**Ralph J. Gonsoulin Rotary Youth Exchange Scholarship**

**History**

The Ralph J. Gonsoulin Scholarship is in memory and honor of Ralph J. Gonsoulin. Ralph was a former Outbound Chairman of District 5890’s Rotary Youth Exchange Program. He was well loved by the students and Rotarians alike. He exemplified so many outstanding personal characteristics, and we hope our scholarship winners will exhibit some of these same virtues.

Ralph has been described in the following ways. He was intelligent, respected, and respectful. He was passionate, hard-working, honest, and a peacemaker. He was humble, determined,

adaptable, and flexible. Ralph was caring, self-confident and positive. He was a team player, great communicator, and always had a positive attitude. He was committed to whatever he was doing at the time, was service-oriented, and had the highest moral integrity. Ralph lived Rotary’s Four Way Test and exemplified Rotary’s motto of Service Above Self.

Ralph was married to Hope, and they have five children and two grandsons. Ralph was from Louisiana and was a graduate of Opelousas Catholic High School and attended Louisiana State University where he earned a BS in Civil Engineering in 1991 and MBA in 2000. He was a long-time employee of ExxonMobil as Project Management Advisor and a volunteer extraordinaire for Rotary, United Way, and other non-profits. He was a marathon runner who completed 16 marathons. He is sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be sponsored by a Rotary Club in District 5890 and must demonstrate economic hardship and merit.

**Application**

1. All eligible students must complete the interactive application located under the heading “Scholarships” on [www.Ryehouston.com](http://www.Ryehouston.com). The completed application should also be sent through the website.
2. Personal essay “Why I Want To be a Rotary Youth Exchange Student.” The essay should be typed and include the following:

* How the student sees their role as an ambassador for Rotary Youth Exchange
* What the exchange means to them personally
* Their personal and professional goals
* How the exchange will benefit the student and their future plans
* Any effort the student is making to financially pay for their year-long exchange
* Community service in which the student has participated

1. Letter from parents describing their support for their son’s/daughter’s decision to be a Rotary Youth Exchange student and the need for financial assistance. Any supporting documents can be provided that further defines economic need.
2. Letter from the President or Youth Exchange Officer of the sponsoring Rotary Club outlining their support for the prospective scholarship recipient. The letter should be sent from the Rotary Club to the Ralph J. Gonsoulin Scholarship Committee and not given to the student. The address for letter is:

Anais Watsky

Rotary eClub Houston

17814 Running Brook Lane

Spring, TX 77379-6142

**Awards**

The amount of the award will vary depending on the availability of funds. The scholarship committee will have the latitude to determine the disbursement of funds among the successful candidates. Awards and the amount and the number of scholarships will be approved by a majority of members of the scholarship committee. The student and parents will sign the scholarship agreement document to repay the amount of the scholarship if the student is sent home for disciplinary reasons prior to the normal end of the exchange. (See form at the end of these instructions.)

**Number of Scholarships**

The number of awards each year will be determined by the availability of funds and the number of qualified candidates.

**Application Deadline**

The application deadline will be February 15, 2022. In subsequent years, the scholarship deadline is February 1.

**Selection and Disbursement**

Applications will be reviewed by the scholarship committee and will be graded using an unbiased value system based on need and merit. The decision of the scholarship committee will be final and not subject to appeal. The scholarship committee treasurer will send a check request to the treasurer Rotary eClub Houston Foundation for payment and disbursement to the scholarship winner/s. The scholarship committee will be responsible for all record keeping and retention of documents. Pertinent documents must be retained for at least three years.

**Announcement of Awards**

The announcement of the awards will be made by the District Governor at a time convenient to the District Governor