



**Guidelines for Ohio-Erie
Summer Exchange Students –
Summer, 2011**



**RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR OHIO-ERIE ROTARY SUMMER EXCHANGE
STUDENTS:**

- 1) The key to a rewarding exchange has more to do with BEING the right exchange student than being matched with the right student/family.
- 2) You are representing yourself, your family and Rotary when traveling abroad. Courtesy, a pleasant smile, politeness and a willingness to help are universally appreciated.
- 3) The 4 "D's" of Rotary Exchanges - No Drugs, No Drinking, No Driving, No Dating.

No drugs and no driving are absolutely 100% firm. Drinking may have a little flexibility, only if offered one glass of wine or beer with dinner with your host family, assuming this is culturally acceptable and legal in your host country, and OK with your parents here in the USA. Again--a one glass limit with host parents present. If this seems unclear, simply do not drink. Ohio-Erie Rotary may mandate that a student be sent home early, at the student's expense, for excessive drinking. No dating means no sexual relations--go out with a group of friends.

- 4) Work out details like laundry, dishes, house chores, etc., with your host parents right away. Just show a willingness to help and be aware of cultural differences. Some countries and/or families may expect you to help cook or clean up, while others might be insulted if you try.
- 5) Be flexible and open minded. Don't carry a lot of preconceived notions about the way something should be. This applies to living quarters, food, personalities, transportation, and communication. Be light on your feet and be prepared to experience new and sometimes strange things. You are only overseas for 4 weeks--you can get through any situation with the right mindset. It is natural to sometimes feel homesick and out of place when abroad. Be prepared to work through these feelings and stick it out. Of course, some students won't want to come home after 4 weeks :)

- 6) Language is the gateway to culture. Learn a few key phrases before you depart. Be familiar with how to pronounce vowels and consonants. Show an

interest right away in learning more when you arrive overseas. At the same time, you will find you can communicate most anything with pictures, signs, and a giggle.

7) Health Insurance – You will be covered by the Ohio-Erie group health insurance policy. This is secondary coverage, meaning that any other health insurance you have would pay first. You may want to check your family policy for international restrictions, and consider a supplemental travel health policy in addition to the mandatory Rotary group policy.

8) Take the initiative before you depart and politely ask to attend a Rotary meeting the week you arrive, or to at least meet the local Rotary Club youth exchange counselor. Arrange for your host sibling to attend a Rotary meeting in your home town too. Issues can arise with a host family that could easily be resolved by a third party Rotarian. Plus, you expand your network of friends by attending Rotary meetings. Be willing to “work the crowd” a bit...you might be surprised by what Rotarians are willing to do for you.

9) Over ninety percent of summer exchanges are great matches. Each year, we have a few personality mis-matches, which is only natural when two new acquaintances are placed together for eight weeks during nearly every waking hour. If this occurs, be diplomatic and friendly, but suggest it may be fun spend a day at the home of a Rotarian, or to go work with a host parent for the day, or to go shopping with a neighbor, etc. When your host sister/brother is living in your home, plan a few events so that you are apart for a day or two during your month together. Also work with your sponsoring Rotary Club to arrange a few activities with local Rotarians.

Listed below is a summary of tips for travel based on years of experience. Quoting Ed at Its Your World Travel, "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not get bent out of shape." Problems will come up when traveling--stay calm, stay focused, be courteous, be persistent and be flexible.

PASSPORT RELATED:

- Apply for passports early to avoid delays associated with summer travel. If you have not yet applied for a passport, you will need to request expedited processing. Use proper legal names on forms.
- One or both parents might want to obtain a passport too for emergency travel needs.
- No travel VISA is needed generally, with the exception of Brazil and Australia.
- Photocopy your passport and keep the copy separate from the original.

BOOKING AIRLINE TICKETS AND AIRFARE:

- Ed from Its Your World Travel will contact students.
- Confirmed departure and return dates are required by Rotary International.
- Once the return flight home is booked, the city of departure for the trip back home cannot be changed.
- Buy your airline tickets quickly after being contacted by the travel agency, to secure a seat and to obtain the best price.

TRAVEL:

- Don't lose your return airline ticket or e-ticket confirmation. Photo copy your ticket or itinerary and keep it in a separate location.
- Expect long delays in airports. Cushion time is built in for weather delays and security checks.
- Consider wearing a money belt for cash and important documents.
- Don't accept anything from strangers and don't leave bags unattended, even to just run to the restroom. Security may destroy unattended bags.
- **IMPORTANT** - Carry a notarized parent permission to travel, signed by both parents, and keep this document with you when traveling through airports.
- If your flight gets delayed, stay calm but act with urgency and respect. Ask to talk to a supervisor, using the words "**I need a protected flight.**" You will have host family waiting on your arrival in your host country, so you need to make connections.
- Carry the phone numbers and emails of your host family with you at all times, as well as contacts for Rotary at home and abroad.
- Wear a Rotary jacket, shirt or other Rotary ID. You will be surprised at how many people will recognize Rotary in airports and lend a helping hand.
- Luggage limits may vary by airline and country. Have some cash or credit card in case you need to pay more for excess luggage.

- If you have camera film, tell security. New stronger X-rays machines can damage film.
- Immunizations - none are likely, but the student/parents should check the web site, cdc.gov.com, for required or recommended shots by country/region. Also check with your family doctor.

ARRIVAL:

- Immigration/Customs will be in the first city of entry in your final country destination. Customs is serious business, not a time for joking.
- Your host family will not greet you until you have made it through customs.
- Have a picture of your host family. You may not look like your picture after 14 hours or more of a tiring flight.
- If you need directions, ask airport officials, and not the average "man on the street."
- Call home when you have arrived so your parents know you have arrived safely.

BAGGAGE:

- US and Canada are only countries that allow so many carry on bags. Pack light and check most baggage.
- Generally the limit is 2 suitcases of 70 pounds each, 1 carry on bag, and 1 purse. **You should verify with all airline companies the luggage limits.**
- If a carry on bag has to be later checked, make sure it is checked to your final destination. If not, you may have to pick it up at a connecting airport, particularly if you are changing airline companies.
- Keep prescription medication with you, **IN THE ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE.**
- Take pictures of your luggage, in case something ends up lost or misrouted.
- If you have lost luggage, don't miss your next connection. You can fill out a lost baggage report on board your next flight.
- Obviously, don't handle illegal drugs of any type in a foreign country. Don't accept packages from strangers and watch your carry on bags at all times.

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU:

- Take pictures or slides of your home town, family or other items of interest to your host family.
- Visit your local Rotary Club and ask for two or three club banners, so you can exchange banners with the Rotary Club abroad.
- Check with your local club about Rotary pins, or perhaps buy pins representative of your local town or state.
- Take a small gift for your host family. This should not be expensive, but it should be meaningful to you.

-You may want to make up business cards with your name and contact information (this is optional).

MONEY:

- Have a VISA or MASTERCARD credit card.
- Make sure that a parent does not have to co-sign to use the credit card.
- Debit Cards may not work everywhere. Credit cards are more widely accepted.
- Know who to call to get a replacement card if lost or stolen, and keep a record of the credit card number separate from your purse or wallet.
- Travelers Checks work well in many countries, but not all. Keep records of checks in a separate location.
- Phone bills can be outrageous (hundreds of dollars). Take an international cell phone with you, or consider a pre-paid international calling card. Please do not stick your family with a huge phone bill.
- Email may cost by the minute overseas. Check with your host family.

OTHER: - The District Youth Exchange Chair, both in the host country and here, must approve any early trips home, assuming that is even possible.

Emergency Contacts:

Monte Zinn
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John W. Koetz – Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador
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Ed at Its Your World Travel 800-955-6077; ed@iywt.com

Your local Club Rotary Contact in your home town USA:

Your District Rotary Contact:

Your Host Country Rotary District Contact:

Your Host Country local Rotary Club Contact:

Your Host Family Contact:

Emergency Contact in USA: