

Program Guide for STEP Chairs



2009 Summer Exchange Rotary International – Ohio-Erie



What is STEP?

The Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) offers the opportunity for qualified students to experience a cultural exchange during summer months. The STEP program is a family-to-family exchange experience—students travel abroad and also host a foreign student from the family they visit. The entire exchange generally lasts two months, one month abroad and one month hosting in the USA.

The STEP program also offers opportunities for Rotary Clubs to host one-way inbound summer students. By first reaching out to those who want to visit the USA, Ohio-Erie hopes to expand our pool of students to match with our summer outbounds. When a matching student is not available, we will have the opportunity for Rotary Clubs to host unmatched inbound students. This may open the door for a USA student to later visit the home of their foreign guest.

Ohio-Erie recognizes the benefits of STEP as a stand-alone exchange program, and also that summer exchanges help promote the long-term exchange program. The STEP program requires little Rotary Club expense, but does require Rotary Club supervision, and perhaps coordination of a few activities for inbound exchange students.

Procedural Overview

You may recruit outbound summer exchange students now through the January 2009, to meet the application deadlines listed below. We suggest you promote the summer program and the long-term program as two exchange options in your local schools, church groups, scouts and other youth organizations, and family and friends or Rotarians.

Students complete the STEP Application and submit it to the local Rotary Club. The club's YEP Chair conducts an in home interview with the applicant and family, and completes the interview checklist and host family document. Applications for qualified students are then signed by the local club President and YEP Chair, and forwarded to the District STEP Chair.

The District STEP Chair will review the application, and call the student for a short telephone interview, to emphasize key points about the program and to answer any additional questions of the student or parents. The District STEP Chair will then sign the application and forward it to the Ohio-Erie STEP Chair. The Ohio-Erie STEP Chair will collect all applications, arrange matches with our foreign country contacts, and communicate with District STEP Chairs and families.

“Special” exchange requests by district or individual Rotary Clubs will be considered; however, they must be approved by the Ohio-Erie STEP Chair and follow the procedures as outlined in this guide. All rules and procedures that apply to The Long Term Youth Exchange Program also apply to The Short Term Youth Exchange Program.

Each District is responsible for complying with all Rotary International Certification processes (i.e.: host family application/background checks, interview checklist, volunteer background checks, etc.) All of us involved with Ohio-Erie Multi District are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants.

Student/Family Information

The Information for Students and Parents (Summer Family to Family Exchange) has been updated September 18, 2008. This document should be copied and distributed to your club chairs and given to each student applicant. I can email the document in Microsoft Word format so that you may customize it for your district upon request.

Application Procedures

Students may find the STEP application at the following website link:

www.ohioerie.org

Included are:

- 1) 2009 Summer Family to Family Exchange Information
- 2) The application: Students are to complete and sign (in blue ink) two original copies
- 3) Country Preference Form – Students indicate their choice of countries—please see details below.
- 4) Travel Preference Document – To show departing cities and other travel information.

Country Choices

Effective for 2009, students must select 5 countries Country Preference List.

After first choosing your 5 countries from the country preference list, the student should then place a **Y** in the Preference Column by each country they would consider going to, and an **N** after each of those countries they would not be willing to go to under any condition. Every effort will be made to place the student(s) in one of their top 5 choices.

We obviously want to place students in countries they want to visit. We want to set realistic expectations for students and their families; however, after years of experience, we recognize there are some limitations.

Costs

The exchange student/family generally pays program costs which are:

- 1.) \$395 application fee includes mandatory supplemental health insurance
- 2.) Airfare (please see Country Preference Form for estimates)
- 3.) Spending money.

Some Rotary Clubs have voluntarily offered to help defray some student costs, but this is not a requirement.

Deadlines

- * February 16th – Student deadline to submit applications to local Rotary Club
- * March 1st – Clubs deadline to submit applications to District Chairs
- * March 16th – District Chairs deadline to submit applications to Ohio-Erie Step Chair. Any application received after March 16th by the Ohio-Erie Step Chair will only be considered if the student is willing to go to any country that is still available.

Promotional Sites and Materials

- * Brochure available both on the Ohio-Erie website in a PDF format and a hard copy available upon request
- * Ohio-Erie Multi District Website: www.ohioerie.org
- * Rotary International Website: www.rotary.org/programs/youth_ex/index.html
(Please use ALL forms off of the Ohio-Erie Website: www.ohioerie.org)

Sponsoring Rotary Club Responsibilities

- * Recruit and screen applicants
- * Student Orientation – must conduct orientation for outbound and inbounds
- * Conduct in-home host family interviews
- * Communicate with sponsoring Rotary Club abroad
- * Ensure that student attends at least one Rotary meeting (both inbound and outbound)
- * Coordinate a few activities with host family as desired for inbound (such as cook-out, movie, short trip to amusement park, zoo, etc.)
- * Ensure student welcomed upon arrival
- * Provide contact information to student including:
 - a.) Host Club Counselor
 - b.) Host Club Youth Exchange Chairperson
 - c.) Host Club President
 - d.) 2 Non-Rotarian Resource Persons – one male and one female
(school personnel are typical candidates)

Contacts

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