

# Rotary Exchange Program - Our Outbound Student's Year in Japan

## by Phillip Bachman

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(Editor's Note: Phillip is a classic example of why our Club feels so strongly about participating in Rotary Youth Exchange.)

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Even though his stay in Japan was cut short and his senior year was spent half a world away from his Memorial High classmates, Phillip Bachman enjoyed the experience of a lifetime. Phillip was our Club's 2010-11 Outbound Exchange Student to Niigata, Japan.

The original timetable had Phillip returning to Eau Claire at the end of the school year. However, that plan was abandoned shortly after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami struck the east coast of Japan. Even though Phillip was on the west coast, 100 miles away, there was enough uncertainty as to how the damage to the nuclear plants could ultimately affect other parts of the country, that Rotary International decided to bring all of the exchange students home early. While Phillip did not feel in any danger and was naturally disappointed by the decision, he was also somewhat relieved that he would not have to deal with any potential problems that could arise.

Phillip lived with three different host families, which is typical for Rotary exchange students. While each family was different and imposed various house rules, he enjoyed each and every one. They made sure that he was exposed to the various cultural experiences that Japan has to offer. Phillip commented that the food was very healthy and good. The healthy part was in full evidence just by looking at Phillip. He left Eau Claire carrying 213 pounds, and now is a slim and trim 150. In addition to the healthy diet, Phillip took up running with one of his host fathers, and before long, the weight just started to come off.

Phillip commented on everything from the cultural differences to the many friends that he made to the differences in day-to-day living.

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Outbound Rotary Exchange student **Phillip Bachman** (right) with the President of the Rotary Club of Niigata Higashi Japan