



## Rotary Friendship Exchange



## DISTRICT 5610

## TEAM MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

**Goals:** The primary goal of a Friendship Exchange is to build greater international understanding and goodwill among Rotarians and their families. In addition, exchange participants who are committed to going, and are willing to be team members will:

- learn how their vocations are practiced in other parts of the world
- observe new customs and cultures
- promote an appreciation of cultural diversity worldwide

**Funding:** Rotarians and their partners are responsible for their own expenses including airfare, hotel, meals, and incidental expenses. Occasionally, expenses for event tickets, dining out and admission fees over and above hosts' provisions are anticipated (an estimate will be given prior to exchange).

However, lodging, home meals and local transportation will be provided by hosts. In return, when their District sends a team to our District, our Rotarians will host them.

An application must be submitted with a \$50/person deposit check (non-refundable if accepted to team or alternate). These funds help to defray costs for name tags and gifts to hosts and clubs etc.

If we find a good arrangement, team members will participate in group purchase of airline tickets and travel as a team. It is best to arrive together as a team. Exceptions may consider arrival and departure times, and unavoidable travel interruptions such as weather, etc. It is advised to have emergency assistance and medical insurance or be self-insured. Air miles and personal discounts can be used when arranging airline tickets.

**Gifts:** It is essential that team members each bring a gift to their host families. The type of gift is generally decided by the team going to a specific District. It is also necessary to bring club banners for exchanging at Rotary meetings.

The District committee will arrange for name badges, cards, State pins, District and State flags, etc. for the team to hand out during their visit.

**Duties of a team member:** Be committed to go. Lead time is many months out to allow time to plan presentations, arrange hostings, and travel plan. Be of good health to permit travel. Willing to be a team member. Will have current passports and visa (if required). Visa assistance will be provided on specific Exchange. Will attend team planning meetings prior to departure. Will serve as a good Rotary ambassador from our District, and be involved in the hosting and activities of the visiting RFE District team.

**Luggage:** A RFE team will be constantly moving for the duration of the trip, so it is important to travel with a minimum of clothing and luggage. Many foreign vehicles are small so this also necessitates a minimum of luggage. Climate and dress conditions will be ascertained before departure.

**Presentations:** Team members will participate in presentations about our District to the host clubs. Team members will do a presentation to own club upon return, and be willing to do presentations to other clubs or at District events. A Powerpoint or AV will be prepared and presented by the participating members, and includes a description of the District, and team members' backgrounds.

**Additional information and specific arrangements for Exchanges may arise separately.**

Contacts: John Kittelson, [kittelson@prodigy.net](mailto:kittelson@prodigy.net), Linda Peterson [Linda@clarkprinting.com](mailto:Linda@clarkprinting.com)

## **Building Cultural Awareness:** Tips for Rotarians planning an exchange

### **Understanding culture**

Culture is complex. At times, the underlying social values, assumptions, and behaviors associated with a culture can be difficult to understand from an outside perspective. Exchanges provide many opportunities to explore new cultures and see your own culture through the eyes of others. Some features of culture, like language, dress, music, and food, will be immediately visible, while other features, like people's attitudes toward age, personal space, work, and time, may be subtle. Consider these questions:

- What elements define your culture?
- How do these elements influence the way you think and behave?
- How do others view your culture?
- How does culture shape the way people see the world, themselves, and others?
- How do cultural attitudes influence the visible aspects of a culture?
- Why might it be possible to misunderstand someone from another culture?
- How can you learn to see something from another culture's perspective?
- Why is it important to understand culture?

Understanding a culture takes time and patience. In preparation for your exchange, try:

- Consulting travel guidebooks or videos that give a thorough description of your exchange partners' culture
- Speaking to people who are natives of your exchange partners' country to learn about the cultural norms
- Learning some of the language of the host country

Though Rotarians share many core values, they are culturally diverse. As you prepare to interact with your exchange partners, resist the urge to automatically interpret their words, gestures, values, and other aspects of behavior according to the standards of your culture. Remember: Although a person's behavior may not make sense in your culture, your behavior may not make sense in his or her culture either. Attempting to understand the cultural background of your exchange partners will enable you to put cultural differences into context, understand your own culture on a more profound level, and make for a more enriching exchange experience. As you familiarize yourself with the language, customs, and beliefs of your exchange partners, you will improve your ability to function, interact, and communicate within a new cultural context.

During your exchange you will have a unique opportunity to forge lasting international friendships. Take full advantage of this opportunity by asking questions, communicating effectively, and actively participating in your exchange. Engaging other participants in an open dialogue is the best way to understand another culture.

### **Understanding culture shock**

Culture shock describes the feelings of anxiety, disorientation, and confusion that people may experience when they are immersed in a new cultural environment. A person suffering from culture shock will often seek out environments that are familiar and may exhibit hostility, irritability, and anxiety. Culture shock can occur when visiting a new country or after you return home, and varies from person to person.

To minimize the effects of culture shock:

- Familiarize yourself as much as possible with the host culture
- Actively participate in exchange activities
- Rely on your exchange team for support
- Share your experiences with others
- Participate in group follow-up meetings after an exchange
- Be open-minded and flexible

Always keep in mind the greater purpose of your exchange. If you strive to be respectful and friendly, you will

come away from your exchange experience having made new and lasting friendships. Ask past exchange participants about their experience, and they will probably tell you that a little temporary cultural anxiety was well worth the reward of new friendships made.