

## Rotary Rationale for Multiple Host Families

Other programs allow one family. We don't.

We know from our own experience and that of others that when the first host family relationship is particularly successful, it can be hard for both the student and the family to separate. But the Rotary program calls for three host families for very good reasons.

Committing to 3-4 months, rather than a year, alleviates the financial and emotional responsibilities on the families. (If it's hard to part after 3-4 months, imagine the pain after a year.)

There is no such thing as the "typical American family," so exposure to three different family structures, interests, activities and lifestyles gives the student a better overall picture of family life in the USA. Too, the more families a student lives with, the more exposure they have in the community, through the extended family and friends and new neighborhoods.

With luck, all three situations will be successful and the student will go home at the end of the year with three ongoing family relationships, not just one. As those of us who have been lucky enough to have close connections with our students know, these relationships can and do go on and on and on.

Beyond that, there's a very important growth opportunity for the students in the Rotary program. When they first arrive, they're nervous and scared. Will I be able to adapt? Will the family like me? When it does work, there is great relief and the bonding begins. Just when they're comfortably ensconced, they're required to move again. The same apprehension sets in. Voila! They succeed again. When it happens for the third time they realize they can do this. They are no longer totally reliant on a family's nurturing to succeed. They have found the resources within themselves. By the time we send them home we've given them the self-confidence to meet life's changes and challenges and to rise to whatever occasion presents itself.

So if any of your first families have trouble relinquishing their new son or daughter, we hope this Rotary rationale helps you to explain it to them. It is, after all, in the best interest of the student to have multiple family connections, and in the final analysis, we're all working together to do what's in the best interest of our students, aren't we?