

# Rotary Short-Term Exchange Program (STEP)

## Important Information About the STEP Application Process

**Date: Nov. 19-2017**

To: Club Presidents, Youth Protection Officers, and Youth Exchange Officers:

From: Ron Dyck - Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) Coordinator

This memo is to clarify the application process for all students and families applying to participate in STEP in 2018 and forward. The STEP program in D5020 is a family to family exchange program where the family matches are facilitated by Rotary. The Rotary International Youth Protection Policies apply to STEP just as they do for the Long-Term Exchange Program (LTEP). Because it is a family to family exchange, the host family must be vetted as part of the application process. The STEP application cannot be submitted until the host family vetting process is complete.

The application process is outlined below:

1. The student fills out the STEP Student Application Form
2. The parents fill out the Host Family Application and Affidavit which includes a summary of their responsibilities as a host family, a profile of their family, the names and contact information for three people who can act as references, and a Volunteer Waiver and Release.
3. The Club arranges for an interview of the student and their family.
4. A **vetted** member of the club must do a home visit to determine that the home is free of any health or safety hazards and has adequate room for another household member
5. A Criminal Background Check (CBC) must be done on all adults over 18 who will be living in the home at the time of the Inbound student's visit (this could include a college age sibling home for the summer or a grandparent making an extended visit).
  - In the US, the CBC is done by a vetted Rotarian, usually the Youth Exchange Officer or the Youth Protection Officer
  - In Canada, the adult family member initiates the CBC with the local RCMP and brings a copy of the completed CBC to the vetted Rotarian in their club.
6. A counselor must be assigned to the student for the duration of their stay in D5020. This could be the Youth Exchange Officer, the Youth Protection Officer, or the vetted Rotarian who has served as a counselor for a Long-Term Exchange student or another vetted volunteer who has had Youth Protection Training. The name and contact information of this person will be entered on to the Guarantee Form. The counselor must meet the student shortly after their arrival and explain their role as an objective support person. Because the student may only be present for 4-6 weeks, that first meeting is important.
7. Once the application is completed, the Club submits the
  - **Original** Student Application form with all signatures in blue ink
  - Original Guarantee Form with all required signatures in blue ink.

**Copies of:**

- The host family application complete with all signatures
- Background checks of all adults in the home
- Completed reference checks
- Home Visit/Interview report

The original copies of the STEP application and the Guarantee form will be kept with the STEP Coordinator. Once they have reviewed the copies of the CBC's and the reference checks and the Home Visit/Interview Report they will destroy these copies in a secure manner. The originals will be kept in a secure manner by the Youth Protection Officer of the student's sponsoring club.

Thank you for all of your support for both STEP and LETP. These programs are Rotary's most powerful tools for peace.

Ron Dyck