

**RYLA 2023**  
**Participant Handbook**  
**& Parent/Guardian Guide**

TeamRYLA7490@gmail.com  
[www.RYLA7490.org](http://www.RYLA7490.org)



## Hello!

Congratulations on being selected as a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards scholarship recipient! As a 2023 RYLAteer, you are joining a long legacy of RYLA 7490 participants that are top-quality, high-value people who go out and make a positive impact on the world!

Please review the information in this Handbook and Guide closely. In it, you will find essential information about the mission and vision of RYLA 7490 as well as camp rules, a recommended packing list and important documents (online forms) to fill out in order to finalize your enrollment in the program.

This year's RYLA program begins the morning of Sunday, June 25th and concludes the evening of Wednesday, June 28th. The program will be held at Happiness is Camping at 62 Sunset Lake Road, Hardwick Township, NJ 07825.

Drop off and sign in are from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM on June 25th. We ask that participants with last names starting with A-M arrive from 9:00 to 9:30 and N-Z from 9:30 to 10:00. During this time, participants will arrive, check in, get their gear settled in their assigned room and participate in pre-program activities.

Participants are required to remain on program premises for the duration of the RYLA program. Late arrivals to and early departures from the program are prohibited. Emergencies that require departure from the program will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Visitors are not allowed (drive-bys to drop off items for participants are also not allowed). Participant pick-up will take place from 5:30 to 6:00 PM at the same place and in the same way drop off takes place. It will be imperative that all participants and guests depart the camp facility on time, as the RYLA program must quickly vacate the premises. Participants' parents/guardians or an authorized Rotarian who has completed Rotary's Youth Protection training may pick up participants.

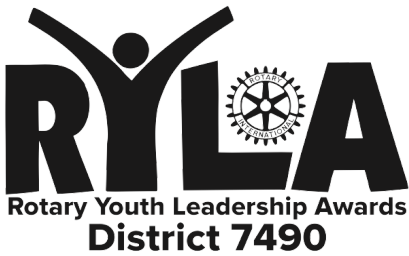
All meals will be provided, starting with lunch on Sunday through dinner on Wednesday.

Team RYLA 7490 is truly looking forward to a historic program this year. We look forward to welcoming you in just a few days!

**David Z. Edelstein**

Program Director

RYLA 7490



## **General Program Information & Background**

### **❖ What is RYLA?**

- The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is an intensive leadership experience organized by Rotary clubs and districts where participants are presented with opportunities to develop their personal, team, community and global leadership skills while having fun and making connections.

### **❖ What are the benefits?**

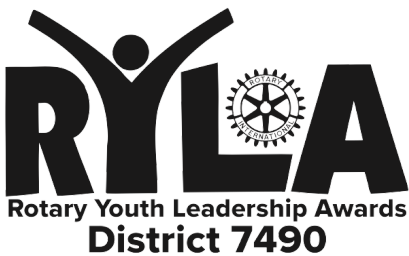
- At RYLA, participants:
  - Connect with leaders in their community
  - Build communication and problem-solving skills
  - Discover strategies for becoming a dynamic leader in their schools and communities
  - Learn from community leaders, inspirational speakers and peer mentors
  - Unlock their potential to turn motivation into action
  - Have fun and form lasting friendships

### **❖ Background**

- Current high school students finishing their junior year of high school are eligible to attend.
- Participants must be younger than 18 years old during the entirety of the RYLA program (June 25th-June 28th, 2023)
- Participants are sponsored by local Rotary clubs and are selected from students enrolled and in good standing in public schools, private schools, charter schools and home schools in the Rotary clubs' designated geographic area
- The RYLA program consists of:
  - Leadership training via
    - Outstanding speakers
    - Experiential activities
    - Discussion groups
    - Service projects
  - Friendships with peers that will last a lifetime

### **❖ Talent Show**

- RYLA 7490 will host a talent show as an activity during the program. Participants are welcome to bring instruments and other items to use as part of the talent show. By participating in the program, participants and their parents/guardians acknowledge and accept that the instruments



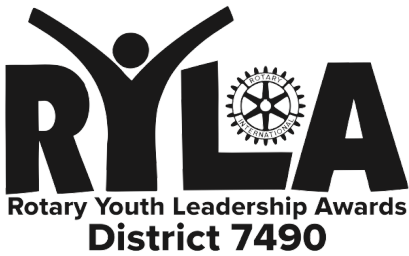
and/or other items brought to the facility are the sole responsibility of the participants and that damage to and/or loss of personal items are not the responsibility of the RYLA program, Happiness is Camping or any parties related to the program and/or the facility.

#### ❖ Closing Ceremonies

- Unfortunately, due to a surprising change in camp rules at the last minute, visitors will not be allowed at Closing Ceremonies. However, professionally-edited video of Closing Ceremonies and of other events from the week will be made available to participants and parents/guardians after RYLA concludes.
- It will be imperative that all participants and guests depart the camp facility on time, as the RYLA program must quickly vacate the premises.

#### ❖ Camp Rules

- Participants are prohibited from driving themselves to the program for any reason. This is for safety considerations and in keeping with RYLA, Rotary and Happiness is Camping policies. Participants may be dropped off and picked up by parents/guardians or an authorized Rotarian who has completed Rotary's Youth Protection training.
- Participants are required to remain on program premises for the duration of the RYLA program. Late arrivals to and early departures from the program are prohibited. Emergencies that require departure from the program will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- Visitors are not allowed.
- Drive-bys to drop off items are not allowed.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices are allowed; however, RYLA encourages participants to limit the use of such technologies during the program. The use of phones does have its place during the program (for example to share contact information with other leaders and engage in activities designed to teach how to use technology to create service projects), but there are also times and activities where the use of technology is strongly discouraged in order to enhance the in-person experience.
- Bullying and/or violence of any kind are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Failure to comply with program rules may result in dismissal. Although this has not happened to our knowledge at any previous RYLA 7490, any student that presents a disruption to the program or presents a risk to other participants, staff or volunteers will result in the parent/guardian being asked to pick up their participant immediately.



## **Forms to Complete**

Please provide the information requested below by filling out the form at [www.TinyURL.com/Ryla-Forms-2023](http://www.TinyURL.com/Ryla-Forms-2023) before June 20, 2023. Participant's eligibility to attend the program is no longer guaranteed if forms are submitted June 20, 2023 or later.

### **1. Participant Information**

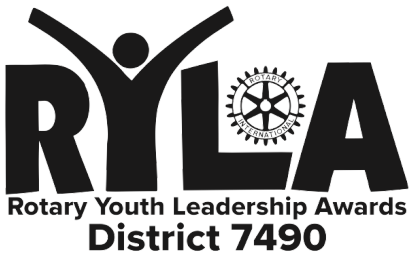
### **2. Acknowledgement & Acceptance of Program Rules**

### **3. Statement of Participant's Health**

### **4. Liability Release**

### **5. Photography Release**

### **6. COVID-19 Policy**

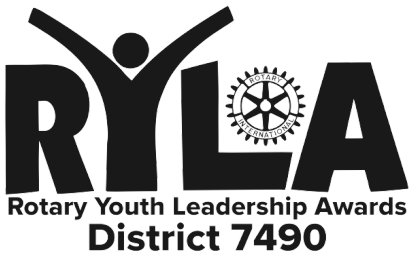


## Packing List

The RYLA program includes many activities that require movement and are both indoors and outdoors. We recommend packing school-appropriate, comfortable clothing and preparing for various weather conditions. It may be hot and sunny and/or cool and raining. The temperature and conditions may vary from day to night, day to day, inside to outside. Also, please remember there are no laundry facilities on the premises, so please pack enough to last you the duration of the four-day program! Rooms are not locked at any time. RYLA 7490 is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### Recommended packing items:

- Reusable water bottle
- Pillow, sleeping bag, twin-sized bed sheets, blanket
- Bath towels
- Flashlight
- Laundry bag
- Personal hygiene/toiletry items (toothbrush, tooth paste, shampoo, deodorant, hair dryer, etc.)
- Flip flops (for wearing while showering)
- Comfortable closed-toe shoes
- Extra pairs of socks
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Light jacket/sweater
- Comfortable clothing you can move in (think: running, jumping, sitting)
- Bug repellent, sunscreen
- Phone charger
- Small bag/backpack
- Medications **listed on your Statement of Participant's Health Form**. There will be no sharing of any medications.
- Face masks, if desired
- Any specific snacks you might prefer during the program (please no peanut-containing items, as some participants have severe allergies) (we will provide meals from lunch on Sunday through dinner on Wednesday and other snacks as well, but if you have a specific snack you enjoy, bring it! Please be mindful of other participants' potential allergies.)
- \*\*\*Personal valuables (electronics, jewelry, watches, etc.) and cash of high value are DISCOURAGED



## **Prohibited Items**

- All tobacco products and paraphernalia
  - This includes vaping devices, e-cigarettes, etc.
- All drugs, unless prescribed to the participant and identified on the Statement of Participant Health Form
- Alcohol
- Knives and other items that may be used as weapons
- Inappropriate, revealing or offensive clothing (remember: school appropriate)

**\*By participating in the program, participants and their parents/guardians understand and agree that RYLA and Happiness is Camping Staff have full permission to search a participant's belongings at any time if it is suspected there may be a prohibited item present.**



## **Communication in Case of Emergency**

David Edelstein, RYLA Chair: (201) 787-3167

Jim Boyer, Past District Governor, Youth Services Chair, Youth Protection Officer: (201) 206-3117

Ray Cywinski, District Governor: (201) 566-5227

Happiness is Camping, Camp Facility: (908) 362-6733

**As always, in critical emergency, dial 911**





## **Ready to Rise! Ready to Rock! Ready to RYLA!**

Rotary District 7490 RYLA Chair David Edelstein attended RYLA in 2014 as a representative from Paramus High School and the Paramus Rotary Club.

David's first involvement with Rotary was as a PHS student, volunteering at the annual Rotary Pasta Dinner held at the school. As a high school junior, David received the Certificate of Global Peace & Multicultural Understanding from the Paramus Rotary Club in recognition of his contest-winning poem on the topic of Multicultural Diversity. He was also a four-year scholarship recipient from the Paramus Rotary Club.

David describes RYLA as a program that had immediate impact and lasting influence on who he is and, consequently, his entire life. While at RYLA in 2014, David learned lessons of personal, team, community and global leadership, teamwork and service. He immediately began putting these lessons to practice in his home, school and extracurricular life (including a heavy influence on a 10,000-word thesis he wrote as part of his black belt testing for Isshin-Ryu karate, titled "The Power of Words.")

David reunited with RYLA in 2016, returning as a program organizer and leader. In 2018 and 2023, David visited RYLA 5330 in California to observe and share RYLA mindsets and strategies. This outreach continued as he connected with RYLAs across the US and internationally, including Districts 6980 and 6930 in Florida, 5020 and 5030 in Washington State and western Canada, 7150 and 7170 in central New York and 7910 in central Massachusetts. David has been a guest speaker at RYLA Hawaii, RYLA New Mexico, RYLA Southern California and RYLA Mississippi. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, David helped create and lead an interactive online RYLA program (RYLAUniversity.com) for District 5650 in Nebraska.

David graduated Summa Cum Laude with University Honors from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University with a Bachelor of Science in Broadcast & Digital Journalism. David served as Vice President of the Rotaract Club of Syracuse University in its first full year of existence. He is a founding member and current President of the Rotaract Club of Leadership & Service in District 7490.

Please feel free to reach out to David for any RYLA-related questions, comments, assistance, ideas, information, stories, etc. You may email him at:  
TeamRYLA7490@gmail.com

