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## **ROTARY SHORT TERM EXCHANGE PROGRAM (STEP)**

### **A FAMILY EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING**

- Student Application Process •

#### **General Information**

- Students are eligible for a short-term exchange any summer starting between their eighth grade and freshman year of high school to the summer after graduating high school. Most short-term exchange students are in high school. The student must be 15 to 19 years of age.
- Students do not need a family connection to Rotary. Any qualified student may apply.
- The student's family must be willing and able to be approved to host their student's inbound exchange match.
- Students will be interviewed and nominated by their local Rotary club.
- Clubs may nominate more than one student.
- Students may be eligible to go on a Short Term Exchange more than once.

#### **Specific Club and Student/Host Family Instructions**

- The student fills out a club application for their local Rotary club.
- If the club application is approved, the club will interview the student and family in their home. The family must agree to host a student for the same length of time that their son or daughter is in their host country. The family must understand that both their child and their child's exchange match will be at their home at the same time. Since this is a FAMILY to FAMILY exchange, sending clubs should be confident that the student's family is eligible to host before they recommend the student to the district for Short Term Exchange (STEP). This determination needs to be made before submitting the student's Nomination Form to the district.
- If the interview is successful, the club fills out and submits a STEP Nomination Form to the district by September 30th of each year. A \$450 check for the STEP fee, written to "District 5100 Rotary Youth Exchange" or "Rotary D5100 YEX", should be included with the Nomination Form. This fee is usually paid by the student or their family.

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- Once clubs have filled out and signed the STEP Nomination Form, both the form and check for \$450 should be sent to:

Tina Scheible  
District 5100 STEP Coordinator  
14888 SE Cedar Ave.  
Milwaukie, OR 97267

It is okay for the nominating Rotary club to send the signed Nomination Form electronically (as a PDF) to [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com). Then, the family can mail the check separately to the above address.

- The club should make sure the student and family are aware of the Application Seminar (usually the first weekend in October) and the two required Orientations (a whole weekend in January for the students (usually around the 9th), with a parent orientation on that Sunday, and a morning in late April or early to mid-May).
- It is highly recommended that both the student and their family attend the district STEP Application Seminar held in early October. Rotarians are also invited.
- Students will get the link to the online STEP application after the Application Seminar.
- The student completes the online STEP application form, including student and family letters, and pictures. The club should support their student while filling out the online application. The club may want to request to see the student and family letters before they are uploaded to help them be the best letters they can be. When the online application is done, it should be submitted through the website.
- The STEP Coordinator will review each application and respond with an email letting the student know if any changes need to be made. This may take some time since all applications arrive at the same time.
- Four more documents are required after the application is submitted:
  - a copy of their current, signed passport good until at least March of the year following their exchange.
  - the Rules and Conditions pages signed by the student, family, and sponsoring Rotarians (all in blue ink). The student will upload the two pages with the signature of the district chair section blank and bring the document to the January orientation to get that signature. Once the student gets the chair's signature, the student will reupload the pages.

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- a completed Health Form.
  - the Guarantee Form. Only the top three sections of the Guarantee Form (about the applicant, the sponsoring club, and the emergency contact) should be filled out. These sections do not need signatures.
- The club should support their student in filling out these forms.
  - The STEP Coordinator will review each document as it is submitted. It will either be accepted or rejected. If it is rejected, there will be a note explaining what to change.
  - Clubs wanting to nominate students after October 31<sup>st</sup> should contact Tina Scheible, the district STEP Coordinator, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com). Each request will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
  - Because this is a FAMILY to FAMILY exchange, all members of the student's family who will be living at the home and who will be 18 years or older at the time of the exchange must have a background check and go through Rotary's youth protection training. This is initiated when the family completes the online host family application. The family should apply to be a host family in mid-December after their student is fully accepted into the short-term exchange program. (That timing ensures they will still be approved as a host family at the end of a possible staggered exchange.)
  - Students and their parents are required to attend the outbound student orientation that will be held in January. The students are required to attend for the whole weekend, late afternoon Friday to early afternoon Sunday. At least one parent must join the orientation on Sunday morning of that weekend. There is also a morning orientation held in late April or early to mid-May for parents and students. It is also required. All students and at least one parent must attend both orientations. This requirement is unlikely to be waived.
  - On Sunday of the January orientation, **the students will make their final choice** for country preferences for short-term exchange. The student and parents will sign the page approving and agreeing to the choices.
  - The STEP Coordinator will then work to find matches for the student from the country of their choice. When one is found, it will be offered to the student and their family. The student and their family must approve their match (or not) within about four days. Both the student and at least one parent will need to email their approval of the match to Tina Scheible, the district STEP Coordinator, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com). Students and

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families may *not* contact the inbound student until the match is fully finalized and the STEP Coordinator has given them approval to communicate.

- Once a match is agreed to on each side, the two students and families can begin to communicate.
- After being matched, the students and their sponsoring Rotary club (who are their match's hosting club) will need to fill out their match's Guarantee Form. This guarantee form must be signed by the hosting club secretary or YEO, club president, and the district youth exchange chair. All signatures must be in blue ink. The counselor assigned to this inbound STEP student must have completed the background check and youth protection training and be an approved youth exchange volunteer. The student should keep the original document and submit a pdf electronically to the STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com)
- The student's match will fill out the student's Guarantee Form in their country and return the finished Guarantee Form electronically (as a PDF) to the student. The student should forward it to the STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com), as soon as they get it.
- Travel arrangements must be agreed upon by both families and follow all Rotary rules. Students must travel from their home airport and return to the same airport at the end of their exchange. All travel for our students must be made through our Rotary district approved travel agent, It's Your World Travel (IYWT). The student will contact IYWT after their match is finalized.
- The student will forward their travel confirmation and the travel confirmation of their exchange match to the STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com), as soon as they get it.
- Required Rotary district health insurance must be purchased before leaving on exchange. Most of the students will purchase our district's insurance. Some may need to purchase their host country's insurance. The STEP Coordinator will advise the student. Please don't purchase insurance before being prompted.
- The student will forward their health insurance information to the STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible, at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com), as soon as they get it.

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## STEP EXCHANGE COUNTRIES

We have established short-term exchange relationships with many European countries, as well as Iceland, India, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador. We will attempt to establish a short-term exchange relationship with any country in the world a student requests that has a **certified** Rotary Short Term Exchange program in place.

Exchanges with Southern Hemisphere countries such as Australia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile will be “staggered” exchanges, meaning our student will be going there during our summer, and their match will be coming here during theirs (equivalent to our winters). Staggered exchanges can be for longer periods of time than the basic three to five week “summer” or “standard” exchange, and can be up to 2 to 2.5 months in length. Because of this, foreign students coming here attend school for several weeks as an observer. This can only happen if, prior to making the match, the student and/or their family gets written approval from their local high school to allow their match to shadow classes during winter. STEP students are not here on a student visa but rather a tourist’s visa, so they can not register for high school. The student’s sponsoring Rotary club should also give their approval for a staggered exchange because there tends to be more club involvement for the STEP students staying longer.

## STUDENT AND PARENT QUALIFICATIONS

- The student must be in good physical and mental health.
- The student must fit the age eligibility criteria; ages 15 to 19.
- Students with outgoing, friendly personalities will have more success in this program. Students should also have high academic and behavioral standards, and the maturity to benefit from this cultural experience. Despite the hours that go into planning this exchange, there will be times that the student must be able to problem solve and think independently. In preparation for this, we encourage parents to let their child practice problem solving in a variety of different situations in the months before they leave. Once in their host country, a student must know how to, and is expected to, turn to their host parents or local Rotarian counselor or contact for help rather than calling home to their natural parents. They may also contact Tina Scheible, our district STEP Coordinator, for help while in their host country at [tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com) or +1 971-258-8839 on WhatsApp.
- Families must be willing to host a student for a minimum of four weeks. Their student and their student’s exchange match will be at their home at the same time. Host families must be willing to follow the Youth Protection Policy. The application process includes completing a host family application, providing references, completing a background check for anyone in the household who is 18 years or older, completing

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youth protection training, and having a Rotarian do a home visit/interview and a host family orientation.

- The student’s home situation must be suitable as a host home. Photos of the home are provided as part of the host family application. A club Rotarian will need to verify that the photos are indeed of that home at the time of the host family interview.
- The student and their family must be willing to bear the entire expense of the exchange, including the district fees, visa costs (if any), guaranteed return airfares, pocket money for their son or daughter, and costs to host their student’s match in their home.
- The student and family must be willing to make the commitment to this program, and to make the stay of the student they are hosting an enjoyable and educational experience.
- While in the host country the student is representing their country, state, Rotary, and their family. The student must understand that cultural differences are to be accepted and not criticized in any manner.
- The student may be asked to give presentations in their host city or nominating Rotary club.

#### **FEES AND TRAVEL**

- The club will collect a \$450 fee. That fee is usually paid by the family, with a check written to “District 5100 Rotary Youth Exchange” or “Rotary D5100 YEX”, and included with the Club’s Nomination Form that is due by Sept. 30th. If the Nomination Form is submitted electronically, the check may be mailed to the STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible, separately at

Tina Scheible  
District 5100 STEP Coordinator  
14888 SE Cedar Ave.  
Milwaukie, OR 97267

- The fee is refunded if the student’s application is rejected by the club nominating the student or the district or if the student drops out of the program before the January orientation takes place. The fee is not refundable if the student drops out of the program after the orientation in January.
- The fee will cover the cost of orientations, the Rotary polo shirt, and the business cards introducing the student as a Rotary exchange student.

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- All travel arrangements for our students will be made by a district designated travel agent, It's Your World Travel (IYWT). Rotary does not accept the use of air miles or ordering tickets through the Internet, as they do not provide guaranteed seating. The student and families must use IYWT to purchase airline tickets. It's Your World Travel (IYWT), Phone: 1(888)499-0631, [www.iywt.com](http://www.iywt.com) The student will register with IYWT after finalizing a match and deciding on mutually agreeable travel dates. The inbound student does not need to use IYWT, but they may if they want. They will need to log into IYWT to approve our student's itinerary.
  - Travel will take place within the times agreed upon by the exchanging districts. Both districts must approve exceptions to the coordinated travel policy. Matched families work together to establish the exact dates of the exchanges, and make the travel arrangements through the designated travel agent, IYWT.

**Nomination Forms and the \$450 STEP fee are due by September 30th.  
to the District 5100 STEP Coordinator**

**Tina Scheible  
14888 SE Cedar Ave.  
Milwaukie, OR 97267**

**Online STEP Applications,  
including four documents that the student receives after submitting the application,  
are due  
October 31st.**

**Questions? Contact our District STEP Coordinator, Tina Scheible  
[tina.scheible@gmail.com](mailto:tina.scheible@gmail.com)  
(503) 659-3485 home  
(971) 258-8839 cell/text/WhatsApp**