

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.

INTRODUCTION

The Rotary International Youth Exchange Program is a tremendous adventure which each year enables thousands of young people to travel to distant parts of the world to live and study in a different environment. The prime purpose of the program is to promote international understanding by granting young people a unique opportunity to broaden their knowledge and widen their horizons. The ultimate impact that the program will have on the lives of the student's fortunate enough to participate in it is probably incalculable. Many of these young people will be leaders of their communities in the future.