

The following is a letter from a participant after this year's RYLA Conference (Rotary Youth Leadership Award).

Dear Rotarians

I would like to start by expressing my utmost gratitude in having the opportunity to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Award Conference from April 5-8. It was an extremely rewarding experience, I have been to many other things like it, but I have never been quite as inspired as I was that weekend. To start out, I would like to tell you a little about myself. My name is Santiago Sordo-Palacios and am a sophomore at Saint Viator High School. I was born in Venezuela and moved to the United States in 5th grade. As a member of the Saint Viator community, I am Inter-Class Council Co-Secretary (Recently elected as Vice-President), Co-Founder & Co-Chairman of the Presidents' Association, a retreat leader, and a member of Boy Scout Troop 166 of Mt. Prospect. I have been involved with leadership during my two years, and have had many opportunities to learn how to become a better person, and in turn a better leader. I never really put in those ideas as that big of a deal into my life. Not until RYLA. I was truly inspired by everyone there to keep working and doing the things that I have been doing. It is truly an experience that I enjoyed and all of my friends I made there also enjoyed.

I would love to be able to come in and talk to those of the Rotary Club of Arlington Heights and express my gratitude and tell them a little more about myself and my experience at RYLA. I am currently working on the National Association of Student Councils Student Leader Program, the program is in a way a workbook that must be read, answered, and then one has to take part in different events to show that he or she understood the concepts being taught. As I am finishing it up, one of the requirements that I have left is to give a talk to a group or committee. I feel that this would be a great way to "kill two birds with one stone." I wanted to see when there would be time for me to come in and talk for a little bit, I am not too busy at the moment, but I will be going into finals soon and then other work to finish the year. Please let me know when we can work something.

Thanks in advance,

Santiago Sordo-Palacios  
Saint Viator Class of 2014"