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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Maurice Dalton, Lindsey Krumroy, and Alex Finch are Rotary Youth Exchange students.

# Students take part in exchange program

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — For Dallas High School senior Maurice Dalton and sophomore Lindsey Krumroy, a chance to discover a foreign language and culture was irresistible.

They received letters from Dallas Rotary at the end of their freshman year inviting them to participate in the organization's youth exchange program during their junior year. They accepted.

"I was also interested in seeing what it would be like to go to a place and live my whole life where there's not a single person I've previously met," said Dalton, who spent last year in Berlin. "Totally clean slate, fresh start, to see what that is like."

Krumroy, who will spend next year in Finland, said her first thought about the prospect was "why not?"

"I wanted something new. I wanted to go do something that wasn't normal," she said. "I've been friends with a lot of exchange students, so I've heard a lot about exchange, and it seems like something that would be fun to do."

Rotary sponsors the exchanges working with districts in other countries, so students can rely on the familiarity and support of Rotary before and throughout their year abroad. Krumroy is attending classes preparing her for the inevitability of culture shock and learning to communicate when you don't speak the local language well — or at all.

"There's a series of orientations and trainings where they teach us about different things, like culture shock and things like that," Krumroy said. "They had us do exercises, like they had us create a random language and we had to communicate without

them understanding what we are saying."

Clint Branum, the Dallas Rotary youth exchange coordinator, said the program looks for high school freshman interested in the travel year. Rotary is hosting an informational meeting for students and parents at DHS at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday. Students don't have to belong to Rotary to participate.

Alexander Finch, who is from Germany, is spending a year in Dallas. His older brother participated in an exchange, so he was eager to have the same experience.

"I got really excited because I really love traveling. I really love the language and wanted to get to know new people. That's why I wanted to do it. It's really fun," Finch said. "I was lucky. I got really good host families that helped me in all the ways they could."

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