

ROTARIAN GUIDE

for



Virtual RYLA Program

Districts 5020, 5030 & 5230

Central CA ~ Western WA ~ Vancouver Island, BC

Feb 28, 2021 - March 28, 2021

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What is RYLA?

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is an intensive leadership experience organized by Rotary clubs and districts where student leaders develop their leadership and teambuilding skills while having fun and making connections. Although RYLA conferences are typically held in-person, this year virtual RYLA is designed for students to participate from home.

What is RYLA Ascend?

RYLA Ascend is a virtual RYLA program hosted by RYLA Northwest (Districts 5020 and 5030) and Camp ROYAL (District 5230). Rotary District 5230 includes parts of Central California, from Fresno to Monterey. Rotary District 5030 covers the greater Seattle, Washington area. Rotary District 5020 includes western Washington, U.S.A., and Vancouver Island, B.C., Canada. Students will meet fellow young adult leaders from up and down the west coast of North America.

What is your role as a Rotarian?

Club support is critical to the success of this program. We rely on local Rotarians to identify student candidates for RYLA. The best student candidates are not necessarily the student class president or the captain of a team; they are students with recognized potential who will grow when presented with challenging activities and workshops.

We recognize that students will be facing different obstacles when attending, ranging from spotty internet connection to busy homes with many distractions. Please work with us to identify potential obstacles and help us solve them. These should not be disqualifying factors; would that be fair or beneficial to all concerned? Understanding the diversity of lived experience that students face during this pandemic and finding ways for them to meaningfully attend is an opportunity for Rotarians to build goodwill and better friendships. For instance, if a student is logging in from a bustling home, would a set of \$20 earbuds with microphone facilitate participation, both for the student attending and those who want to hear his or her ideas? We encourage you to be intentional and creative, and reach out to the RYLA team where necessary.

In April, welcome your student(s) to attend a club meeting. Some clubs have even invited their returning student(s) to deliver a program on their experience, or to become an Honorary Rotarian (upon turning 18 years of age). In addition, we will be asking students in neighboring communities to discuss service opportunities in their area and

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potential solutions. You may just find that your next service project or grant idea comes from a RYLA alumni!

How do I register my student?

RYLA Northwest and Camp ROYAL are maintaining separate registration systems for clubs/students from their respective areas. If you are a Rotarian in Districts 5020 or 5030, visit rylanw.org/rotarians/ to learn more. If you are a Rotarian in District 5230, email Bruce.rylaAscend@gmail.com to begin the process.

How will students “attend” RYLA this year?

Students will visit the RYLANW.org and log into the RYLA Ascend webpage. Students will review lesson materials on their own, participate in small group meetings led by alumni facilitators, generate ideas in activity groups, and build their skills during workshops. Since students cannot leave their regularly scheduled activities (including school, activities, family time), the schedule is designed to enable students to do both: maintain their current schedule and attend RYLA.

How is this different from schooling? Will students be bored?

We assure you that the RYLA program is not passive online learning. Have you ever wondered how students can encounter Zoom fatigue during the day and then jump onto Snapchat with their friends? Or how someone will complain about spending all day in Teams meetings for work, then turn on the TV? Screens are merely the media for connection; engagement with that media is born out of an interest in what’s beyond the screen.

RYLA Ascend is an alumni-facilitator led program. What does that mean? Facilitators are generally teens and twenty-something alumni of RYLA programs who have returned as Rotary volunteers to share the lessons they learned when they attended RYLA, with some adjustments to account for the pandemic. Many facilitators are Rotarians or Rotaractors in their home or college communities, and all understand the mission and principles of Rotary. Facilitators are also near-peers for our students who are trained to share via facilitation. As a facilitator, their role is not to “teach,” but to help students practice the lessons and concepts through activities and realize the take-aways (“a-ha moments”). This year, our facilitators will be logging in from all over the United States, from California and Washington to Arizona, New Jersey, Missouri, Colorado, and North Carolina.

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What does the month-long schedule look like?

Students will meet on Sunday and Wednesday nights, although students may schedule additional meetings of their small groups as needed.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February 28 3-4:30pm – Kickoff Program 4:30-5:30 – Small Groups	March 1	2	3 6-7pm – Small Group Challenge 7-8pm – Action Groups	4	5	6
7 2-5pm – Workshop 5-6pm – Small Groups	8	9	10 6-7pm – Action Groups	11	12	13
14 3-4pm – Workshop 4:30-5:30 – Small Groups	15	16	17 6-7pm – Action Groups	18	19	20
21 3-4pm – Workshop 4:30-5:30 – Small Groups	22	23	24 6-7pm – Action Groups	25	26	27
28 3-4pm – Small Groups 4-5pm – RYLA Sendoff	29	30	31			

Small Groups will select their own meeting times based on Small Group preferences and availability.