*Sent to all Members*

June 1, 2025

Dear {%FName%},

I have it on good authority that 2025 is the fiftieth anniversary of Rotary Youth Exchange in 6220. That means a fifty-year tradition of forging citizens of the world among high school students whose lives are forever changed for the experience.

Past District Governor Ralph Herlache, along with other Rotary Club of Sturgeon Bay members Karl May and Otto Andre, are cited as the founders of our district’s exchange program.  When I joined Rotary in 1977, RYE was headed by Rotary Club of Minocqua member Don Wacholz. Don was an elegant and articulate promoter of not only Rotary International but also the youth exchange program. To describe Don as the quintessential gentleman is an understatement.

Today I pause and offer thanks and gratitude from our district Rotary Youth Exchange leaders from Ralph Herlache, Karl May, Otto Andre, and Don Wacholz in the formative years to Ellen Weingarten from the Marquette After Hours club, our RYE chair today, and all who served in between.

This district has also been fortunate for the services of Dr. Dennis White, also a member of the Rotary Club of Sturgeon Bay. Dennis has spoken on the psychological impacts of youth exchange in more countries than many are fortunate to visit in a lifetime.  Dennis brought his professional expertise to one of Rotary’s most valuable programs and is still active today.

Please remember these leaders with thoughts of gratitude and appreciation. Thanks, also, to the families that have hosted exchange students and changed lives forever. We have all seen exchange students leave our clubs for their outbound experience as shy, often introverted emerging adults. They return with self-confidence, poise, and maturity as citizens of the world.

May all Rotarians work to continue this life-changing program that is at the very core of our values as members of Rotary INTERNATIONAL.

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Thank you.

ROGER UTNEHMER
Rotary District 6220
District Governor 2024-25
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