

2024-2025
ANNUAL
REPORT

rotary
youth
exchange

Rotary 

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

A message from 2024-25 Rotary International President Stephanie A. Urchick	1
2024-25 program highlights	2
2024-25 program statistics	3
About the data in this report	3
Program participation	3
Program reach and impact	8
Long-term exchanges	12
Short-term exchanges	15
Virtual exchanges	18
Ending an exchange early	19
Rotary's commitment to youth protection	20
50 years of Rotary Youth Exchange	22
Alumni of Rotary Youth Exchange	23
The 2025 Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention	24
Resources for Rotary Youth Exchange	25
Credits	26

Click on a title above to jump to that page.



A MESSAGE FROM 2024-25 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT STEPHANIE A. URCHICK

Throughout my term, I used my presidential platform to emphasize the importance of diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Rotary's international nature is what first made me accept a co-worker's invitation to a meeting; what secured my engagement was that I felt I belonged — so much so that I was writing the club's newsletter by the fourth meeting! Belonging is the secret of *The Magic of Rotary*, and it is a cornerstone of Rotary Youth Exchange. By fostering international connection, we learn that our similarities vastly outnumber our differences, and we better understand each other. The family of Rotary has room for everyone, and Youth Exchange has been a shining example of that spirit since it began.

Therefore, it's safe to say that Youth Exchange is not just an exchange program. It's a peacebuilding program.

Between Youth Exchange, the Rotary Peace Centers and the Peace Fellows program, member projects, and our fruitful partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, we can be proud of our work to advance peace around the world.

Youth Exchange empowers young people to become global citizens by immersing them in other cultures. It helps them develop lifelong leadership skills, build lasting friendships, break down barriers, and in turn, become advocates for peace.

Lorelei Higgins was 17 when she embarked on her exchange. She had never been on an airplane, spoke no other languages, and was headed from Canada to South Africa in 1998, during the yearslong transition out of apartheid. That year fundamentally altered the course of her life. Since then, she has worked in international

development, worked to combat racism, and worked to support Indigenous communities in her role as a strategist for Calgary's Indigenous Relations office. Her studies and career have taken her to Bolivia, Guyana, Dominica, Finland, Poland, Austria, Portugal, Brazil, and India. She has gained important skills, such as strength and adaptability. As an employee of the city of Calgary, she uses these skills to connect residents with resources, for example, arranging for 10,000 pounds of restaurant food that would have been wasted to be delivered to vulnerable families during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is a Rotary Peace Fellow, a consultant with Mediators Beyond Borders International, and an ambassador for the Institute of Economics and Peace.

She is a peacebuilder. She is a Rotary Youth Exchange alumna. To me, those are one and the same.

Marie Tornquist, a former Rotary Youth Exchange student from Minnesota, USA, who studied in Brazil, captures the idea nicely: "In a world that increasingly pits 'us vs. them,' I believe that developing an understanding and appreciation of what once seemed strange and unfamiliar is the key to global citizenship, world peace, and progress."

I would venture a guess that Marie's remarks reflect many of your experiences as well. There is no "us vs. them." There is only "us." As we reflect on Youth Exchange's history and look toward the future, I encourage you to focus on the "us." When we center inclusivity and belonging — when we emphasize what unites us, rather than what divides us — we can find common ground. We can create a more peaceful world. We can see the magic in each other and can more effectively advance *The Magic of Rotary*.

"I've often found that the more a culture differs from my own, the more I am struck by its essential humanity," American travel expert Rick Steves writes. As he explains elsewhere: "Travel broadens our perspectives personally, culturally, and politically. Suddenly, the palette with which we paint the story of our lives has more colors."

Youth Exchange gives young people an expansive palette with vibrant, rich colors.

It erases borders, builds bridges, and teaches us that kindness is our most valuable currency.

It expands young people's worlds beyond their wildest dreams and shows them that they are truly capable of anything.

And that is something to celebrate. Happy 50th anniversary, Youth Exchange, and cheers to the next 50 years!

Stephanie A. Urchick
Rotary International President, 2024-25

2024-25 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



384

Rotary districts actively participated in Rotary Youth Exchange
465 districts were certified to participate.

4,497

clubs participated:
4,266 Rotary clubs
231 Rotaract clubs

51

countries hosted students or sent students on exchange.
127 countries and territories were certified to participate.



9,729

host families
3,575 Rotary and Rotaract club member host families
6,154 nonmember host families



7,290

exchange students



21,822

total volunteers
12,712 Rotary and Rotaract club member volunteers
9,110 nonmember volunteers



241

host districts, or about 63% of participating districts, involved students in community service projects.



76,380

hours were served by 3,122 students in their host communities.

2024-25 PROGRAM STATISTICS

ABOUT THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

In June 2025, Rotary International asked district Rotary Youth Exchange leaders for information about their exchange programs in the 2024-25 Rotary year. This report reflects the aggregate data that those leaders provided about their districts.

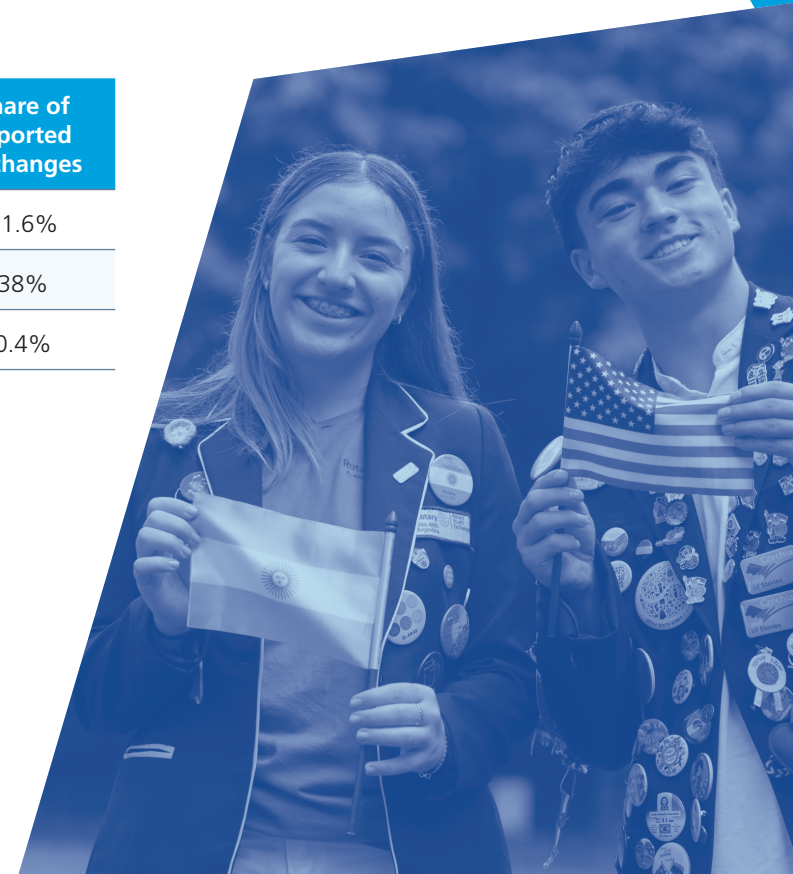
For 2024-25, we received responses from **409** of 465 districts that are certified to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange. That's an **88%** response rate. Of the 409 districts that responded, **384** said that they actively participated in long-term, short-term, or virtual exchanges during 2024-25. They'll be referred to as "participating districts" throughout this report.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Participating districts reported **7,290** exchanges in 2024-25. This is a **9.5%** increase in exchanges from the previous year, and all but one geographic area experienced growth in program participations.

EXCHANGES BY TYPE

Exchange type	Exchanges reported	Share of reported exchanges
Long-term	4,491	61.6%
Short-term	2,768	38%
Virtual	31	0.4%

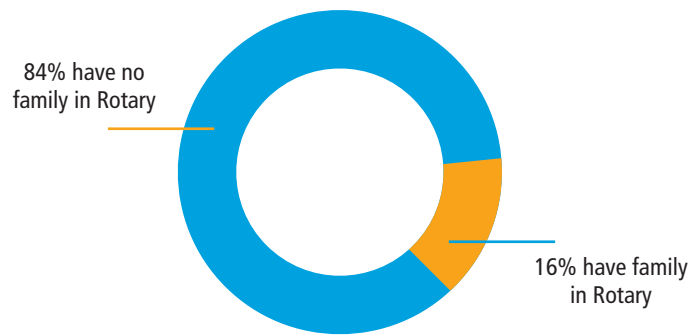


NUMBER OF EXCHANGE STUDENTS HOSTED BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

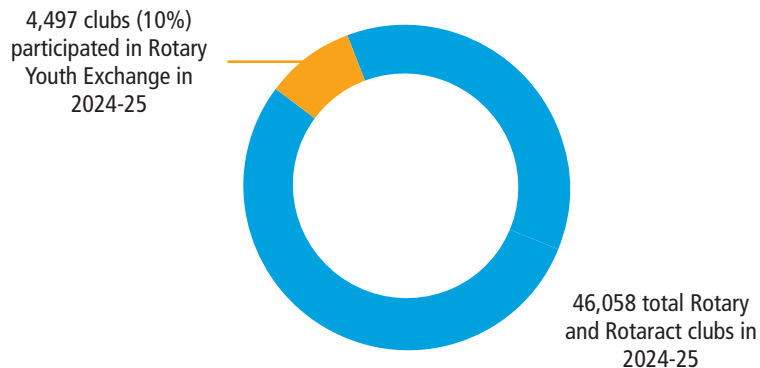
Geographic area	2024-25		2023-24		2022-23	
	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges	Exchanges reported	Percentage of exchanges
Africa	171	2.3%	203	3.1%	160	2.8%
Asia	905	12.4%	716	10.8%	453	8%
Europe	3,275	44.9%	3,190	47.9%	2,861	50.5%
North America	1,434	19.7%	1,318	19.8%	1,256	22%
Oceania	171	2.4%	161	2.4%	37	0.7%
South America	1,334	18.3%	1,067	16%	897	16%
Total	7,290	100%	6,655	100%	5,664	100%

Increasing clubs' participation in hosting young people and sending them on exchanges remains the single greatest factor in creating more and better exchanges through Rotary Youth Exchange. Increased club participation not only leads to more students getting involved in the program and benefiting from greater support but can also inspire other clubs and members to become more actively engaged in Rotary Youth Exchange. Clubs can extend the success of their programs by organizing activities for students or offering them opportunities to talk about their exchange experiences at club meetings. Experienced clubs can work with and guide other clubs that are interested in hosting or sending students to help more clubs get involved in the program — and more involved in Rotary.

2024-25 ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS' FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO ROTARY



2024-25 ROTARY AND ROTARACT CLUB PARTICIPATION



Financial assistance in Rotary Youth Exchange

Although it's not required, many clubs and districts support students by paying for part or all of their exchange experience. In other cases, the students' families are expected to pay for their participation. Clubs and districts said that they spent a total of **US\$3,345,108** to support exchanges in 2024-25. This is a significant increase from previous years, showing that districts are prioritizing using funds to support the Rotary Youth Exchange program.

A total of **121** districts provided financial assistance to students going on exchange. The number of students who received the assistance was **731**. Districts that offered financial support assisted an average of 6 students.

Family connections to Rotary

Participating districts reported that **1,159** Rotary Youth Exchange students, or **16%**, had a family member in Rotary, while **6,131 (84%)** did not. This proportion is consistent with that of previous years and shows that Rotary Youth Exchange continues to be a strong entry point and introduction to Rotary.

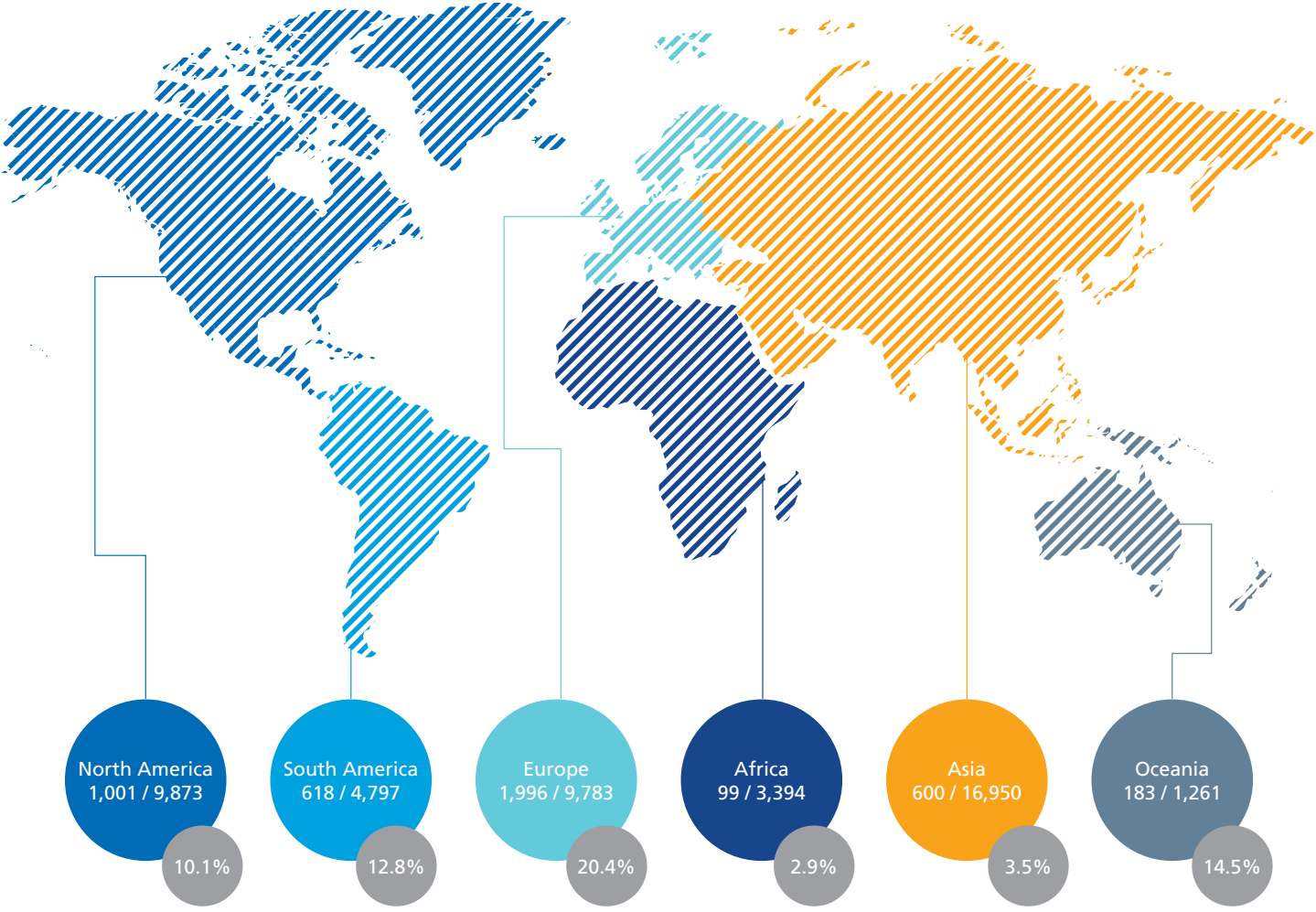
The opportunity to build public awareness of Rotary and expand our reach through our student exchange program is significant. Rotary Youth Exchange leaders can find new and innovative ways to engage students and families who are unfamiliar with Rotary International, which can foster new relationships and encourage a more diverse and inclusive environment for our organization.

Rotary and Rotaract club participation

Participating districts reported that **4,497** Rotary and Rotaract clubs participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in 2024-25. That's about **10%** of all clubs worldwide. Of these, **4,266** were Rotary clubs, and **231** were Rotaract clubs. All statements about "clubs" in this report refer to these clubs.

CLUBS THAT REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE, BY REGION

Worldwide, **10%** of Rotary and Rotaract clubs reported participating in Rotary Youth Exchange.



District partnerships

No matter how hard districts and clubs work to send young people on exchange, they also need trustworthy and reliable partner districts in other countries and regions that can receive these students. And in most cases, districts have many partner districts in various countries and regions. In 2024-25, **districts worked with an average of 11.5 partner districts** to allow their students many possible placements.

To continue building Rotary Youth Exchange, districts must build relationships with new partner districts. In 2024-25, **208** participating districts (**54%**) found new partner districts.

Region	Average partnerships per district
Africa	8.3
Asia	7.8
Europe	16.6
North America	8.1
Oceania	9.5
South America	18.9
Global	11.6

Top 3 methods districts used to connect with new partner districts:

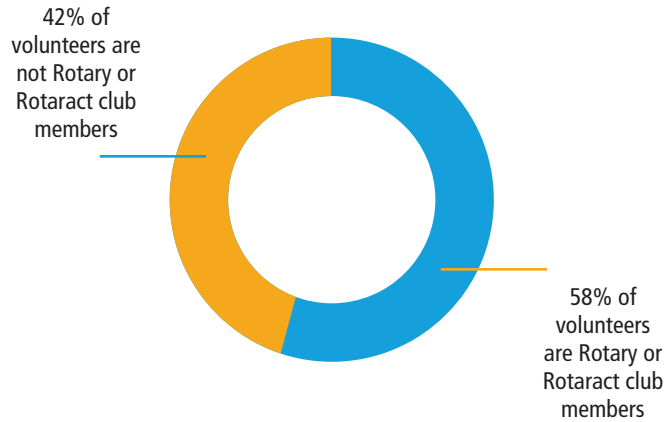
1. Using the Rotary Youth Exchange Officers Directory
2. Attending regional conferences
3. Connecting with a regional multidistrict group

In 2024-25, **323** participating districts (**84%**) reported that they both hosted students and sent students on exchanges. Reciprocal exchanges are strictly voluntary, but when it is possible for districts to share equally in hosting students, many of them find that allows them to sustain and grow their programs.

It should be noted, however, that many exchanges are conducted each year from outbound-only certified districts that work on exchanges with partner districts but can't host students.

PROGRAM REACH AND IMPACT

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Volunteer engagement

To understand how Rotary Youth Exchange expands Rotary’s reach and its ability to engage communities around the world, we asked participating districts to tell us how many volunteers participated in the program in 2024-25. A total of **21,822** volunteers, including both Rotary and Rotaract club members and nonmembers, were involved in the program. Of the volunteers, **9,110**, or **42%**, were nonmembers.

Rotary Youth Exchange is a decentralized program, meaning each exchange is largely facilitated on a local level. This year’s numbers are consistent with data from years past and show that there were three times as many volunteers as students.



CLICK TO LEARN MORE

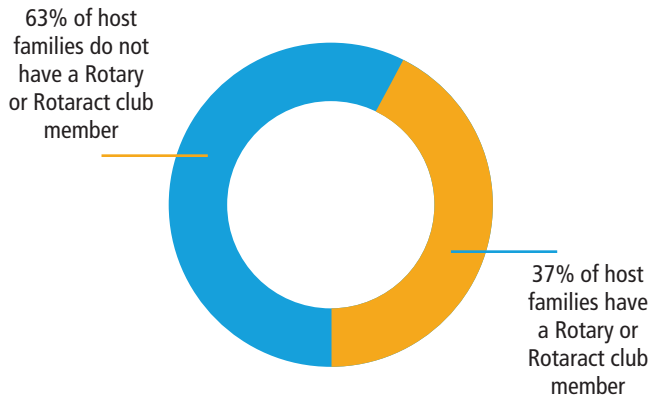
ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE RETURNS TO DISTRICT 3310 (MALAYSIA)

After 17 years, District Youth Exchange Chair Irwan Norris and the leaders of District 3310 were determined to reinvigorate their Rotary Youth Exchange program. Effectively starting the program anew, they decided to limit the scope to receiving one inbound student. They welcomed Kevin from Venezuela. Read about the experience Irwan recounts as Kevin settled into a new environment and showed the district that Rotary Youth Exchange is “a challenge worth taking.”

blog.rotary.org/2025/03/25/rotary-youth-exchange-returns-to-district-3310/



HOST FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Region	Host families members	Host families with nonmembers only
Africa	9%	91%
Asia	78%	22%
Europe	26%	74%
North America	37%	63%
Oceania	50%	50%
South America	34%	66%

Top 3 methods that districts used to recruit new host families:

1. Club members asked friends and family.
2. The district held events in the community.
3. The district posted on social media.

Host family engagement

In 2024-25, **9,729** of the reported volunteers hosted exchange students. Of all host families, **3,575 (37%)** included at least one Rotary or Rotaract club member, and **6,154 (63%)** were made up of nonmembers. Note that some short-term exchanges, such as short-term camps or tours, do not involve a host family.

The table shows the percentage of host families, by region, that include a member of a Rotary or Rotaract club. In Asia and Oceania, half or more of the host families had someone who was a member of a Rotary or Rotaract club, while the majority of families that volunteered to host students in Africa, Europe, North America, and South America did not.

In the 2024-25 Rotary year, **295** participating districts (**77%**) recruited new host families to house students and share the responsibility of welcoming them to the country. Host family recruitment and retention are among the most challenging aspects of a successful Rotary Youth Exchange program. The role of host requires a family that is committed, empathetic, and well prepared to host students for several weeks to months at a time.

Districts that said they recruited new host families by holding events recruited **6.5 more** families on average than districts that did not recruit this way. “Club members asked friends and family” was the most common method districts cited for recruiting host families, with only 34 districts not using this method. However, those 34 districts recruited **13.4 more** families on average, which suggests that districts and clubs that rely on friends and family to be host families may be missing out on more effective methods of recruitment.



[CLICK TO LEARN MORE](#)

HOST SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Long-term exchanges by school type

School type	Number of students	Percentage of students
Public	2,624	58.4%
Private	1,514	33.7%
Vocational	90	2%
Fine arts	13	0.3%
Other	6	0.1%
Unreported	244	5.4%
Total	4,491	99.9%

Host school involvement

Long-term exchange students attend school in their host countries. This gives them the opportunity to connect with peers and teachers while experiencing academic life in a new culture and, often, a different language. Students may be placed in various types of schools, depending on their goals. Most often, students can expect to attend a typical public school (usually government-funded), but in some cases, they may attend a private school (often funded through tuition or other sources) or a school that focuses on the arts or vocations.

FINDING FAMILY IN FRANCE

Living with a host family is often the main way an exchange student experiences a new culture firsthand. Those experiences can lead to changes in perspective and a lifetime of connection to a culture. Athena Trentin thought about the experiences she had with host families and reflected on how different life was back home. During her exchange, her perspective broadened to become that of a global citizen's.

“When her plane landed, her host father met her at the gate. Outside of baggage claim, a huge group of people were waiting to welcome her. ‘This is your family,’ he told her. Trentin felt alone growing up, like she didn’t fit in. ‘This is my family,’ she thought as her host family came in to embrace her.”

rotary.org/en/finding-family-france



COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Contributing to the care and development of the host community is an important part of Rotary Youth Exchange. In 2024-25, **241** participating districts, or about **63%**, reported that they involved their inbound students in community service projects.

Each participating district was asked to estimate the number of exchange students who volunteered and their collective hours of service. Of the 7,290 exchange students, **3,122** students served a total of **76,380** hours in their host communities.

To help their host communities, students got involved in a wide range of service initiatives. Here are some examples:



3,122

students served a total of 76,380 hours in their host communities.



Lost Food Project — Rotary Club of Petaling Jaya (Malaysia)

Rescued food destined for landfills and redirected it to low-income families



Peace wall mural — Rotex and Youth Exchange students (Turkey)

Painted a large wall to promote peace and sustainability, highlighting the legacy of war and promoting global unity



Tree planting — District 6095 (Canada)

Planted trees for a forestry organization in Canada



Food packing for humanitarian relief (North America)

Packed meals and supplies for international humanitarian relief



“Eu Fiz o Bem” (I Did Good) personal impact projects — District 4740 (Brazil)

Designed and executed their own individual service projects in their host communities and shared videos at the district conference about the impact they made



Teaching English to underserved children (Thailand and Brazil)

Volunteered as English teachers for children in low-income schools, fostering cultural exchange as well as language learning



Special Olympics basketball tournament support (United States)

Assisted in facilitating inclusive sports and social events for people with disabilities



Wheelchair distribution — District 4185 (Mexico)

Raised funds for wheelchairs for those in need and delivered them during a district conference



PolioPlus fundraising and awareness campaigns (global)

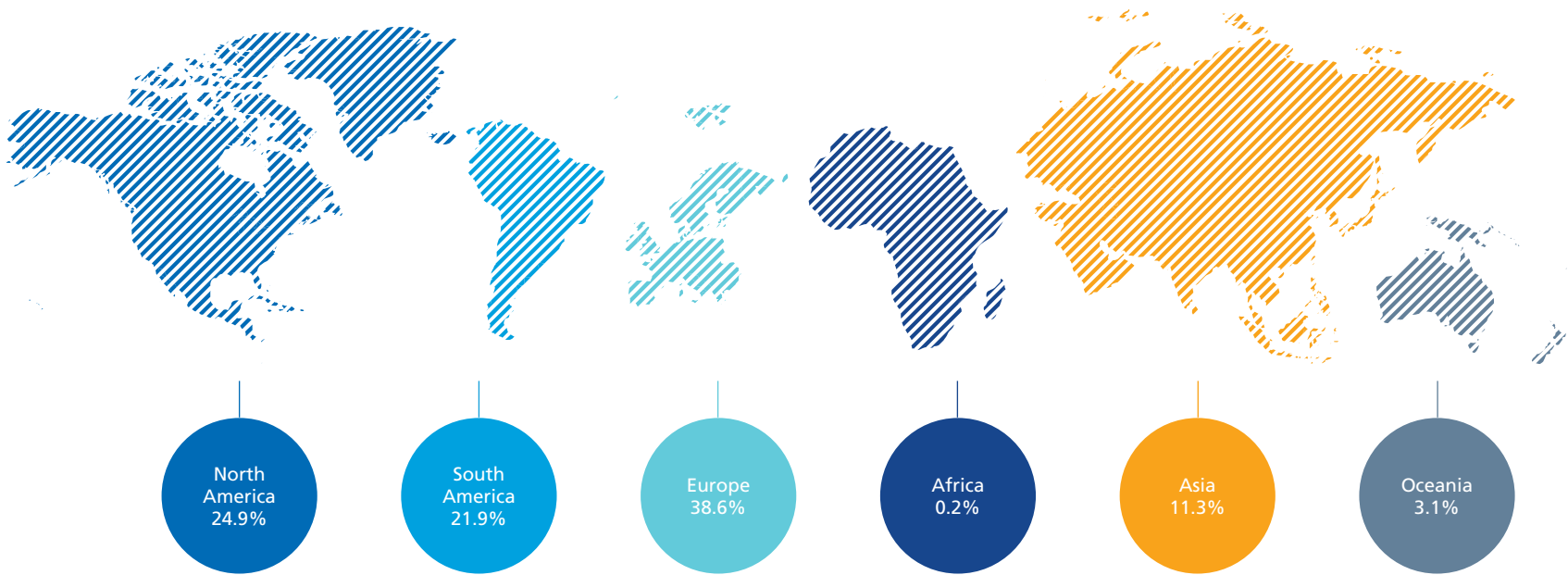
Participated in rallies, fundraised by selling baked goods, and marched in parades to raise awareness and funds for Rotary’s End Polio Now initiative



LONG-TERM EXCHANGES

Long-term exchanges usually last a full academic year. In 2024-25, **327** districts hosted **4,491** long-term exchanges, representing **62%** of all student exchanges through Rotary.

2024-25 LONG-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST REGION



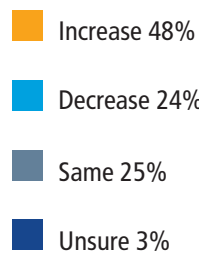
LONG-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
United States	567	12.63%
Brazil	532	11.85%
Germany	445	9.91%
Mexico	391	8.71%
France	328	7.30%
Taiwan	224	4.99%
Argentina	208	4.63%
Italy	196	4.36%
Belgium	176	3.92%
Canada	159	3.54%
Australia	116	2.58%
Japan	108	2.40%
Spain	81	1.80%
Chile	80	1.78%
Colombia	78	1.74%
Finland	72	1.60%
Thailand	72	1.60%
Slovakia	58	1.29%
Switzerland	57	1.27%
Czech Republic	53	1.18%

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Denmark	53	1.18%
Sweden	51	1.14%
India	50	1.11%
Peru	40	0.89%
Poland	39	0.87%
Austria	34	0.76%
Ecuador	30	0.67%
Turkey	30	0.67%
Hungary	29	0.65%
Netherlands	26	0.58%
New Zealand	21	0.47%
Norway	21	0.47%
Bolivia	18	0.40%
Korea	16	0.36%
Romania	13	0.29%
South Africa	10	0.22%
Indonesia	5	0.11%
England	2	0.04%
Croatia	1	0.02%
Malaysia	1	0.02%
TOTAL	4,491	100%

This table shows the number and percentage of long-term exchanges hosted by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SENT ON LONG-TERM EXCHANGES, BY DISTRICT



Long-term exchange trends and challenges

Since Rotary Youth Exchange resumed operating in 2022-23, after being suspended at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term exchanges have been increasing, and this trend continued in 2024-25. Nearly half of the surveyed districts reported hosting more students on exchange last year.

Top reasons districts give for increases in long-term exchanges:

1. Increased participation by Rotary and Rotaract clubs
2. Increased interest from young people
3. Strengthening relationships with partner districts

Top reasons districts give for decreases in long-term exchanges:

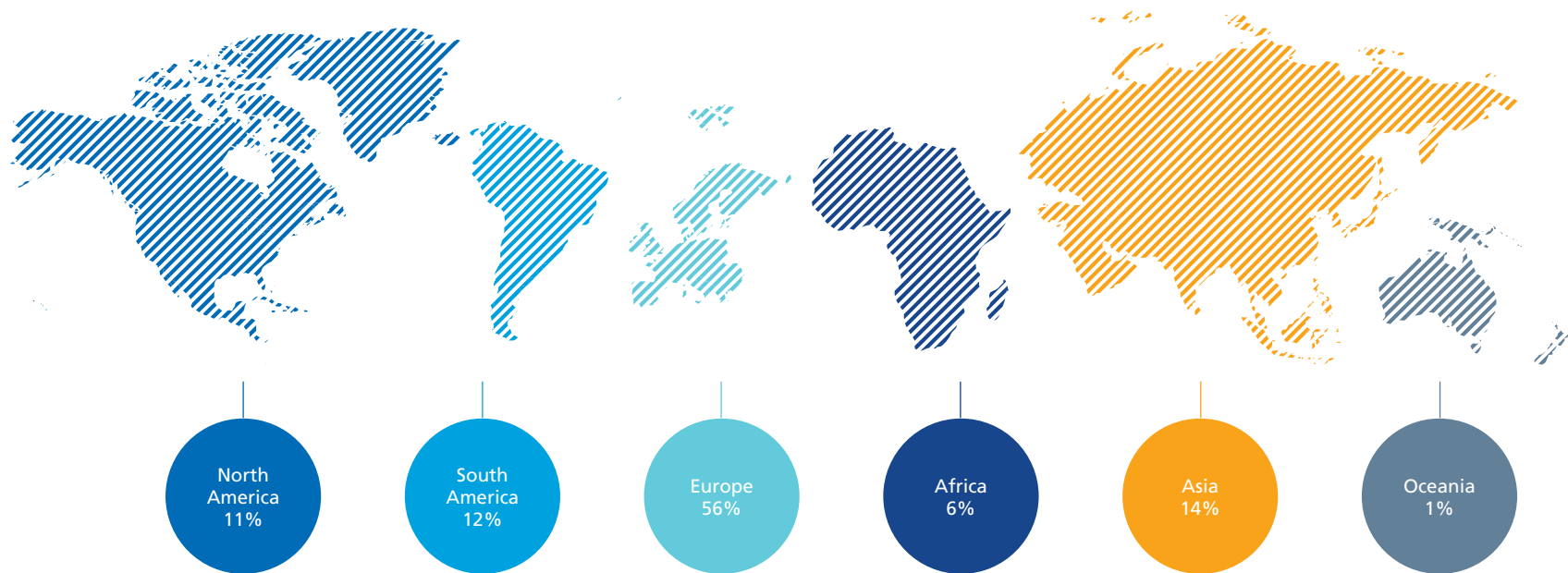
1. Lack of interest from clubs
2. Lack of interest from young people
3. Lack of interest from host families



SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES

Short-term exchanges last from several days to a few months. They often take the form of a camp, tour, or homestay and take place when school isn't in session. In 2024-25, **185** districts hosted **2,768** short-term exchanges, which represents **38%** of all exchanges.

2024-25 SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES HOSTED BY REGION



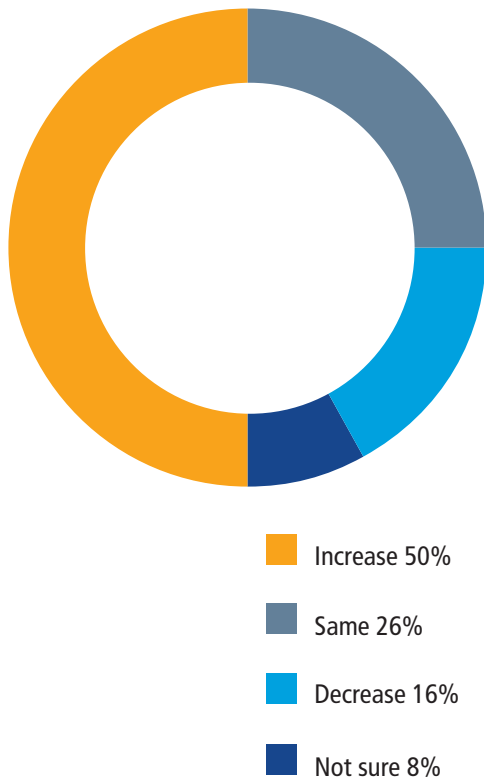
SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES BY HOST COUNTRY OR TERRITORY

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Italy	359	12.97%
France	256	9.25%
Brazil	228	8.24%
Germany	222	8.02%
United States	178	6.43%
Denmark	143	5.17%
Taiwan	138	4.99%
Turkey	118	4.26%
Mexico	88	3.18%
Hungary	86	3.11%
Finland	86	3.11%
Korea	83	3.00%
Egypt	83	3.00%
Belgium	82	2.96%
Spain	75	2.71%
Argentina	75	2.71%
South Africa	69	2.49%
Switzerland	63	2.28%
Austria	62	2.24%

COUNTRY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Canada	51	1.84%
Australia	34	1.23%
Romania	30	1.08%
Norway	24	0.87%
India	20	0.72%
Czech Republic	19	0.69%
Japan	15	0.54%
Slovakia	14	0.51%
Chile	12	0.43%
Sweden	11	0.40%
Malaysia	10	0.36%
Colombia	9	0.33%
Nigeria	6	0.22%
Netherlands	5	0.18%
Indonesia	5	0.18%
Peru	3	0.11%
Ecuador	3	0.11%
Poland	2	0.07%
Portugal	1	0.04%
TOTAL	2,768	100%

This table shows the breakdown of short-term exchanges by country or territory, organized from largest to smallest.

CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF SHORT-TERM EXCHANGES



Short-term exchange trends and challenges

Top reasons for increases in short-term exchanges:

1. Increased interest from young people
2. Increased participation by Rotary and Rotaract clubs
3. Strengthening relationships with partner districts

Top reasons for decreases in short-term exchanges

1. Lack of interest from young people
2. Continued impact of COVID-19 on the ability to conduct the program
3. Lack of interest from clubs



VIRTUAL EXCHANGES

Virtual exchanges are an alternative to in-person exchanges that offer young people unique opportunities to interact and collaborate online with people from other cultures and communities. When virtual exchanges are structured and safe and are developed with specific goals in mind, these experiences can be just as valuable as physically going abroad.

Virtual exchanges remain a wonderful way to offer young people — especially young people who are underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized — chances to engage in meaningful conversations that promote respect and understanding across cultures. They can also help students challenge stereotypes, increase empathy, and develop intercultural competencies, all of which can help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to become global citizens and peacebuilders.

In 2024-25, **3** participating districts hosted **31** virtual exchanges in Brazil, Malaysia, and Nigeria, which represents **0.4%** of all exchanges.

Virtual exchange trends

We asked districts to tell us about their methods of facilitating virtual exchanges.

Top types of interactions in virtual exchanges:

1. Student to Rotary or Rotaract members
2. Student to teacher
3. Student to counselor

Top platforms used for virtual exchanges:

1. Zoom
2. Google Meet

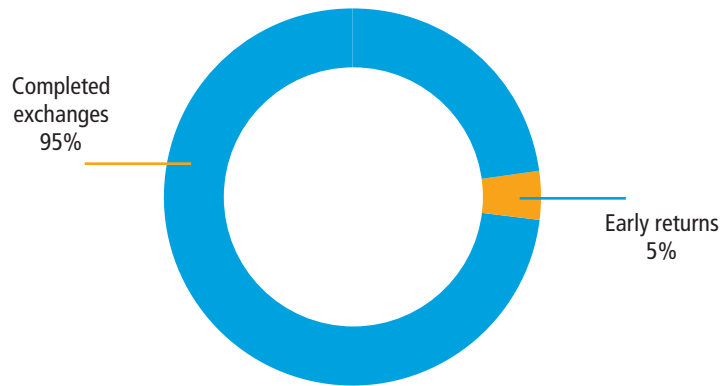
Top reasons that districts decided to participate in virtual exchanges:

1. There are more opportunities for us to partner with other districts.
2. Virtual exchanges are more affordable.
3. Virtual exchanges are more accessible for some or all of our students.

ENDING AN EXCHANGE EARLY

EXCHANGE COMPLETION RATE

Participating districts reported that **339** exchanges, or **4.6%**, ended early in 2024-25.



Mental health and Rotary Youth Exchange

In the 2024-25 survey, we asked whether districts made efforts to support students' mental health, and **315** districts (**82%** of participating districts) responded that they did. When we asked how, they cited many methods, but they generally strived to provide professional counseling and to communicate with students more openly about mental health.

Top methods that districts used to address student mental health:

1. Provided professional mental health counseling to students
2. Invited speakers to events for students
3. Offered additional mental health education to students

Reasons for ending an exchange early

Homesickness was the most frequent reason given for students returning early from their exchanges.

Reasons given for early returns	Number
Homesickness	71
Rule violation	59
Mental health concern	44
Medical health concern	31
Problems at school (grades, attendance, expulsion)	21
School requirements in home country	19
Problems with host family	17
Breach of law	15
Problems with host club	7
Other	55
Total	339

ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO YOUTH PROTECTION

The safety and well-being of young people and youth program participants are Rotary's highest priority. Rotary International has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and harassment of young people.

Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

What is reported to Rotary International?

Anyone can report concerns related to youths in Rotary, including concerns that member or nonmember volunteers are not upholding our youth safeguarding standards. Our expectations and guidelines are consistent with globally accepted standards for organizations that work with or serve young people, and we require our members to report any allegations of abuse, harassment, or misconduct that involve youths. Reports can be submitted by email, by phone, or through our secure online reporting form, and they may be anonymous.

Rotary International supports club and district leaders in responding to medical incidents, accidents, and early returns from exchanges, as well as allegations of abuse, harassment, or misconduct. Reporting youth safety concerns allows our staff to guide local leaders and to facilitate as they respond to, report, review, and resolve youth protection concerns in accordance with our policies and local laws.

Trends identified during 2024-25

Even the most robust, proactive safeguarding efforts cannot prevent all misconduct, accidents, and other youth protection concerns. Thorough reviews of each situation and a commitment to taking corrective action ensure that we do everything we can to prevent any problems from happening again. To truly protect and empower young people, volunteer-based organizations that serve, engage, and empower youths must embrace youth safeguarding as a commitment to real-life action, not just a policy.

Rotary International supports districts that are involved in Rotary Youth Exchange by analyzing trends in the concerns that are reported from around the world so we can identify potential causes and develop resources and support to reduce risk and keep our young participants safe. Consider how your district can enhance its commitment to youth protection in some of the following key areas we've identified.

Strengthen your network of youth safeguarding champions

Our commitment to safeguarding young people requires everyone's effort. Bring together willing volunteers with a wide range of skills to build a community that has a positive culture of safeguarding — and is passionate about it. Establish a youth protection committee that includes leaders who work with youths, program alumni, and community experts such as social workers, educators, law enforcement professionals, and those with special knowledge or experience in working with youths. Get guides, templates, and other materials from Rotary's Learning Center and the [Youth Protection page](#) of My Rotary to help you build club and district teams that are committed to ensuring safe and meaningful experiences for young people through Rotary.

Travel and overnight stays

Student travel — for example, for tours, service projects, cultural excursions, and overnight group events — offers youths and volunteers opportunities to build friendships, explore new communities, and strengthen Rotary partnerships. These experiences are often highlights of Rotary programs and can be deeply enriching. They also introduce specific risks that require careful planning and oversight. To keep participants safe, it is essential to provide clear, up-front guidance on behavioral expectations and use strong supervision and monitoring practices. Recent increases in reports of violations of personal boundaries, rule infractions, and peer-to-peer abuse underscore the need to enhance and reinforce training for both volunteers and youth participants. Prioritizing safety through both proactive education and consistent oversight helps create a secure environment where all participants can thrive.

Noncontact abuse and harassment

Young people are immersed in technology, and tools like artificial intelligence (AI) offer many benefits but also carry unique risks for youths online. Another trend is an increase in “noncontact abuse.” Verbal harassment, emotional manipulation, intimidation, exposure to inappropriate content, and personal boundary violations through digital communication can be just as harmful as physical abuse, deeply affecting a young person's sense of safety and trust.

But such behavior often goes unnoticed or unreported because it is difficult to monitor. It is vital for leaders and volunteers to understand the risks of online interactions and support young people in learning how to keep themselves and their peers safe online and when to get support from a trusted adult. Having open, honest, and transparent conversations about internet safety and safe online interactions is an ongoing commitment that can interrupt dangerous behavior or abuse and prevent it from escalating.

Barriers to reporting

Someone's decision to report harassment or abuse that they are experiencing is a personal one, and it can also be a difficult one, especially for young people who are experiencing a different country, culture, and language. Young people in particular tend to minimize and deny abuse, not exaggerate or over-report incidents. People who have experienced a traumatic incident may not report it for many reasons, so it's especially important to recognize the signs of abuse as well as barriers to reporting it. Reaffirm your commitment to reporting, resolving, and addressing all youth protection concerns that are expressed in good faith, as well as recognizing and taking opportunities for improvement.

Resources

If you need advice or assistance, write to youthprotection@rotary.org, or call +1-866-976-8279 from 08:00 to 16:00 Chicago time (UTC-5 or UTC-6) to talk with Rotary's Youth Protection staff. Our staff members are experienced and are trained in receiving reports of abuse or misconduct that involves youth. Each situation will be handled with care and confidentiality.

Resources to make your programs safer:

[Rotary's Youth Protection Guide](#)

[Rotary's Youth Protection page](#) — with the link for reporting youth protection concerns

[Protecting Youth Program Participants](#) (online course)

[Preventing and Addressing Harassment](#) (online course)

50 YEARS OF RYR YE

1975 · 2025

In 2025, Rotary Youth Exchange marked 50 years as an official program of Rotary International. For five decades, Rotary leaders have helped students experience new cultures, develop lasting friendships, and become global citizens.

We know that Rotary Youth Exchange succeeds not only because of the students who participate but also because of the dedicated volunteers who make it possible. A blog post features volunteers who support the program, along with insights drawn from the data collected from five years of preparing the Rotary Youth Exchange Annual Report. [Learn more about the collective impact of Youth Exchange volunteers over the years.](#)

Rotary International launched an Instagram account focused entirely on Rotary's youth programs, called Rotary Young Leaders, and [posted about the 50-year milestone anniversary.](#) The comments from past and present participants are inspiring — be sure to browse through them.

Did you know that some Rotary members facilitated exchanges for almost 50 years before Rotary Youth Exchange became an official program of Rotary International in 1975? [Learn about the origins of the amazing program from its start to formal recognition.](#)



VIDEO SPOTLIGHT: To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the program, alumni and leaders from around the world explain what Rotary Youth Exchange means to them.

ALUMNI OF ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

In 2024-25, **353** districts, or **92%** of participating districts, reported actively engaging Rotary Youth Exchange alumni in some way after they completed their exchanges. These alumni are often referred to as Rotex. They are frequently asked to serve as volunteers for district-organized Rotary Youth Exchange events or invited to participate in other Rotary youth programs, service projects, and club events.

Top ways that Rotary Youth Exchange alumni were engaged by Rotary or Rotaract clubs:

1. Student orientation (283 alumni)
2. District conferences (206 alumni)
3. Club meetings (188 alumni)

District leaders said that **2,379**, or about one-third of the 7,290 students who participated in Rotary Youth Exchange in 2024-25, were active participants in other Rotary programs, such as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) or Interact, or have joined a Rotex alumni association.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

1

57 years of Rotary Youth Exchange

Ivan Vianna of the Rotary Club of Belo Horizonte-Pampulha, Minas Gerais, Brazil, reflects on his years as a Rotarian. He went on an exchange before Rotary Youth Exchange became an official program of Rotary International, and he later joined Rotary.

blog.rotary.org/2025/04/16/57-years-of-rotary-youth-exchange/

Three generations of Rotary Youth Exchange students. Pictured (from left) are Ivan Vianna, granddaughter Isabella, and son Gustavo.



2



Former Australian member of parliament describes the impact of Rotary Youth Exchange

Before her Rotary Youth Exchange experience, Melissa Parke had never traveled outside of her home state in Australia. Her exchange to France inspired her "to experience more places, cultures, and languages, and to help those less fortunate around the world."

blog.rotary.org/2024/10/08/former-australian-mp-shares-impact-of-rotary-youth-exchange/

THE 2025 YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICERS PRECONVENTION

About 300 members of the Rotary Youth Exchange community from around the world gathered for the 2025 Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention, 20-21 June 2025 in Calgary, Canada. Participants had the chance to network, take part in breakout sessions to learn from one another, and hear inspiring speeches from both alumni and program leaders.



Current Youth Exchange students and alumni in their iconic pin jackets at the preconvention



Attendees talk to old friends, meet new ones, and make connections between sessions.



Attendees showing off 50th anniversary-themed cupcakes during a networking break

RESOURCES FOR ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

1

VIDEOS

Overview video for Rotary Youth Exchange

on.rotary.org/ryevideo

“What Does Rotary Youth Exchange Mean to You?”

on.rotary.org/ryevoices

2

PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

Promotional materials available on the Rotary Brand Center (photos, graphics, printed materials)

on.rotary.org/ryepromo

3

YOUTH PROTECTION

Rotary International takes all youth protection concerns seriously. You can access our online youth protection reporting form at rotary.org/youthprotection.

Email youthexchange@rotary.org for questions about the program.

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**LEARN MORE ABOUT
ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE
ON [ROTARY.ORG](https://www.rotary.org)**