



## WHAT IS ROTARY INTERNATIONAL?

Rotary International is a service organisation of business and professional men and women, united worldwide, who conduct humanitarian projects, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and work toward world understanding and peace.

Rotary International was born as a simple concept in Chicago in 1905 with four members and now boasts well over 1,2 million members in 32000 clubs throughout the world. Rotary is a non-profit organisation and as part of its programme towards creating international understanding, each year contributes over 30 million US dollars to its programmes through the Rotary Foundation.

Youth Exchange is a recognised programme of Rotary International and each year adds fulfilment to the lives of over 8000 young people throughout the world.

## ARE YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES FREE?

No, there are costs attached, but Rotary is a non-profit world-wide service organisation which offers a variety of programmes for youth. Cost of selection, orientation, travel, uniforms, insurance, optional tours and pocket money are born by the students' parents. The organising of the exchanges between countries is done by Rotarians (on a voluntary basis) through District Youth Exchange committees.

## WHAT ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS ARE REQUIRED?

Students are chosen for their ability to express themselves and their ideas and need to feel comfortable in the company of strangers. We are looking for outgoing mature young adults, who are happy to accept a challenge. Applicants need to be likeable representatives of our country's youth. They need to be able to accept the hospitality of strangers with grace and adapt to the life style and customs of their host families.

Students need to accept every opportunity which is offered, and make the most of it.

## WHAT ABOUT RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES?

Participants are required to show tolerance towards the political and religious views of their host parents. Rotary International is an apolitical, interdenominational organisation. While it is expected that participants will remain true to their own beliefs, they are encouraged to discuss their customs and beliefs freely and honestly with their hosts and guests.



# INVITATION

Please join us in an  
"Adventure of  
a Lifetime"



Objectives of the Youth Exchange Programme:

- To further international understanding and goodwill, by enabling young adults to observe first hand the problems and accomplishments of peoples in countries other than their own.
- To broaden their own outlook by learning to live with and meet people of different cultures in their home environment.
- To act as ambassadors for South Africa, your sending Rotary Club and your parents, by addressing other Rotary Clubs, community organisations and youth groups in their hosting countries.

## SHORT TERM (STEP)

### ROTARY DISTRICT 9270 SHORT TERM (STEP) YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

STEP is an exchange programme offered by Rotary International. It is a cultural exchange between young people throughout the world. It is a family-to-family exchange of about six weeks duration. Students do not have to attend school. Provided that they are not wage earners and are not older than 21 years of age at the date of departure, they may be accepted for the programme.

### WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF THE SHORT TERM EXCHANGE?

STEP was created as a cultural programme aimed at young people who did not wish to spend a whole year away from home. Its aim is to promote goodwill between countries and people through the exchange of youth, both as a vehicle for interchange of ideals and a broadening of experiences.

### ARE STUDENTS FREE TO TRAVEL WHILE OVERSEAS?

No, not on their own. STEP is not a tour or holiday programme. It is a cultural exchange between young people through a family environment. However, participants are encouraged to travel with their hosts and their friends or obliging Rotarians during their visit overseas. They are also encouraged in turn to show their guests as much of their own country as they are able to in return.

### IS IT COMPULSORY FOR EACH STUDENT TO HOST IN RETURN FOR THEIR OVERSEAS STAY?

Most definitely. This is a fair concept and encourages both families to participate fully in the exchange. Exceptions may be made when certain under-privileged applicants are sponsored by Rotary.

### HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT JOINING SUCH AN EXCHANGE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Briefly, District 9270 committee, concurrently with Rotary Districts throughout the world, circulate posters and programme details to their Clubs in September and October for the following year's exchange. The Rotary Clubs interview their applicants in December or January and forward details of their chosen candidates to the District committee.

The District committee in turn then interview all the chosen candidates a second time, together with their parents and make a final choice of the participants for that year. Various Districts throughout the world then match their candidates according to choice of destination and match family with family. In general the South African participants host their Northern hemisphere guests in July / August, and their Southern hemisphere guests in January / February. The South African students all depart for their various destinations in December.

### THAT SOUNDS VERY COMPLEX

Yes it is, but that is our problem, not yours. However, it must be realised that not every student can expect to be matched with their first choice of country. That is the reason why alternate destinations are called for. Rotary endeavours to match the participants with as much sympathy and selectivity as possible, but time and logistics sometimes dictate the final choice.

### ADAPTATION AND TOLERANCE

Yes, that is what it is all about. STEP is not aimed specifically at high scholastic grades or leadership qualities. Rotary believes that STEP is the ideal medium for broadening the outlook of young people at an age when they are most receptive to new ideas. This programme requires adaptation when living in the homes of others, and tolerance of one's guests when hosting in return. If this philosophy is supported by the whole family, it should provide the basis for a broader understanding of, and goodwill towards others.

### WHAT COUNTRIES CAN ONE TRAVEL TO?

The list of countries participating in exchange is expanding all the time. Currently the following countries participate in STEP exchanges with District 9270: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey.