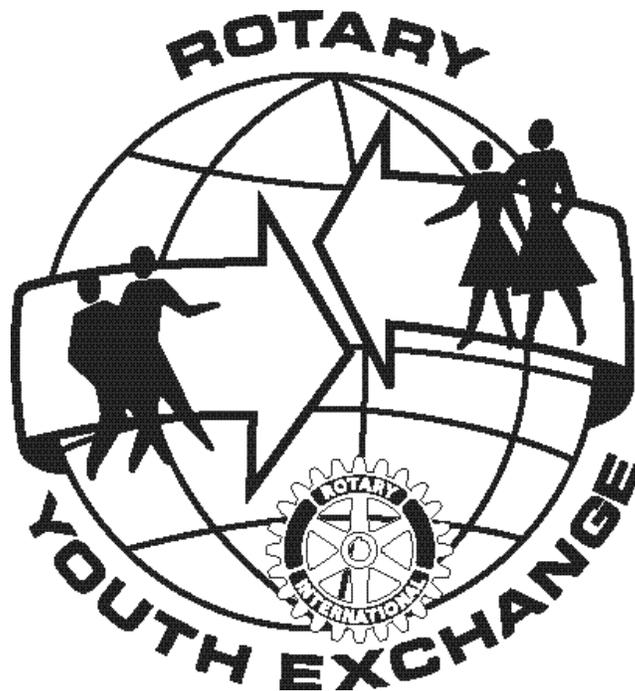


# Rotary International District 5470

## Youth Exchange Inbound Program



## Information Book For Host Parents

## Table of Contents

Objectives Of The Program .....	2
District 5470 Youth Exchange Committee.....	4
The Rotary Support System.....	5
The Exchange Student's Role .....	6
The Host Family's Role .....	8
Other Information Needed By Host Parents .....	9
Appendix A What is Rotary .....	12
Rotary Motto and Theme.....	12
The Rotary Foundation .....	11
Rotary at the Local Level -- The Rotary Club.....	11
Appendix B – Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange .....	13
Appendix C – Travel Policy for Inbound Exchange Students .....	15
Appendix D-- First Night's Questions.....	23
Appendix E – How to Cope with Culture Shock.....	22
Its OK.....	25
Desiderata.....	26
Exchange Cycle.....	27

---

### Objectives Of The Program

- **To further international goodwill and understanding** by enabling students to study first hand some of the problems and accomplishments of people in lands other than their own.
- **To enable students to advance their education** by studying for a year in an environment entirely different from their own, and undertaking the study of courses and subjects not normally available to them in their own country.
- **To give students opportunities to broaden their outlook** by learning to live with and meet people of different cultures, creeds, and colors and by having to cope with day-to-day problems in an environment completely different from the one they have experienced at home.
- **To have students act as ambassadors** for their own country by addressing Rotary Clubs, community organizations and youth groups in their host country; by imparting as much knowledge as they can of their own country, its attributes and its problems to the people they meet during their year abroad.
- **To provide sufficient time to study and observe another country's culture** so that upon returning home students can pass on the knowledge they have gained by addressing Rotary clubs and other organizations and assimilate the positive aspects into their everyday living.

## The Rotary Support System

### What is Youth Exchange?

Rotary Youth Exchange is a country-to-country exchange of high-school age young people, between the ages of 15 and 17½ years old at the time of arrival in the hosting country for a cultural and educational experience for both the student and those serving as hosts. The duration of the exchange is 10-12 months, and generally follows the school year as defined by the Exchange student's home country. Youth Exchange began in Rotary in 1929 with the first exchange between Denmark and Spain. Now more than 8,000 students got out on exchange each year through Rotary. It is one of Rotary's largest and longest continuous programs.

### What is Rotary?

Rotary International, as the sponsoring organization of this program, is an international volunteer organization comprised of Rotarians around the world dedicated to improving their community, both locally and world-wide, through service to others. A more comprehensive description of Rotary and its structure can be found in Appendix A of this Information Book. However, one term used throughout this Book warrants explanation here: **District** is the geographic organization of a number of local Rotary clubs for purposes of governance and support. We are **Rotary International District 5470**, consisting of 58 Rotary clubs representing the southern two thirds of Colorado.

### Role of the Rotary District and Youth Exchange Committee

Rotary Youth Exchange is, more specifically, an exchange of students between two Rotary Districts in different countries. District 5470 is excited about the possibilities of expanding our Youth Exchange program, involving more and more countries and more and more students. Conduct and administration of the Exchange program is the responsibility of each participating Rotary District under the authority of the respective **District Governor**, a Rotarian elected for a one-year term to provide leadership to the clubs and Rotarians in that District. All Rotary districts participating in the Youth Exchange Program agree to comply with Rotary International guidelines, but retain autonomy in the conduct of the program. This responsibility is delegated in District 5470 to the **District Youth Exchange Committee** (or Mountain & Plains **RYE**).

For example, the selection, screening and preparation of "outbound" exchange student candidates is the responsibility of each sending or sponsoring Rotary District, although a uniform application form has been developed for this purpose by Rotary International. On the other hand, once our District RYE has agreed to accept an "inbound" exchange student, and one of our 58 Rotary Clubs has agreed to host and support that student, that student agrees to comply with **this** District's rules, regulations, and guidelines as a condition of the exchange.

To assure a complete understanding of those conditions, the District 5470 RYE provides a comprehensive orientation to our inbound students shortly after their arrival. Even before the student's arrival, the Youth Exchange Committee establishes and maintains communications with its counterparts in the exchanging district, the inbound students both before their arrival and during their year here, and the outbound students we are sending overseas.

The District 5470 Youth Exchange Committee is a valuable resource for both you and the exchange student, and its members are familiar with the conduct of the Exchange Program both here and in the country your student is from. **If you have any questions or need help with a problem with your student, please contact the Country Contact for your student.** Please feel welcome to contact any member of the District 5470 RYE Committee anytime you have a question or need help with a problem **if you are unable to reach the Country Contact.** Names, telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are available at the beginning of this handbook.

### The Hosting Rotary Club's Role

The local Rotary Club provides another level of support to you, the student, and the Exchange Program. Rotary clubs will identify an individual Rotarian as the **Youth Exchange Officer** (or **YEO**) to administer the club's Exchange program, including recruiting outbound candidates and Host families. Another member of the Rotary club will be designated as the Inbound Exchange student's **Club Counselor** for the duration of the exchange. The **Club Counselor may or may not be of the same gender as the exchange student** and serves primarily as an advisor and advocate for the student, but should certainly also be in contact with the host family on a regular basis, and be available to answer questions or direct host parents to the appropriate resource when needed. Club Counselors **may not serve as a host parent.**

The Hosting Rotary Club has made or will make arrangements for enrolling the exchange student in your community's high school or a private school shortly after he or she arrives. The YEO may ask for your help in registration of your student for school. The YEO or Club Counselor, together with the school counselor, will assist the student in selecting a course of study that should be neither overly-challenging nor boring for the student. As a host parent, you should discuss school work

with the student, teachers, and school officials if academic or social problems are becoming apparent just as you would your own child. The Hosting Rotary Club is also responsible for paying for all school fees related to **required** course work at school. Non-obligatory school activities, such as athletic fees, are normally the responsibility of the student's natural parents if not covered by the Hosting Rotary Club

The Hosting Rotary Club provides another form of support to the Exchange student in the form of a **personal allowance**. Each month the Rotary Club will provide an amount between \$100 and \$150 (depending on the location of the Rotary Club) directly to the student, to be used for incidental personal expenses, entertainment and similar expenses. Through the Rotary-provided allowance and parental resources, exchange students are expected to be **financially self-supporting** in terms of personal expenses, clothing, entertainment, and travel when not participating in a host family event.

The Hosting Rotary Club will regularly invite the exchange student to attend Rotary meetings and other Rotary events. While students are encouraged to attend Rotary meetings and other events as often as possible, only attendance at the **two Inbound Orientation weekends, the annual Rotary District Conference, and the District 5470 Interview Weekend** are **mandatory** for the student. Interference with host family activities or transportation to and from, Rotary events should not impose a burden on the host family, and the YEO/Club Counselor should be advised before this can occur. There are a number of other events scheduled for the inbound exchange student throughout the year- ski weekends, informal gatherings, and similar events which may be found on the general event calendar for our Rotary District. Please go to the RYE Website ([www.mtnandplainsRYE.com](http://www.mtnandplainsRYE.com)) or the District 5470 web-site at <http://www.clubrunner.ca/portal/SitePages/SitePage.aspx?did=5470&pid=24230> and scroll down to the event calendar to find them. It is wise to check at the beginning of each month for the events of the month and place them on your calendar. The information is also available on a Facebook Group that will be created for Parents of this year's Inbound Students.

### **Rotary Support -- District + Club**

This Team of the **District Youth Exchange Committee**, the local Rotary Club **Youth Exchange Officer** and the **Club Counselor** are here to help the Exchange student and host family have a successful exchange experience. They are available to you, 24 hours a day, to provide you with assistance on any matters of concern. We strongly urge you to seek our involvement before problems become too large for simple solutions.

**Your best resource for information is our website, [www.mtnandplainsRYE.com](http://www.mtnandplainsRYE.com), where all necessary forms, handbooks and other information may to be found.**

## General Support Structure for Host Families – How It Works

1. **Issue Arises**
2. **Host Family**-Typically made aware of issue by student- school/family attempts to resolve. If unable to resolve, contacts YEO or Club Counselor.
3. **YEO or Club Counselor**-if unable to resolve, contacts student's U.S. Country Contact
4. **U.S. Country Contact**-if unable to resolve, contacts Inbound Coordinator
5. **Inbound Coordinator**-if unable to resolve issue, contacts District Chair
6. **District Chair**-Typically works with District Governor or foreign District Chair to resolve issue

During the entire process, our counterparts in the student's home country are informed of the situation when appropriate. The Committee works hard to ensure fair and proper resolution of issues and privacy is respected as best as possible. Students are sent home as a last resort. We prefer the student or host family to inform us early of an issue- especially those involving a rules violation- so that we can work to resolve the issue and preserve the exchange. However, certain rules violations will result in immediate termination of the exchange year.

## The Exchange Student's Role

Above all else, we expect the inbound students to be involved: involved in your family, involved in school, involved in the community in which you live, and involved in Rotary. To do this successfully, most Exchange students must do two things: **learn to communicate in English, and learn to adapt.**

### Learning English

All students arrive with some understanding of the English language, and most can speak and understand our language well, having studied English for several years in school. But for a number of students, considerable effort will be needed on their part to understand the English we  *speak*, which is often different than the English they were *taught* in school. Practice, by engaging in real conversation, reading, and writing our language are necessary to develop true proficiency. You can help by asking questions that require more than “yes” or “no” answers, having patience when communications are not clear, and consciously speaking slowly and clearly, with frequent checks for understanding.

*Inbound exchange students may be tested for English proficiency before or shortly after arrival and tutoring can be arranged by Rotary for students who are experiencing difficulty communicating. Some schools offer ESL classes to exchange students which include extra help with homework concerns. School counselors and teachers can also be valuable resources for both the student and host family in addressing communications problems.*

### Learning to Adapt

Learning to adapt means, for most students, being willing to try new things (especially new foods), do things differently, recognize the cultural biases of the environment they are used to, and accept that our cultural differences are neither “better or worse”, simply “different”.

### Comply with our Rules

All inbound exchange students, and their parents, agreed to comply with the rules, regulations, and guidelines that are part of the Rotary Youth Exchange application. These are common sense conditions that are intended to insure their safety, comply with the standards of the international organizations monitoring exchange programs, and assure that their conduct does not impose a burden on the families who open their homes to these students – you, the Host Parents. **The Program Rules & Conditions of Exchange** are located in Appendix B of this handbook for your information. A summary of the more important rules are listed below:

1. **Driving:** Exchange students are **not** permitted to operate motor vehicles, including motorcycles, boats, snowmobiles, airplanes, or any other powered device as a condition of the medical and accident insurance. Under no circumstances may they take a Driver Education course.
2. **Drinking and Drugs:** We expect all exchange students to comply with our laws, including those applying to possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances. Students, with the approval of the host parents, may accept an alcoholic beverage offered by the host parent in the host home when celebratory occasions may occur. Keep in mind that consumption of alcohol under age 21 is illegal.
3. **Smoking:** Applicants are asked to indicate if they smoke on the application, and this information is often the basis for the decision by the host family to host the student. Students who do smoke must comply with the conditions and restrictions imposed by the host family in all cases, and we strongly endorse the requirement that smoking not be permitted within the host family home. Any student who stated on the application that he/she did not smoke is absolutely not permitted to smoke while here on exchange.
4. **School Attendance:** This is an educational exchange, and students are **required to attend school regularly**, and maintain satisfactory grades. All exchange students should maintain at least a C average in all classes. The RYE program's objective is not necessarily to provide a high school diploma to these students; each high school/school district that agrees to enroll exchange students will determine what certification and/or transcripts will be provided for classes taken. As the host parent, you are responsible for determining the appropriateness of any school **absence requested by the student**, as you would for your own children. You should know and comply with the attendance requirements (and absence notification requirements) for the school your student is attending.
5. **Travel:** Travel for the exchange student as part of your family, or with school or church groups, is highly encouraged and will provide the student with opportunities to learn more about the host country. However, **independent travel, or travel without adult supervision** should be given the same level of parental control you would impose on your own children of that age. Normally travel without adult supervision is not allowed, but under certain circumstances, the local hosting Rotary Club may allow such travel. If it does, it **must be authorized by the host Rotary Club and the District Youth Exchange Committee Chair**. Additionally, Rotarians at both the host club and district committee need to know where Exchange students are in the event of an emergency. The **Travel Policy for District 5470 Inbound Exchange Students** will be reviewed in detail with your exchange

student, and **compliance with this policy is a condition of the exchange.** We ask that you be familiar with this policy, and enforce it with your student. ***Please know that we will always support the host parents when you say NO to travel by your student with which YOU are not in agreement. It is also important to know the names of the friends your exchange student may be driving with in private vehicles and to know the state laws regarding student drivers.***

6. **Visits by the student's parents, family, and friends:** Program rules discourage any visitors from the student's home country during the first 8-9 months of the exchange year, and **specifically at any time that will interfere with school or that will cause an inconvenience to the host family. Furthermore, visits by family or friends during the traditional Christmas and New Year holiday are NOT ALLOWED.** On the other hand, parental visits near the conclusion of the exchange year are great opportunities for the student to share their mastery of our language and knowledge of our culture, and introduce natural parents to all of the host families they've lived with. Any such visits planned by the student or his/her parents must be fully acceptable to you, the host parents, and should be discussed with and approved by the Host Rotary Club YEO/Counselor **before** being finalized. We do not expect you as a host family to pay for your exchange student to travel with you with you during a family vacation, although many families do choose include their student as a member of the family anyway. If a concern arises as to payment of the student's travel expenses, you should always communicate with your student's natural parents who may be willing to pay for such a trip. If you choose to travel without including your Exchange student, please arrange well in advance with the Host Club to provide a temporary Host Family during your absence.
  
7. **Use of telephone and Internet:** Students who frequently communicate with family and friends "back home" by telephone, e-mail, Facebook or Skype often delay their own adjustment and adaptation to the exchange, and prolong, rather than reduce, feelings of homesickness. In addition, they often do not recognize the cost of lengthy, international telephone calls until the phone bill arrives. **Occasional** telephone calls to or from home, plus calls on special occasions (birthdays, special holidays both here and in their home country, etc.), should be sufficient voice contact when combined with "newsy" letters the student mails home that will likely be cherished and reread by his or her parents long after the exchange year is finished. Constant e-mail or instant messaging also prevents a student from becoming part of the host family and community. Students are told to limit that kind of electronic communication with home. Of course, the student is responsible for any costs incurred for telephone or Internet charges, and host parents should decide, in advance, how the student will pay for such usage when it is permitted. Additionally, we suggest that cell phones should be obtained for emergency purposes only (i.e. needing a ride home) and should be paid for **solely** by the student if not provided by the Host Rotary Club. (Many Host Rotary Clubs do provide a cell phone to the student, either on a family plan or with purchased prepaid minutes). If the host family and student agree that it is advisable or necessary for the student to have a cell phone, only prepaid plans should be accepted. International I-Phones are not encouraged and should be inactivated during the exchange year. If allowed to remain active, they only encourage constant contact with family and friends in their homeland and will compromise a successful exchange in the USA.

## The Host Family's Role

The operative word here is **Family**, and we ask you to help your exchange student become a part of your family during the period that he or she lives with you. That means treating this young person as you would your own son or daughter, not as a guest, and exercising all of the **parental responsibilities and authorities** you would for your own child. While many factors will influence to what extent you may need to focus on this role, such as your own prior experience as a host parent, the ages of your own children, and whether you are the first, middle, or final host family for this student, here are some suggestions that previous host parents have provided to us:

- X **Establish a clear understanding of expectations** soon after your student arrives. A review of **First Night Questions** that we provide to both students and host parents that cover most of the topics that will help define those expectations is a good start. Cultural differences as well as personality differences often lead to misunderstandings unless these topics are discussed and clarified. Many students will use the questions as a "check-off list" to make sure nothing has been overlooked during the first few days; we suggest that host parents also review this list for any topics that are important to them.
- X Be prepared to help your student recover from **homesickness**. This can take many forms, from simply general sadness to wishing to stay in his or her room alone. It is perfectly normal for Exchange students to have bad days and experience homesickness. If you are sensitive to this, you will be able to reassure your student that such reactions are perfectly normal. Help him or her to keep busy and involved. These feelings will pass. If your student has poured out frustrations in a letter home (often saying he or she wants to return home immediately), suggest that the letter be put away for a couple of days and re-read , and only then mail it ... if it still applies. Most times the letter will be thrown out!
- X Encourage your student to **get involved**. School extracurricular activities, sports, community activities, church groups, and family activities may be new and unfamiliar to your student, and will likely be very "different" from those activities he or she was involved in back home. If you sense that your student is bored and reluctant to participate in available activities, it may simply be because no one has asked him or her to join in. Try to introduce the student to some people who will help overcome this reluctance. Or introduce the student to the coach/leader of the sport/club he or she wants to try.
- X **Understand "culture shock", and help your student learn our culture.** The Resource Tab of this website provides the article **How to Cope with Culture Shock**, which may help you understand some of the feelings your student may experience as a result of the differences between our culture and the one they have known since birth.

## Other Information Needed By Host Parents

### INSURANCE

All inbound exchange students must have a medical/accidental injury policy that meets Rotary's requirements, under a policy issued by \_\_\_\_\_ . (Students from Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand will arrive with their own country's issued insurance.) Instructions for submitting a claim are included in Appendix F. In addition, a **Medical Authorization form**, signed by the Exchange student's natural parents, should be provided to the Host Parents by the Host Rotary Club YEO or Counselor before the student moves into your home, authorizing you to seek medical treatment for the student while part of your household.

**The cost of any medical treatment is the responsibility of the student and his/her natural parents.** The insurance provides for either payment or reimbursement of those expenses less \$25 deductible for each emergency medical situation and \$100 deductible for sickness. Students should have the financial ability to pay for any medical expenses at the time provided, and host families should not incur any costs in this regard. **Your student is required to have and maintain an emergency fund of \$500 which may be used ONLY to cover the cost of EMERGENCY situations such as medical or dental issues. If this fund is used for an emergency, the natural parents must be informed and replace it to the \$500 balance required. Any unused funds will be returned to the student at year's end. The Host Rotary Club YEO/Counselor should have access to this fund if it should be needed.**

**However, as host parents, you are asked to make arrangements for medical treatment when necessary**, as well as to determine when medical treatment is called for. Your student may be reluctant to discuss medical problems initially, and their own culture, or medical system at home, may be quite different than that which we have, so you may need to patiently ask questions and offer suggestions when you observe conditions that may be medically-based. Many Rotary clubs have arrangements with local medical-services providers (often a member of the Rotary club), and you should be apprised of these arrangements by the Rotary YEO or Club Counselor before a medical problem arises.

**It is always advisable to inform the host Rotary Club of any medical treatment or medical problems that have occurred so that information is made available to subsequent host families. Serious illnesses or injuries should be made known to the District RYE Chair as soon as possible as well as the Country Contact and the Inbound Chair.**

### BEING THE FIRST HOST FAMILY

While being "first" often provides the greatest challenges for dealing with things like language difficulties and cultural differences, it also provides the opportunity to form a lasting emotional bond with the student that can continue after the student moves on to subsequent host families, since he or she will remain part of your community for the balance of the exchange year.

When the time comes for the student to move on, be prepared for the emotions that come with separation and fear of something new, both for the student and you. It will help to make this transition go smoothly if the student has met the new family, perhaps first in your home, and then later for a visit in the next host family home, to provide opportunities to become familiar with the family and surroundings.

Once your student has moved, maintain contact without undermining the development of relationships with the next family. Inviting your student to share special family events, like birthdays, will reinforce the relationship you developed earlier, and will usually be welcomed by the current host family, just as you welcomed others' invitations to the student when part of your family.

When it is finally time for your student to return home to his or her own family, they will be leaving not one but several **families** that they will consider "home" for the rest of their lives.

### BEING THE FINAL HOST FAMILY

Being the host family at the conclusion of the exchange year could involve dealing with many of the same emotions the student had upon arrival, but this time caused by the realization that the "familiar" is now *our* culture, and the "unknown" involves *returning home*. Understand that the exchange student **must** return home at the conclusion of the exchange year, typically departing within a few weeks after school has ended. **A sign of a successful exchange is the student's reluctance to go home, and we wouldn't want it any other way.**

You may need to help your student prepare mentally for this departure, in addition to the physical assistance that will be needed. **Start by selecting an actual departure date** with which everyone involved agrees (the student's natural parents, the Host Rotary Club YEO and Counselor, and the airline on which the student is flying) and help the student make the necessary airlines reservations. The Host Rotary Club YEO or Counselor is the person normally responsible for assisting the student with these air arrangements. (Although we require all students to have round-trip airlines tickets, some airlines can only book flights 6-9 months in advance, and many students must change the initial return date once they know end of school and bus tour dates, etc.). As the departure date approaches, help the student with packing and luggage, recognizing

that much has been collected since their arrival. It may be necessary to ship some of the student's possessions home to keep suitcases below the airlines' quantity and weight limits. Sometimes it is less costly to buy an old suitcase and pay the extra baggage fee than it is to ship items home. Do NOT allow yourself to be put in a situation where you are asked to pay excess baggage fees for the student at the airport, because it may be difficult to get reimbursement once he or she returns home.

Help the student wrap up any financial obligations with you and others, especially regarding long-distance telephone charges. Use of a pre-purchased phone card, or having the student make final calls collect, will minimize phone charges appearing on your telephone bill after the student has departed. The Host Rotary Club YEO or Counselor will work with the student to close his/her bank account and end any membership obligations in the community.

Involve the prior host families, and the Host Rotary Club, in planning a farewell event before the student departs. Often the Host Rotary Club will plan such an event, including a thank you to all host families. Allow sufficient flexibility in your schedule during the final few days to provide your student with the opportunity to say goodbye to the many friends made during the past year. In many cases, these "good-byes" will be even harder for the student than those said 11 or 12 months earlier, and your understanding and support will make this a happy time for everyone involved.

#### **IMPORTANT REMINDER:**

Whenever the exchange student changes host families, the new family name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail **must be reported to the Country Contact and to the District RYE Chair**. The regulations of the U.S. Department of State require address changes to be filed within ten days – failure to do so can result in the deportation of the student. It is normally the responsibility of the Host Rotary Club YEO or Counselor to ensure this information is submitted; however, host families will often communicate with each other and make their own transfer arrangements so it is important to include these Rotarians in your plans. Although we consider it the student's responsibility to report moves, we recommend that host families and/or club counselors stay on top of the situation as well, due to the seriousness of the consequences.

#### **LASTLY, IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS.....**

While there is no way we or you can guarantee that every Exchange student and host parent will enjoy a completely successful exchange, we do our best to help them, and you, and the percentage of unsuccessful exchanges is very small. Most problems that do occur can be taken care of satisfactorily **if addressed early**, before they become too big to handle.

**IF YOU DO HAVE A CONCERN, AND NEED TO DISCUSS SOMETHING, please contact the local Rotary Club Youth Exchange Officer or the student's Club Counselor.** If he or she is not available, please contact your student's Country Contact. If that person is not available then contact the Inbound Coordinator. As a final resource, contact the District RYE Chair. They will get in touch with the student, and if appropriate, the counterpart in the sponsoring district for further information and help, if needed.

**Please do not dismiss non-compliance with our rules, or try to solve major problems yourself.** Because this is an international program, there may be cultural and/or Rotary subtleties of which you are unaware, and there may also be long-range implications affecting future exchanges. Please call and give us the opportunity to show you that we are concerned about the exchange student and the host family and club as you are. We can't help you or the student if we don't know that there is a problem.

Finally, while much of this booklet addresses rules, regulations, and "dealing with problems", we want you to know that being a host parent is also a lot of fun and full of rewards. You will get to know, and love, someone from another country, another culture, and another part of the world. You will have the opportunity to watch, and help shape, the development and maturity of a young person. You will have opportunities to learn of another culture yourself, and in the process of sharing our culture and our country with this student, gain knowledge and understanding for you and your family. And at the end of the exchange, you will have added to your family a son or daughter who may live in a "foreign" country the rest of their life, but will always be a part of **your** family.

## Appendix A – What is Rotary?

### ***The History of Rotary***

Rotary was born on February 23, 1905 in Chicago, Illinois, the world's first and most international service club. The founder of Rotary was attorney Paul P. Harris (1868-1947), who gathered with three others to discuss his idea of a group of businessmen from different professions getting together periodically to become better acquainted. They decided to limit membership to one representative of each profession and to rotate the meeting site among each member's place of business, to acquaint each other with their various vocations and to promote business. The rotation of meeting places is the source of the name "Rotary".

Club membership grew rapidly. The second Rotary Club was founded in San Francisco in 1908. When clubs were formed in Canada and Great Britain, in 1912, Rotary became an international organization.

Since 1905, the ideas of Paul Harris and his friends have become ideals which have been accepted by people of practically all nationalities, and of many political and religious beliefs. Today there are Rotary Clubs in Austria and American Samoa, in Brazil and Brunei, in Italy and India, in Scotland and South Africa - in over 200 countries. The universal acceptance of Rotary principles has been so great that there are now nearly 34,000 Rotary clubs, with a membership of over 1.2 million men and women.

### ***Rotary Motto and Themes***

Rotary International has adopted as its motto, "**Service Above Self**". A second theme of Rotary is "**He profits most who serves best**". Additionally, each year, the Rotary International President coins a theme for that Rotary year.

Rotarians throughout the world quote the Four Way Test (essentially a statement of Ethics).

Of all the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

### ***The Rotary Foundation***

In 1917, the Rotary Foundation was born. The Rotary Foundation is a philanthropic trust promoting further understanding and friendly relations between peoples of different nations. The Foundation sponsors the largest scholarship program (Ambassadorial Scholarship) in the world and is supported purely by voluntary contributions from Rotary Clubs and Rotarians.

The Rotary Foundation has eight working programs and a budget of approximately \$45-\$50 million (US) each year. These programs include Ambassadorial Scholarships, The 3H program (for Health, Hunger and Humanity), Rotary Peace Fellowship, World Community Service Projects all over the world through matching grants, Group Study Exchange and many youth related activities such as RYLA and Young RYLA.

One specific project of Rotary International, begun in 1985 as a project of a single Rotarian and Rotary Club in the Philippines is Polio-Plus. Rotary has partnered with the World Health Organization, The Centers for Disease Control and UNESCO to **eradicate** Polio from this earth.

Group Study Exchange involves paired districts in different countries sending teams of 4 or 5 business or professional men and women for a 4 week period of study and discussion with their counterparts in the other country.

### ***Rotary at the Local Level -- The Rotary Club***

The "personality" of each Rotary club is a reflection of the community it serves and the membership of that club. Even within our own District, club size ranges from less than two dozen members to over three hundred members. Rotary clubs meet weekly throughout the year; some for a breakfast meeting, others during lunch. Some Rotary club meetings are quiet and "serious", staying to a tight schedule so the members can return to work on time, while other club meetings are less formal and structured.

Exchange students often find that the Rotary club **hosting** them will be very different from the Rotary club **sponsoring** them, and both will be very different from other Rotary clubs they may have the opportunity to visit during their exchange year, but Rotarians around the world all share the common philosophy for Service to Others and they are there to help provide a successful exchange experience.

As with most organizations, Rotary clubs are lead by officers who are elected by the membership for one year terms, beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. the beginning of the Rotary Year. The officers include the Club President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and/or President-Elect, and Directors. Rotary clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program generally appoint a Youth Exchange Officer, or YEO, to oversee that program. It is the YEO who is the primary liaison between the hosting Rotary club and the student, the host families and the District Youth Exchange Committee. Each club also provides another Rotarian as the counselor for the exchange student. It is the counselor's duty to communicate regularly with the student and to be available if problems arise which the student may need help in solving.

## Appendix B – Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange

The following two pages contain the Program Rules and Conditions which all exchange students and their parents agreed to follow as part of the Application to the Exchange Program. These are the “universal” set of common sense rules that all Rotary District Youth Exchange Programs expect the student to comply with as a condition of the Exchange.

### Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange

As a Youth Exchange Student sponsored by a Rotary Club and/or District, you must agree to the following rules and conditions of exchange. Please note that districts may edit this document or insert additional rules on the reverse side if needed to account for local conditions.

#### Strict Rules and Conditions of Exchange — Violations will result in student’s immediate return home.

- 1) Obey the Laws of the Host Country — If found guilty of violation of any law, student can expect no assistance from their sponsors or their native country. Student will be returned home as soon as he/she is released by authorities.
- 2) The student is not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Medicine prescribed by a physician is allowed.
- 3) The student is not authorized to operate a motorized vehicle of any kind which requires a federal/state/provincial license or participate in driver education programs.
- 4) The drinking of alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. If the host family offers a student an alcoholic drink, it is permissible to accept it under their supervision in their home. The legal drinking age is 21.
- 5) Stealing is prohibited. There are no exceptions.
- 6) Unauthorized travel is not allowed. Students must follow the travel rules of the Host District.
- 7) The student must be covered by a health and life insurance policy agreeable to the Hosting District.
- 8) The student must attend school regularly and make an honest attempt to succeed.
- 9) The student must abide by the rules and conditions of exchange of the Hosting District provided to you by the District Youth Exchange Committee.

#### Common Sense Rules and Conditions of Exchange — Violations will result in a district review and restrictions. Severe/Consistent disregard for these rules will result in being returned home.

- 1) Smoking is discouraged. If you state in your application that you do not smoke, you will be held to that position throughout your year. Your acceptance and host family placement is based on your signed statement. Under no circumstances are you to smoke in your Host Family’s home.
- 2) Become an integral part of the Host Family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a student of your age and other children in the family. Respect your host’s wishes.
- 3) Learn the language of your host country. The effort will be appreciated by teachers, host parents, Rotary club members and others you meet in the community. It will go a long way in your gaining acceptance in the community and those who will become lifelong friends.
- 4) Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events. Show an interest in host family and Rotary activities to which you are invited. Volunteer to get involved; do not wait to be asked. Lack of interest on your part is detrimental to your exchange and can have a negative impact on future exchanges.
- 5) Get involved in your school and community activities. Plan your recreation and spare time activities around your school and community friends. Do not spend all your time with the other exchange students.
- 6) Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counselors and school personnel in choosing friends.
- 7) Do not borrow money. Pay any bills you incur promptly. Ask permission to use the family telephone, keep track of long distance calls and reimburse your host family each month for the calls you make.
- 8) Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary Club or district with proper adult chaperones. Other travel must be approved by the host district Country Contact, host club YEO, host family and student’s own parents/legal guardians in writing exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability. Students may not travel alone or accompanied only by other students.
- 9) If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or to an event, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go.
- 10) You must show proof of proper immunization. See page 4, question 5 — Immunizations.
- 11) Students should have sufficient financial support to assure their well-being during the exchange year. Your hosting district may require a contingency fund for emergency situations. It must be replenished by the student’s parents/guardians as it

is depleted. Unused funds at the end of the exchange will be returned to the student. These funds must be turned over to your Host Rotary Club upon your arrival and is not meant to cover day-to-day expenses.

- 12) Any costs relative to a student's early return home or any other unusual costs (e.g., language tutoring, tours, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the student's own parents/guardians.
- 13) Students must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to the host district and student's parents/ guardians.
- 14) You will be under the Hosting District's authority while you are an exchange student. Parents/guardians must avoid authorizing any extra

activities directly to their son/daughter. The Host Club and District Youth Exchange Officers must authorize such activities. If the student has relatives in the host country or region, they will have no authority over the student while the student is in the program.

- 15) Visits by your parents/guardians, siblings and/or friends while you are in the program are strongly discouraged. Such visits may only take place with the host club and host district's consent and only within the last quarter of the exchange or during school breaks. Visits are not allowed during major holidays, even if occurring during school breaks.
- 16) Avoid serious romantic activity. Abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity.

#### **Additional Program Rules and Conditions for Inbound Students to District 5470:**

- 1) Students must arrive with a complete round-trip airline ticket, including both domestic and international segments, and the ticket must have an "OPEN" return.
- 2) Students must maintain an Emergency Fund of \$300 US, to be deposited upon arrival with the host Rotary Club Counselor or Youth Exchange Officer. This fund is ONLY to be used in emergencies and then must be replenished immediately by the student or his/her natural parents.
- 3) All inbound students must purchase the Rotary-approved accident and sickness insurance policy, known as "Annual Plan B", from American International Group, Inc., through CISI-Bolduc. (There are some exceptions for certain countries) Insurance must be paid for prior to the student's arrival, by credit card or by bank check (in US Dollars, drawn on a bank in the USA). Guarantee forms and DS-2019 visa documents will not be issued until the insurance premium is paid.
- 4) Students must certify that they have no dietary or physical restrictions other than those shown on the application. If something occurred after submission of the application and the student needs special attention, the District 5470 YE Chairperson must receive a complete report no later than 2 weeks before departure. If the applicant suffers from mental or medical condition(s), the D5470 YE Chairperson

reserves the right to cancel or terminate the exchange.

- 5) To help in the adaptation of the students, we ask that phone calls home and time spent on the computer communicating home through E-mail and social networks be limited.
- 6) Students must attend school regularly and make good effort in classes. Students will attend high school, at the school designated by the Host Rotary Club. Under no circumstances will the student be allowed to take driver education or operate a motor vehicle.
- 7) Students are prohibited from independent travel. Travel with host family, school groups, or Rotarians is permitted, but the District 5470 Country Contact must be notified in advance of all trips. Inbound students must arrive directly in District 5470 from their home country, and must return directly at the end of the exchange year.
- 8) Visits by parents and family members are permitted only during the last quarter of the exchange year. Visits by home country friends are generally NOT permitted, and may be allowed only in very special circumstances. Students are not permitted to return home during the exchange year, except in cases of emergency.

## Appendix C – Travel Policy for Inbound Exchange Students

**This is a cultural and educational exchange, NOT a travel exchange.** Exchange students should have no expectations of being a tourist. The Host Rotary Club and Host Families are under no obligation to provide or permit it. However, some student travel through the generosity of, and with, the Host Club, individual Rotarians and Host Families and this is encouraged. **Under no circumstances shall students make their own travel arrangements and then expect the Host Club and Host Family to agree.** Inbound Exchange students must comply with this policy, and Host Families are asked to enforce it. Violations of this policy may be grounds for terminating the Exchange, and returning the student to his or her home country immediately.

### **For Students to travel, they must:**

- Complete the travel permission form located on our website at [www.mtandplainsRYE.com](http://www.mtandplainsRYE.com).
- Obtain all the signatures as required on the form.
- Legible fax copies or scanned and emailed copies are acceptable.
- Send the form to their Country Contact and to the RYE District Chair (fax, mail or email).
- Receive a response from the Country Contact or RYE District Chair authorizing the travel.

**All travel forms MUST have a complete description and itinerary of the trip planned, with information as to the adult with whom the student is traveling, where and with whom the student is staying, and complete contact information. (Phone numbers)**

### **There is only one travel form:**

**For any travel within the State of Colorado (a long weekend camping trip or going skiing for the weekend) you need only inform your YEO and your Country Contact where you will be going and how you may be reached (phone numbers).**

**For any travel outside the State of Colorado, the travel form MUST be completed and signed by all parties required. The planned trip must be described in detail, including contact information. Then the form is Faxed or scanned and E-mailed to your natural parents for their signatures. They may either fax or scan and E-mail the signed form back, indicating their approval of the trip.**

**Additional signatures are then required, namely, your HOST PARENTS, your YEO and your COUNTRY CONTACT and your DISTRICT CHAIR. Once these signatures have been obtained and all parties agree to allow the trip, you may leave- NOT BEFORE. This travel form must be completed at least two weeks before the requested travel date.**

The reason for these rules is simple. The Rotary District 5470 Youth Exchange Committee, Host Rotary Club and Host Parents are responsible for students while in this country. We must know where students can be reached in case of emergency or a message from home.

The U.S. Department of State, various visa requirements and Rotary International requirements all must be adhered to for the program to continue and these travel forms are required by all. A student's visa may be revoked if their whereabouts are unknown (i.e. they are travelling and did not complete the form) which will result in immediate expulsion from the Mountain & Plains RYE program and country.

Specific travel approvals will vary based upon many factors. Host Parents will ask themselves if the travel is something they would allow their own son or daughter to do. Further, common sense must be a guide. Participants chose to be exchange students to meet and learn about people from the USA. The travel desires of an exchange student should not place a burden on the Host Family.

**In summary, so there is no misunderstanding: ALL TRAVEL MUST BE APPROVED. You must plan in advance to obtain the required signatures and this may include your natural parents' signature. We are not trying to prevent students from traveling or reduce their fun. However, Rotary is responsible for Students' safety and compliance with all laws, rules and regulations and therefore must know where the student is at all times. Allowing legible fax or e-mailed copies of the travel form returns spontaneity to student travel.**

## **International Travel:**

International travel requires additional approval and original signatures. Students should NEVER travel internationally without explicit prior approval and without specific forms from the Mountain and Plains RYE Visa and SEVIS Responsible Officer. A student's failure to have these forms at time of border crossing will likely result in the student's detention and eventual deportation. This includes travel to Mexico and Canada

## **Unaccompanied Travel:**

It is understood that the host parents will verify by personal conversation with the adult with whom the student will be traveling or staying, all plans and itinerary for the travel. There must be an individual at the destination who assumes full responsibility for the student, and who has been approved by the Host Parent, and if applicable, the Host Rotary Club and RYE District Chair. A background check may be required!!

**UNAUTHORIZED TRAVEL WILL RESULT IN THE  
STUDENT BEING RETURNED HOME**

# Travel Permission Form

For ALL travel outside Colorado

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Host Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

What dates do you plan on traveling? From: (MM/DD/YY) \_\_\_\_\_ To (MM/DD/YY) \_\_\_\_\_

Who will you be traveling with (please include their name and cell phone number)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Where will you be traveling/staying (please be specific and include phone numbers-continue on back if needed)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you spoken about your plans with:

Your school (if missing school)? YES NO Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

## Release and Consent by Student, his/her Parents or Legal Guardians and Mountain & Plains RYE

We the parents or legal guardians of the Rotary Youth Exchange Student shown above give permission for him/her to travel to the destination shown above, at (and only at) the time shown above, with the other travel arrangements, such as companions and host shown above.

We agree that either the student or we will pay all expenses for that travel.

In consideration for Rotary's granting permission to travel to the student named above, we the parents or legal guardians and the student, to the full extent permitted by law, hereby release and agree to hold harmless and indemnify all host parents, members of their families, all members, officers, directors, committee member and employees of all host and sponsor Rotary Clubs, Districts and organizations, Mountain & Plains Rotary Youth Exchange and Rotary International, of and from all liability or any property loss, property damage, personal injury or death, including such liability which may arise out of the negligence of any such persons or entities which may be suffered or claimed by the student, parents or guardians during the period of his/her travel, including travel to and from the destination described above, or elsewhere, expressly waiving any and all claims for liability which we or any of us assert. Student agrees not to deviate from stated travel plans without first informing Mountain & Plains Rotary Youth Exchange and further agrees to not participate in any activity not covered by their insurance.

We further understand that if such travel is to occur following the student's exchange year, the permission and release shall apply to any and all travel thereafter, including travel from the host town, it being understood the student is no longer under the auspices of the Rotary International Youth Exchange Program and is traveling as an individual without the sponsorship of Rotary International, host and sponsor Rotary Districts, host and sponsor Rotary clubs, without Rotary sponsored insurance and without a Rotary sponsored visa.

We have read all of the above and agree to these terms and restrictions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father/Guardian      Date                      Signature of Mother/Guardian      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student    Date

**Having read all of the above information and seeing the legally binding signatures of the student and his/her parents or legal guardians, properly dated, whereby they agree to the terms and limits set forth, we do hereby give our permission to the student for him/her to travel as specifically set forth above (and only as set forth)**

---

**Signature of Current Host Father                      Current Host Mother                      Date**

---

**Signature of Club YEO    Date**

---

**Signature of RMRYE Representative (Country Contact)    Date**

*In summary, so there is no misunderstanding:*

**THERE WILL BE NO TRAVEL ALLOWED (outside the State of Colorado) THAT HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED BY YOUR HOST PARENTS, CLUB COUNSELOR, THE DISTRICT 5470 COUNTRY CONTACT AND THE DISTRICT CHAIR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE RULES.**

We are not trying to prevent you from traveling or to reduce your fun. However, Rotary is responsible for your safety and therefore must know where you are at all times.

**Appendix D – Questions for “First Night”  
with Host Family**

1. What do I call you? “Mom”, “Dad”, or given (first) name?
2. What am I expected to do daily other than:
  - a. Make my bed
  - b. Keep my room tidy
  - c. Clean the bathroom up after I use it?
3. What is the procedure about dirty clothes? Where do I keep them until wash day?
4. Should I wash my own underclothes?
5. What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
6. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
7. Where can I keep my bathroom accessories?
8. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings?
9. When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
10. When are mealtimes?
11. Do I have a regular job at meal times? Set, clear, wash, dry the dishes; take out the garbage?
12. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
13. What areas are strictly private e.g. your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?
14. May I put posters and pictures in my room? On the wall? How do you want things hung?
15. What are your feelings about my drinking alcohol if offered by you?
16. Do you object to my having wine at the table with you or an occasional beer?
17. What time must I get up weekday mornings?
18. What time should I get up weekends and holidays?
19. What time must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
20. What time must I be in on school nights if I go out? (Exceptions by special arrangement).
21. What time must I be in on weekends if I go out?
22. What dates are the birthdays of family members?
23. May I have friends stay overnight?
24. What is your rule on entertaining friends in my room with the door closed?
25. Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?
26. What are the rules about phone calls? Local?, Long Distance?, Overseas? How and when may I pay for calls I make? How do you want me to keep track of my pay telephone calls?
27. What are the rules about access to the Internet and e-mail if there is a computer in the house? Are there time limits or time periods that use is permitted or prohibited?
28. May my friends call me? What times are not good?
29. What is the procedure about posting mail?

30. Do any of you have any pet dislikes? e.g. chewing gum, music types, being late, wearing curlers or a hat at the table, being interrupted while reading, etc.
31. How do I get around? bus, bicycle, be driven, riding with friends, etc.
32. What about transportation to the mall or movies?
33. May I play the stereo or TV?
34. May I use kitchen appliances? Microwave? Dishwasher? Stove?
35. What are the rules about going to church?
36. May I smoke? Where? (Rotary discourages smoking in general and forbids smoking in bedrooms)
37. If I have something bugging me, how do you want me to handle it?
  - a. Write a note explaining it
  - b. Ask for a heart to heart discussion
  - c. Tell my counselor
  - d. Keep it to myself and live with it
38. How often can I go out each week?
39. Who pays for "event" expenses? me? you? Rotary? (movies, sports events, concerts/shows )
40. Can I use the shampoo and tooth paste or buy my own?
41. What do I do about school lunch? Buy- who pays- me, you, Rotary? Bring from home?
42. Are there any eating habits or foods I need to discuss? I don't like\_\_\_\_\_.

**In general, ask about those things you feel are most important the first night, and then other over the next couple nights. Try to always keep an open and honest communication with your Host Family and Rotary.**

## Appendix E – How to Cope with Culture Shock

by Arthur Gordon

As the world grows smaller, as ever-increasing numbers of people travel, work or study abroad, more attention is being focused on a kind of silent sickness that often afflicts the inexperienced traveler or the unwary expatriate. It's the loss of emotional equilibrium that a person suffers when he moves from a familiar environment where he has learned to function easily and successfully to one where he has not. The term used to describe this malady is "culture shock".

The effects of culture shock may range from mild uneasiness or temporary homesickness to acute unhappiness or even, in extreme cases, psychological panic, irritability, hyper-sensitivity and loss of perspective are common symptoms. Often the victim doesn't know what the matter with him is. He just knows that something's wrong -- and he feels miserable.

Most experts in inter-cultural communication agree that the basic cause of culture shock is the abrupt loss of the familiar, which in turn causes a sense of isolation and diminished self-importance. "Culture shock", says anthropologist Kalvero Oberg, "is brought on by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not."

According to Dr. Oberg, these cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions or customs, are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind on hundreds of these cues, even though we may not be consciously aware of them. "When an individual enters a strange culture," Dr. Oberg says, "all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of goodwill he may be, a series of props has been knocked out from under him."

Sometimes the transition to an alien culture has an immediate impact. A short term American visitor to certain Eastern European countries may find himself dismayed or depressed by living conditions that seem perfectly normal and acceptable to the people of that country - toilets with no seats, for example, or even more primitive bathroom facilities. It may come as a real shock to a teenager from Texas to find that hamburgers are non-existent, or, that local hairdressers never heard of plastic curlers.

More insidious is what might be termed delayed culture shock. Often when a person takes up residence in a foreign country there's a period of excitement and exhilaration when everything seems new and challenging and fascinating. If one has friends of business connections one may be asked to dinner, taken sight-seeing, made much of -- at first. Also, in the beginning similarities between cultures are more apparent than differences. Almost everywhere people live in houses, go to work, relax

on week-ends, do the shopping, eat three meals a day and so on. All this seems reassuring.

It's not until this honeymoon period ends that the newcomer begins to realize that there are endless subtle differences that leave him facing a host of perplexing problems. Many of these problems never bothered him at home, because they solved themselves almost automatically. Now, to his increased dismay, he finds that he has language troubles, housing troubles, money troubles, transportation troubles, food troubles, recreation troubles, perhaps even health troubles. All of these things drain away his reservoir of good-humor and equanimity. Having his laundry done may become a major struggle. Making a telephone call may be a small crisis. It may seem to him that people say yes when they mean no and promise to do things which they never do. Time may be regarded quite differently by the people among whom he finds himself. So may space, in some countries people like to stand very close together when they converse, in others this violates a deep-rooted sense of privacy.

Underlying all these difficulties is the uncomfortable feeling of not really belonging, of being an outsider. In changing cultures, the newcomer has inevitably changed his own status. At home he was "somebody", or at least his place in society was established and recognized, here he is relatively "nobody". As a foreigner, he is a member of a minority whose voice counts for little or nothing. He may find that his homeland, so important to him, is regarded with suspicion or dismissed as unimportant. In short, as one observer put it, he finds himself in "circumstances of beleaguered self-esteem".

A mature, confident person may be able to shrug off these circumstances. But if the newcomer is insecure or sensitive or shy, they may seem overwhelming. Furthermore, as troubles pile up and he begins to look around for help, he may conclude that the natives of the country in which he finds himself are either incapable of understanding his plight or are indifferent to it. This in turn triggers the emotion that is one of the surest signs of culture shock: hostility to the new environment. The victim says to himself, "These people don't seem to know or care what I'm going through. Therefore they must be selfish, insensitive people. Therefore I don't like them."

Inevitably this reaction tends to increase the isolation of the unhappy visitor because people sense his antagonism and begin to avoid him. When this happens, he may seek out other disgruntled souls, usually expatriates like himself, and find melancholy relief in criticizing all aspects of the host country. These discussions almost never lead to any honest evaluation of the situation or awareness that the difficulty may lie in the attitude of the critics themselves. They are simply gripe-sessions in which the virtues of the home country are exaggerated almost as much as the alleged failing of the country being visited. As Dr. Oberg says, "When Americans or other foreigners get together to grouse about the host country and its people, you can be sure they are suffering from culture shock."

Sometimes the victim of culture shock may go to the other extreme, surrendering his own identity and trying to imitate

all the customs and attitudes of the alien culture. Or he may try to solve the problem by withdrawing into himself, refusing to learn the native language, making no effort to find friends among the local people, taking no interest in their history, art, architecture, or any other aspect of their culture. While in this state of mind he may display a variety of unattractive symptoms. One is a tendency to over-react to minor frustrations or delays or inconveniences with irritation or anger out of all proportion to the cause. Another is to be unduly suspicious, to think that people are out to cheat or swindle him because he is a foreigner. Yet another is over-concern about cleanliness, an unwarranted conviction that water, food or dishes are unsanitary when in fact they are not. Often the person is unaware of the extent to which he is displaying these symptoms.

He does know, however, that he is miserable and that the casual remedies recommended to him --- patience, hard work, mastery of the language and so on -- don't seem to do much good. Sometimes he will develop a marked degree of over-dependence on people from his own country who have passed through their own period of culture shock and are residing successfully and happily in the host country. If they in turn can display wisdom, patience and understanding of his symptoms, they often are able to shorten the span of his misery.

One reason the unhappy expatriate gravitates toward his own countrymen is that in their company he can at least feel sure of being understood. Underlying much of his confusion is the fact that even if he speaks the language of the country there remains endless opportunities for misunderstanding. All experts in communication emphasize the fact that language and voice are by no means our only form of communication; they are supported by hundreds of gestures and facial expressions that are easily misinterpreted.

Yet another stumbling block that compounds the problems of culture shock is the tendency of many people to think of members of other cultures in terms of stereotypes. The excitable Arabs. The amorous French. The touchy Italians. The lazy Latinos. The volatile Hungarians. The materialistic Americans. Some psychologists think that anxiety-prone people cling to stereotypes because it lessens the threat of the unknown by making the world predictable ... and what the victim of culture shock needs desperately is a familiar, predictable world.

Almost always, fortunately, symptoms of culture shock subside with the passage of time. The first sign of recovery may well be the reappearance of the victim's sense of humor; he begins to smile or even laugh at some of the things that irritated him as much at first. As familiarity with local language and customs increases, his self-confidence and self-esteem begin to return. He comes out of his shell and makes tentative overtures to the people around him -- and as soon as he starts being friendly, they stop seeming hostile. Slowly he progresses from a grudging acceptance of his surroundings to a genuine fondness for them and becomes proud of his growing ability to function in them. In the end, he wonders what he was so unhappy about in the beginning.

Is it possible to shorten the duration of culture shock or minimize its impact? The experts think so. Here are three

suggestions they offer to anyone planning a stay in a foreign land.

- First, be aware that such a thing as culture shock exists, that it will probably affect you one way or another, but that it doesn't last forever.
- Next, try to remember, if and when you become thoroughly disenchanted with your surroundings, that the problem probably isn't so much in them as it is in you.
- Third, accept the idea that while it may be somewhat painful, culture shock can be a very valuable experience, a mind-stretching process that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight into yourself and wider tolerance for other people.

If it happens to you, don't think that you're strange or abnormal. If you had a happy life back home, why shouldn't you miss some aspects of it or feel a sense of loss? You'd be abnormal if you didn't.

If it happens to you, don't sit around being negative and critical, this just prolong and deepens your gloom. Try to keep busy. Arrange something pleasant to look forward to. Set goals for yourself -- learning ten new foreign phrases each day, for example-- and stick to them.

If it happens to you, try not to be judgmental. Everyone has an ethnocentric tendency to think that his own culture is superior to all others. Actually, any culture is a good culture if it provides an environment that meets basic human needs.

If it happens to you, force yourself to look for the best, not the worst, in your situation. People who go around looking for trouble usually manage to find it. Train yourself to enjoy the diversity of people and cultures, not fear it or shy away from it.

Recently in Russia two members of an American tour- group at different times during the day bought a candy bar from a booth in a railroad station. Each was given his change in the form of chocolate wafers. One American, disturbed by this departure from the familiar, felt that he was being victimized and protested vehemently. The other, charmed by what seemed to him a quaint and delightful custom, regarded it as a novel and refreshing experience and even bragged about it to his fellow tourists. The first American, it seems reasonable to say, was far more a prisoner of his own culture, than the second.

In sum, before he leaves home the visitor to a foreign land should make up his mind neither to resist the culture in which he finds himself nor surrender to it. What he needs to do is fight or grope or inch his way toward a new and flexible personality, a personality that retains its own cultural identity but recognizes the right of members of other cultures to retain theirs.

If that new personality can help him toward a better understanding of himself and of others, if it can enable him to communicate easily and convey warmth and understanding and goodwill across the culture barricades, then the pain of culture shock will have served its purpose,

and the recovered victim will truly have the best of two worlds.

*Abridged version reprinted by kind permission of Youth for Understanding.*

***It's OK***

**It's okay to be afraid  
of things we don't understand**

**It's okay to feel anxious  
when things aren't working our way.**

**It's okay to feel lonely....  
even when you're with other people**

**It's okay to feel unfulfilled  
because you know something is missing  
(even if you're not sure what it is)**

**It's okay to think and worry and cry.  
It's okay to do  
whatever you have to do, but**

***Just remember too....***

**That eventually you're going to  
adjust to the changes life brings your way.  
and you'll realize that,**

**It's okay to get to love again and laugh again,**

**It's okay to get to the point where  
the life you live is full and satisfying and good to you...**

**And it will be that way  
because you made it that way.**

## **Desiderata**

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others. Even the dull and ignorant; they, too, have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons. They are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself to others, you may become vain and bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble. It is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is. Many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is perennial as the grass.

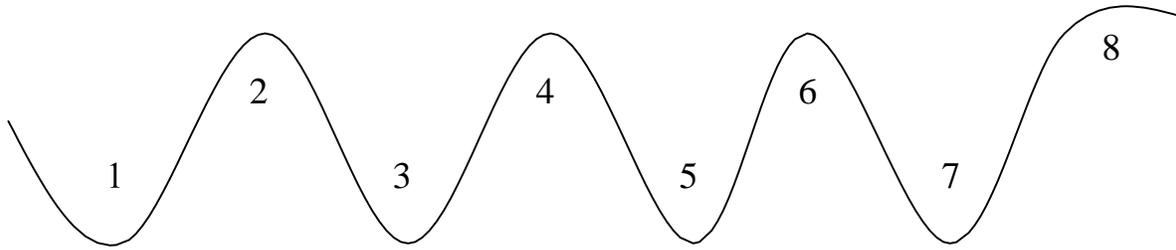
Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe. No less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

**Author Unknown**

## The Exchange Cycle



### 1. Application Anxiety

### 2. Selection/Arrival Fascination

Elation  
Expectation

### 3. Initial Culture Shock: 1-6 Months

Novelty wears off

Characteristics:

Sleeping Habits  
Disorientation  
Language difficulties  
Fatigue (Mental/Physical)  
Eating

### 4. Surface Adjustments

After initial "down"

Settle in:

Language improves  
Navigate culture  
Friends  
Social Life

### 5. Mental Isolation

Frustration increases  
New sense of isolation  
Boredom  
Lack of motivation  
Unresolved problems  
Language problems

### 6. Integration/Acceptance

Begin to examine society  
Accept surroundings/self

### 7. Return Anxiety

Preparation for departure  
Realize changes  
Desire to stay  
Results:  
Confusion/Pain  
Breaking of bonds  
No promise of renewal in future

### 8. Shock/Reintegration

Contrast of old and new  
Family/friends  
Difficulty to accept change  
Not the center of attention  
Others not interested in experience details  
Reorientation

All exchange students experience phases of elation, anxiety, and depression. One or more of these phases will be experienced near the time of application processing. Various phases will then continue even after the student returns home. It is important that this be anticipated, and calmly accepted and dealt with.

The best method to resolve each occurrence is to keep busy and remember that all the exchange students before you, with you, and who follow you, will experience similar circumstances.

Parents and host families need to know that exchange students will experience these phases and should not be alarmed. They should be ready to help the student work their way out of the down cycles.

The time necessary to work through each phase is not predictable and will depend on the student and the circumstances.

Ref. Helmut Muscheid, Rotary Youth Exchange Officer, Germany