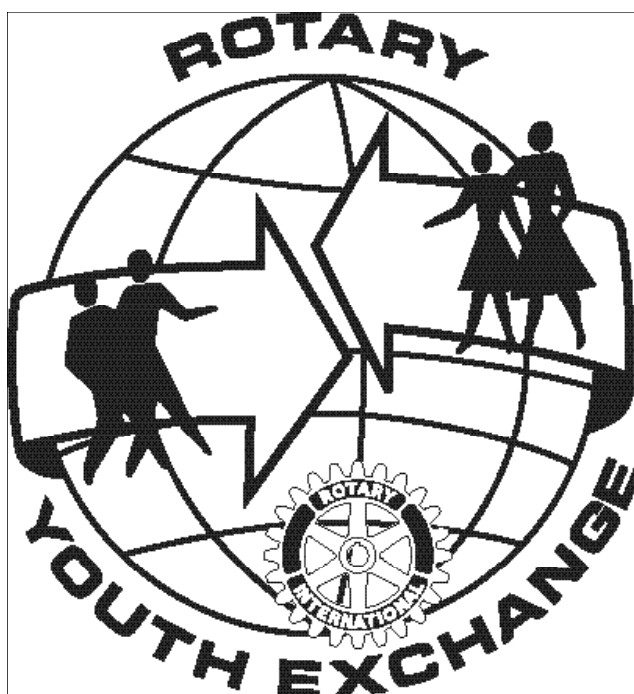


# Rotary International District 5190

## Youth Exchange Inbound Program



## Information Book For Host Parents 2008 - 2009

[www.rye5190.org](http://www.rye5190.org)



To the Host Parents,

**Congratulations!** You are about to become a new parent, probably not for the first time, but this time your new child will already be a teenager upon arrival, may not speak English fluently, and will certainly have cultural traits that are different from yours.

By agreeing to be a host family for a Rotary Exchange student, you have agreed to assume parental responsibility for this young ambassador from another country, to provide shelter and sustenance, guidance and counsel, and love and support to the child of strangers who may live thousands of miles from you. But we do not ask you to do this all on your own. Rotarians in your local community as well as those of us who serve on the Rotary District Youth Exchange Committee will do all we can to make this exchange a success. We provide you with the information you need, through our Host Family Orientation meetings and this Information Booklet. We meet with and provide orientation training to the exchange students upon their arrival. And we will, throughout the exchange period, be in contact with both you and the exchange student to answer questions, address concerns, and resolve problems.

All too soon, it will be time for your student to move on to the next host family or return home at the end of the exchange year. Many of the host parents who preceded you do not say "goodbye" when that time comes, but instead say "farewell, until we meet again", with the full intention that this new member of the family will indeed be met again. We hope you experience those feelings, and will do all we can to have that happen. This Information Booklet provides the information you will need to be a successful Host Family; please refer to it often. And take a look at the District 5190 website at [www.rye5190.org](http://www.rye5190.org).

In Youth Exchange Service,

Chas Macquarie, Chairperson  
Rotary District 5190 Youth Exchange  
2008-2010

To contact any Committee member, send email to:  
[info@rye5190.org](mailto:info@rye5190.org).

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# 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 16 to 18½ 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.

## What is Rotary?

Rotary International, 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. One term used throughout this Handbook warrants explanation here: **District** — *the geographic organization of a number of local Rotary clubs for purposes of governance and support.* We are **Rotary International District 5190**, consisting of 53 Rotary clubs in northeastern California and northern Nevada. See Appendix A for a map of District 5190.

## 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 5190 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 their respective District Governor, a Rotarian selected 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 conduct of the program. In District 5190 this responsibility is delegated to the **District Youth Exchange Committee** (or **YEC**).

The District Youth Exchange Committee is comprised of an executive committee, and committee members. Most committee members work with students from particular countries. These District Committee Members are known as **Country Contacts**, or **Country Counselors**.

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 YEC has agreed to accept an “inbound” exchange student, and one of our 53 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, all Rotary Districts provide a comprehensive orientation to both outbound and inbound students. Even before the student's arrival, the Youth Exchange Committee establishes and maintains communications with: 1) its counterparts in the exchanging district, 2) the inbound students both before their arrival and during their year here, 3) and the outbound students we are sending overseas.

The District 5190 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. Feel welcome to contact any member of the District 5190 YEC anytime you have a question (or need help with a problem) that cannot be answered by the Hosting Rotary club.

### **The Hosting Rotary Club's Role**

The local Rotary club provides another level of support to you, the student, and the Exchange Program. Each Rotary club appoints an individual Rotarian as the **Youth Exchange Officer** (or **YEO**) to administer the club's exchange program, including recruiting outbound candidates and host families. This person, or 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** serves primarily as an advisor and advocate for the student, will 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.

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 or Club 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 schoolwork with the student, teachers, and school officials if academic or social problems are becoming apparent.

The hosting club provides another form of support to the exchange student in the form of a **spending allowance**. Each month the Rotary club will provide this allowance directly to the student to be used for incidental personal expenses, entertainment, school supplies, etc. 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 part of a host family event. In addition, District 5190 requires all inbound students to deposit with the hosting club a **\$300 emergency fund** that can be accessed by the club to pay for such expenses when the student is not able to do so. Please discuss any financial concerns with the Rotary club representatives.

The hosting 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 Inbound Orientations and the annual Rotary District Conference are mandatory** for the student. It is the responsibility of the Host Rotary Club to arrange for transportation to these events.

### **Rotary Support = District + Club**

This Team of the **District Youth Exchange Committee**, the local Rotary club **Youth Exchange Officer** and **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.

# 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 some can speak and understand our language well, having studied English for several years in school. But for most, 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 is 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.

## Learning to Adapt

Learning to adapt means, for most students, being willing to try new things, do things differently, recognize the cultural basis for the environment they are used to, and accepting that our cultural differences are neither “better or worse”, simply “**different**”. They need to understand the RYE mantra: ***It is not right, it is not wrong, it is just different!***

## Complying 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 help ensure 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. **The Program Rules & Conditions of Exchange** is 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 cars, motorcycles, boats, snowmobiles, jet skis or any other powered device. 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 may, with the approval of the host parents, accept an alcoholic beverage offered by the host parent in the host home.
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 in the student's bedroom. Any student who stated on the application that he/she does not smoke is absolutely not permitted to smoke while here on exchange.
4. **School Attendance:** Although this is a cultural exchange, students are **required to**

**attend school regularly**, and maintain satisfactory class work. The program's objective is not to provide a high school diploma to these students, and each school agreeing to enroll exchange students will determine what, if any, certification 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 about the host country. However, **independent travel, or travel without adult supervision** is normally not permitted. Check with the student's club counselor or YEC contact. 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 5190 Inbound Exchange Students**, contained in Appendix C, 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 they say NO to travel by a student.***
6. **Visits by the student's parents, family, and friends:** Program rules prohibit any visitors from the student's home country during the first six 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 periods are expressly forbidden, as are visits within one month of the student's return home.** On the other hand, parental visits 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 should be fully acceptable to you, the host parents, and should be discussed with the appropriate Rotarians **before** being finalized.
7. **Use of telephone and Internet:** Students who frequently communicate with family and friends "back home" by telephone, email or instant messaging, often delay their own adjustments and adaptation to the exchange, and extend, 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. Weekly telephone calls to or from home, plus calls on special occasions, should be sufficient voice contact when combined with "newsy" emails that will likely be cherished and reread by his or her parents long after they arrive. Constant email 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 to once per week. 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.
8. **Mobile (cell) phones:** Many students will arrive with a mobile phone. It is the responsibility of the student to set up their account in their name. If a hosting Rotary club feels that they should cover the costs of the phone, they should give the student the amount of the monthly plan. The RYE District Committee strongly recommends against a student having a mobile phone that is in the name of the hosting Rotary Club or host family unless it is a prepaid account. If the host family and student agree that it is advisable or necessary for the sponsoring Rotary club or Host Family to provide the

student with a cell phone, there needs to be clear cut rules for the use of the phone.

9. **Involvement:** The exchange student is strongly encouraged to get involved in school, church, or community activities. The student should place emphasis on becoming a part of their family, school and community. Activities might include band, sports, drama, community theater, community volunteering, etc. In most countries extracurricular activities do not occur as they do in our schools. Therefore, you might have to explain after school activities to your exchange student.
10. **Moving:** The student is responsible for adapting to changes in host families. While we recognize this is very difficult emotionally (both for the host family and the student), it is intended to give the student a broader perspective on American families and American life. Within 24 hours of moving to a new host family, the student is required to notify the District RYE Committee of the move, with the name of the new host parents, their street and mailing addresses, phone number, and email address.

# 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 experience as a host parent, 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:

1. **Establish a clear understanding of expectations** soon after your student arrives. Appendix D is a listing 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. 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.
2. 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 their reactions are perfectly normal. Help them to keep busy and involved. These feelings will pass. If they have poured out their frustrations in a letter home (often saying they want to return home immediately), suggest that they put it away for a couple days, re-read it, and only then mail it ... if it still applies. Most times the letter will be thrown out! If you feel that your student is suffering from severe homesickness, then contact the student's RYE Club Counselor or District Committee Country Contact.
3. 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.
4. **Understand “culture shock”, and help your student learn our culture**. Appendix E is the article **How To Cope With Culture Shock** that 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. Culture Shock is normal. If you feel that your student is suffering from severe culture shock, then contact the student's RYE Club Counselor or District Committee Country Contact.
5. Ask questions of your RYE student's club counselor or RYE Committee contact.
6. Look at the materials that are published on [www.yeoresources.org](http://www.yeoresources.org) and on the District 5190 website, [www.rye5190.org](http://www.rye5190.org).

# Other Information Needed By Host Parents

## INSURANCE

All inbound exchange students must have a medical/accidental injury policy that meets Rotary's requirements. While some students come with insurance from their home district, most inbound students purchase a policy issued by the American International Companies through CISI Bolduc (formerly Joseph C. Bolduc & Associates). Instructions for submitting a claim and a claim form may be downloaded from the D5190 RYE website. In addition, a **Medical Authorization form**, signed by an officer of the Host Rotary club, should be provided to the Host Parents when the student moves into your home, authorizing you to seek medical treatment for students while part of your household.

**The cost of any medical treatment is the responsibility of the student** and his/her natural parents, and the insurance provides for either payment or reimbursement of a portion of those expenses (usually after a nominal deductible has been met). 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.

**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. If you have any questions relating to medical care, contact the student's YEC member.

**You are required to inform the host Rotary club and the District Country Contact 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 Youth Exchange Chair as soon as possible.**

**CAUTION:** If you have to take your student to the doctor or to the emergency room, **do not** sign any financial responsibility documents. Under Federal rules, you are NOT required to accept financial responsibility. If you do sign accepting financial responsibility, and if the insurance does not pay the medical provider, then you are legally responsible. If you do not pay, or pay late, it could be negatively reflected on your credit report.

## 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 these students to return home to their 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 as a condition of the exchange program. **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 many physical aids that will be needed. **Start by selecting an actual departure date** that everyone involved agrees with (including the student’s parents), and help the student make the necessary airlines reservations. (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 dates and tour dates, etc.). As the departure date approaches, help the student with packing and luggage, recognizing that much has been collected since their arrival, and it may be necessary to ship some of the student’s possessions home to keep suitcases below the airlines’ quantity and weight limits.

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. Discuss with the student and the Rotary Club Counselor the return of the student’s emergency fund.

Involve the prior host families, and the host Rotary club, in planning a farewell event before the student departs. And 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 REMINDERS:**

Whenever the exchange student changes host families, the new family name, address (physical and mailing if different), and phone numbers, **MUST** be reported to the student's Rotary Club counselor and the RYE Executive Secretary. The regulations of The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, US Department of Homeland Security require address changes to be filed within ten days – **failure to do so can result in the deportation of the student**. Although we consider it the student's responsibility to report their 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.

The District 5190 RYE program is "Listed" (accredited) by the Council on Student International Education and Travel (CSIET), and certified by the Rotary Youth Exchange Office of Rotary International. Starting in 2009, the United States Department of State will require all high school exchange programs to have an annual audit/review conducted by a CPA. One of the conditions of these certifications and audit/reviews is that once a month the student's counselor meets with the host family, meets with the student, and communicates with the student's school. If the host Rotary Club counselor does not meet with you, or the student, feel free to remind them, or contact the student's RYE Committee Country Contact.

# Student Protection Policy

## Rotary Youth Exchange District 5190

### Rotary International Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouse, and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

-- *Rotary Code of Policies, 2.110 Youth Protection, November 2006*

Rotary International and District 5190 are committed to the safety and security of each of the young people who is in our care through the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. The United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Youth Programs Division; The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and Rotary International have implemented rules and regulations designed to provide a safe exchange experience for exchange students. District 5190's policy relating to the safety of youth is based on the requirements of these agencies.

In order to provide a safe environment for our inbound students, the District 5190 Rotary Youth Exchange Program has implemented the following procedures:

- In-home interviews for host families
- Personal references for host families and volunteers
- Criminal background checks for host families and other program volunteers
- Orientation and training for host families and other program volunteers
- Monthly visits with students and host families

### IN-HOME INTERVIEWS

All potential host families will have an in-home interview before they are accepted as host families. The interview will be conducted by one or more Rotarians and will follow a format set by the RYE District Committee. All members of the household will be interviewed. Along with evaluating the members of the family, the interviewer(s) will also evaluate the family's home to ensure that it meets the minimum standards for hosting an exchange student.

### PERSONAL REFERENCES

A prospective host family will be required to fill out a host family application, and a personal reference form.

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Criminal background checks will be conducted on 1) host family members age 18 or over and 2) anyone (Rotarian or non-Rotarian) who has direct one-on-one unsupervised regular contact with students. Adults who are to have criminal background checks will be required to fill out a criminal background authorization form. The Background Checks will be conducted by a person designated by the District Governor.

**Ineligible to Participate** - A host parent or volunteer will be ineligible to participate in the RYE program if:

- They do not provide personal references
- They do not authorize a criminal background check
- If information on the application form, on the personal reference form, or on the criminal background authorization form; or given during the in-home interview is false

**Background Check Disqualification** - an applicant will be automatically disqualified if they have committed:

- Crimes against children
  - Felony offenses against persons
  - Felony domestic violence
  - Crimes of public indecency
  - Crimes of using weapons
  - Felony drug crimes
  - Other crimes as determined by the RYE District Chairperson
- And
- If they are a registered sex offender
  - If they are residing with a registered sex offender

**If an individual has committed the following crimes, they may be disqualified:**

- First time DUI, DWI, or possession of a controlled substance under two ounces
- Crimes involving theft, fraud, embezzlement, and forgery
- Other crimes as determined by the RYE District Chairperson

**APPEALING DISQUALIFICATION DECISION** - Any host family member or volunteer has the right to appeal participation denial by:

- Providing written notice of an appeal to the District Chair or District Governor within ten calendar days of being advised that participation has been denied
- If the appellant feels that the information that led to the denial is not accurate, it is the responsibility of the family member/volunteer to provide the corrected information.

Rotary District 5190 reserves the right to exclude altogether or limit a prospective host family member or volunteer's participation in District youth programs including, but not limited to Rotary Youth Exchange.

Policy and procedures, including the various forms, are posted on the District RYE program website at  
[www.rye5190.org](http://www.rye5190.org)

# 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 a member of the District Youth Exchange Committee. 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 as 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, born on February 23, 1905 in Chicago, Illinois, is 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 some 170 countries. The universal acceptance of Rotary principles has been so great that there are now 33,000 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***". Additionally, each year, the Rotary International President has a theme for that Rotary year. For the 2008-09 Rotary Year the Rotary International theme is: ***Make Dreams Real***.

Rotarians throughout the world follow the  
**Four Way Test of 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?

## ***Rotary Clubs***

Each of the 33,000 Rotary clubs in the world is a member of Rotary International. Rotary is divided into over 500 Districts, each of which is headed by a District Governor. We are District 5190, which consists of 53 clubs in northeast California, and northern Nevada. The first Rotary club in our District, the Rotary Club of Reno, was organized in 1916.

Geographically, our District is one of largest in the United States. A map of District 5190 and two distance charts are on the next page. The first chart lists distances between cities within District 5190. The second chart gives comparisons between cities in Europe and in South America.

The District Governor, and all officers of Rotary on the international, district and club level, serves for a Rotary fiscal year that runs from July 1 to June 30. Additional information about D5190 can be found at [www.rotarydistrict5190.org](http://www.rotarydistrict5190.org).

A number of district-level committees are organized to provide sponsorship or support for Rotary functions and initiatives that involve Rotarians from across our District. The Rotary Youth Exchange Committee, or YEC, is an example of a District Committee.

## ***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 college scholarship program in the world (The Ambassadorial Scholarship Program) and is supported purely by voluntary contributions from Rotary Clubs, Rotarians, and friends of Rotary.

The Rotary Foundation has a budget of approximately \$140 million (US) each year. Some of the of the Rotary Foundation programs include, Rotary Volunteers, The 3H program (Health, Hunger and Humanity), Rotary Peace Conferences, World Community Service, Individual Volunteer Grants, and three others that you may encounter during your hosting experience: Group Study Exchange, Ambassadorial Scholarships and Polio-Plus.

**Group Study Exchange** involves paired districts in different countries sending teams of 4 or 5 non-Rotarian business or professional men and women for a 4 week period of study and discussion with their counterparts in the other country. The **Ambassadorial Scholarship** is the largest college/university scholarship in the world. **Polio-Plus** is a program started by Rotary International in 1985 to eliminate polio from the world. As of 2008 only 4 countries in the world still report new cases of polio.

For additional information about Rotary International, and the Rotary Foundation, look at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org).

Rotary District 5190 is one of the largest Rotary districts in the United States. The chart below will give you an idea of the distances between cities within the district.



CITIES	MI	KM
Reno – Elko	290	467
Reno – Yerington	80	130
Carson City – Susanville	114	185
Tahoe City – Elko	375	605
Portola – Minden	95	153
Ely – Placerville	443	720
Truckee – Quincy	75	120
Susanville – Placerville	210	340
Susanville – Ely	401	645

CITIES	MI	KM
Frankfurt – Geneva	364	585
Cologne – Amsterdam	175	281
Berlin – Frankfurt	354	570
Brussels – Calais	132	212
Bordeaux – Geneva	409	659
Amsterdam – Antwerp	100	161
Bern – Zurich	76	123
Sao Paulo – Rio De Janeiro	268	430

# Appendix B – Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange

The following 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. Some Rotary Districts have modified these rules.

## 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) You must obey the laws of the host country. If found guilty of violating any law, you can expect no assistance from your sponsors or native country. You must return home at your own expense as soon as released by authorities.
- 2) You are not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Medicine prescribed to you by a physician is allowed.
- 3) The illegal drinking of alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. Students who are of legal age should refrain. If your host family offers you an alcoholic drink, it is permissible to accept it under their supervision in the home.
- 4) You may not operate a motorized vehicle or participate in driver education programs.
- 5) You will be under the host district's authority while you are an exchange student and must abide by the rules and conditions of exchange provided by the host district. Parents or legal guardians must not authorize any extra activities directly to you. Any relatives you may have in the host country will have no authority over you while you are in the program.
- 6) You must attend school regularly and make an honest attempt to succeed.
- 7) You must have travel insurance that provides medical and dental coverage for accidental injury and illness, death benefits (including repatriation of remains), disability / dismemberment benefits, emergency medical evacuation, emergency visitation expenses, 24-hour emergency assistance services, and legal services, in amounts satisfactory to the host Rotary club or district in consultation with the sponsor Rotary club or district, with coverage from the time of your departure from your home country until your return
- 8) You should have sufficient financial support to assure your well-being during your exchange. Your host district may require a contingency fund for emergency situations. Unused funds will be returned to your parents or legal guardians at the end of your exchange.
- 9) You must follow the travel rules of your host district. Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the host Rotary club or district with proper adult chaperones. The host district and club, host family, and your parents or legal guardians must approve any other travel in writing, thus exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability.
- 10) You must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to your host district and your parents or legal guardians.
- 11) Any costs related to an early return home or any other unusual costs (language tutoring, tours, etc.) are the responsibility of you and your parents or legal guardians.
- 12) You should communicate with your first host family prior to leaving your home country. The family's information must be provided to you by your host club or district prior to your departure.
- 13) Visits by your parents or legal guardians and siblings while you are on exchange are allowed; however, such visits must not occur during the first six months of the exchange. Such visits may only take place with the host club's and district's consent and within their guidelines. Typically, visits should be arranged during school breaks and are not allowed during major holidays.

- 14) Talk with your host club counselor, host parents, or other trusted adult if you encounter any form of abuse or harassment.

### **Recommendations for a Successful Exchange**

- 1) Smoking is discouraged. If you state in your application that you do not smoke, you will be held to that position throughout your exchange. Your acceptance and host family placement is based on your signed statement. Under no circumstances are you to smoke in your host family's bedrooms.
- 2) Body piercing or obtaining a tattoo while on your exchange is not allowed, for health reasons.
- 3) Respect your host's wishes. Become an integral part of the host family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a student of your age or for children in the family.
- 4) Learn the language of your host country. Teachers, host parents, Rotary club members, and others you meet in the community will appreciate the effort. It will go a long way in your gaining acceptance in the community and with those who will become lifelong friends
- 5) Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events, and show an interest in these activities. Volunteer to be 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
- 6) Avoid serious romantic involvement. Abstain from sexual activity.
- 7) Get involved in your school and community activities. Plan your recreation and spare-time activities around your school and community friends. Don't spend all your time with other exchange students. If there is a local Interact club, you are encouraged to join it.
- 8) Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counselors, and school personnel in choosing friends.
- 9) Do not borrow money. Pay any bills promptly. Ask permission to use the family phone or computer, keep track of all calls and time on the Internet, and reimburse your host family each month for the costs you incur.
- 10) Limit your use of the Internet and mobile phones. Excessive or inappropriate use is not acceptable.
- 11) If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or attend an event, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go.

# Appendix C – Travel Policy for Inbound Exchange Students

(Revised 8/27/08)

*This is a cultural and educational exchange. Exchange students should take advantage of opportunities to travel under appropriate conditions while on their exchange. While the host Rotary Club and Host Families are not under any obligation to provide or permit travel, there will be many opportunities to travel. Students must adhere to this travel policy and should not make and execute their own travel arrangements outside of this policy. Students must adhere to this policy. Should they not do so, it is possible that their exchange could be terminated. The student would be asked to return to their sponsoring country.*

***In all cases the student must possess written approval from their natural parents authorizing travel during the exchange year. This permission is required because the District 5190 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. (Normally parents provide such an authorization to their student to bring with them to the United States. If this has not occurred, the parents can send such authorization after the student has arrived in the United States.) In addition to this general authorization for travel, the natural parents or guardian may be requested to provide individual trip authorizations at the discretion of a District 5190 Rotary Youth Exchange official***

Individual 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.

## **General Requirements:**

1. **Travel Black-Outs** - Students must not schedule personal travel that conflicts with mandatory orientations or the District Conference.
2. **Within District 5190 Travel – Less Than 24 Hours** - Students traveling within District 5190 with a Rotarian from District 5190 or an adult member of their host family do not need to notify anyone. For purposes of these requirements, an adult is someone who is 21 years of age or older.
3. **Within District 5190 Travel – More Than 24 Hours** - Students traveling within District 5190 with a Rotarian from District 5190 or an adult member of their host family must notify their club Youth Exchange Officer. For purposes of these requirements, an adult is someone who is 21 years of age or older. When contacting this individual, the student should provide the following information:
  - a. Name of adult accompanying the student
  - b. Destination and route/itinerary
  - c. Housing/lodging location/address
  - d. Contact telephone numbers
  - e. Means of transportation
  - f. Length of stay

**4. Local Travel** - Rotary Youth Exchange students are allowed to travel locally, within District 5190, at the discretion of the host parents and/or the host Rotary Club, with other high school students, to attend football games, dances, go shopping. Students are permitted to travel locally outside the District 5190 boundary either with adults (individuals over 21 years of age) or with other students at the discretion of the host parents and/or the host Rotary Club where appropriate. An example of such travel is to travel from Jackson or Placerville to Sacramento for dinner or shopping, whereas travel from Jackson to San Francisco is not Local Travel.

**5. Travel Within 48 contiguous United States** - Travel within the 48 contiguous United States, outside of District 5190, must be approved by the natural parents, host family, club youth exchange officer or counselor and the RYE District Committee Country Contact.

The following information will be required at a minimum for all trips outside the district.

1. Name of adult accompanying the student
2. Destination and route/itinerary
3. Housing/lodging location/address
4. Contact telephone numbers
5. Means of transportation
6. Length of stay

**6. Travel Outside of the 48 contiguous United States** - Travel outside of the 48 contiguous United States including Alaska, Hawaii, Caribbean, Mexico, Canada and all other destinations will require the approval of the District 5190 RYE Chairman or designated alternate when appropriate. Exchange students may not travel to their home country except for a major family emergency.

The following information is required:

1. Name of adult accompanying the student
2. Destination and route/itinerary
3. Housing/lodging location/address
4. Means of transportation
5. Length of stay
6. Contact telephone numbers
7. Permission of natural parents via original letter or fax of original letter (We have been accepting email confirmation.)

Confirmation that Multiple Entry visa is in place and that appropriate notification of U.S. Department of State has occurred.

**7. Travel in Small Planes** - Travel in small (private, non-commercial) airplanes is not encouraged. Permission to travel in this way will only be approved with specific written permission of the natural parents, and President of the hosting Rotary Club. Such permission must be requested, with supporting documents at least one week in advance. Permission for travel by private plane must be obtained from the District 5190 RYE Chairman or; if he/she is unavailable, the Inbound Chairman.

**8. Unaccompanied Travel** – In general, Rotary Youth Exchange Students will not be allowed to travel unaccompanied while staying in District 5190 except locally. Any such travel must be approved by the District RYE Chairman or alternate. It is the responsibility of the host parents to verify all plans, itineraries, etc. The individual meeting the student at the other end of the journey must be approved by the Host Parents and the Host Rotary Club.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT YOUR CLUB YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICER OR YOUR RYE DISTRICT COMMITTEE COUNTRY CONTACT.**

Rev. 8/27/08

**DISTRICT 5190 ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE  
TRAVEL TABLE**

<b>Type of Travel</b>	<b>Approval Needed from:</b>	<b>Information Required</b>
TRAVEL BLACK-OUT	Travel is not allowed during Mandatory Orientation periods or the District Conference	
Travel Within District and Less Than 24 Hours with Host Family or Rotarian (including Adult)	No approval required.	
Travel Within District and More Than 24 Hours with Host Family or Rotarian (including Adult) (or other local travel such as Auburn to Sacramento)	Club Youth Exchange Officer or Counselor <u>notification</u> is required.	Name of adult with student Proposed itinerary/destination Means of Transportation Length of Stay Lodging Contact telephone numbers.
Local travel with other students	Permission of host family	
Travel within the contiguous 48 United States and Outside District 5190	District RYE Committee Country Contact Host Rotary Club Host Family Natural Parents	Name of adult with student Proposed itinerary/destination Means of Transportation Length of Stay Lodging Contact telephone numbers.
Travel to Mexico, Canada, Caribbean, Alaska, Hawaii or international travel	District 5190 RYE Chairman, District RYE Committee Country Contact Host Rotary Club Host Family Natural Parents Sponsoring Rotary District Chairman	Name of adult with student Proposed itinerary/destination Means of transportation Length of Stay Lodging Contact telephone numbers. Written approval from natural parents Written approval from sponsoring Rotary District Chairman Confirmation from Bob Edwards that Multiple-Entry visa is in place
Travel in private, non-commercial airplanes	District 5190 RYE Chairman, District RYE Committee Country Contact Host Rotary Club Host Family Natural Parents	Name of pilot Proposed itinerary/destination Air plane tail number Contact telephone numbers.
Unaccompanied Travel	District 5190 RYE Chairman Host Rotary Club Host Parent	Same as for accompanied Travel except that the name of individual(s) meeting the student at the other end of the journey must also be included

Rev 8/27/08

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

The First Night Questions below are given to each inbound student at the first inbound orientation in both English and their first language. You should discuss these questions with your inbound student within the first few days that they are in your home.

## English

“FIRST NIGHT” QUESTIONS WITH YOUR HOST FAMILY These questions are suggestions only. You and your host family should discuss anything that you think is important. We suggest you discuss the items most important to you as soon as possible. When you are in a new place with not much language skill, it is best not to assume anything, but rather, to ask. The simplest questions may be the most important, such as “where is the bathroom”? You can come back to other questions, as they seem necessary.

- 1 What would you like me to call you? Should I call you “Mom”, “Dad”, or given (first) name, or something else?
- 2 What are my daily responsibilities while living in your home: a. Make my bed? b. Keep my room neat and clean? c. Clean the bathroom after I use it? d. Other?
- 3 What is the procedure for laundering clothes? Where do I keep dirty clothes until they are to be washed?
- 4 What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
- 5 May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
- 6 Where can I keep my bathroom accessories?
- 7 When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings (in order to get ready for school)?
- 8 When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
- 9 Is there anything special about using the bathroom I should know?
- 10 May I use the family’s shampoo and tooth paste or should I buy my own?
- 11 When are mealtimes?
- 12 Do I have any responsibilities at meal times, such as to set or clear the table, wash or dry the dishes, dispose of the garbage?
- 13 May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
- 14 May I use kitchen appliances such as the microwave, dishwasher or stove?
- 15 What areas of the house are strictly private, for example, your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?
- 16 What are your rules about my drinking alcohol?
- 17 What time must I get up weekday mornings?
- 18 May I rearrange the furniture in my bedroom?
- 19 May I put posters or pictures on the walls of my room? If yes, how do you want things attached to the walls?
- 20 Where can I store my suitcases?
- 21 May I use the stereo, computer or TV?
- 22 What time should I get up weekends and holidays?
- 23 What time must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
- 24 What time must I be at home on school nights if I go out?
- 25 What time must I be in on weekends if I go out?
- 26 What dates are the birthdays of family members?
- 27 May I have friends stay overnight?

- 28 What is your rule on entertaining friends in my room?
- 29 Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?
- 30 What is the telephone number here? How do I contact you in an emergency when I am not here?
- 31 How do I make telephone calls? What are the rules about telephone calls? Local, Long Distance, International? How and when may I pay for calls I make? How do you want me to keep track of my expenses for telephone calls?
- 32 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? If you are not connected to the Internet, where can I find an Internet service to contact my family and friends?
- 33 May I receive telephone calls from my friends? Are there times of the day when calls are not acceptable?
- 34 What is the procedure about sending and receiving mail?
- 35 Do any of you have any special dislikes? For example, chewing gum, types of music, being late, wearing a hat at the table, being interrupted while reading, etc.
- 36 What transportation is available to me? (Walking, bus, bicycle, being driven, riding with friends, etc) Are there times or places it is unsafe for me to walk unescorted? Are there rules about traveling with friends?
- 37 What transportation is available for shopping or going to movies?
- 38 What are your expectations for me about going to church or other religious institution?
- 39 May I smoke? Where? (Rotary discourages smoking in general and forbids smoking in bedrooms)
- 40 If I have a problem with the family or a family member that is bothering me, how do you want me to handle it?
  - a. Write a note to you explaining it
  - b. Ask for a face-to-face discussion with you
  - c. Tell my Rotary counselor
  - d. Keep it to myself and live with it
- 41 How do I enroll in school?
- 42 What do I do about school lunch? If there is an expense, who pays- me, you, Rotary?
- 43 How can I arrange to go shopping for personal items?
- 44 Is there anything else I can do around the house to be of help?
- 45 Am I expected to attend Rotary meetings? How often? Who will arrange for this?
- 46 Is there anything else we should discuss?

Remember, ask about those things you feel are most important the first night, and then others as appropriate. 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's the matter with him. 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 or 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 remain 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.

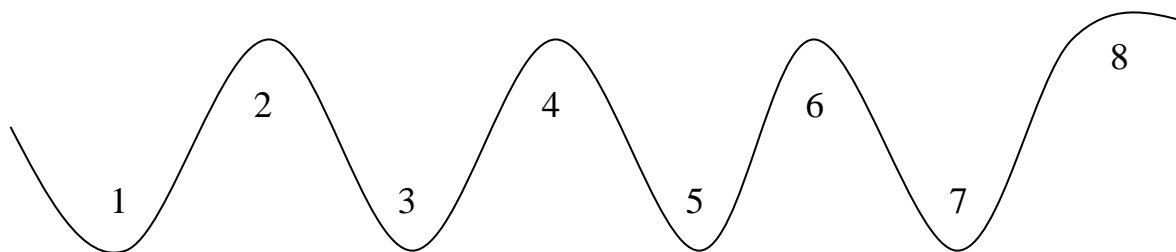
Recently in Russia two members of an American tour-group at different times during the day bought a candy bar from a booth in a railroad station. Each was given his change in the form of chocolate wafers. One American, disturbed by this departure from the familiar, felt that he was being victimized and 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*

# Appendix F – 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*