

Youth Exchange

January 2017

Connecting students and communities
around the world



Alumni give back through Rotex

Rotary Youth Exchange Alumna Sophie shares, "as a Rotary Youth Exchange student, I spent a year in Thailand. This experience changed my life and my view of the world. When I returned to Germany, I wanted to give something back to Rotary because of how incredibly thankful I was for the opportunity I had been given. Joining our district's Rotex club was my way of doing that."

Find out more about Rotex and how Sophie's Rotex from District 1800 gives back to Rotary.

give back through Rotex

Posted on [November 17, 2017](#) by [Rotary International](#)



Members of the District 1800 Rotex at the 2017 Rotary Convention in Atlanta.

By Sophie Richter, 2012-13 Rotary Youth Exchange Student

As a Rotary Youth Exchange Student, I spent a year in Thailand. This experience changed my life and my view of the world. When I returned to Germany, I wanted to give something back to Rotary because of how incredibly thankful I was for the opportunity I had been given. Joining our district's Rotex club was my way of doing that.

A Rotex club is an organized group of **Youth Exchange** alumni that stay involved in Rotary by working closely with Rotarians in their district. Our Rotex in District 1800 was founded in 1989 and has around 80 active members. We organize about six weekends each year for inbound and outbound exchange students.

Nine countries in three weeks

One special weekend is our Outbound Orientation, where we prepare students for their experience abroad in different workshops that deal with intercultural communication, stereotypes, life with host families, attending a new school, and other challenges. We also hold a three-week long Europe Tour with inbound students, which is completely organized and run by about a dozen Rotex members each year. Our adventurous tour takes us through nine countries and

14 cities!

We enjoy doing these activities year-round. But a tragedy last year taught us we had the power to do even more.

In April 2016, a massive earthquake struck Ecuador while three Ecuadorian students were on their exchange in our district. They weren't able to communicate with their families for days and were going through a difficult time. Sadly, one of the students even lost an uncle in the disaster. Our Rotex and the current exchange students wanted to help in any way we could. As one of our inbound students explained in a letter to the Youth Exchange chair, "whenever one part of a family is in a difficult situation, you stand together even closer."

Every Rotary district should encourage alumni to give back. By taking action, our Rotex is living the principles of Rotary.

The exchange students, in cooperation with Rotex and the Youth Exchange team, reached out to Rotary clubs in our district. In addition to receiving donations from many clubs, we organized a day of service. Exchange students helped by baking cakes to sell at their schools, and even raised money on the street.

In the end, we were able to raise more than 20,000 euros (about \$23,000) for victims of the earthquake. One of the students from Ecuador, Camila, later wrote, "seeing people who I only met recently move mountains for others filled my heart." It was gratifying to know that our Rotex could help accomplish such a big task for Camila and the others.

A new project every year

Since then, we've undertaken a new project every year. This year we raised money for a school in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and met one of the South African Rotarians we partnered with at the Rotary Convention in Atlanta. It was so touching to meet him in person.

Rotex allows us to stay involved in our community and helps us do more through Rotary than we could as individuals. Every Rotary district should encourage alumni to give back. By taking action, our Rotex is living the principles of Rotary. Now that we have officially chartered as a Rotary alumni

association, we are excited to see what the future will bring!

For more information about Rotex, or about chartering Rotex alumni associations, please write to alumni@rotary.org.

LEARN MORE

Updates

Connect with YEOs on Google Groups



The ever popular **YEOTalk** chat group for Youth Exchange Officers around the world to discuss topics relating to exchanges has moved from Yahoo to Google!

[Apply for membership](#) in the new closed-forum, Google Group to ask questions and share your expertise and experiences. And follow the open [YEOTalk Facebook page](#).

APPLY

Show us your best shot



Do you have a great photo from your recent exchange? Did you host a student this year and take some terrific pictures during a service project or while traveling? Enter up to three photos in [The Rotarian's 2018 Photo Contest](#). Show how you capture the

fun, excitement, and internationality of Rotary Youth Exchange. Submit your entries before **15 February** and your photos could be featured in The Rotarian.

ENTER

How Japan activates alumni



"Through numerous scholarship programs, Rotary has helped foster in alumni a desire to give back to their communities. Within Japan, there is a strong network of alumni associations which help them do just that while maintaining their connection to Rotary and each other. A lesson I quickly learned, however, was that no two alumni associations are exactly alike!" Find out more about Bill's whirlwind tour of alumni in Japan.

Whirlwind tour of alumni in Japan

Posted on [December 20, 2017](#) by [Rotary International](#)



Bill Rintz, second from left, in the radio studio with alumni in District 2650.

By Bill Rintz, Rotary alumni relations specialist

A visit to Japan last month took me on a week-long, whirlwind tour. My visits to multiple Rotary districts gave me the chance to meet members of the Rotary family, including classically-trained musicians, development workers, school teachers, architects, university professors, business leaders, and young professionals. Despite their varied backgrounds, those I met have something in common: they proudly call themselves Rotary alumni.

Who are alumni?

Alumni include former recipients of Rotary scholarships, Rotary Peace Fellowships, and past participants of Group Study Exchange, Youth Exchange, Rotaract, and other programs. Japan's [Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation](#) awards over 700 scholarships annually, adding considerably to the Rotary alumni family. Through these programs, Rotary has helped foster in alumni a desire to give back to their communities. Within Japan, there is a strong network of alumni associations which help them do just that while maintaining their connection to Rotary and each other.

Alumni associations around Japan

A lesson I quickly learned, however, was that no two alumni associations are exactly alike!

My first stop was in Kobe, where the Japan Rotary Alumni Association held their 7th annual meeting. This group brings together former scholars and other Foundation alumni from around Japan. A lively reception and performances by some seriously talented music scholars made it easy to feel the common bond the alumni enjoy. Foundation alumni associations like these often hold orientations for new scholars and reunions for returnees, and passionately support the programs that impacted their own lives.

Relatively newer associations, like those I met in Osaka and Kyoto, have members from a variety of Rotary programs, though their energy and enthusiasm are equally infectious. In Kyoto, I was given the opportunity to talk about The Rotary Foundation on the local radio. The radio host, an Ambassadorial Scholar alumnus, told me about his desire to give back to Rotary, and how he and his alumni association advocated for

Rotary's mission locally.

Yoneyama alumni associations also operate in nearly every district in Japan, sometimes using their connections abroad to help Rotary find partners for international projects. Thanks to a partnership with an alumni association in Sri Lanka, Rotary District 2620's Yoneyama Alumni Association is currently organizing a medical equipment donation project.

Support alumni near you

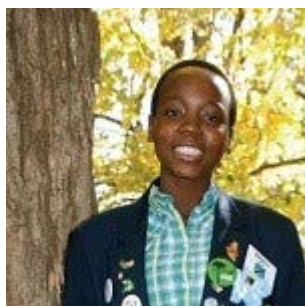
During a group trip in Kobe to view the spectacular Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, I thought about the value of alumni to Rotary. I felt I had stumbled across the perfect metaphor. Rotary alumni act as a bridge: a bridge between countries; a bridge between Rotary and the public; a bridge for current program participants to continue their involvement in Rotary.

In order to play this role, they first need Rotarians' help. Alumni associations might operate quite differently around the world, but they can best thrive when they have support from Rotarians who see alumni as equal partners. Alumni already feel a sense of gratitude and want to give back. How can they do so in your district? Ask them!

Do you have questions about engaging with alumni in your district? Want to create an alumni association? Email us at alumni@rotary.org.

[READ MORE](#)

2016-2017 Rotary year in review



Together, we...

- established stronger, more vibrant clubs
- created lasting change
- gained recognition for our work

...and so much more! Read our annual report.

LEARN MORE



Events & Resources

NEWLY CERTIFIED DISTRICTS

The **Kazakhstan** and **Kyrgyzstan** sections of District 2430 (comprised of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan) have met certification requirements for **outbound-only exchanges**; they can send, but not host, exchange participants. The Turkey portion remains fully certified to participate in exchanges. Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan remain noncertified.

View our complete listing of noncertified districts.

NONCERTIFIED DISTRICTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

14-17 March

North American Youth Exchange Network (NAYEN)
Omaha, Nebraska, USA

12-13 May

23rd Annual Japan Youth Exchange Conference
Chiba-City, Japan

22-23 June

Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention
Toronto

23-27 June

Rotary International Convention
Toronto

RESOURCES

Rotary Youth Exchange on LinkedIn

Rotary Code of Policies

Youth Exchange Directory (*district and multidistrict Youth Exchange chairs can access by signing in to Rotary.org*)

rotary
youth
exchange



START AN EXCHANGE

Let's tell the world we are
PEOPLE OF ACTION
GET STARTED TODAY!



Youth Exchange is a source of news, resources, and event details for those who promote global understanding through the Rotary Youth Exchange program available every other month.

Send questions and story ideas to youthexchange@rotary.org.

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