

THE EXTENDED FAMILY OF ROTARY

In November 2009, **Chula Vista Sunrise Rotarian Marta Knight** led a Group Study Exchange team of educators to Ecuador (D4400). The team visited a number of public and private schools during their one month sojourn as well as attended a number of Rotary club meetings and other local and cultural events.

One of the Rotary programs of particular interest to **team member Maddy Ramirez** was the Youth Exchange (YE) program. Maddy, a Carlsbad resident who teaches in the Oceanside Unified School District was very impressed with the number of inbound Rotary Youth Exchange students from foreign countries that were being hosted by local Rotary clubs in Ecuador.

Upon her return home Maddy, accompanied by her husband Joe and son Alex, gave a presentation about her GSE experience to the **Rotary Club of Carlsbad**. At the meeting **Alex Ramirez** indicated an interest in the YE program --in particular if there was an opportunity to possibly attend school for one year in Ecuador.

Alex completed the application process and his sponsoring club, the **Rotary Club of Carlsbad**, forwarded his application to the District Youth Exchange Officer, **National City Rotarian Bob Chalfa**. Alex was accepted and will be hosted by the Rotary Club of La Puntilla, Guayaquil, Ecuador for the 2010-2011 school year. Alex departed San Diego on Friday, 27 August for Guayaquil, Ecuador.

In the meantime, **Geraldine Jackson** from Malaga, Spain had applied to the YE program in hopes of coming to the United States for the upcoming school year. The Ramirez family graciously accepted "Gery" into their family. Gery is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Benehavis, Malaga, Spain (D2203). Her host club is the **Rotary Club of Carlsbad**.

Gery arrived in San Diego on Friday, 13 August. On Sunday, 15 August, the Ramirez family hosted a party in their home to welcome Gery as well as wish Alex a fond farewell.

Gery has already settled in to Carlsbad High School where she will be playing volleyball in addition to carrying a full class schedule. She will be a frequent visitor at the Rotary Club of Carlsbad meetings this coming year as well as attend other district events and events with other inbound YE students from Southern California, Arizona, Nevada and Hawaii districts.

These two exchanges are a wonderful example of extending the Family of Rotary between three countries and families and of exemplifying this year's RI Theme of *Building Communities- Bridging Continents*.