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## Public Relations Possibilities

### Ideas for promoting the Ambassadorial Scholarships program

***Sponsoring and/or hosting a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar is an exciting event. Whenever your club or district participates in the Ambassadorial Scholarships program, make public relations part of the process.***

***The following guide will give you an idea of the promotional opportunities for each phase of your club or district's scholarships program.***

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#### Attracting qualified applicants

Attracting and selecting suitable scholars is the most critical stage of your scholarships program. From a public relations perspective, current scholars and Rotary Foundation alumni are the most powerful spokespeople for the Ambassadorial Scholarships program. The program depends upon enthusiastic, responsible scholars who will talk about their experiences abroad.

Public relations can make students and university administrators aware that scholarships may be available through their local Rotary club. The more people that are aware of Rotary's scholarships program and its unique objectives, the larger the pool of qualified applicants. Make sure international student/study abroad offices of area colleges and universities have up-to-date brochures and information as well as a contact name and phone number of the scholarships chair for your district.

When scholarships applications become available, create a press release to send out (see the suggested news release on page 5). Some districts have also created advertisements announcing application availability. Your release could be accompanied by basic information about the Ambassadorial Scholarships program such as a brochure or fact sheet. Create a media list that can be reused (remember to update lists periodically). A scholarships media list should include the names and addresses of:

- ◆ Editors of local/regional newspapers and magazines.

- ◆ Editors of area college and university newspapers and publications.
- ◆ Program managers of area radio stations — including college radio stations.
- ◆ Directors of the international student or study abroad offices of area colleges and universities.
- ◆ Directors of your local cable or public access channels.

Don't overlook your most important audience — Rotarians. Although Rotarians and their immediate families are not eligible for Rotary scholarships, they can still increase awareness in the local community. Information should be sent to club presidents for announcements encouraging all Rotarians to tell friends and coworkers about application availability.

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#### PR opportunities for outgoing scholars

##### ***What the scholar can do:***

The announcement of a local scholarship winner(s) is a great PR opportunity — and scholarship recipients can help. They may be willing to develop their own releases based on samples you provide (see page 6). Rotarians or scholars should send a release to their hometown newspaper as well as appropriate college newspapers, alumni publications, trade publications, etc., after the scholarship has been approved by The Rotary Foundation Trustees. If possible, provide a picture with the release, with the student's name written on the back.

Before departing, a scholar may also want to suggest to a local newspaper the possibility of acting as a "foreign correspondent" while abroad. The scholar could arrange to submit regular columns or write a feature story about their experiences, like Kathleen Bergeron, a journalist, who took a year's leave from her job as a staff writer with *The Sun Herald* in Biloxi, Mississippi, USA, to be an Ambassadorial Scholar. While attending the University College Cork in Ireland, Bergeron wrote several articles for the newspaper about Irish culture and her time abroad as a Rotary Foundation Scholar. Sandy Juliano, a scholar from Australia studying in Canada, took another approach. She contacted the local newspaper in her host country and submitted

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a proposal to write a regular health and fitness column. Her efforts were successful; Sandy wrote a weekly column for the *Prairie Free Press* newspaper and regularly credited Rotary International in her work.

District 5160 (California, USA) worked with 1998-99 scholar, Abigail Collins-Sears, to set up a Web site that she used to report her experiences as a scholar. Visit the Web site at [www.abby.rotary5160.org](http://www.abby.rotary5160.org).

A scholar's time abroad is usually filled with new activities and new friends. Many students keep a journal or document their experiences in some way. Upon return they will have to speak to Rotary clubs, other groups, and the media, so it will be helpful to have a record of the trip.

### ***Provide photos***

Scholars should also be encouraged to take pictures in their host country. Not only will this help public relations efforts, but it will also be a good way for students to remember their activities. One way to improve the chances of being covered by the media is to provide interesting visuals to local newspapers, or point out video opportunities for television news programs. If a local newspaper is unable to send out a photographer, take your own photos, or hire your own professional photographer, and send them to the media. A high-quality, visually compelling photo has a good chance of being used.

Include captions with photos describing the scene and naming everyone pictured.

When taking a photograph, be imaginative. Groups of people staring at a camera are generally not exciting. Take pictures that show action or tell a story and convey the purpose of the Ambassadorial Scholarships program.

- ◆ Hands-on photos of scholars working with projects or programs in the community
- ◆ Photos that portray two different cultures coming together
- ◆ Scholars giving presentations
- ◆ A scholar working with local Rotarians on a service project or working with children
- ◆ Whenever possible, include the Rotary emblem in the photo either on a sign or on an article of clothing
- ◆ Share scholar photos with Rotary International for use in publications and displays

### ***What clubs/districts can do:***

As goodwill ambassadors, scholars need to be articulate spokespeople for both their country and Rotary. They should be able to give a short presentation about their country, appropriate for a Rotary club or other group, and respond effectively to questions from the media and public. Clubs can help prepare them for their visit abroad by providing up-to-date Rotary background information such as fact sheets, brochures, and Rotary publications available from the service center for your district.

Even after a student departs, it is still possible to publicize their activities from back home. Two months after their scholarship year begins, Academic-Year and Multi-Year Scholars are required to submit a progress report to both their sponsor and host districts. It includes their impressions of the culture, education, people and Rotarians in the host country, and their accomplishments to date. The report may be of interest to the local media, particularly if a scholar is studying in an unusual locale or in a country recently featured by the media. A local person's insight on international events can be an interesting news or human interest story. If appropriate, you may want to suggest a story to your local media using report excerpts, but only with the scholar's permission.

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### **PR opportunities for incoming scholars**

If there are Rotary scholars studying in your district . . . be a good host! What distinguishes the Ambassadorial Scholarships program from other scholarships is the active involvement of area Rotary clubs. Rotarian counselors and hosting clubs help ease the transition to new surroundings. They can be a good support network for overwhelmed students by answering questions and providing assistance.

If students are involved in club projects and district activities, they are more likely to speak positively of Rotary. Invite scholars to district conferences and other events and let clubs know that they are available to speak at meetings. If your district is receiving a large number of scholars, you may want to send out a press release announcing their arrival (see example on page 7). When a scholar does speak at a club meeting, always invite the local media. A scholar's international perspective on your local community can be a good feature story. Some examples of scholar press coverage include:

- ◆ Pilar Violante, a Rotary Scholar from Mexico, appeared with her host counselor on "The Good Morning Show," a local television program in

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA, to discuss the scholarships program and her role as an “ambassador.”

- ◆ Atsuko Watanabe, a Japanese Ambassadorial Scholar studying music in Germany, was featured in a photo and caption in the *Aschaffener Zeitung* newspaper. In the photo, Watanabe was giving a piano performance for local Rotarians. A larger article about the Ambassadorial Scholarships program accompanied the photo.
- ◆ Christopher Jenkins, who rode his bicycle from Wyoming, USA, to Concepcion, Chile, for his scholarship year, appeared on the Chilean morning talk show “Buenos Días a Todos” to talk about his biking experience and the Rotary scholarship that made his stay in Chile possible.

The amount of press coverage will depend upon the skills, interests and individual personalities of the scholars. Those scholars with notable achievements or those pursuing unusual fields of study are more likely to receive media attention. Public relations success may also be determined by where a scholar is studying. In districts that host several students each year, the novelty of Rotary scholars may have worn off. But in those districts that rarely host scholars, the arrival of a Rotary student may be a significant event. Make sure local reporters have information on your scholar and the phone number of a local contact.

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### **Making the most of alumni**

When students return home, they will have plenty of stories about their experience abroad. Inform area clubs and the media that scholars have returned and are available to talk about their trip. Again, media interest depends on the situation of the scholar. For example, local media covered a Rotary club presentation by scholar James Cook, a former U.S. Marine who had recently returned to Cupertino, California, from Hong Kong. As a student who witnessed Great Britain’s historic hand-over of Hong Kong back to China, Cook was a credible local source for an international news story.

Some scholars write articles about their studies or experiences that can be submitted to local newspapers, alumni publications, appropriate trade magazines, or even Web sites. Yalcin Sert, an Ambassadorial Scholar from Turkey, wrote an article for the computer magazine *Monitor* about using electronic mail to correspond with his family while abroad and how he used the Internet to talk to other Rotary scholars.

Develop an organized procedure for tracking your longtime alumni. Each district is encouraged to build and maintain an accurate database of Foundation alumni. Because scholars often relocate beyond their home district, help them reestablish contacts with Rotarians in their new community. The Ambassadorial Scholarships program has received some wonderful PR from former scholars who are now prominent professionals.

Many former scholars serve important posts with their governments, others are highly respected in their fields. Most of them are quick to credit The Rotary Foundation with starting them on their paths to success. Former scholars like Bill Moyers, a prominent U.S. journalist; Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Bill Ferris, with the National Endowment for Arts; and Roger Ebert, a popular film critic, have spoken on behalf of the Ambassadorial Scholarships program at district functions and in the press.

Alumni are excellent spokespeople for Rotary and can speak to the long-term benefits of the program. Many former scholars are benefactors to The Rotary Foundation. They are also good candidates for a Group Study Exchange team, and certainly are potential Rotaract and Rotary club members.

Ask longtime alumni to speak at club or district meetings, or attend fund-raisers. Most of them are happy for an opportunity to “give something back.” Contact The Rotary Foundation Alumni Section at RI World Headquarters for assistance locating alumni.

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### **PR resources**

For more information about Rotary public relations, order the publication *Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs* (257-EN). The guide gives basic tips and suggestions for Rotarians trying to promote club activities locally. It can be ordered from the service center in your area.

Rotary’s home page on the World Wide Web is also a good source of information about the scholarships program. Visit the home page at the Internet address <http://www.rotary.org>. On the Web site there is a growing collection of “pages” of wide-ranging information about Rotary. Access the home page for background information about Rotary public relations and scholarships. The scholarships leaflet (132-EN) and the application (139-EN) may also be downloaded in English from the Web site.

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**A final note**

The best public relations opportunities are often those that can't be anticipated, especially with scholars. While it's good to have a PR plan for the year, don't let it limit you to only those activities. If you think a scholar has done something newsworthy or simply has a good story to tell, contact the media and Rotary International either through a release or a letter.

Although not everything you send will be used, you're likely to be surprised by how much is. For additional guidance promoting Rotary Foundation Scholars, please contact the Rotary International Public Information Department at (847) 866-3237 (telephone), (847) 866-8237 (fax), or e-mail at [pid@rotaryintl.org](mailto:pid@rotaryintl.org).

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**Sample news releases**

A basic tool for communicating news about Ambassadorial Scholars is the press release. On the following pages are several suggested releases: notice of application availability, scholar selection, and arrival of incoming scholars. Suggested news releases should be modified according to your culture and what scholarships are available from your district.

## Sample release: Applications available

Contact: **(Name)**  
**(Telephone)**  
**(Fax/E-mail)**

For Immediate Release

### ***2001-02 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship Applications Available***

**(CITY) (DATE)** — Applications for 2001-02 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarships are now available from the Rotary Club of **(name)**.

The scholarships, which are designed to further international understanding and goodwill, provide for study abroad in more than 160 countries where Rotary clubs are located. Some 1,300 scholarships of various types will be available from clubs worldwide.

During their studies abroad, Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars act as “ambassadors of goodwill.” Through appearances before Rotary clubs and districts, schools, civic organizations, and other forums, the scholars represent their homelands and work to further international understanding.

Academic-Year Ambassadorial Scholarships are for one academic year abroad and provide funding for round-trip transportation, tuition and fees, room, board, some educational supplies, and language training (if necessary), up to a maximum award of US\$25,000 or its equivalent.

Multi-Year Ambassadorial Scholarships are flat grants of US\$12,000 per year for either two or three years toward the cost of a degree program in another country. Also available are Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarships which provide funding for three or six months of intensive language study and cultural immersion in another country, including transportation, tuition and homestay expenses, up to a maximum of US\$12,000 and US\$19,000 respectively.

For more information and an application, please contact **(Insert local contact information in this paragraph — name, address and phone numbers, as well as type of scholarship available and application deadline dates)**. Interested students may also want to consult the Rotary Web site at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org), where the application may be downloaded in English.

The Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarships program is the world’s largest privately sponsored international scholarship program. Focused on humanitarian service, personal diplomacy, and academic excellence, the program has sponsored more than 30,000 Rotary Scholars abroad since it began in 1947.

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## Sample release: Scholars selected

Contact: **(Name)**  
**(Telephone)**  
**(Fax/E-mail)**

For Immediate Release

### *Local Student Named Rotary “Ambassador”*

**(CITY) (DATE)** — **(Scholar’s name)**, sponsored by the Rotary Club of **(name)**, was awarded a 2000-01 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship. **(Scholar’s last name)** plans to study at **(university)** in **(city and country)**.

**(Include scholar information here: name, hometown, educational background, study plans as a Foundation scholar, achievements.)**

[Please Note: The following paragraph will change if the scholar has been awarded something other than an Academic-Year Ambassadorial Scholarship. See below for sample paragraphs for students awarded Multi-Year\* or Cultural\*\* Ambassadorial Scholarships.]

**(Last name)** will receive funding to cover round-trip transportation, tuition and fees, room, board, and necessary educational supplies for one academic year, up to a maximum amount of US\$25,000.

**(Last name)** is one of more than 1,300 students worldwide to receive a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship this year. Designed to promote international understanding and goodwill, the scholarships give students the opportunity to study in one of the more than 160 countries where Rotary clubs are located. While abroad, Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars speak to Rotary clubs and districts, schools, civic organizations, and other forums where they act as “ambassadors of goodwill.”

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\* **(Last name)** has received a Multi-Year Ambassadorial Scholarship to pursue an academic degree program abroad. The Rotary Foundation will provide US\$12,000 or its equivalent per year for the **(two-year or three-year)** scholarship.

\*\* **(Last name)** has received a Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarship to improve **(his/her) (specific language)** skills through intensive language study and cultural immersion. The Rotary Foundation will provide funding for round-trip transportation, tuition fees and homestay expenses for a **(three-month or six-month)** scholarship up to a maximum amount of **(US\$12,000 or US\$19,000)**.



## Sample release: Arriving scholars

Contact: **(Name)**  
**(Telephone)**  
**(Fax/E-mail)**

For Immediate Release

### *Area Rotarians Welcome (Number) International Scholars In 2000-01*

**(CITY) (DATE)** — Rotarians of **(area — may be district, club, or description of geographical area)** will be hosting **(number)** Rotary Foundation Scholars during the 2000-01 academic year. These scholars are among more than 1,300 scholars from some 70 countries that received a Rotary Foundation Scholarship this year. They are **(scholar 1 name)** from **(country)** studying **(subject)** at **(institution)**; and **(scholar 2 name)** from **(country)** who will study **(subject)** at **(institution)**.

The scholarships, which are designed to further international understanding and goodwill, provide for study abroad in one of more than 160 countries where Rotary clubs are located. During their stay, **(scholar 1)** and **(scholar 2)** will be speaking at Rotary club meetings, schools, civic organizations, and other forums about life in their home countries. **(Here you can include information about the scholars — hobbies, interesting facts, etc. or a quote.)**

The scholars will arrive in **(month)** to begin their studies. If you are interested in having a Rotary Scholar speak to your group or organization, please contact **(Insert local contact information in this paragraph — name, address and phone numbers)**.

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