



**Hosting
Rotary Exchange Students
In
Rotary District 5010
Alaska, USA
Yukon Territory, Canada
Eastern Russia**

**A Guide for Rotary Clubs, Students
&
Host Families**



The Rotary Youth Exchange Program

It's Purpose

The purpose of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is to build bridges of friendship and understanding between the peoples of the world. We accomplish this by allowing selected high school students to live for a year in a foreign country, assimilating their host country's culture and language, and being ambassadors of goodwill while they are there. The students live with one or more appropriate host families, sharing in the life and love of each family, and attending high school or other pre-university schooling. As these students share of themselves and of their lives and experiences at home, the hosts develop bonds of friendship with these young ambassadors, and thereby with the people of the students' home countries. This building of international goodwill "one hug at a time" is what Rotary Youth Exchange is about.

How the Program Operates

In the Rotary Youth Exchange Program, students are "sponsored" by local Rotary Clubs and are "hosted" by local Rotary Clubs. The sponsoring clubs announce the program to local high school students, and do the initial student selection. They continue to maintain an active interest in their outbound students during the exchange and usually have each student give them a report program after returning home.

The hosting Rotary Clubs are responsible for the inbound students while they are on exchange. As hosts, they arrange to have suitable families to care for, house and feed their students. They provide a Rotarian counselor for each student. Most hosting Rotary Clubs also bring their students to some of the Club meetings, which provide the opportunity for the students to become familiar with the Club members and with what Rotary is and does.

Management of the Rotary Youth Exchange program is done by the associated Rotary "Districts" which are geographical groupings of Rotary Clubs under a District Governor. The participating Districts, through Youth Exchange Committees, are responsible for selecting the students who will actually go overseas and for placing incoming students with local Rotary Clubs. The District Committees are also responsible for the overall operation of the program and for training outbound candidates, inbound exchange students, Rotary Clubs and their exchange officers. The District Committee tries its best to be a fountain of knowledge from whom all participants in the program can obtain help and direction and with whom they can consult in times of trouble.

Who pays for what in the Program

Through the hosting Rotary Club, Rotary supports all of its exchange students financially.

The hosting Rotary Club pays:

- A personal monthly expense allowance to cover incidental expenses while on exchange.
- Registration fees and travel expenses for the student to attend mandatory district functions such as Fall Orientation, Winter Orientation, and District Conference.

The student's own family pays:

- The costs of equipping and training the student for the exchange.
- The costs for the student's passport and visa.
- The round trip travel costs to the host country.
- All expenses for optional trips offered within the host country.
- All educational expenses, special fees, tuition and books.
- All clothing including required school uniforms, gifts, and unusual or unexpected expenses
- An emergency fund of at least \$500.00 US and which must be replenished when the fund is half gone.

The hosting family pays for:

- Room and board for the student.
- School lunches

Criminal Background Check (CBC)

All persons, Club President, President Elect, YEO, Councilors and host family members 18 years of age and older who may have unsupervised contact with exchange students are required to have a current Criminal Background Check. Rotarians taking a student to and from meetings, to social events such as movies or the theater, or for weekend outings less than three nights do not require a CBC.

Host Rotary Club Responsibilities

Selecting Host Families

The first responsibility of a Rotary Club hosting Youth Exchange students is to find suitable host families. This shouldn't be done just by having families agree to host and then putting a student in that home. Instead, the club should be satisfied that each family will be a good experience for a student and that the student will be a good experience for the host family. This means that the Club should have selection criteria for families, and should visit prospective host families to check them against the criteria. There are now a number of requirements both by Rotary International and the U.S. State Department that need to be met. It is mandatory that Rotary Club conduct Host Family Interview Form, a Home Inspection, and a Volunteer Affidavit be completed and returned to the District Committee. See our web page at www.ye5010.org for current details.

What To Look For

Examine the family's motivation for wanting to host a student. Are they doing this because they want to share their life and experiences with a teenager from a foreign land, and because they want to know that person as a loved son or daughter? These motivations are key to what is needed in a host family. We don't want a family who thinks they should be hosts merely because one of the parents is a Rotarian, nor a family who thinks that hosting an exchange student can help them solve existing family problems. Let's face it, hosting an exchange student places strain on a family, and a successful relationship with the student might depend on the motivation the family has in becoming hosts.

Look for warmth and affection between family members; enough to be able to share with a foreign teenager and still have lots left over.

Look for flexibility. The family needs to be secure and confident enough in themselves to be able to adapt to an exchange student. We talk about exchange students adapting to their families, but be assured that all families have to do a lot of adapting in order to accommodate a student.

Look for a family with a sense of humor. When things are going wrong, a laugh can keep molehills from becoming mountains.

Look for a family where members like to talk with one another. Since communications with an exchange student need to be almost totally verbal, it is important to have families that like to talk and who enjoy sharing with each other. A family with good communications can even bring the introverted and quiet students to life and allow them to really enjoy their exchange.

Potential host families should be on solid financial ground to be able to expand to include the student without excessive financial strain. If the family is on the borderline financially, the Club should not consider the family. (R.I. rules prohibit payments to host families.) If the Club can't do this, it might be better to find another family unless that particular family is so outstanding in other ways that they will be great hosts despite financial difficulties.

If a host family has these qualities, little else is needed. One or both parents need not be Rotarians, even though at least one Rotary family per exchange is preferred. Both parents can work; while it might be better if the student isn't left alone at home from the end of school until evening, even this condition can be acceptable for many exchange students.

As to same age, same-sex siblings, the sex restriction should not be a hindrance in and of itself, as long as the host brother or sister is on solid ground emotionally. Equality of age can be beneficial, or have no effect at all, or could even be a problem since these will be siblings for all that this means: delights and fights, joys and jealousies. It is what a person is, not age or gender that makes the difference.

Likewise, it doesn't matter where a family lives as long as it is a solid family. However, if the family lives in the country, miles from school, they can expect to be transporting the student to and from school, church, or club events. If the family isn't willing to take this extra effort, it could cause a problem with an exchange student.

All persons 18 years of age and older living in with the host family must have a Criminal Background Check (CBC).

The Rotary Counselor

The exchange students need at least one adult friend with whom they can share their joys and troubles, and from whom they can receive help, guidance and advice in dealing with any problems. This is also true for host families, who need someone to answer questions about their student, about Rotary Club policies, and who will act as advisor if problems arise while they are hosting. Finally, the host Rotary Club, needs feedback on how the exchange experience is going and what they, as a Club, need to do to carry out their job as the student's Rotary hosts. In the Rotary Youth Exchange program, these are the functions of the student's Rotary Counselor.

In selecting a Counselor, the Youth Exchange Officer should look for a Rotarian who can become a friend to the teenager, has enough time to do this, and who is willing to use that time to help the student. If the student is of the opposite sex, there should be a partner-counselor who is the same sex as the student. This additional Counselor must also be a Rotarian who is also willing and able to take on the job. **The Rotary Counselor may not be a host simultaneously.** This is because one of the major responsibilities of the counselor is to deal with problems between the student and the host family. Also, plan to have a counselor for the entire year, rather than trying to rebuild this relationship more than once while hosting the student.

Rotary has prescribed certain duties for all Counselors throughout the world, which are:

- Build a friendly, confidential relationship with the exchange student.
- See the student frequently, not less than once a month and spend enough time with the student to know what the student is doing, what achievements the student has made, how school performance is going, and what the student's plans are for the future. Look for any problems which need to be addressed and deal with those problems in a prompt and forthright manner.

- See that the Club issues an allowance check of the committed amount by the first day of each month that the student is being hosted, and personally transmit that check directly to the student.
- Act as liaison between the student and the Club, keeping the Club informed on how the student is doing and what the student's financial and other needs are, and keep the student informed about the Club action on any of the student's requests.
- Remind the Club of important events in the student's life, such as birthdays, special holidays at home, or any outstanding accomplishments, and see that the Club remembers the student on these occasions.
- Talk to the host family occasionally, not less than once a month (required by regulations), to see that everything is going smoothly in the hosting situation, and provide the host family with help or advice as needed.

The importance of having a good and effective counselor cannot be overstated. Time after time, if the student's counselor is a counselor in name only, small irritations become big problems. Worldwide, many exchange students who have no real counselor have let problems in their hosting situation overcome them to where they wound up going home early. In some cases the student couldn't take the situation any longer, in others the host families couldn't take the student any longer. It doesn't matter what the immediate reasons were, these exchanges failed for the lack of a counselor. A good counselor can make the difference between successful exchanges and ones in which there are bad feelings left over to linger on and jeopardize the future of a Club's exchange program.

The Host Club's Financial Obligations

The Club pays the student a monthly allowance. The amount of the allowance is set by the District at the time the student is accepted, and it is payable to the student on the first day of each month that the student is present and being hosted. The allowance is for the student's personal expenses and may be spent at the student's discretion.

The Club pays the District Orientation Fees (usually held in the fall) and travel expenses associated with these meetings. Rotary District 5010 runs the Youth Exchange Program on the basis that those who benefit the most from it, pay the most toward it. As a result, the District costs of hosting and training the student's at the Orientation meeting which take place during the student's year are passed on to the host Rotary Clubs. These fees are payable at or before the time of the meeting the student attends.

Each incoming student is required to have an accident and sickness insurance policy which is obtained by the District for each student. The cost of this policy is the responsibility of the student/parents. Some countries provide insurance for their students, which is in most cases acceptable to our District. If we have determined that the sponsor's policy is acceptable, the host club(s) will be notified.

How to Put Rotary into the Youth Exchange Program

Most youth exchange organizations consider it enough to see that their students are placed with acceptable families and are entered in acceptable schools for the exchange year. But Rotary gives us the chance to make a lot more of the exchange than these organizations do. All we have to do is accept the full role that Rotary has planned for us – that we make the exchange student the whole Club's son or daughter in every aspect. Don't just be check-writing guardians of a student, but bring the student into the fellowship, to meetings, into our homes and into our hearts. Let our families in on the big secret, that there is a wonderful young person from a foreign country in our community who will be ours to enjoy as soon as we get acquainted. Will Rogers probably said it best, "Strangers are friends you haven't met yet." So let's make sure we don't miss out on having another great friend.

There are several things a Club can do to integrate a student into the fellowship or Rotary and Rotarians. First, invite a student to the Rotary meetings as often as possible, considering school performance requirements and the student's availability to come. This may mean arranging the school schedule so as to have a course which can be missed once a week to come to Rotary. Also, many Clubs demand much the same attendance performance from exchange students that they do from Rotarians; that the student should attend every meeting possible, and that under no circumstances would the student miss four meetings in a row, nor have an attendance percentage less than sixty percent.

When an exchange student comes to the Club meetings, plan to have the student shared by different Rotarians each time the student attends. This may be done by having a different host Rotarian assigned to the student for each full week for each meeting. That Rotarian would greet the student upon arrival if he doesn't pick the student up from school, would introduce the student to the Rotarians around the table and see that the student isn't ignored in the table conversation. There is no reason why the student can't be the focus of conversation during the meal so that everyone at the table will have a chance to get to know him or her better. If a Rotarian is host for a full week, he/she could also be assigned to do something outside the Rotary meeting with the student as well. However, in choosing to spread the exchange student around the Club, we should try to get the maximum amount of exposure to the maximum number of Rotarians while hosting the student.

Involve the student occasionally in the Club meeting. The student can tell about a school event, or a bit about what life is like at home, or what event of interest has happened recently. The student can pass the hat, or pot, as the case may be, in collecting fines. Let the student participate in the events of the Club meetings in the ways that are most appealing to your Club.

The plan should include using the student for at least two Club programs during the exchange. The first program can be a talk about the home country so Club members will gain more knowledge of the world around them, and in particular, around someone who is both near and dear to the Club. The second program can be an evaluation of what the year has been like and what this has meant to the student. Plan to have Rotarian spouses as well as the student's host family in attendance. This is a great way of finding host families for the future. This is also a good opportunity to thank the host families for their involvement and support. Actually, if the

Club's program chairman is given the opportunity of having a ready-made program early enough, he/she will jump at the chance to use the exchange student.

Celebrate the special occasions in a student's life, like a birthday, graduation, Christmas, or whatever. This is a good way to let the exchange student know that the entire Club cares and delights in the special events of his or her life. Gifts need not be fancy or expensive, just enough to show that the Club remembered. Nevertheless, many Clubs use one of these occasions to present the student with a copy of a book on Alaska and/or the Yukon Territory photo book so that he or she can share what the country was like here with the folks at home, and can have a lasting memory of the time spent with us.

Involve as many Rotarians and their families as possible with the student outside the weekly Rotary meetings. Individual Rotarians could have the student over to dinner, out for an evening, for a weekend at the lake or skiing, or a shopping trip. We'll tell you a secret. **About the only successful way to make this happen is to appoint a social secretary for the student.** This is a Rotarian who first meets with the host families to arrange times when the student could be absent without disrupting the family's plans, and then uses these times to schedule events with other Rotary families.

The selling operation involved in setting up the student's social schedule involves offering selected Rotarians a choice of dates/times in which to do something with the student. The social secretary could say something like "I have these times available for you to choose from so which do you want?" If the Rotarian ducks by saying that he or she would like to consult with the spouse, counter with, "Great, I will give you a call at home tonight." Like all good salesmen, the social secretary never offers the opportunity of saying "no", merely "when."

Once this program gets going, it needs to be remembered not to overdo it. After all, we don't want the host family to feel we are interfering in their life. How much time there is away from home must be worked out with each host family. Some families would be delighted to have their student out once or twice a week, while others would feel pushed if their student is out once every couple of weeks. We recommend to plan to have 20-30 events in the course of the year, depending upon the particular situation.

The Club's leadership should be informed about how their student is doing by having the Counselor or Youth Exchange Committee Chairman give a report monthly at Board meetings. The report might include information about any achievements of note, the status of the relationship between the student and the host family, or how the student is doing in school. The board might also like to know the student's plan in the immediate future, whether the student has any financial needs, or whether there are any other problems with which they need to deal.

There are a lot of rewards for a Club if the members take a strong interest in a student, and if the student is included in as many aspects of the Club's life as possible. These rewards aren't just in knowing this one student better. The Club will have a much better insight into the world at large and the peoples of other lands. We will be sharing Rotary and Rotary ideals with not just your students, but also with those who come in contact with our students here and abroad. Rotary Youth Exchange is a major way that a Club can build bridges of friendship with other people that

will last for generations and maybe, influence the course of history for the betterment of mankind. It doesn't take a lot of effort, just a lot of caring/sharing ourselves for one moment with a marvelous youngster from another land.

The Youth Exchange Officer

The YEO's responsibilities are:

- Selection of host families for inbound students. Preferably 3 families per exchange.
 - Paperwork (completed)
 - Interviews (completed)
 - Home Inspections (conducted)
 - Documentation to the Area Coordinator when homes change
- Enrollment of inbound students in school and being the main contact of the school in regard to the student's academic achievements (you can often register your email with the school and have instant notification of absenteeism and notices from teachers)
- Receive student grade reports from the student, review them with the student and notify the area coordinator if there are any issues.
 - You should plan to attend Parent/Teacher night.
- Coordinate attendance of Club meetings by inbound students.
- Registration and attendance of inbound and rebound students to Fall Orientation, registration of potential outbounds and inbounds, at Winter Orientation. (Select rebound students will be invited to Winter Orientation with the recommendation of the YEO and Area Coordinator.
 - Inbound Students are required to attend District Conference
- Participation in the selection of outbound students
 - May include recruiting at schools
 - Participate in interviewing and selection process
- Club must have one representative attend Fall Orientation and Winter Orientation, this is required for the Club to remain active in Youth Exchange.

Being a Host Family

Hosting an exchange student will bring you both added joys and added trials because teenagers are much alike all over the world. If you treat your exchange student as if he/she is a member of your family as if born into the family. If you open your heart to this person as well as your home, and if you follow the steps we suggest, you and your student can have a good and memorable time together. You may make a lifelong friend.

Sleeping Arrangements

You need to provide your student with a bed of his or her own and a space to study without interruptions. A separate room for the student is desirable but not necessary. Many times, when an exchange student feels blue and homesick, they want to be off by themselves until their feelings have been worked out. That's where a room of their own can be a big help. On the other hand, there are students who would rather share the same room with their host brother/sister and have the opportunity of getting to know them better. Either way, exchange students are good at adapting to your circumstances most of the time, so plan to share your family just as it is, not as what you think someone else would like it to be.

Relationship Building Prior to Hosting

As soon as you know that you are going to be a host family, it is time to start getting acquainted. Assuming your student hasn't left their home country yet, please email or write to the student about you, your home, your town, school, what clothing will be needed, anything that will help the student become more familiar with the upcoming exchange experience. Send photos of your family and home. If the student is already here, invite them into your home before they move to your house so they will be acquainted with you as a family and with their new surroundings. The more things that they can know and be certain about will help ease the transition and allow them to open and be him/herself.

Arrival at the Airport

Plan to meet your student at the airport upon arrival. If you have contacted the student prior to their arrival, your presence at the airport will confirm that you really want to have him or her as a part of your family. This is true even if you are family number four. If you can't be at the airport, plan to meet the student as soon as possible. You could host a party for the student and other host families, or you could have the student over for dinner or a weekend event. Don't delay. You will have more fun with your student if he/she is comfortable with you as a family.

Required Meeting at the Airport

Each student must be met at the airport upon arrival by SOMEONE, if not the first host family, then another host family, YEO, Counselor, or Club President. More is better and it is required by Rotary that someone meets the student. The student will probably be tired and nervous and expecting to be met by someone to help them as soon as they reach Alaska or the Yukon.

Parent Notification

The first host family or YEO needs to allow the student notify his/her parents ASAP that the student has arrived safely. The student needs to email, call or both to reassure their parents that

all is well. You do not have to pay for the call, but it would be a nice gesture. You could allow the student to call collect, use a calling card, or reimburse you when the bill arrives.

The First Few Days

During the first days after arrival, the student may be suffering from jet lag. He/She could have spent upwards of 40-50 hours up, awake and traveling before getting to you and may be exhausted on arrival. Many students sleep practically through the entire next day before they arise to see what they have gotten themselves into. You should consider this before planning the first day or two of the student's life with you. A big party the first night in your home may leave you talking to yourself while the student falls asleep. Please be considerate of the student who has left the comfort and security of home, has been worrying about what life will be like in their new home, who is scared to death and now, is totally exhausted.

If you are not the first host family, make arrangements in advance so the current family and student know what day and time you will be coming to get the student. The YEO can also provide the transition and transportation to the new home. The student should be packed and ready to go at the arranged time. Don't be in a rush to get in and out. You may have to deal with tearful goodbyes as the time comes to depart and this could cause a delay. Tears are common, the hardest thing a student has to do is change families, given up the known and loved for the unknown, and you too will experience this when the student moves from your home.

Getting the Student Started in Your Family

Exchange students are really poor at knowing how to fit into a family just by observing the family members in their daily lives. Therefore, you need to hold a family conference with your student almost immediately after he/she moves in with you. It doesn't matter whether your family is the first host family or last one. YOUR family does things differently from the way they were at home and from all other host families. Follow the link below:

http://yeoresources.org/First_Night_Questions.htm

and **See our web page at www.ye5010.org for other links and details.**

On the Second Day

The first host family (at least) gets the honor of holding yet another conference with the student which is the mother/daughter or father/son conference. This second conference may be handled as tactfully as you desire to make sure that your student is properly versed about life here. Say that you are going to review things about our way of life to make sure there are no misunderstandings, even though life here may be exactly like it is at home.

FATHER/SON CONFERENCE

- Frequency of bathing and use of deodorant
- Shaving
- Haircuts and hair care
- Appropriate dress for various occasions (You may want to say that at least some clothing is worn around the house, since this topic has come up surprisingly often with regard to exchange students here.)

- The social equality of men and women, boys and girls. This addresses the way men treat women in the United States. For example, being “macho” in the manner of Latin countries isn’t the way we do it. Host moms must be respected in these situations.
- The dating system here, how it works, and how to be successful, but self-protective during dates. Please support the Rotary rules against love affairs, serious dating, and/or sexual relations.

MOTHER/DAUGHTER CONFERENCE

- Frequency of bathing and use of deodorant, Feminine hygiene, as practiced here.
- Proper use of cosmetics, some students may never have used cosmetics.
- The dating system here, how it works, and how to be successful, but self-protective during dates. Please support the Rotary rules against love affairs, serious dating, and/or sexual relations.

The Student’s Valuables **THESE ITEMS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YEO**

All students arrive with certain valuables that need to be cared for during their time with you. **These valuables should be cared for the by the Host Club’s YEO.**

Certificate of Immunization Status –The student should arrive with a Certificate of Immunization Status. If missing, check with the Counselor or YEO, it may already be here. If it isn’t here, and the student cannot get one, the student may be forced to go to the State health office and get all of the required shots to remain in school.

Round-trip airline ticket -- Students are required to have a round-trip airline ticket, so they should have their return ticket upon arrival. Since airline tickets are negotiable documents as well as valuable ones, they need to be kept in a safe but accessible place until time to go home. It is required that **the YEO keep the student’s passport, airline ticket, insurance records and other important documents.** If you are hosting, make sure you know where these documents are kept in case the student must return home quickly.

Passport – Your student only needs to have it if going outside the U.S. See note about giving it to the YEO. Check the student’s visa upon arrival and see if it allows multiple entries into the US and is valid for the entire year. If not, report this information to the AREA COORDINATOR. For identification purposes, the YEO will take the student to the local DMV and have an Alaska ID issued. To do this, you first must visit the Social Security office and get a letter stating the student is not eligible to work (Alaska). It is recommended that the student keep a copy (not the original) of their passport with them. Yukon ID is not required but the student should have some other means of identifying themselves with them.

Revolving Fund of Cash or Travelers Checks – should be deposited in a bank or credit union, do not allow the student to have direct access to this account, the YEO should set up the account with a required signature plus the students signature (i.e., the YEO, club counselor, president,.) This fund is for emergency use. So there is no need for a checking account or ATM, try to place the money in an interest bearing savings account. Since the Alaskan banks will need a TIN (Taxpayer Identification Number) to open the account, the YEO should be a co-signer on the

account, he/she may be able to use the Rotary Club's tax number. The Club is tax-exempt, you won't have to pay income tax on the interest the student receives. This should be a dual signature account since many students have never managed money or budgeted funds, they will have to convince a second person that the purchase is valid. Past students have spent all of their money in one splurge on clothes or a stereo and we must explain to their parents how we could let that happen.

Accident and Sickness Insurance Policy – we hope this isn't needed, however, the policy is normally obtained here before the student leaves home, but sometimes the student family will be required to purchase it at home. If you don't know where this policy is, be sure you ask the Counselor or YEO. Be sure to get a copy and keep it with the student's papers that are kept at your house, easily available in case of an emergency or injury. As a host parent, you are authorized by a **Parental Release Form** in the student's application to act as the student's guardian in the event the student needs medical treatment or even an operation. You can get a copy of the release from the Club Counselor or YEO.

Making Your Student a Real Family Member

Believe it or not, there is such a thing as exchange student segregation, and it can even be in their host families. The segregated student is one who is treated either as a guest of the family, or just as bad, like a family servant. How does this come about?

Sometimes it may seem easier to not go through all the effort it takes to expand your family to make your exchange student a bonafide family member. It's okay if you treat this student as a guest, isn't it? After all, guests are put on a pedestal and have things done for them to make their life pleasant. You don't ask guests to take out the garbage or shovel the snow. Yet an exchange student really wants and is expected to be included in all aspects of family life, even if that means shoveling snow or caring for animals, doing dishes or pulling weeds in the garden. Because that is part of how a student knows he or she is really accepted into the family. Students may grumble about some of the less pleasant tasks, but a student who is not included in the family activities to the same degree that the other family members are, realizes it and feels rejected.

Occasionally a student has the opposite problem with a host family, and he/she is assigned to do the jobs the family doesn't want to do themselves. Maybe the student is used as a perpetual baby-sitter, or even as a modern day Cinderella without the fairy godmother, prince or glass slippers. Any student in this situation is sure to feel abused and rejected by his or her host family.

Probably the worst family situation an exchange student can get into is to be "shunned." Shunning is the custom of treating a person as if he weren't there, and excluding him from all forms of human communication. As hosts for an exchange student, it is far too easy to unintentionally "shun" a student who arrives with severe language difficulties if you figure that it's too difficult to try to talk to your student other than saying "good morning," or "time for dinner."

What can your family do to totally integrate your exchange student? Some of the techniques may be obvious from the examples, but basically you should make your student as much a part of your family as if born into it. Be sure he/she has equality of status within your family, the same as all of your family members. No more, no less.

Be sure your student shares in the love of your family, just like all the other members.

Be sure your student has the benefit of lots of communication with the other family members. If you happen to have a student who is weak in English or shy or introverted, you need to make conversations take place. You can talk about life in the student's home country and family. Talk about their day in school, what the student likes and doesn't like. Just talk, talk, and talk some more. Your student will learn faster by talking and can be brought out of himself/herself by talking, so it is well worth the extra effort it takes.

Celebrate the special events in the life of your student as if he or she had always been part of your family. These could be things like a birthday, Christmas, Easter, or graduation. There may even be other days which are important in the life of the student such as the "Name Day" and Saint Lucia day of the Scandinavians. Just find out what days are important in the life of your student, how they are celebrated, and join in. You will have a happier student, and will have fun learning something more about life in your student's country.

MOST OF THESE ITEMS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YEO, HOWEVER THE FAMILY HAS DAY-TO-DAY CONTACT. IF PROBLEMS ARISE, PLEASE NOTIFY THE YEO.

The Family and School – Before the School Bell Rings

If you are the first family, you need to do some preparation for school even before your student arrives. You should find out who the counselor will be for your student and arrange for a block of time when you can bring the student to school to review his/her current academic standing and to plan the classes for the coming term. If you think that your student will have difficulty speaking English, you might also arrange to have someone speaks his/her language there as an interpreter. For example, if your student speaks either Spanish or Portuguese, you might be able to use the Spanish teacher at the school. You might even have to search your community for someone who is at least partially fluent in your student's language and ask if they can help you. If at all possible, have the Club's YEO along to make sure he remains the point of contact for the school. After all, the student will move to another host family and may "forget" to change "guardians."

If you can, try to set the counseling session for a time when the counselor can spend an hour or so getting to know your student, thereby allowing the best possible courses to be set up. We have found that most exchange students come from an academic situation ahead of the equivalent grade studies here (even if they can't speak English), and that it is often difficult to challenge them enough to keep their interest going. Nevertheless, you have to do this or the student will become bored, and could become a problem for the school and the host family. Classes that are good for most students to take include English, US History, and Public Speaking. You might also include studies in math and science as well, be sure to consider your student's personal interest in art, music, sports or manual skills like typing and try to satisfy them as much as possible. Most schools overseas don't have any of these programs and your student

will find them to be fun and different. Further, these auxiliary programs can be a good way for your student to get acquainted with other students and a fast way to gain friends and remain active.

Remember to take the Certificate of Immunization Status form to the school at time of enrollment or you may not be able to enroll the student.

Our Alaskan and Yukon systems of high school is almost universally unlike what exchange students will have encountered in their school at home. We seem to be respectively unique in having the teachers stay put and the students roam around from class to class. Most everywhere else, this is done the other way around. To get your student prepared for this new and different procedure, we suggest you have a “walk-through” set up for your student to go through after receiving their class assignments. The guide could be a host sibling or school assigned guide, or maybe a friend of the family if you don’t have kids in that school. A good walk-through should start at the beginning of the day, from the place that the student will arrive on campus, and go to all places the student will have to go. It should include going to and opening the locker, each class in succession, the restrooms, and lunchroom or eating area. The guide might also show how to get to the office/counseling area so the student will know where to go to discuss problems in a particular class or with scheduling. We have heard many stories of first-day confusion, lockers that wouldn’t open, classes that couldn’t be found and other problems that might have been avoided with a walk-through.

The First School Days

Your student will normally enter school at the beginning of a school term. Students who arrive in the summer usually have anywhere from one to two weeks to get accustomed to life here and to be prepared for school, and even the winter arriving students usually have a week or two to prepare for school. If your student arrives after classes have started, try to set up a schedule leading to the beginning of school that neither rushes nor delays too much before classes begin. Allow a day or two to adjust to your family and get over jet lag, and your student will be better prepared to deal with school. Then, when you have met with the counselor and your student has had a walk-through, go ahead and start classes.

The first day of school is going to be a major event in the life of your exchange student. All students find it exciting, but some are totally devastated by discovering their English isn’t going to get them through. Even students who think they know English pretty well can find themselves in language trouble because of the American slang which gets thrown at them. For the students who are weak in English, this day becomes a blur of language, none of which is understood. Why? Because they have to translate back and forth between languages and they can’t do it fast enough. Many students have come back from the first day in school and have insisted on calling home to see if they can get out of this horrible mistake right now!!! “I want to go home” is what you are likely to hear.

If this happens to your student, there are things that you can do to help. You can talk about the first day sympathetically discuss the classes and what might be going on in each. This will help you find out how much your student really picked up and how much was missed. If there is

enough of a language problem that your student doesn't know anything that happened, look for other ways to help him or her get through. One approach is to have your student take a cassette recorder to class (with the teacher's permission) and record the sessions for later review at home. Another is to talk with the teachers and find out what each class is doing so that you can go over the material later at home. This "home review" is really good for both you and the student, as it helps your student understand school and it helps you know where your students needs help. The practice in English allows your student to make a lot more progress than would be possible just at school, where things often happen too swiftly to be understood at all.

Unless your student arrives a lot later than normal, they need to attend the Fall Orientation that occurs just after school starts which may help your student get over those opening day jitters and fears. In September, we have a weekend orientation to get the students acquainted with each other, to have fun, and to let the kids know that any problems they have, others also have, and they can all succeed. For students who arrive in January, we have a meeting in January (Winter Orientation) to accomplish the same purpose. Beyond the fellowship and reinforcement that the students get at these meetings, they also have a chance to learn more about the rules and regulations of the program, and more about how to fit into life as an exchange student.

Monitoring Your Student's School Performance

Because school here often doesn't demand as much performance or achievement by the students as at home, and because some students have graduated from high school before coming here, it is easy for them to become bored with school and then become a mental or even physical dropout. If that happens, and if it becomes a habit before it is detected, you may expect to have problems with your student, and he/she will probably end up going home early. Your best bet is to see that your student follows the school requirements of the program, attends all classes faithfully, and achieves all that is possible scholastically. You do this by keeping in touch with how your student is progressing in school.

Talk to your student's teachers shortly after school has begun to see how your student is doing in each class and find out if there are any problems to be addressed. Each teacher should be informed that this is an exchange student, and is willing to undertake the extra effort which might be required. If not, it might be better to have your student moved to another class where the teacher has time. Not all students require more effort in all of their classes, bus some students do in at least some of their classes. American or Canadian History are good example of classes where teacher cooperation is needed in order to achieve success, because exchange students have neither the background expected of the U.S. or Canadian students, nor the vocabulary necessary to really understand the text.

Having once made contact with the teachers, you will find it easy to follow up occasionally and assure yourself that your student is doing well in class and attending school regularly.

A school open house is another good time to see how things are going for your student. Visit with the teachers and the counselors and administrators and make sure you really know how things are going in school. If there are any issues, you/YEO can request a special grade report from the school. For this, the teachers issue interim grades and attendance information as of that

time, and the school will send you the report. You/YEO may also send emails to each teacher requesting periodic updates. In a few instances where there have been real difficulties at school, the exchange student's hosts have received weekly reports until the problems have been resolved. Both you/YEO and the teachers involved will appreciate knowing that each other cares and is working on correcting the problems.

If you are unfortunate enough to receive an attendance or scholastic deficiency notice from the school, don't hesitate. Act immediately, talk to your student, to the YEO and to the Counselor, Get to the bottom of the problem and see that it is resolved. Consider this a warning that the student may be getting into other problems as well, and that only prompt action may be able to save this exchange. Remember that if your student has to be sent home due to problems, the exchange program in your community could be in jeopardy for the next several years.

Grade reports will normally be sent to the student's YEO who will share them with the host family. When you get grade reports, review them carefully and congratulate your student for successes, and counsel your student where he needs to improve. Take careful note of any stated absences, and make sure they fit your own knowledge of attendance. Discuss any issues with the YEO and Counselor.

Is School Really That Important?

Yes it is. Because this is a school year exchange and the student is expected to benefit as much as possible from the school experience, things which interfere with school must be minimized. Nevertheless, there are some Rotary functions which conflict with school functions and take precedence over school events. These are the Fall Orientation, Schussout, District Conference and Host Club meetings. Since these are **ROTARY** Youth Exchange Students, we feel an obligation to have them informed about Rotary as well as things taught in school.

On the other hand, we don't want our students off traveling during school time when it can be avoided. Please defer your travel plans to weekends and vacations while you are hosting rather than pulling your student out of school to go to Disneyland for example. Missing a day or two won't cause a crisis, but try to avoid trips which would require your student to miss a week or more of school unless you have the permission of your student's YEO, Area Coordinator, and the District Chair.

Basically, we are asking you to use common sense about school achievement and attendance. If you are happy with the progress of your exchange student as you would be if they were your own child, great! If you have doubts or are dissatisfied, it's time to consult your Rotary Counselor and/or YEO. We really want to help you make your hosting experience one you will want to repeat. We hope that you will, the next time the opportunity arises.

District 5010 Rules for Exchange Students

There are several rules that we have for the inbound students who are being hosted in this District which are meant to keep students safe from harm, and to give them every chance to be great ambassadors from their home countries. Before coming to this District, the students and their parents have agreed to be bound by our rules, and know that students will be sent home if they violate them. As hosts, it is important that you also know our rules.

Students must attend all District youth exchange meetings, unless there is a serious health issue. We do not excuse students from attending any of these meetings, not even for such events as sports or to go to the Prom. Any requests to miss meetings will be denied. The dates of the meetings will vary from year to year, so it is important to find out right away what the meetings date will be for the current exchange and note them. In summary, District meetings are held:

Fall Orientation, in September

Four day weekend in January, Winter Orientation

Rotary District Conference, usually in May or June, various cities throughout Alaska

We expect the inbound exchange students to participate in school almost as if they had been in school from kindergarten. That means they should attend classes regularly each school day and do all assigned work for each class. Because we don't tolerate substandard school performance by an exchange student, we expect each of them to do as well as they can scholastically. They need to get involved in school activities because to integrate them fully into school life. They can do what they do best, or would like to do in sports, art, music, debate, etc.

In addition to the Club, host families are their student's guardians. Therefore, students are to do as their host family's wish, and host families should expect their students to comply with all family rules as well as Rotary rules. We want the students to do most of the adapting required to fit in to each host family, making sure that their behavior and their expectations fit the way their hosts live and where they live.

If the student's natural family wishes to visit while their child is here, they are expected to give prior notice to the host family, Counselor, and YEO. If families come to visit, by District rules, they are merely guests. The hosts here are the student's family. When parents visit, there are some rules that need to be followed so that we can maintain the continuity of the exchange. First, students may not leave the boundaries of the Rotary District with just their natural parents. They may leave the District is everyone if traveling with the host family. Due to the rules regarding school attendance, an exchange student will not be allowed to withdraw from school for an extended period to travel or visit with his or her family. If it can be arranged with the school for a particular student to get some time off without penalty, it is acceptable to the District. We like to advise the student's parents that the best time for them to visit is during the third quarter of the exchange.

District 5010 has some COMMANDMENTS that we expect all exchange students to obey, and the student will be sent home for violations:

- No Driving – includes autos, boats, airplanes, dune buggies, motorcycles, snowmobiles, or any other a powered vehicle/machine. (Our insurance does not cover this.)
- No Drinking alcoholic beverages. No matter what life is like at home, Alaska and Yukon Laws say no alcohol until the ages of 21 and 19 respectively. If a toast is served for a special occasion, a student may be included, but not required to have a drink. The student needs to understand that a toast with his or her host family is not the same as drinking in public or at a party.
- No Drugs other than prescription medications that are prescribed to the student.
- No Serious Dating, although group dating is acceptable. A student should not become romantically involved or the relationship must end.
- No sexual activity.
- No travel alone outside the host community without permission of the YEO. Students may travel with their host families, Rotarians, church and school groups and others that are approved by their host family AND YEO, but never out of their host community alone without explicit permission.
- Obey all the laws of the United States, Canada, and the State/Territory and the host community. Being an exchange student does not exempt them from all the consequences of illegal acts. They can be arrested and go to jail.
- Write home or email at least once a week. The home family will be missing their child and getting letters and emails from here can keep their phone bill minimized.
- Submit a STUDENT ACTIVITY REPORT to their District Outbound Coordinator quarterly. This is a report that tells how your student is doing and whether there are any problems that need to be dealt with.

Common Problems

Not all exchange students have problems, but most will encounter some at one time or another during their exchange. The good news is that when we identify these problems and have an idea how to effectively handle them, we can help our student avoid or overcome the issue. On the other hand, if we don't anticipate problems, they become even larger. Here are some common problems that students have and possible solutions.

Culture Shock

One of the very first problems that exchange students might encounter is culture shock. No matter how much students think they know about their host country, when they arrive they generally find things much different than what they expected. For example, there could be the shock of going from a large city to a small town, or vice versa. Or it could be that our country isn't like it seems on television or in the movies. Or it could be the lack of respect shown to our teachers in school or adults in general. The liberated status of women here can shock students who come from societies where women are subservient to men. The shock can even come from our billboards, television commercials, our "strange" foods, or the way we handle silverware at the table. The sad thing is that these types of cultural differences can be so upsetting to students that they want to go right back home. NOW!

So what can we do as hosts to help our student with a bad case of culture shock.

Culture shock is a process of recognizing and adapting to a different cultural environment. The responses to culture shock need to be a show of warmth and affection for the student, and sympathetic reassurances that this particular problem has been experienced by a lot of other exchange students who got over it. They did this by learning to accept us and our strange behavior not as being right or wrong, but just as being as we are. Different, but lovable.

Homesickness

The most common of all exchange student problems is homesickness, or the severe loneliness which one feels when separated from the sights, sounds, and people at home. At one time or another, this occurs to nearly every exchange student, and ranges in severity from a minor annoyance to a major problem. Also, students are more susceptible to homesickness at times when there are major holidays or events at home, like Christmas, or Carnival in Brazil.

The trigger for an episode of homesickness is always thinking of home. Most commonly, simple inactivity allows the mind to wander off to home, and homesickness ensues. If the student is really lucky, this is just before he lies down to go to sleep, and his homesickness is over before it begins. Many students are homesick after a phone call from home. While they are delighted to be talking with family and friends, homesickness soon follows when the call ends. Afterwards, they disappear into their rooms for a full-blown attack of homesickness that lasts the rest of the day or longer.

Like other kinds of sickness, the best cure is prevention. For homesickness the cure is keeping the student physically and mentally active so they don't drift off to home. We should see that the

student has plenty of physical activity during the day and something to do after homework is finished.

When homesickness strikes, it is okay for the student to disappear into their room to mope or cry for a short time. But not for too long, so after crying, the student should get active. Running, playing sports, aerobics, gymnastics, sledding; anything that demands strenuous physical performance will help the student feel better fast.

Telephone/Computer Usage

Please keep in mind that the exchange students are here as ambassadors. The more they get involved in the culture, the sooner they will get over the homesickness. Students should have limited access to a cell phone, to be used only for local calls. Frequently students who have a successful exchange advise that the most common homesick time was when they talked to their friends/families at home. There should be minimal contact both by e-mail and phone. A suggestion is an hour a week tops. If there is a problem with this, please notify the YEO.

Weight Gain

Weight gain is the second most common problem for exchange students and is almost universal for girls. It doesn't matter if it is an inbound or outbound student. By going on exchange, students are likely to gain weight even if they have never had a weight problem before. Why is this?

First there is the change in diet. The body gets used to a particular diet, and when it gets that type of diet, it throws off a large percentage of calories taken in. When one's diet changes, the body plays it safe by storing the calories it doesn't need immediately in the form of fat. Therefore, if the amount of food eaten remains the same as it was before the exchange began, there is a high likelihood that weight will climb. To make matters worse, this tendency of the body to hoard its calories is often compounded by new food that are both good and potentially fattening. Like chocolate chip cookies. If we add that to a host parent who urges the student to "have another helping," the problem only gets worse.

Another important cause of weight gain is that students sometimes overeat to compensate for the stress of being on exchange. Exchange students are involved in the dual stresses of being away from home and in a foreign culture, and some can't resist overeating as a result.

As hosts, we can help our student control weight by encouraging the limit of calorie intake. Sometimes this encouragement almost needs to be in the way of a lock on the refrigerator door, particularly if a student is eating in reaction to stress. If he or she still gains weight, it may help to serve limited portions of food at any meal, and by not having "seconds" on the table, ready to eat. Seeing the student gets the proper amount of exercise also helps. Nevertheless, in a typical situation, a student will probably gain some weight despite all we do to help control it. Think of the large student we might be sending home at the end of the year if we don't have everyone's help. Some students have gained as much as 40 pounds, so be on guard, and be prepared to help. A student's ability to control weight gain depends a lot on the host families.

Language Difficulties

An exchange student can have language difficulties even if the native language is a version of English or French. For English/French-speaking students, these occur in at least three areas. First, kids will tease them about how strange their accents sound. Second, words have different meanings here from what they have at home. Third, students have problems understanding slang expressions that we use. Exchange students almost always wind up embarrassed because of their “misuse” of English or French.

Canada is different in that there are two official languages, French and English, so students have the option of communicating in either language. Nevertheless, the difficulties described below will apply equally to the use of either language since typically neither is their native language.

Those who speak another language will have some of the same problems, no matter how long they have studied English/French at home. For the best of these students, they will only have the above difficulties. The remaining students have but a limited use of the English/French when they arrive. Their English/French can range from almost none up to those who speak and understand if fairly well as long as the conversation is slow. The none-to-slow speakers need our help if they are going to learn English quickly.

There are certain things we can do to help a student weak in English/French. These are:

- Teach them to say “Speak more slowly” or “I do not understand” if they are having trouble understanding.
- If they want to be sure they understand what is being said or asked, have them paraphrase back, “Do you mean.....?”
- Have them use a bilingual dictionary when they don’t understand the meanings of words heard in English/French and for translating into English/French the words or thoughts from their native language.
- There are translators available on the internet such as www.babblefish.com where you can type in a word or sentence and translate it between languages.
- Tell the student that asking questions will help him/her understand what is being said. The more a student insists on understanding, the more rapidly he or she will make the transition to thinking in English/French. When students are able to think in our language, they are home free. The average student will achieve translation-free English/French within two to four months of their arrival.
- To keep up their language practice, students need to spend their time with US/Canada students rather than exchange students. This is especially true when a student is really comfortable only when talking with other exchange students. While it is okay for them to visit with other exchange students occasionally and take a language break, it is when they spend their time with the US/Canada kids that their English/French improves and their exchange accomplishes its potential for building good will and understanding between peoples.
- If a student needs more language assistance than can be obtained in school and home, there are other things we can do to help. A student can be enrolled in an English/French

As A Second Language (ESL) class which is available in many communities, or a language tutor, in or out of school, can provide extra learning opportunities.

- The most important help hosts can give to an exchange student who is having language difficulties is to make him/her talk. Believe it or not, we learn a language best through our mouths, not through our eyes or ears. This is because we have to use a lot more of our brain to think of what we want to say, figure out how we want to say it, and then say it, than we do in just translating words in our heads. Therefore, we should talk with our student at every possible opportunity. It doesn't matter what the conversation is about, just that you are doing it-talking a lot every day.

Making Friends

American and to some degree Canadian high school students are famous for our "cliques" and their unwillingness to take new students into their groups and friendships. Since this happens all the time to our students when a family moves and the student enters a new school, it is important for the incoming exchange students to understand that this problem will exist for them also. Nevertheless, there are accepted techniques a student can use to help overcome the barriers and to make friends.

Possibly the only certain way for an exchange student to have no trouble making friends is to be the school hero. Usually this means that he or she is athletically inclined and has developed a prominent position in one or more of the school's sports programs. While this is a great approach to making friends for one who has sports abilities, most exchange students need to find other ways of making friends.

Sometimes an exchange student can make a good beginning towards developing friendships by using the circle of friends of a host brother or sister as a base. It isn't that these kids are necessarily the ones an exchange student would like to have for friends, but they can many times be used to gain introductions to other kids who can, in turn, become their friends.

There is a basic rule that an exchange students needs to follow to make friends. An exchange student needs to be the prime mover in developing friendships, and must be willing to reach out to anyone wanted as a friend and make a strong effort to win them. This means finding any number of excuses to get acquainted, and then being the one who makes the overtures of friendship again and again, until the goal is reached. It's a tough job and it demands persistence if the exchange student is going to have any chance of succeeding. Therefore, a student shouldn't be allowed to get discouraged if early, meaningful friendships come hard. We should explain that it takes continuing efforts to make new friends, and that it is only by being the outgoing searcher-after-friends that the exchange student has any hope of winning them. If a student feels that he or she has been trying really hard, but that the friends just aren't coming, that may very well be true. A lot of exchange students have only a few friends at the end of their year here, and those friends are typically not close friends like the ones they have at home.

However, there might be a home family that just doesn't like to write, or thinks a phone call beats writing. If so, there might be an incoming long distance call every week or two. A call once a day from a boyfriend back home is the current known record. That did not work out well

for the student. Unless the phone calls are upsetting to a student, there is no reason to be concerned. But if calls from home are a problem to the host or the student, consider writing the family or having the student write explaining why it would be best if the family limited its calls.

Rules for any outgoing calls need to be well understood by a student. No one wants a surprise on their phone bill some month. If we set the rule, that the student must pay for some of all the calls home, the student needs to see the bill and then pay what he or she owes. No calls should be a silent gift to a student, if pay-as-you-go ground rules are not to be misinterpreted. If they are, there will be a more expensive surprise later. If at any time an exception to the rule is made, the student needs to know it is an exception, and why it is an exception. Remember, we need to be totally verbal in communicating with our exchange student.

An alternate to phoning is to use the Internet. Programs like Skype. Do set limits. Though there may not be a charge, overdoing it may lead to additional problems.

Religious Differences

It is quite likely that our families will have different religious backgrounds from our exchange students. Therefore, we need to talk about each other's beliefs and practices, so that we can avoid any form of religious conflicts while being hosts. Here are some things to discuss, both from our perspective and that of our students:

- What our religious beliefs are.
- What the student's religious beliefs are.
- Whether or not we attend church; how frequently we go.
- Whether or not the student attends church; how frequently the student goes.
- Whether or not a student would have a problem doing as we do, and going where we go.
- Whether or not the student would like to attend the church of his/her religious belief.

If there is going to be a problem, we need to try to find some way to satisfy both our desires and those of the student. That might mean finding someone else to take the student to a church of their choice. Or it might mean leaving the student home while we go to church. On the other hand, if the student is happy to do as we do, great.

The big thing with religion is not to try to change one another's religious beliefs or "convert" a student to Christian belief if he/she happens to be a Buddhist or Moslem or whatever. Even within the "Christian" religion there are a multitude of beliefs that don't always work in harmony. For example, we once had a girl from an Episcopal background who became totally confused as she attended a more fundamental church with her host family. The "Hell Fire and Damnation" sermons she heard convinced her that she was going to hell because she was Episcopalian, and she came close to a mental breakdown. She had to have some serious and expensive counseling to get her back to emotional stability.

What we want everyone to understand is that they need to be prepared for religious differences. You need to try to deal with the exchange student using all the respect and tolerance you would expect to be afforded. Please keep in mind that you are dealing with another person's innermost

beliefs and faith. Please keep in mind that tolerance is the name of the game. We are dealing with young ambassadors.

Travel and Tours

Independent Travel

Rotary District 5010 prohibits all independent travel by students.

Travel With the Hosts

Information for Inbound Students about Travel

Foundational concepts:

VISA requirements – Exchange students are visitors in country other than their own with permission to stay for an extended period based on having an approved student visa. Therefore, activities of such students must be of an educational nature as required by the U.S. State Department and Immigration Laws and/or Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Canada Laws. Exchange Students must attend a local secondary school on a full time basis and meet school requirements as a responsible student in good standing.

Rotary Youth Exchange Expectations - Exchange Student are ambassadors of good will. Therefore, Exchange Students are expected to immerse themselves in the lives of their host families, their host schools and their host community. They are expected to act as ambassadors of their countries of origin to their host Rotary clubs and to participate and join in activities their host Rotary club and Rotary District. In addition, when the return to their countries of origin, they are expected to share what they have experienced and learned in a “reverse ambassadorial” role. They will provide comparisons of culture, lifestyles, values and way of doing things. In this way, the exchange students will become ambassadors of their country of origin and educate their hosts about their home county and culture and then they will reverse that role and become ambassadors of their host country and educate their families, friends, associates and Rotary Clubs about their host country and culture.

Travel for those on Student Exchange VISAs is not the same as that for those on tourist VISAs or on a travel exchange. However, Exchange Student may have opportunities to travel with their host families, school, Rotary Club and/or Rotary District or other recognized groups or Rotarians. Such travel may be permitted if an Exchange Student does not miss school or Rotary events and if the Student has permission from his/her host family, Rotary Councilor, and (if required) the Alaska Yukon Rotary District Chairman.

There are three different kinds of travel situations:

- 1) Travel within District 5010, confined to the country (USA, Canada or Russia) for which the VISA is granted;
- 2) Travel outside of District 5010, but remaining within the country for which the VISA is granted; and
- 3) Travel to a country outside the geopolitical boundary of the student’s host country for which the VISA is granted, whether or not that travel is within the Rotary D5010 boundary (from the Canadian Yukon to Alaska, or vice versa, for example).

1) Generally, travel within District 5010 with Exchange Students host family or members of Students host Rotary club does not require special permission provided that the Students' host family and club are informed in advance and Exchange Student do not miss school. Similarly, travel with Exchange Students' school class does not require special permission as long as that travel does not fall with the definitions of items 2 and 3 above. Remember, three countries are represented in District 5010 and travel between these countries will require special permission.

2) Travel outside of District 5010 always requires special permission. If the trip is with an Exchange Student's host family or a member of the Student's Rotary club, the Alaska Yukon District Chairman must be informed of when, where (with address, phone number, and name of contact), with whom, and for how long Exchange Student will be traveling and must grant permission before the trip. If, in an exceptional case, it is necessary to miss school, the school Principal's permission in writing must be obtained before the trip.

3) Travel outside of an Exchange Students' host country always requires special permission and may not be granted due to VISA limitations. In this case, not only do the requirements of item 2 above apply, but also the requirements of the U.S. State Department and/or the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Department, usually, the requirements of the Immigration officials of the country the student proposes to visit. Two problems that may occur are, a) the visited country may not allow the student in because of an improper or even non-existent VISA, and/or b) once in the visited country, the student may not be permitted to re-enter their host country due to VISA limitations on "Multiple Entry" into the host country.

If the trip is with Exchange Students' school class, then Students' host family, Rotary Counselor/YEO, Area Coordinator, and Alaska Yukon District Chairman must be informed and grant their permission before the trip.

Educational purpose:

It is important that the educational purpose of the exchange be kept in mind at all times. If a student proposes to travel, regardless of the immediate context his/her travel must have an educational component. It is strongly recommended that the student make notes of the trip, take photographs, keep souvenirs and write a paper about the trip upon return. The student will then be asked to include his/her observations when presentations are made to his/her host club and/or schools. In addition, this paper and associated photos and souvenirs will be of use when the students return to their country of origin as a source of information in their "reverse ambassadorial" role. The educational component of the travel request will be expected for any travel request.

Disallowed Travel:

Except under the most exceptional circumstances (illness, death in the family, or other emergency situation) Individual travel inside or outside District 5010 and/or the Exchange Students' host country generally is not permitted.

Travel with Exchange Students' own parents or to visit family or close friends generally is not permitted.

Travel during any nationally recognized holiday is not permitted except with Exchange Student's host family.

Random travel, alone or with other students, is not permitted.

Travel Requests:

Timing – Travel requests must be made in writing to the District Inbound Coordinator at least two weeks (further in advance if possible) before the intended travel takes place. If the request occurs in less than two weeks prior to the intended travel, it will probably be denied unless exceptional circumstances exist (which must be explained in the request).

As with any other travel, permission of Exchange Students' host family, Rotary Councilor/YEO, Regional YEO Coordinator, Inbound Coordinator, Alaska Yukon District Chairman, and school principal (if school is in session) will be required before any travel is permitted. The following steps are required if a travel request is to be approved:

- A written invitation from the people Exchange Student intends to visit or from a principal authority of the event (usually educational or related to a school event) that Exchange Student attend. A request to travel without a written invitation will automatically be denied, or sent back until such invitation is obtained.

- A written permission from Exchange Students' own parents is required. No travel will be approved until this permission is received;

- The Exchange Students' itinerary showing, as nearly as possible, all departure and arrival times, methods of travel, and intermediate stops;

- The name, address and telephone number of Exchange Students' contact or host being visited is required;

- Permission of Exchange Students' host family and Rotary Counselor and/or YEO is required;

- Recommendation of approval by the host club's YEO's Regional Coordinator is required;

- A written explanation of why the trip is appropriate and/or educational with all supporting details for the District;

- Upon receipt of the above, the Inbound Coordinator will review the request. If the request is complete he/she will endorse the travel request for the Alaska Yukon Chairman's approval;

- The Alaska Yukon Chairman's review and approval must be obtained before the trip occurs.

Liabilities:

The above requirements are strict and substantial. They are not intended to prohibit Exchange Student travel. They are intended to control any difficulty of liability should an unexpected accident or error occur. They are also intended to ensure that the conditions of the exchange as required by the granting of the VISA are not violated.

The Rotary Summer Tour

Rotary District 5010 offers a tour of the western United States during a two week period in late June. It is the only Rotary tour that we authorize for our students. The tour specifics are usually known in early winter, and applications are made available to all students by their YEOs. All

students are encouraged to go on this tour, however, if they do participate, all costs are borne by the student. See our web page at www.ye5010.org for current details.

Visit to Barrow

The Rotary Club of Barrow offers a visit to the farthest North city way above the Arctic Circle. See our web page at www.ye5010.org for current details.

Going Home

Initial Culture Shock

Remember what it was like those first few weeks and months going abroad? It was new, exciting, often confusing, and always changing. And while your whole year may have been exciting, it wasn't always pleasant. You probably became irritated with, and even hostile to, your host culture when the deeper differences between your culture and their culture became apparent. As you began to develop real language skills, and you better understood fundamentally different cultural values, you began the slow process of adapting. Eventually, maybe only at the end of your stay, you began to realize how you could really fit in – adapting fairly well to your adopted culture, while maintaining your own native cultural identity. You became bicultural. And then, just when it was getting good, the year was over and you had to go “home”.

Most people who live abroad for an extended time go through similar successive stages of culture shock. These stages are generally recognized as being:

1. Initial Excitement or Euphoria
2. Irritability and Hostility
3. Slow and Gradual Adaptation
4. Eventual Adjustment to Biculturalism

If your experience was anything like this, you learned that culture shock is not just adjusting to jet lag and different food. It is an on-going process of developing increased cultural competence, by being “shocked” by differences, adjusting to them, learning new skills and eventually adapting. And when you prepared for going abroad, you had some expectation that you would experience culture shock. It is not possible (or even desirable) to avoid culture shock, but at least anticipating it made it somewhat easier -and kept you from thinking it was all your fault, or all the new culture's fault.

Reverse Culture Shock

As you return home, you are likely to experience some very similar, but possibly surprising reactions that are part of what is known as reverse culture shock, or re-entry shock. In the first few weeks back, many people feel the effects of jet lag, general exhaustion from lots of changes, fatigue from an overdose of “welcome home” parties and trying to do and see everything and everyone at once. This flurry of activity can cause a significant degree of disorientation, making it difficult to tell exactly what thoughts and feelings you are having.

But mixed in with all of this are two distinct and often conflicting reactions. One is the same excitement stage as in initial culture shock. It may be very exciting to be back, to see family and friends, to tell about your adventures and to do things you have missed for a year. If this reaction occurs, it fairly quickly wears off, and is replaced by the second stage of culture shock - irritability and hostility. This stage often comes much more quickly than in initial culture shock,

and can be much more severe and disturbing. It also may be the first reaction you have to coming home, with no excitement stage at all.

There are several reasons that you may not feel excitement at all, or for very long. Remember, when you went abroad initially:

1. You wanted to go.
2. You expected and looked forward to learning about different things.
3. You were warned to expect culture shock.
4. Though you may have been sad to leave family and friends, you knew it would not be forever – you knew you were coming back.

Now that you are returning at the end of your exchange year:

1. You may not want to come home.
2. You may expect things to be just like they were when you left (or at least that things will be very familiar)
3. You may not have been sufficiently warned about reverse culture shock (or you didn't think it would happen to you).
4. You may be very sad to leave friends and “family” in your host culture because you know there is a possibility that you may never see them again.

If reverse culture shock is so unpleasant, why not try to avoid it? Because it is impossible if your exchange year was successful. In fact, the extent to which you immersed yourself in your host culture, and truly adapted, is probably the best indicator of how much reverse culture shock you will experience. People who don't have much trouble re-adapting to their native culture probably didn't get very involved in their host culture. They didn't change much, so they don't have to readjust much.

Appendix with attachments

See our web page at www.ye5010.org for current these forms and details.

ABUSE, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FORMS

DISTRICT 5010

1) J51	Criminal Background Check, Policy and Procedures	2P	PDF
2) J54	Criminal Background Check Process (Alaska)	2P	PDF
3) J56	Criminal Background C heck Process (Yukon Territory)	2P	PDF
4) K02	Referral for Suspected Abuse or Neglect	1P	PDF
5) K03	Host Family Information Packet (content list)	1P	PDF
6) K04	Host Family Application	3P	PDF
7) K07	Housing Physical Check List	1P	PDF
8) K08	Youth Volunteer Application	3P	PDF
9) K11	Consent to Criminal Background Check	1P	PDF