

GENERAL

The following information is furnished with the sincere hope that it will provide guidance to you, making your special GRSP year a meaningful and rewarding experience.

Having accepted the GRSP scholarship, you are an international guest of Georgia Rotarians and specifically of your sponsoring Rotary Club.

- As such, you are an **Ambassador** of your country. And we know you will be an outstanding representative. Remember: by representing your country, you have certain responsibilities.

During your academic year, you are responsible to your sponsoring Rotary Club, your selected Host Family, and your GRSP Trustee.

- Your assigned Trustee is a guarantor of the Georgia Rotary Student Program, insuring that its mission is fulfilled and that your year is a positive, enriching experience.
- If you encounter questions or problems that are not resolved by your host family, you are responsible for discussing them with your Trustee.

Your GRSP scholarship is both a cultural and scholastic scholarship. GRSP's mission is to provide you with experiences that contribute to Rotary's ideal of **World Peace through Understanding**.

- **The foundation of Understanding will result from your INVOLVEMENT with your sponsoring Club, host family, GRSP students, college life, etc.**
- **IMPORTANT: TO INSURE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR YEAR AS A GRSP STUDENT, YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH ROTARY AND GEORGIA ROTARIANS WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES.**
- To further Understanding, you are encouraged to actively participate in all aspects of American culture. Likewise, you will be asked to share information about your country and its culture. **Jointly, then, we have responsibilities to each other:**
 - **It is important that we each explore and compare the similarities and differences between our cultures rather than judge what's right or wrong.**
 - **When discussing political, social, and religious thought and/or issues, we must be sure that ALL dialogue is directed toward UNDERSTANDING and is not perceived by the other as attempted conversion.**

Once here, you will find that many people in the Southeastern U.S. are deeply religious -- in thought and in practice. It is an important aspect of the culture.

- GRSP asks that you remain open to and tolerant of this unique cultural aspect. Likewise, you should expect others to respect and be tolerant of your beliefs.

To enhance your integration into the American culture, please refrain from using your native language as much as possible.

Please associate with Rotarians and American college students; this way you will learn more about our culture.

Throughout your year, you will hear many people refer to GRSP as an "exchange" program. Unfortunately, even some Rotarians say this in error.

- GRSP is not an exchange program in the traditional sense. It is, however, an exchange in the true sense of "sharing".
- When appropriate, politely clarify this misunderstanding.
- Also, when introducing yourself or being introduced, refer to yourself as a GRSP scholar or a GRSP international student. Avoid the terms "exchange" or "foreign" student.

You will find that America is quickly becoming a smoke-free society. If you smoke, please observe the following:

- Refrain from smoking in Rotary meetings unless the Club permits it.
- When visiting homes, if the family members do not smoke, excuse yourself and go outside to smoke. This courtesy is appreciated. If the family does not mind smoking in the home, they will gladly tell you.
- Most public buildings do not permit smoking. Generally, there are areas outside for this.

Since GRSP students are mature, young adults there seldom are any serious problems requiring action by the Chairman or Trustees of the program. **However, an individual's scholarship can -- and has been -- revoked for action and behavior unbecoming a student in this honored program.** We are confident YOU and the other members of your class will be outstanding ambassadors of understanding and goodwill.

HOST FAMILY

Your sponsoring Host Club has selected an outstanding Rotarian and his/her family to be your Host Family.

- In addition to providing you with a "home away from home", your host will take many steps toward making you "one of the family". Your host does this, not as an obligation to Rotary, but rather as a sincere belief in and commitment to the ideals of GRSP and Rotary.
- More than likely, your host played a major role in selecting you as his/her Club's GRSP student for this year.
- In an effort to have you as a member of the family and not as a "guest", your host asks that you actively join in their activities and to enjoy being part of your new, adopted American family.

As the representative of his/her Club, the HOST is responsible for You. And YOU are responsible to the Host! Also, you are responsible to your assigned Trustee, but most of your involvement and accountability will be with your host.

Also, the host is responsible for involving the host Club in your year by:

- Coordinating and scheduling Rotarians to pick you up and return you to campus so you can attend many of the Club's weekly meetings.
- Coordinating and scheduling Club families to host you for dinners, weekends, etc.
- Informing the Club about your activities and status throughout the year.
- Making Rotary a meaningful part of your life!

Due to the cost of sponsoring a student, several clubs frequently join together to select and sponsor one student. Each club has a host family; therefore, you may have more than one host family. Jointly, they select one "lead host" to:

- Coordinate scheduling between the hosts to prevent you from having to choose between two or more invitations for the same date.
- Maintain equity in scheduling, meeting your needs, etc.
- Determine what basic items each club will provide for your year at college.

Once your selection has been approved by the college and you accept the scholarship, each host is to write a letter of welcome to you. **Please answer promptly.**

Your host will define your GRSP responsibilities based on the Club's expectations of you that are in addition to the items detailed in this section of the Handbook.

He/she will describe the Club's requirements for the presentation you will make to the Club within a few weeks after your arrive in Georgia. (Refer to the section, Host Club.)

For personal, basic items you will need at college, your host will identify the items the Club will loan to you, such as bed linen, towels, etc. You will return all items in good condition to the host at the end of your year.

Prior to your arrival, the host will take steps to establish good communication with you. Once you are in Georgia, it's important you and your host work together for sound, one-to-one communication.

- If either you or the host/family don't understand what the other person said or meant, ask for clarification. Don't be hesitant!
- **Both you and your host are responsible for successful communication and dialogue.**
- With the host, determine how and when you will handle your weekly telephone conversations.
- **You are responsible for talking with your host before scheduling any weekend or holiday**

activities. This is to avoid any conflict with scheduled Rotary activities.

- **Throughout the year, keep your host informed about your academic term schedule and holiday-vacation periods.**
- You should feel free to call your host ANYTIME!
- Be sure you keep the home and office telephone numbers of your host family and your Trustee with you at all times.
- You will find that communications will be the key to having a great year with your host.

You will be invited to your host's home for weekends and holidays. Please accept their sincere request to join them and be a real member of the family.

If you encounter serious financial difficulty during the year, please discuss it with your Trustee. GRSP asks that you refrain from borrowing money from your host family and/or Club.

If possible, offer to cook a dish or even an entire meal typical of your country for your host family. Ask your host if you need a Metric-to-Imperial (American) measurement conversion table.

If your host has young children in his/her family, offer to speak to the children's school class about your country and its customs.

Your host will explain the American holidays that are celebrated in Georgia. Be prepared to explain your country's special holidays to them.

When home for weekends, you may enjoy renting videos. This is a good time to see many movies you have heard about but would not otherwise be able to see. Discuss your interest with your host.

Many foods in Georgia will be similar to those you are accustomed to; others will be different. Your host asks only that you try our foods. If you do not care for a particular dish, your host will certainly understand.

- If you must adhere to special dietary laws/restrictions as a result of your culture, religion, or medical condition, please tell your host prior to your arrival.

Frequently, student's parents come to Georgia to see their son/daughter during the GRSP year. If your parents can come, please inform your host as soon as you know so the host can schedule time to meet and be with your parents and you.

- As a courtesy, please plan to have your parents visit with your Georgia family at least one day before you depart for travels with your parents.

HOST CLUB

Your relationship with your host Club is extremely important.

- Your host Club has gone to considerable effort to make your year possible. It wants you to be actively involved in the Club's "Rotary family" throughout the year.
- The Club's continued support and involvement in GRSP depends, in large measure, on your involvement and participation with the Club and its families.

Your Club will ask you to make at least one, maybe two formal presentations -- one shortly after arrival and another before departing Georgia.

- The first program will be scheduled as soon as possible after you arrive. If you have more than one host club, the "lead host" will coordinate your speaking schedule with all the clubs.
- In general, your presentation should be a 20 minute orientation to your country, including its culture, customs, political, economic, and social systems along with an introduction to your family.
- Power point or 35mm slides are strongly recommended. The Club members also appreciate other support materials such as maps, books, etc. if you have space to bring them.
- Your host will let you know any other aspects the Club wishes you to address. Please discuss any questions you have with your host.
- GRSP encourages you to prepare your presentation before you come to Georgia. Your Club considers this an important and exciting way to begin its year with you.
- Although you may be apprehensive about making a presentation, you will find Rotarians warm and friendly. They really want to hear what you have to say.
- By being well-prepared, you can answer the questions they will certainly ask at the end of your presentation.
- By all means, allow your presentation to be fun. You'll enjoy it more and they will too!
- If you are requested to make a second presentation, it usually is held in late spring. It should focus on the year you have spent in Georgia -- your perceptions about the United States, Americans, Georgians, the GRSP program, and a sampling of some meaningful experiences you have had.
- Again, slides and/or photographs are important in your farewell address to the Club.

Throughout the year, your host and other Club Rotarians will assist you in attending Club functions. You should plan to attend and to actively participate in:

- Weekly Club meetings
- Special functions such as Christmas parties, spouses nights, picnics, barbecues, etc.
- Club projects

Occasionally, you will need to miss a class to attend a Rotary function. If your professor requires a permission statement, tell your host. He/she is prepared to write a statement on Club letterhead, detailing the function and your Rotary attendance requirement. If this is required in advance of the

function, please notify your host.

An important part of your year will come from your involvement with Rotary families. Periodically, you will be hosted for dinner, weekends, sightseeing, outings, etc.

- **An important aspect of the American culture is your written acknowledgement of a family's or individual's kindness to you. GRSP asks that you send a "Thank You" card with a short, personal note of appreciation for the friendship that was extended to you.**
- **This must be written and sent immediately upon your return to school. A telephone call is not sufficient.**
- Your host will give you a Club membership roster with addresses to facilitate your writing.
- If you were entertained by a non-Rotarian, be sure you get his/her address before you leave.
- Your efforts will not only be appreciated, but they will also contribute to the success of your GRSP year.

When you are at Club functions, some Rotarians will make a general invitation to you such as "We would like to have you come to our home. Call me when you have a free weekend!"

- In America this is considered a sincere invitation; you should not consider this as "courteous conversation". It is proper to ask the individual for his/her telephone and then call to schedule a convenient time.
- Be sure you check with your host about your schedule before making the call. Let your host know what the final plans are so he/she can update his/her calendar.

At the beginning of Rotary meetings, a short prayer is offered. It is followed by a "pledge of allegiance" to the American flag.

- As an international student, you are not expected to recite the pledge. With the other Club members, stand and face the flag. This act of respect is sufficient and is all that's expected of you.

PRE-DEPARTURE

Avoid making your travel plans to Georgia until your host family has written to you. They will write to you shortly after being notified of your acceptance by the college/university.

- Depending on the host's schedule, they may want you to arrive a week or so before you must register at college.
- If so, this allows you to recover from your flight and time to adjust to your new home, family, Georgia, language, etc. Your host family may have some local sightseeing planned for you.

- If invited, please try to make your plans accordingly.
- As soon as you know your travel itinerary, please provide it to your host as well as to the GRSP office in Savannah.

Estimate the spending money you will need for the first part of the year. Please bring the money in traveler's checks or be prepared to have it transferred from your bank at home to your checking account established at a local bank near college.

- Your international student advisor or academic advisor will help you establish your personal checking account at a bank near the campus.
- Some colleges have automated teller machines (ATM's) on campus for convenient deposits and withdrawals.
- If an ATM is available, be sure you know if there is a small charge for each transaction.
- Many students find it convenient to have a MasterCard or Visa credit card from their home bank.
- In addition to purchasing items, these cards can frequently be used to transfer bank funds internationally for a nominal service charge.
- Although American Express is a popular credit card in the U.S., it is not as widely-accepted as MasterCard and Visa.

For electrical items you bring such as a hairdryer, etc. you may need to bring an electrical converter with adapter plugs. The United States electrical system standard is 60 cycle - 110/120 volt.

After reading the section on Transportation, you may wish to consider purchasing a car. Please discuss this with your parents prior to your departure. GRSP asks that you have their permission before proceeding with a purchase.

- If you are considering a car purchase, please bring your driver's license and an international license, if you have one.

Many student's have misconceptions about Georgia's climate. As a result they do not bring all the necessary clothing for the seasons. **With your host, please discuss the specific climatic conditions for the region where you will be attending college.**

Generally:

- During summer and early fall, daytime temperatures will be between 80 and 95 degrees F. (26 and 35 C).
- In winter (December-February), temperatures can be in the 50's to 60's (10 to 15 C). However, cold periods occur with temperatures near or below freezing, 32 degrees F. Occasionally, temperatures will fall to 10 degrees F (-12 C).
- Northern Georgia receives snow periodically through the winter. Also, ice storms do occur throughout the state, paralyzing the entire area.

- Normally, severe cold weather lasts only a few days.
- During spring, daytime temperatures range from 40 to 70 degrees F (4 to 21 C) -- a great time to get your suntan before going home.
- **Winter clothing such as sweaters, coats, etc. is a must!**
- Georgia does experience occasional tornadoes and the effects of some hurricanes. You will receive specific information on safety precautions at your Orientation Conclave in early October.
- **IMPORTANT: Be sure to bring some dress clothes appropriate for Rotary functions.**

In preparation for your Club presentation, please bring materials such as slides, maps, videotapes (NTSC - U.S. television standard), etc.

- **If you have a national costume, please bring it and wear it when you make your presentation. You will also be able to wear it at the Conclave and District Conference. (See the section, Conclave, Conference & Gatherings.)**

Please refrain from making any plans for the Thanksgiving (November) and Christmas holiday periods until after you arrive in Georgia and discuss it with your host.

- Your host will be scheduling activities for you with his/her family and other Club families for these two important holiday periods. Upon arrival, your host will discuss these arrangements and help you make any travel plans for the remaining, available time.

Please bring photographs of your family, home, etc. to show to the new friends you will make in Georgia.

- If space is available in your luggage, you might include some favorite posters to hang in your college room.

Before coming to Georgia, please check with your college office at home about transferring academic credits earned in the U.S.

- In many cases, colleges will not accept and apply credits earned during your GRSP year in Georgia toward your degree program at home.
- Ask your college officials about their rules and regulations.
- If a transfer is possible, be sure you know the required procedures. Bring any necessary documents that your Georgia school will need to expedite your credit transfer.

If your application for a GRSP scholarship was endorsed or recommended by a Rotary club near your home, please bring the name of the club president and his/her complete mailing address. Upon arrival, give this information to your host so your host Club can communicate with the Rotarians who proposed you.

If you have an endorsing club, you should ask the club to provide you with one of its banners for each of your sponsoring host clubs. The exchange of club banners is a Rotary tradition.

- You should present the banner to the president of your host Club(s) when you make your first presentation.
- If possible, you should bring one additional banner for the club that will host the GRSP Conclave in October.

You should bring sufficient "Thank You" note cards for the Rotarians and other Americans who will host and befriend you. Cards from your country, even in your native language, are really appreciated by the recipients.

In anticipation of the Christmas holiday, you should consider bringing a small gift for your host family. A gift that represents something typical of your country will be appreciated by your host and will be kept for years to come. If space is limited, you might have your parents ship it to your college address later. In preparing for your year abroad, you will certainly have many questions. Please send these questions to your host family; they will be happy to answer everything they can. If some questions remain unanswered, please write to your Trustee, or the GRSP office in Savannah.

ARRIVAL & INITIAL DAYS

Your host family and/or your Trustee will meet you at the airport.

Some Rotarians tend to be very overt in welcoming their student to this country and to GRSP. Your arrival is just as exciting for them as it is for you! If this happens, enjoy their sincerity and hospitality.

In the excitement of reaching your new home on arrival day, please be sure you call your parents and let them know you arrived safely.

Spend the time between when you arrive in Georgia and when you leave for college by adjusting to your new home, family, and culture.

- Don't be hesitant to learn as much as you can about your new host family. And they will be doing the same with you.
- Depending on the host's available time, you may do some local sightseeing.

Your host will go through all the items in your "Rotary Suitcase" that the Club has provided such as bed linen, towels, etc. All items are to be returned to the host in good condition at the end of your year.

- You should make and maintain a complete inventory of all items. Also you should update the list for the additional items your host may loan you during the year.
- Your host will be happy to take you shopping for any items you forgot to bring with you.

If you have any questions about how to use any facilities in your new home, don't be hesitant to ask.

With your host, determine how and when you will handle your weekly telephone conversations

while you are in school. Ask your host if long distance charges are involved, and if they are, who will be responsible for them.

When at home with your host family, do not make any long distance calls, including international calls, without his/her permission.

Before leaving for college you and your host must discuss:

- **Your responsibility for communicating with him/her before scheduling any weekend or holiday activities.**
- **The day and time of your host Club's weekly meeting.** When registering for classes, if possible try to avoid scheduling classes that would prevent you from attending meetings.
- **The calendar of Rotary activities that he/she has coordinated for you during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday periods.** Since many colleges operate on the "quarter" system rather than semesters, some students have several weeks off from school during December. Your host will have activities scheduled for you during this time.
- Your host will provide you with a calendar of scheduled events and activities through the end of December. Additional activities will be added, so you should not consider this to be your final schedule.
- Both of you should discuss the calendar. If your host envisions that there will be some time available for short trips during December, he/she will tell you and assist you in making travel arrangements.

Your host will take you to college and help you in move into your on-campus room.

COLLEGE

As a GRSP scholar, your academic achievement is extremely important.

- **Although Rotary comes "first", your scholastic achievement comes in a very close "second".**
- **GRSP requires that you maintain at least a "C" average in each of your classes.** Like most GRSP students, we know your achievement will be much higher.
- Your outstanding academic performance, participation and conduct will help insure that the college you attend will continue to maintain high regard for and acceptance of GRSP students in the future.

From reading this section you may find the American college system differs in many ways from the academic systems of other countries, including your own.

For many Georgia colleges and universities, the academic year is based on three "quarters" rather than two semesters. This means the academic periods are shorter. There is one additional exam period, and yes, there's one additional vacation period.

YOUR ATTENDANCE AT ALL CLASSES IS MANDATORY. If you must miss a class for a Rotary function or any other excusable reason, you must discuss it with your professor before you plan to be absent.

- Georgia's academic system is not structured where you can read all the coursework and then take the final exam without actually attending class. **Class attendance and participation is required.**

As a student in an American college, YOU MUST TAKE ALL EXAMINATIONS. Being a GRSP student does not exempt you from any test unless a professor exercises his/her option to exempt students with high academic achievement.

You must adhere to all college rules and regulations including those for the on-campus student housing facilities where you will live. You may find differences when you compare our requirements to those of your country. However, this is part of the cultural experience.

GRSP REQUIRES YOU TO LIVE IN ON-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS DORMITORIES. OFF-CAMPUS ROOMS OR APARTMENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED.

- A primary objective of GRSP is to enable you to experience the unique aspect of American on-campus college living. For most international students, this is a major difference of the American educational experience. And many GRSP students find this to be a real highlight of their year in Georgia.
- Although your room will not look like one of the plush rooms in an elegant hotel depicted in many American movies, it will provide you a basic, comfortable residence. The cost for your room is included in the scholarship.
- By residing on campus, you will find attending classes very convenient.
- You probably will have at least one roommate, depending on the specific dormitory. Your roommate (same sex... of course) may be another GRSP student, international student, or an American student.
- When possible, GRSP recommends that your roommate be an American student for the important cultural interchange that can take place.
- Rely on your roommate to assist you in acclimating to your new school environment and possibly the American culture.
- **If you experience serious compatibility difficulties with one or more of your roommates, you are required to follow and comply with your college's rules and regulations for changing your on-campus living location.**
- Before undertaking any changes, you must make every effort to resolve the difficulties with your roommate(s).
- If you have difficulty with changing your room location, you must discuss the problem with your Trustee.
- **If you change your room location and/or telephone number, YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY**

NOTIFY (WITHIN 8 HOURS) YOUR HOST FAMILY, YOUR TRUSTEE AND THE SAVANNAH OFFICE. NO EXCEPTIONS!

- Normally, your room will not have any provisions for cooking. You will eat all meals in a nearby campus cafeteria (canteen). The meal cost is also included in your scholarship; it is non-refundable to you for alternative eating arrangements.
- The meals will consist of basic, sound nutritional foods. Gourmet... it is not!
- After several weeks of cafeteria dining, you will discover one "real" benefit of visiting your host family on weekends!
- GRSP students report that this unique on-campus living experience is one of the best and most fun aspects of their year in Georgia.

IMPORTANT: In addition to the rules and regulations of your college, as an international student and guest of the U.S., **YOU ARE GOVERNED BY ALL STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS. Your compliance with such laws is MANDATORY.**

- **It is a Federal offense to possess, use, or sell illegal drugs and controlled substances.** This includes all non-prescribed narcotics and illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, heroine, "crack", PCP, etc.
- **It is a State law that an individual must be 21 years of age to possess and to consume any alcoholic beverages.**
- Although these laws may be more restrictive than those of your country, GRSP **REQUIRES** you to adhere to these laws throughout your year in Georgia. Violations of these laws have serious legal consequences.

Depending on your college, once on campus you may attend a new student orientation and/or an international student orientation program(s). This will help you quickly learn about your new school environment. It's also a great time to meet other students.

- You will also meet with your international student advisor and/or your academic advisor. Throughout your year, he/she will help you in the selection of your coursework as well as offer academic guidance to you.

Your registration for specific classes will be governed, in large measure, on the possible transfer of your Georgia-earned credits to your home college. Again, you should determine this before coming to Georgia.

- If credits are transferable, you should pursue courses in your academic field of endeavor.
- If credit transfer is not possible, GRSP recommends that you take courses that will contribute to your general education and preferably to your knowledge of the United States -- English, American history, American literature, political and social sciences, etc.
- During your studies, if you encounter specific problems with a course, please discuss it with your professor and your advisor. If the problem remains unresolved, please talk with your Trustee for

guidance and resolution.

Your scholarship includes the cost of books **required** for your courses. You will be given a book allowance to cover the cost of these books and supplies.

- **Due to the high cost of text books, GRSP asks that you buy used books whenever they're available.** One or more students next year will be able to come to Georgia because of the book money you and the other GRSP students save this year.
- If your school does not bill GRSP directly for your book costs, please pay for your books and then **send a copy of the receipt** to the GRSP office in Savannah for reimbursement. You can not be reimbursed without this receipt.

You are encouraged to be involved in your college's social activities. These will contribute to your overall exposure to our culture.

- **These activities, however, must not prevent you from participating in scheduled Rotary activities and functions.**
- Remember -- discuss your Rotary schedule with your host before scheduling weekend and holiday activities.
- Please invite your host family to join you in attending special college functions they might enjoy -- football/basketball games, international nights, etc. They enjoy college life too!
- Many colleges have social fraternities and sororities. Before you consider joining one, GRSP encourages you to evaluate your time commitment to Rotary, your academic studies, and other school social involvement. Before making the financial commitment to join, please discuss it with your host.

Since you have been granted a Student Visa to participate in GRSP, the United States immigration laws forbid you to work and be compensated. Violation results in immediate revocation of the Visa and the student must return home immediately at his/her expense.

- There is only one exception. A student can be employed part-time, on-campus at the college or university where he/she is a full-time student.
- Although an additional source of spending money is always helpful, GRSP asks that you avoid such employment due to the restrictive impact it will have on your year of cultural involvement.

Please talk with your host family by telephone at least once a week.

- If you are permitted to have a telephone in your room, talk with your host about the Club providing one for you. This makes it easier for everyone to "keep in touch".
- If a telephone is provided, you are responsible for the installation charges and all monthly charges.

Your host family is responsible for transporting you to and from their home for weekend visits.

- Coordinate your schedule with the host so your availability does not create an undue imposition.

- If your host lives in another city, check with other students at your college who may be from your host's town. Frequently, you can share a ride with them.
- Be sure to read the next section (Transportation) if you plan to buy a car during the year.

During the year, please refrain from engaging in activities that are potentially life-threatening unless you are trained and very experienced and are accompanied by another experienced friend. These activities include: sky-diving, hang-gliding, spelunking (caving), etc. Your safety and well-being is GRSP'S concern.

At first, you may find that some American students may be somewhat aloof or unfriendly. Please do not take this personally.

- Generally, this is due to their lack of exposure to people from other cultures. Also, Americans are unaccustomed to students who are multilingual and they feel somewhat uneasy due to speaking only one language.
- Frequently, when they get to know how great you really are and learn about the things each of you have in common, they will become good friends. Your effort in establishing friendships is extremely important.
- The benefits of GRSP extend far beyond you and Rotarians. That's another reason your college was pleased to accept you for your year of study.

Once here, you might be surprised at the number of showers or baths American students take. In the United States -- and especially in Georgia -- our personal hygiene standards include a minimum of one shower/bath each day and the use of personal deodorants. If you are not accustomed to these requirements you will find them a just reward from Georgia's heat and humidity. Enjoy!

Unfortunately, the United States is experiencing a serious, deadly epidemic of A.I.D.S. (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). It has one of the highest per capita ratios of H.I.V. positive/A.I.D.S cases anywhere in the world, affecting both the homosexual and heterosexual populations! Therefore:

- **GRSP asks that you practice the safest known form of sex -- NO SEX.**
- **Although condoms are readily available, they have been proven not to be totally effective in the spread of this deadly disease.**
- **The prevention of contracting A.I.D.S. is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation in the U.S., and Georgia in particular, differs vastly from many other countries. Large cities like Atlanta have public (mass) transit systems that include subways, buses and cabs. Other cities have buses and cabs but no subways or trains. Smaller towns have cabs only.

- Many GRSP students find Georgia's public transportation system inadequate in meeting their needs.
- Due to Georgia's size, most people rely on the automobile for personal travel.

To have a successful GRSP year, you DO NOT need to have a car. However, many students find that a personal vehicle adds to their mobility and ability to see more of the state.

If you are considering buying a car, please discuss the following information with your parents and get their consent before proceeding.

- A reliable, safe, small car (about 5 years old) with reasonable resale value will cost between \$3000 and \$4000 (U.S.).
- Students who buy cars between \$1000 and \$1500 find the vehicles demand extensive, on-going repairs; may be in questionable safety condition; and return very little of the investment after nine months of use.
- To get a Georgia Driver's License, you must first have a driver's license from your country. You must also study for and take a written test.
- There is no cost for the study materials.
- The license cost is \$15 and permits you to drive anywhere in the United States.
- If you bring your driver's license along with an international license, you will not have to take the Georgia test.
- The State requires all car owners to have liability insurance. For a student under age 25, minimum insurance coverage will cost \$600 to \$700 for six months.

When driving in the U.S. you must have your driver's license, car registration form and proof of liability insurance (issued by the insurance company) with you at all times. Failure to do so will result in a fine or possibly imprisonment.

As a GRSP student, you must adhere to all state and federal transportation laws.

- **Be aware that the State of Georgia STRICTLY ENFORCES the laws associated with alcohol and drug use and/or possession.**
- **Violations resulting from Driving Under the Influence (D.U.I.) carry serious consequences such as large fines, suspension/loss of driver's license, imprisonment and in some cases all three actions.**
- A D.U.I. arrest for alcohol results when an individual's blood alcohol content measures 0.8% or above. (The 0.8% minimum is generally equivalent to the consumption of two cans of beer.)
- A D.U.I. arrest for illegal drug and controlled substance use and/or possession results in mandatory imprisonment.
- **A charge of D.U.I. for a GRSP student can result in the revocation of the Student Visa.**

- **Speed limits in the United States are generally lower than in many other countries. And they are strictly enforced!**

GRSP offers this information as guidance to you in case you buy a car. We want you to have fun... but have it SAFELY!

HOLIDAYS & COLLEGE VACATIONS

If you want to send gifts home to your country for Christmas, please mail them U.S. Postal Air Mail no later than December 1. This will ensure your gifts arrive by December 25.

GRSP suggests that you send a Christmas/holiday greeting card to your host family and one to the president of your host Club. This always pleases the recipients!

When you get your schedule for the academic term, tell your host the date(s) you will be out of school for a holiday(s). Also let him/her know when the term ends and the next term begins. Also, please give this information to your Trustee.

Remember -- before scheduling any weekend, holiday or vacation plans, please discuss your Rotary schedule with your host to avoid conflicts.

If your host asks you to be with his/her family or another Rotary family for a holiday, you are to accept their sincere invitation. Join in the fun!

If you plan to travel during any of your remaining holiday time, ask your host to suggest places you might want to visit on your way to/from your selected destination(s).

When traveling, please call "home" to your host so he/she knows that you are safe.

CONCLAVE, CONFERENCE & GATHERINGS

An Orientation Conclave is held in early October for all GRSP students. **Attendance at this information/social weekend is MANDATORY.**

- **The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with important, essential information that you will need to ensure that you have a great and successful GRSP year.**
- Although you will meet and socialize with all your Class members, the real purpose is to provide you with necessary information.
- You will have other conclaves and gatherings throughout your year that are more socially-oriented.

- Your Trustee will take you to this conclave or coordinate your travel with your host.
- **YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO DRIVE YOUR OWN CAR, ANY RENTED VEHICLE OR RIDE WITH ANOTHER STUDENT TO THIS CONCLAVE.**
- You will stay in the home of a Rotarian from the club(s) that hosts the conclave.
- As mentioned in the Pre-Departure section, there will be a GRSP Talent Show at the conclave. You will find this not only to be great fun but also one of the many highlights of your year.
- Please bring your national costume along with any materials for performing in individual or group acts. However, any presentation must be short -- under five minutes.

From November to May, six clubs will each invite all students from your GRSP Class for special weekends of fellowship. These are GRSP-sanctioned functions.

- Since each club commits considerable effort in staging these weekends, you are **strongly urged** to attend even if it occurs during a holiday or college vacation period.
- You and your host Club will be notified in advance with ample time for scheduling.
- Your host will try to assist you in getting to these meaningful and memorable weekends. However, your host is not responsible for your transportation.
- You are permitted to drive your own car, a rented vehicle or to ride with another GRSP student.
- **Any student who is not a member of your own GRSP Class is not invited to these weekends, even if he/she is a past GRSP student.**

During the year, GRSP students will have weekend get-togethers at colleges throughout the State. These are unofficial, informal gatherings.

- You are encouraged to attend these weekends if they do not conflict with other Rotary functions coordinated by your host.
- Since these events are often scheduled with very little advance notice, please discuss your availability to attend with your host.
- Your host family is not responsible for your transportation to these gatherings. You are permitted to drive your own car, a rented vehicle or to ride with another GRSP student.

Your attendance at your respective District Conference in the spring of the year is MANDATORY.

- A Rotary District Conference is an important annual social event. Hundreds of Rotary families attend, along with their respective GRSP students. It's a weekend of fun and fellowship.
- Your host will submit the necessary pre-registration form for you and make your hotel room reservation, along with the required payments. You have nothing to do except attend, participate, and enjoy!

- You will travel to the Conference with your host family, with another Rotary family from your host Club or with your Trustee..
- Normally, there are GRSP student functions scheduled during the weekend. You'll have a great time!
- A second and final Talent Show may be held at the Conference. Please take your national costume and any materials for your "starring role".
- **You are not permitted to take another GRSP student or any other student friend unless your WRITTEN invitation from your District Governor permits it.**
- **During the Conference, GRSP asks that you join your host Club for at least one of the evening banquets.**
- **Although you may be invited by another GRSP student to attend his/her District Conference, do not go unless you receive a personal, WRITTEN invitation from that District Governor.**
- If you do receive a Governor's written invitation, notify your host immediately so he/she does not schedule a conflicting Rotary activity.

DEPARTURE

Six weeks before the end of school, determine what your plans and needs will be when school is over. Please discuss this with your host for his/her planning.

- Based on the type of airline ticket, you should contact the airline(s) to determine what date you must make your return reservation. If there are any questions, please involve your host.
- If you plan to do some traveling after school is out and before you leave Georgia, ask your host to help suggest points of interest that you would enjoy.
- Your host family is a good source of information and they will have some helpful hints to make your travels successful.

After being in Georgia for almost a year, you will accumulate many personal items beyond the capacity of the two suitcases you brought.

- During your last month in the college dorm, GRSP suggests that you box those items and ship them home.
- U.S. Postal Surface Mail is four times less expensive than Air Mail; however, it can take 4 to 6 weeks for the shipment to arrive in your country.
- **Do not ask your host family and/or host club to handle the shipping for you or for selling your personal vehicle. THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!**

IMPORTANT: Plan to spend the last several days before you depart with your host family. You and your Georgia family will need time for the closure of your year together.

- Plan to attend one final meeting of your host Club to say "goodbye" even if you made your farewell address a few weeks earlier. Your "Rotary family" will appreciate the thoughtfulness.

Just as when you arrived, your host family will take you to the airport to say, "Goodbye".

In departing, you will experience some sadness in leaving good friends at college, GRSP students and your Rotary family. This will be offset by the excitement of returning home to family and friends.

- Once home for a few weeks, you may undergo a period of depression. Reports from past GRSP students indicate such depression is normal.
- The duration varies with each student -- a few weeks to almost a year.
- If you experience this phenomenon, please keep in touch with your host family by letter or phone. They will want to help you during this adjustment phase.
- Please don't avoid communication with your host in an effort to reacclimate by yourself. Just the reverse is true -- continued communication reduces the adjustment period.

Periodically correspond with your host family and the friends you made during your GRSP year. The GRSP spirit lives on through letters.

Through the years, please keep the GRSP office in Savannah informed of your address changes. Please do so by letter or if you have access to E-mail, then address it to: **GRSP@ix.netcom.com !**

