clubs tend to be made up of local business and community leaders, therefore, in the unlikely event that the RYE student should encounter a serious problem while on exchange, they have access to a large number of locally influential people to help them navigate the local system and sort things out. In addition, students receive a monthly stipend (~US\$100) from their host club for incidental expenses.

Country Choices: Rotary offers exchanges to over 100 countries. The list varies a bit year to year depending on local conditions. Students rank their top 4 choices from that year's list and the vast majority of students



get sent to one of their top picks. A willingness to go to any country is typically an advantage on your application.

Credits and Graduation: Exchange credits are generally accepted by local schools, although this requires coordination ahead of time with your school counselor. Past RYE students have largely been able to graduate on time with the rest of their class.

Eligibility & Applications: Local students ages 15-19 at the beginning of the exchange year. To apply on-line and more information go to: <https://www.youthexchange5050.org/>

Student Selection: We are looking for open-minded, adaptable, tolerant, supportive, and enthusiastic students who we think will make good peace ambassadors. We are not necessarily looking for the best students academically; we are looking for the people who will be most successful in a cultural exchange and reflect well on our country and communities. Students and their parents do not need to be affiliated with Rotary to apply.

Host Family Recruitment: This program relies on our ability to find local host families for our inbound foreign exchange students. This is our biggest limiting factor so we are always looking for suitable host families. For more information on hosting go to: <https://youthexchange5050.org/sitepage/host-families>

Benefits for Students:

- Learn a new language and experience a new culture;
- Build lasting friendships with people from around the world;
- Develop lifelong communication and leadership skills;
- Opportunities for personal growth and increased responsibility;
- Develop a greater sense of purpose and personal values;
- Become more independent, self-confident, and resilient; and
- Enhanced potential for college admissions and scholarships.

Benefits for School:

- Local students get exposure to people and cultures from other parts of the world;
- Local students learn to build relationships with those who are different from them;
- Teachers and students become aware of different styles of education and ways of learning;
- Helps to build bridges between different cultures and promote peace and understanding;
- Join a worldwide network of host families, educators, students, and community leaders; and
- Local students become more aware of youth exchange programs and may choose to participate;
- Each international student placement gives an opportunity for a local student to study abroad.