

ESSEX Short Term Exchange Handbook

Welcome to Rotary's best-kept secret – Short Term Exchange.

We are excited about helping you achieve your dream of spending part of your summer in a new and different culture.

This handbook is our attempt to ease the paperwork process for you, as well as to answer as many questions as possible. We ask that you and your parents take the time to read this handbook in its entirety. We hope you find it helpful.

Edward M. Skwirz, Chairman and Contact

Kathy Stone, Contact
Geri Sheridan, Contact
Dave Wolfe, Contact

What is it all about?

Introduction

A Rotary Short Term Exchange presents opportunities for applicants to advance their knowledge and world understanding by allowing them to exchange in a different country. Participants will live with host families in their selected land usually for three to six weeks in the summer, under the sponsorship of their local Rotary Club.

Objective

To foster world peace, international understanding and good will by extending international communication at the personal level through the exchange of students of high school age. It is our hope that these young people will be able to observe, first hand, the problems and accomplishments of other countries by living with and meeting people of cultures, creeds and colors other than their own.

Who is eligible?

Any applicant age 15-18 of good character who possesses a warm personality and a desire to live abroad and host in return. Candidates should be adaptable and flexible, well mannered and want to experience life in other countries and cultures. Children of Rotarians and non-Rotarians are equally eligible.

How do you go about participating in the Rotary Short term Exchange Program?

Applicants must be sponsored by a local Rotary Club. Contact any member of a local club who will put you in touch with its Youth Exchange Chairperson regarding details. Your high school guidance counselor usually cooperates with the Rotary Club and can help you make that contact.

Why is it called an exchange program?

You will be matched with a student of similar interests in a country of your selection or approval. The two of you will spend an agreed upon time together – half the time in your home and half the time in their home. The exchange must be a 3 week minimum each way.

Is proficiency in a foreign language needed?

NO! The program is cultural in nature, but is also for a short period of time. Many countries throughout the world teach English as a second language and most participating students are quite proficient in speaking our language. If you have taken a foreign language in high school and elect to visit a country that speaks that language, you will be able to gain some conversational ability, but most students do not find language to be a barrier to having a great exchange experience.

How does a student benefit from being abroad?

Being away in a foreign country has a powerful broadening and accelerating effect on your maturing process. Managing your finances and making decisions influences your independence from what your parents would have done for you as a matter of course. You develop an understanding of and a tolerance for people which will benefit you throughout your life.

How much does it cost?

Three elements comprise the cost of the program. First there is a \$65.00 application fee which includes the cost of processing and administration. Some districts also charge a fee. Check with your District YEP Chairman. Second is the cost of Rotary and ESSEX approved life and medical insurance while abroad.

A Short Term Policy B with personal liability coverage is mandatory.

Cost of 1 month policy - \$60.00

Cost of 3 month policy - \$165.00

Third is the cost of round trip airfare from your home to the foreign country. Travel arrangements can be made through the ESSEX recommended travel agency, Bokoff-Kaplan. The ESSEX STEP Chairman and the insurance company will receive the travel arrangements automatically when made by Bokoff-Kaplan. If travel arrangements are made through any other agency or individual, it is required that the itinerary **MUST BE PROVIDED** to the ESSEX Short Term Chairman and Country Contact. Your departure date **MUST ALSO BE PROVIDED** to CISI-Bolduc insurance company by E-Mail or Fax as soon as your travel arrangements are completed.

What is so special about Rotary's Short Term Exchange Program compared to other programs?

The Rotary International Short Term Exchange Program is **VOLUNTEER DRIVEN**. It is organized and administered by **VOLUNTEER** Rotarians and their families throughout the world. The operation is done at several levels: the local Rotary Club, the District and Regional levels. They select the students, prepare them, arrange hosting abroad, travel, insurance, etc. All this work is done by Rotarians as a service. They are **not paid** to provide this service.

In programs where people are paid to find students and host students, they tend to sacrifice quality in order to satisfy quotas and their bank accounts. Rotary does not believe this to be in the best interest of the participants. Ultimately such operational costs end up being passed on to the parents. The Rotary program is the least expensive program. Students have local contacts from local Rotary Clubs who are directly involved in the welfare of the students. At times of immediate need, students who are away from home will be more comfortable knowing that any Rotarian of their host club will be available and be able to help and offer guidance.

How does the program work?

Once your application package is submitted to your district chairperson, it will be forwarded to the ESSEX STEP Chairman, (Ed Skwirz) who will check it and send one copy to your first choice of countries and two copies to that country contact. Your contact here will email/fax the foreign contact and try to make a match keeping in mind your age and interests. When the match has been established, you will be informed and you can start to communicate with your match. Your families can then decide on dates and make travel arrangements.

How do I apply?

That's easy!

1. Bring up the application from the computer at www.exchangestudent.com
2. Type in the requested information-including the name, address and phone number of your local Rotary Club chairman and your District chairman. E-mail addresses are greatly appreciated. We request that **ALL** applications be typed. Not only is it easier for us to read, but it faxes and E-Mails much better. Scanning pictures onto the first and last pages works really well.
3. Print 6 copies.
4. You and your parents should sign all copies with blue ink.
5. Make a list of at least 3 countries you would like to go to with number 1 being your 1st choice of countries. It is very important that you communicate to your club chairman and/or your district chairman how flexible you are. For example, if you are willing to go to any Spanish-speaking country, make sure your chairman advises us on your application checklist. If you will only go to your first choice or if there is somewhere you won't go, let us know. Sometimes we are unable to get cooperation from the foreign contacts. When this happens having several options helps to find you a suitable match.

6. Complete the insurance application for the CISI-Bolduc insurance company.
YOU MUST TAKE THE MANDATORY SHORT TERM PLAN B POLICY
7. Take the applications to your local Rotary Club for their signatures.
8. You need to get two or three checks-
 - a. One made out to "ESSEX STEP" for the amount of \$65.00
 - b. One made out to "CISI-Bolduc" for the amount of \$60.00 - for 1 month policy or \$165.00 - for 3 month policy
 - c. One made out to your district if there is a district fee.
9. Keep one copy of the application for your files and send the other 5 copies to your club YEO who in turn will keep one copy and send 4 copies to the district chairman.
10. Apply for your passport if you don't already have one.

What happens next?

As soon as your country contact receives your application, he or she will send you, your local chairman and district chairman a letter advising you who you're ESSEX STEP contact is. They will then contact their foreign counterpart to start the matching process. Sometimes this takes a while. Not all foreign contacts have access to fax and e-mail. Also snail mail is very slow and not dependable in some other countries. Once a match has been achieved you will hear from your contact. It is not unusual that you could hear directly from your match before you hear from your contact. Upon hearing from or contacting your match, you should start making plans. Your families should agree on the dates of your exchange and make travel arrangements. If you hear from your match prior to hearing from your contact, please let your contact know immediately.

What Countries are available?

Argentina 1	Australia 1	Austria
Belgium	Brazil 1	Canada
Czech Republic	Denmark	Ecuador
Finland	France	Germany
Iceland	India 2	Italy
Japan	Mexico	Norway
Poland	Spain	Sweden
South Africa	Switzerland	Taiwan
The Netherlands	Turkey	UK - (England, Ireland, Scotland)

1. Sends December – January Hosts July – August – **minimum 6 weeks each way**
 2. Sends April – May Hosts July – August – **minimum 6 weeks each way**
- All others send & receive during June – July – August - **minimum 3 weeks each way**

Who makes the travel arrangements?

You and your parents are responsible for making your travel arrangements. We recommend Bokoff-Kaplan Travel Agency. They are familiar with our program and know exactly what you need **OR** you can make arrangements with a travel agent of your choice.

Either way you must send your travel itinerary to your Country Contact, the ESSEX STEP Chairman, and your departure date to CISI-Bolduc as soon as possible.

Why must I carry this insurance when I already have it?

Many of the health-care policies carried by your families have limited coverage overseas. This policy through CISI-Bolduc is RI approved and fills in the many gaps in coverage. It is accepted around the world. It covers you from the moment you take off until you land again on US soil.

When can I expect to hear about my match?

Normally the country contacts start to receive matches in April and are all completed by the first week of June. You will hear as soon as your country contact is notified.

Who is my country contact?

Edward M. Skwirz, District 7950

Short Term Chairman

Contact to: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Taiwan, The Netherlands
32 Ridgeland Drive

Cumberland, RI 02864

Tel: 401 333 6457

Fax: 401 334 1474

Email: essexstepeds@cox.net

Kathie Stone, District 7870

Contact to: Argentina, Austria, Germany, India, Spain

79 Edge Hill Road

Londonderry, VT 05148

Tel: 802 824 6033

E-mail: kdsu@comcast.net

Gerri Sheridan, District 7260
Contact to: Australia, Mexico, UK - England, Ireland, and Scotland
96 Evergreen Lane
East Patchogue, NY 11772-5806
Home & Fax 631 475 1164
Email gerisheridan@verizon.net

Dave Wolfe, District 7980
Contact to: Brazil, Ecuador
52 Far Horizon Drive
Monroe, CT 06468
Home: 203 268 7047
Work: 203 452 7692
Email: dave@wolfepromo.com

What should I expect from my country contact?

Your county contacts are Rotarians who volunteer their time to help you make your dreams become reality. They have jobs, families and other responsibilities. Please be patient with them. They must wait to hear from their counterparts in the foreign countries. Remember that foreign communications are not always up to the US standards. They cannot provide information they don't yet have. Your country contact will keep you informed about your match and send you the foreign application as soon as they are received. Do not wait for the foreign application to make your contacts and travel arrangements.

ESSEX Short Term Exchange Check List for District YEO
A Copy of this Checklist is to be included with the 4 sets of applications sent to the STEP Chairman

District _____

Last Name: _____
First Name: _____

Country Choices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name of District Chair to be contacted after exchange is completed: **Please Type**

Name

Address

E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

1. _____ Yes Interviewed applicant and family by Rotary Club in home
Date of Interview _____
2. _____ Yes District orientation of applicant
3. _____ Yes All signatures on applications
4. _____ Yes A completed insurance application with a check made payable to CISI-Bolduc for Policy B. 1 month policy cost \$60.00 or 3 month policy cost \$165.00
5. _____ Yes Check attached for administrative fees Made out to ESSEX STEP in the amount of \$65.00
6. _____ Yes Request travel arrangements through ESSEX designated travel agency
_____ No

If travel arrangements are handled independently the date of departure

MUST BE FORWARDED BY E-MAIL OR FAX TO:

CISI – Bolduc: Attention Ted Cenatiempo
Email: Tcenatiempo@culturalinsurance.com
Fax: (203) 399 5596

and

ESSEX STEP
Edward M. Skwirz, Chairman
Email: essexstepeds@cox.net
Fax: (401) 334 1474

7. _____ Yes Was the applicant invited to a Rotary Club Meeting
8. _____ Yes Enclosed 4 completed sets of applications with a copy of this checklist
9. Reminder: Background checks must be done for Host Families and anyone 18 years old and over living in the household.