

RISK-TAKING MISSION

Aldersgate 2011



Transforming Mission in Guatemala

Aldersgate has been a partner with Highland Support Project (HSP) for many years now.

In the past six years, Aldersgate has sent over a hundred mission team participants to work in the Mayan Highlands. HSP is a non-profit, United Methodist service program that provides North Americans with meaningful service and learning opportunities while delivering valuable

resources to grassroots Guatemalan organizations.

HSP projects are designed to maximize the benefits of grassroots organizations and individual families while providing a transformational experience for participants. We focus on efforts that support rather than compete with local initiatives.

In 2010 Aldersgate sent 75 participants in mission to Guatemala. This year Aldersgate looks to build on our success by offering a range of opportunities for youth, college-aged and adult mission.

In 2009 and 2010 Aldersgate sent college students to Guatemala to serve as interns with HSP, and we hope to continue that program in 2011.

2011

Winter Team

December 16–23

Particulars: Small team to stay in the village of Cantal.
This team open to adults, college–students or youth.

Youth Team

July 28–31

Lodging: El Refugio

In Village Team

Adult Team

Lodging: El Refugio



The Projects

Stove Building

Epidemiological research demonstrates that the two leading causes of mortality in our partner communities are upper respiratory infections and water-borne contaminants. These are both linked to the practice of cooking on open pit fires in tiny, unventilated homes.

These stoves improve the health, wealth, and environment of the community by channeling the thick smoke from cooking fires out of the unventilated brick dwellings via the new chimney that is installed with every stove. They decrease the amount of money women must spend on cooking fuel because they are significantly more fuel-efficient. Because the stoves consume much less wood than the open pit fires previously used, they

improve the environment of the community by decreasing the amount of deforestation regionally. Decreasing deforestation is very important in improving the quality of drinking water, stabilizing weather patterns, maintaining topsoil, and combating erosion.

Of more immediate importance, the stoves are literally lifesavers for the families that receive them. Every year, a family can easily spend most of its income treating the lung infections caused by smoke exposure provoke in the children and the elderly. Furthermore, the primary cause of fatality in recent natural catastrophes in Central America has been mudslides linked directly to deforestation by the ravenous demand for cooking fuel.

Reforestation

There is a critical need to replace the vast tracts of forest that have disappeared throughout Central America. These forests are the most important element in halting soil erosion that contaminates local drinking supplies, washes away the valuable topsoil, and often claims lives in massive mudslides. The forest is also important for stabilizing weather patterns globally and counteracting the greenhouses gases that cause global warming. Partners in Service focuses on reforesting areas of human occupation, such as villages and rural areas. Volunteers have the opportunity to participate in various stages of reforestation, from soil preparation and transplanting to working in the nursery, with team service assignments based upon the need during the team's stay.



Logistics

Housing and Food

In Village Team

This team will be lodging in the village where they will work. The conditions are not comfortable and sanitation is a consideration. Typically there is no plumbing, no running water and no electricity.

Teams are housed in the village school and should expect to sleep in sleeping bags on the floor or on cots. Food will be typical Mayan fare safely prepared by an HSP staff person. Showers will not be available but team members will be able to use traditional Mayan sweat baths, similar to a sauna. These are villages too distant for teams staying at the retreat center to work in. Therefore, the need is high.

They tend to be poorer and, because of high altitudes, cold. That said, teams that have elected to stay in the communities have reported that it is the most significant decision they made and highly recommend doing so. In-village teams experience deeper fellowship with one another and with their partner community.

Winter Team

Winter adult team will stay at Hilda's home, an HSP community organizer, in the village of Cantal. Team members will work in Cantal, walking to worksites, and will have their meals prepared by Hilda's family. Shower and hot water are available. Lodging conditions are less comfortable than El Refugio but not as rustic as other in-village teams.

Youth and Adult Team

Teams will stay at the retreat center, El Refugio. The rooming is double- to triple-occupancy with either a private bath in each room or a communal hallway bathroom, depending on the location. There is hot water and the bedding is laundered. There is also ample space for team meetings and recreation.

Teams staying at the retreat center enjoy two meals a day in a dining hall. The food is prepared in the retreat center kitchen by their full-time staff. Many organizations and church groups use these facilities and their health records are excellent. The menu is more varied than one might expect and they even offer fresh salads that are safe to eat.



About Staying In-

Staying in the village of Chiquisis provided me with a unique and intimate experience while visiting Guatemala.

Not only were we serving and working with women, but we built real relationships with entire families that didn't last from just 9-5.

This gesture was not only significant to our group's spiritual development and bonding, but proved to the families that we are in fact equals. We have families just like them, and are willing to live just like they do.

During our stay, we ate food cooked on a stove just like the ones we were building. Proof that not only were we giving these people a cinder block structure, but the things work really well! We also bathed in traditional Temescals (sweat baths) exactly like the families do. Although they found our bathing suit attire rather comical, they were flattered that we considered their baths a special treat.

The community was overjoyed with our presence, being nothing but welcoming and loving during our entire stay. Children and adults alike were fascinated with our mere existence, and were eager to cooperate through language barriers to befriend us.

Staying at El Refugio may be a bit more comfortable, but the depth of relationships acquired during complete immersion into the Guatemalan culture is unmatched.

I couldn't have asked for a better experience.

- Laina Schneider



Health and Safety

All food served to the youth during the week will be sanitary and supervised by mission staff. Safe drinking water, in addition to tea and coffee will be available as well.

Health is usually not a problem if precautions are taken:

DO NOT DRINK TAP WATER

DO NOT BRUSH YOUR TEETH WITH ANYTHING BUT BOTTLED WATER

DO NOT OPEN YOUR MOUTH IN THE SHOWER

IF FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGE OFFER YOU

FOOD WHILE YOU WORK, THEN SMILE,

SAY 'GRACIAS' AND PUT IN YOUR POCKET.

AVOID MILK PRODUCTS, ICE CUBES, UNPEELED FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, CANNED SODAS (unclean water can sit on

the tops of them) Nonetheless, it's possible to get an intestinal bug. I suggest you ask your doctor for a prescription for **CIPRO** in case this happens. It's easily available in Guatemala but your dis-ease will be reduced if you have it with you.

In addition, we will be working and sleeping at an altitude between 11k -13k feet. You may experience stiffness and headaches from the altitude. When we

arrive in Guatemala, our travel to Xela- our work site- will be broken up over a day and a half to allow you to adjust to the altitude, but you may want to have **ibuprofen** with you as well.

The drive to Xela at the beginning of the week is long, the roads are windy, there's exhaust fumes, and drivers are crazy. If you're the type to get car sick, then get **dramamine** and bring it with you.

Inoculations -

The vaccinations necessary are the standard ones for tetanus and hepatitis that you are required to get for school. Other regions of Guatemala require additional shots, but we will be working exclusively in the highlands where the altitude and cool temperature mean there are no mosquito bred diseases.

Safety -

HSP has been operating with mission teams in Guatemala for 15 years. They have never had a safety incident occur. Their directors are from the same region in which teams work and have long-term relations with the people the youth will serve.

Drivers during the week are all local rescue squad personnel. Travel will be limited to the region known as 'the tourism triangle' and no driving will be done at night.

Itinerary #1: In-Village Teams

Thursday:

- Arrive in Guatemala City on flight from the United States
- Drive to the village of Panajachel where team will spend the first night
- Visit famous Lake Atitlan which was formed by the ancient volcanoes that surround it
- In-country orientation and team meeting

Friday:

- Drive to village in region of Quetzaltenango where team will be housed for the week
- Community Welcome

Saturday - Tuesday

- Service project work
- Hiking in mountains near village etc

Wednesday:

- Travel to the historic capital of Antigua
- Shopping and sightseeing in Antigua

Thursday:

- Return flight to the United States



Itinerary #2 - Sample Youth and Adult Teams

Thursday:

- Arrive in Guatemala City on flight from the United States (departure city depends on the group)
- Drive in private van to the village of Panajachel where team will spend the first night
- Visit famous Lake Atitlan which was formed by the ancient volcanoes that surround it
- In-country orientation and team meeting

Friday:

- Drive to the town of Quetzaltenango where team will be housed for the week in a retreat center
- Visit local natural hot spring

Saturday:

- Travel to partner community for service project orientation
- Begin service project work
- Watch and discuss a service-oriented film at the retreat center

Sunday:

- Continue service project in partner community
- Relax with a game of pick-up soccer or alone-time for reflection
- Lecture by Mayan scholar on culture and history

Monday:

- Continue service project in partner community
- Meet with Mayan women's circle organizer

Tuesday:

- Complete service project and celebrate with the community
- Visit by invitation local sacred Mayan site
- International dinner and poverty workshops

Wednesday:

- Travel to the historic capital of Antigua
- Meet with Human Rights activist
- Shopping and sightseeing in Antigua

Thursday:

- Return flight to the United States

Packing List

- Passport and 1 Photo ID
- Any medication translated into Spanish
- Day pack
- Toiletries: towel, washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, razor, shampoo, conditioner, soap, baby wipes, roll of toilet paper
- Sunscreen
- Hat, bandanna, lip balm to screen the sun
- Sunglasses
- 2 sets of work clothes: t-shirt, long cotton/nylon pants, hiking/work boots, socks, leather gloves
- Long underwear and/or sweats and warm socks
- Simple travel clothes
- Water bottle
- Sleeping Bag
- Good Rain coat
- Rubber gloves for working with mortar
- Bathing Suit
- Optional
- Sandals or sneakers
- iPod
- Notebook and pen
- Tissues
- Hand sanitizer
- Flea powder
- Camera
- CIPRO

Cost

The current price of the standard package is \$950 plus airfare. For groups staying in-village the cost is \$880 plus airfare (\$950-cultural programming).

This price includes food, lodging, coordination costs, and excursions. The two expenses that are not included in this price are the cost of a passport and a \$3 exit tax. Note that the costs reflect HSP's expenses to provide the mission; HSP does not profit from mission teams.

SERVICE TRIP ASPECT	COST	DETAILS
HOUSING & MEALS (By Location)		
Panajechel	\$35.00	<i>1 Night at Hotel with Dinner Upon Arrival</i>
Quezaltenango	\$50.00	<i>5 Nights at Retreat Center near Service Communities</i>
	\$90.00	<i>3 Meals per Day During Service Projects</i>
Chichicastenango	\$10.00	<i>Lunch During Visit to Famous Mayan Market</i>
Antigua	\$40.00	<i>1 Night – Hotel in Historic Former Capitol of Guatemala</i>
	\$15.00	<i>Lunch and Dinner in Antigua</i>
SUBTOTAL	\$240.00	<i>HOUSING & MEALS</i>
SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMMING		
Registration	\$100.00	<i>Initial Logistics and Outreach</i>
Coordination	\$100.00	<i>Content Assistance and Team Preparation</i>
Service Projects	\$150.00	<i>Building Materials and Project Supplies</i>
	\$50.00	<i>Project Instruction</i>
Cultural Programs	\$70.00	<i>Speakers and Presentations</i>
	\$65.00	<i>Mini Field Trips to Special Sites</i>
Translation	\$50.00	<i>Quiche/Mam To Spanish, Spanish To English</i>
SUBTOTAL	\$585.00	<i>SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMMING</i>
TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY		
Vehicles	\$50.00	<i>Private Passenger Vans</i>
Fuel	\$25.00	<i>Economical Diesel</i>
Drivers / Security & Safety Accompaniment	\$50.00	<i>Licensed Drivers, Professional Firemen Trained in CPR and First Aid</i>
SUBTOTAL	\$125.00	<i>TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY</i>
STANDARD TRIP TOTAL	\$950.00	<i>8-DAY SERVICE TRIP, PER PARTICIPANT</i>

* 2010-2011 Costs Per Person -

Youth: \$750.00 (possibly less, depending on roster size and fundraising totals)

College: TBD by roster size

Adult: \$950.00 plus airfare (less if adults choose to fundraise as a team)