

**Alumni-Hosted Multi-District Orientation for Outbound Scholars  
- How it was Started, and How it is Run -**

**A speech presented at the Breakout Session titled  
“Alumni Associations and Activities: From Association to Rotary Club and Beyond”  
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**by**

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Thank you very much for your introduction, Mr. Tanaka.

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

District 2590 and my District 2780 jointly support a two-day orientation for outbound Ambassadorial Scholars. What is unique about this orientation is that it is hosted by the Alumni Associations of both Districts. Today, I will talk about how it was started, how it is run, about its program and the merits of the alumni hosting the orientation.

As we all know, Rotary began when Paul Harris asked three men to share his dream. Our orientation started when Professor Shimizu, a Rotarian who had long been involved with the Ambassadorial Scholarship Program, asked four *alumni* to help him make his dream come true.

In 1989, old District 259 grew into Districts 259 and 278. With that division, the old Alumni Association stopped functioning. Determined to have it up and running again, Professor Shimizu contacted four alumni in 1991. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I was one of them.

After his long years of interaction with ambassadorial scholars, Professor Shimizu knew that a good orientation program for outbound scholars is a must, and he wanted the alumni to run such an orientation because they can share their experiences as ambassadors of goodwill through Rotary. We studied the Rotary Foundation Manual carefully with Professor Shimizu, prepared a handbook for outbound scholars, and gave the first Orientation in 1992.

Through trials and errors, the orientation was improved as years went by. In the third year, we had the first group of scholars who had attended the orientation now helping new outbound scholars as alumni. In total, we have given 17 orientations, and I have attended every single one of them. (It's hard to believe I am 17 years older now!)

Now let me tell you about how it is run. It's run by the Foundation Alumni Associations. Every year several months before the orientation, they get together and start working on the program under the supervision of the Foundation Committees. Once the program is completed, we send it to the Rotary Foundation and receive their advice and approval so that we can receive a grant from the Foundation.

The venue is always the same. It's a public facility with many lecture rooms that also provides accommodations. Many Rotarians including governors, district foundation committee members, and counselors attend. Sending out invitations, making room and catering arrangements, there are lots of things to be done. Anyone who has organized a two-day event with about 100 participants would know that it involves a lot of work. All that is done by the alumni.

They also update the handbook for outbound scholars every year. It introduces Rotary and its organization, explains responsibilities as scholars before, during and after the scholarship, and contains tips for speeches both abroad and at home. The handbook also has a list of alumni with contact information, and reports from scholars studying abroad. These two sections are updated every year. Again, it's a lot of work. I have brought several copies with me. So please feel free to look at them. I must warn you, however, it's all in Japanese.

Now let's talk about the program itself. We usually start with inspiring and encouraging words from governors. Then there is a session for scholars about Rotary and the scholarship while their counselors are having a separate session about their responsibilities. Then they get together again and learn about things to do before departure. Model presentations by alumni about their lives abroad were given this year, followed by new scholars' presentations about their goals. We also talk about sexual harassment and how best to cope with such incidents.

After dinner, new scholars and alumni are grouped together depending on the country of their study. This part is highly useful for new scholars because they can obtain latest information specific to their destination countries, sometimes even specific to their academic institutions or areas of study.

The highlight of the day is yet to come. We reserve a large tatami-mat room and everybody staying overnight, new scholars, alumni, and Rotarians, get together and keep talking far into the night. This way, they get to know each other better, and learn more from each other. Professor Shimizu used to be known as the last man staying awake.

The next day, we concentrate on things scholars are expected to do after they come home. We also give out a questionnaire for new scholars to fill out to further improve the orientation. By this time all of them are ready to help the Alumni Associations when they return as alumni. Before lunch, the orientation is adjourned.

So every year, scholars who have newly returned home help organize the orientation and share their experiences with new outbound scholars. This is the biggest merit of asking alumni to host the orientation. But that's not all. As you can see, our alumni work very hard for the orientation. With the hard work comes a sense of accomplishment. They enjoy helping new scholars, feel they are giving back to Rotary, and grow proud of themselves. They also enjoy the kind of fellowship that is unique to Rotary, because alumni can share each other's wide variety of expertise. Indeed, the alumni association, if run properly, can be a great school of Rotary.

It was no coincidence that many charter members of Kanagawa Shonan Rotary Club came out of this school. We knew, by joining Rotary, we would be able to give back to Rotary, work for humanity in the international network of Rotary, and learn from each other's unique experiences. I can assure you our club would not exist without the Alumni Association.

My dear fellow Rotarians, the best way to attract new generations to Rotary is to let them lead the way and feel that they have accomplished something through Rotary. In districts that send a reasonable number of ambassadorial scholars, an alumni-hosted orientation would be a good start because it's good for both new and old scholars.

Maybe you can find a partner to do a joint orientation like we do. Remember that the RF financially supports multi-district orientations.

If you are from Japan, and your district is not so far away from ours, please feel free to visit our orientation and consider joining us because we would like to expand this wonderful network of alumni. I have been working on this for the past two years, but haven't been successful. I would very much like to ask for kind understanding and cooperation of the distinguished leaders of Japanese Rotary who are present here today.

My dear friends, I'm sure you understand how I feel because many of you are foundation alumni. All I want is to let young alumni, our Rotary family, enjoy the same opportunity that I had, an opportunity to help new scholars with fellow alumni, to learn from each other's unique experiences, and to feel they have accomplished something. Once they have learned the joy of "Service above Self" for which Rotary stands, they are ready to join Rotary. Remember that foundation alumni are qualified for membership according to a recent resolution. Ladies and gentlemen, Rotary Shares! So let's share Rotary with foundation alumni, hoping that some day they will share Rotary with us as Rotarians as many of us did.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.