

Our District participates in Rotary International's Youth Exchange Program, sending high school students from our communities overseas for a school year and receiving students sponsored by corresponding Rotary Clubs overseas. We coordinate the arrangements at the district level via a multi-district Rotary organization called Eastern States Student Exchange (ESSEX). For our current school year we have sent four students to France, Russia, Argentina and Belgium and in return are currently hosting students from Germany, Turkey, Argentina and Belgium. Next year (school year 2010 – 2011) we hope to send and receive five students district-wide.



As your club leadership considers budgets and priorities for the next Rotary year the district urges you to consider hosting or co-hosting an Inbound Student. These students are screened and selected by Rotary Clubs overseas and sent to us via ESSEX in August to begin school in the Fall. While in our care the students commit to abiding by the rules of the exchange (no drinking, driving, drugs or steady dating) and to do their best to prosper in the high schools, families and communities in which they are placed. Club responsibilities include designating a Rotarian who will be responsible for mentoring the student as a Club Counselor, finding and screening host families (can be Rotarians or non-Rotarians) and providing for a monthly stipend to the student for spending money. Financially the club should be prepared for the monthly expense of the stipend (up to the club, but nominally \$100 / month) as well as spending for things like school activity fees, minimum cell phone use by the student, etc. Expenses for the year can run from \$1000 to up to \$2000 or more depending on circumstances; for clubs that are small or whose budgets are tight this can be shared by another club willing to 'Co-Host'. Although the commitment is significant you should also realize that the benefits to the community, club, families and students are truly outstanding and life-changing. This is one of the most successful 'people-to-people' exchanges that Rotary conducts and the program has been recognized for extensive contributions to the building of international peace and understanding. At the district level we have experienced Rotarians to help guide interested clubs through the process and all of the former Exchange Students and Host Families in our district are interested in helping should you, for example, want to add a Youth Exchange presentation to your speaker program.

Clubs interested in more information are encouraged to consult the web site for ESSEX (www.exchangestudent.org) – there is a section there for clubs, etc. More detailed information pertinent to our district is available from Youth Exchange Chair, Matt Leavitt who can be contacted at hmlleavitt@cox.net with any questions or concerns. If your Club is interested in hosting an Inbound student next year and you know of a specific student trait which the club would prefer (e.g. a boy would be easier than a girl because of host family considerations or a student from a particular country or region would be preferable because of a club connection or service project, etc) we can work to 'steer' the process to give us those students if we know early or what club interests are.

This is a great opportunity for your Club. Youth programs and Exchange programs are truly unique strengths of Rotary and we at the District are standing by to support you!