



Vision Team Handbook



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Hello and Welcome,

So you have decided to come to Guatemala to work hard and open your heart to something new? A few years ago I decided to do the same, as a way to learn more about Guatemala and give back to the country where my children were born. Little did I know that life would eventually lead me to serve thousands of Guatemalan children who struggle in poverty – children just like my own.

So, a warning. This could get under your skin and into your heart.

It started when I joined a Vision Team with Common Hope. We built a house for a single mother of two, who had worked more than 200 hours to earn her new home. We dug ditches and sewed curtains. We packed school supplies with high school kids. And we were invited to visit with families in their homes. The images of those houses with their cornstalk walls and dirt floors stuck with me. It was then that I finally realized the everyday reality of poverty.

I came home and suddenly saw all of the abundance around me. I realized how much we have as Americans and gained a new appreciation for daily conveniences like dependable running water. At first I was overwhelmed with the privilege that comes with being born in a rich country. Now I understand it as a blessing because I can use my privilege to help children who happened to be born into a poor country. And the truth is by giving back I keep receiving more in return: new friendships, greater sense of purpose, a renewed sense of gratitude, to name just a few.

John Huebsch, who founded Common Hope with his family, started hosting Vision Teams because the experience of Guatemala helped him to understand himself and his place in the world. He wanted to share this experience with others who wanted to learn. Your experience may not be as life changing as mine or John's, but if you are open, I believe you will leave Guatemala with a deeper understanding. By sharing yourself and wanting to learn, you can know yourself and the world better.

You will read about Guatemala's violent past. Things are different now, and we don't mean to scare you, but we also want you to know the truth. Clearly, traveling to Guatemala isn't as safe as sitting in your living room, but life isn't about staying as safe as possible. We have brought over 3,000 people to Guatemala on Vision Teams without one serious problem. We know how to do this, and we will be with you. Most people come a bit nervous of the unknown and leave eager to return. I hope you have a wonderful experience. We look forward to seeing you in Guatemala,

Shari Blindt
Executive Director

COMMON HOPE OVERVIEW

MISSION AND PROGRAMS

Common Hope's mission is to promote hope and opportunity in Guatemala, partnering with children, families, and communities who want to participate in a process of development to improve their lives through education, health care, and housing. While education is the heart of our work, we believe a comprehensive approach to development is critical for children, families, and communities to be truly successful.



Our **education program** helps students attend primary and secondary school, vocational school, and university. We also provide extracurricular activities, special education, job placement services, and a day care.

Our **health care program** includes basic health care and vaccinations, preventative health care education, dental care, prenatal education programs, a pharmacy, and nutrition programs.

Our **housing program** allows affiliated families to earn a house through sweat-equity hours. In addition families may also earn a stove, latrines, cement floors, and other housing-related materials. We also have water purification projects.

Our **family development** program includes counseling, AA, Al-Anon, parenting support groups, and goal setting. Through a long-term relationship with a Common Hope social worker, families identify obstacles and goals and create their own unique development plan.

BY THE NUMBERS

Currently, over 3,000 children attend school with Common Hope's help and our programs serve over 8,000 people. The Common Hope staff includes 9 long-term volunteers, 120 professional Guatemalans, approximately 30 short-term monthly volunteers, and 12 full-time employees in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Common Hope has a well-established track record for accomplishing our goals and managing our programs. Our organization has been a strong and well-respected presence in Guatemala since 1986. We have maintained a three-year average of spending 85% of our funds on programs.

SPIRITUALITY STATEMENT

Common Hope welcomes anyone willing to serve the poor, and we serve those living in poverty without regard to religion. We believe that people of different faith traditions can join together in service and can live their spirituality without proselytizing. We embrace spiritual values such as hope, forgiveness, compassion, respect, love, service and the pursuit of peace.

Common Hope recognizes that people, whatever their belief, are equal and deserve respect. If we respect those we serve we must allow them the freedom to develop their own spirituality. We recognize that their poverty is physical, and they are often desperate for the services we provide. We recognize that our physical wealth gives us power, and it would be abusive to this power to dictate belief.

VISION TEAM OVERVIEW

VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE

The Vision Team experience provides an opportunity for volunteers to come face-to-face with poverty, often to an extent not experienced before.

- **The Vision Team experience is intended to foster encounters for our volunteers that educate, provoke compassion, and challenge complacency.**
- **We rely on Vision Teams to connect needs with resources.**
- **Through the Vision Team experience we build relationships that compel volunteers to actively partner with us and multiply our work.**

While in Guatemala you will work hard to accomplish real and significant work. Yet, if manual work were the end goal, much of it could be done by Guatemalans who would happily work for much less than the price of a plane ticket. The work is not the end goal, but rather part of the experience -- an experience we hope will build a lasting relationship for our volunteers.

The Common Hope staff seeks to maintain a balance between the needs of the organization and the interest of the volunteers. You will alternate job assignments depending on individual abilities and the work needing to be done. Some of the work can be strenuous. Volunteers need to be honest about their abilities and speak up if they are asked to do something beyond their limitations.

During the trip your team will participate in a variety of activities which may include the following: accompanying a social worker on visits to the villages, observing or helping in the classrooms, constructing a home, leading a cooking class, teaching a craft or sewing project, working in the warehouse or attending talks by staff members. We love to draw on our volunteers' special skills and talents as well. **Please don't be shy in offering any personal or professional experience of which we might make good use.**

Your experience will not end when you leave Guatemala. It is our hope that you will embrace Common Hope's vision and become a part of it. You have the opportunity to make a vital difference in the lives of others long after your trip is over through financial support, sponsorship, volunteering in the US, or making a commitment to lead a new Vision Team.

FORMING YOUR TEAM

Vision Teams form themselves through churches, civic groups, families, schools, groups of friends, or workplaces. The desired size of a Vision Team is ten to twelve volunteers. The minimum age for an un-chaperoned participant is 18 years. Common Hope hosts one team at a time, generally two teams per month. Please note that the project site is closed over Holy Week and for most of the month of December for school holidays. For 2012 the project site is closed April 1-9th, and December 9-31.

Each team must have a team leader. Often the team leader has previously volunteered with Common Hope. Working together with Common Hope's Vision Team staff, the leader schedules the trip, recruits team members,



plans orientation meetings, facilitates team fundraising, guides the team while in Guatemala, and fosters the team's continued involvement after the trip.

When possible, team members should gather together before leaving for Guatemala. During orientation meetings, the team leader uses Common Hope orientation materials to help the team become familiar with each other, what they can expect in Guatemala, history and country information, and culturally appropriate behavior. In addition to enhancing the experience in Guatemala, the meetings are a lot of fun!

PAYMENT AND CANCELATION POLICY

Common Hope plans annual budgets based on the payment schedule below and asks that volunteers respect and comply with these requirements.

Individual Fee: \$800 per person. Airfare is an additional cost.

Team Fundraising Commitment: \$4000 minimum contribution per team

Fees

Common Hope's \$800 fee includes: lodging at Common Hope, 3 meals per day, weekend trips, ground transportation (airport shuttles, etc.), Guatemala airport exit tax, administrative costs, and emergency medical and evacuation coverage. Team members are responsible for their own gift purchases, telephone calls and any extra food and beverage costs.

Fundraising

In addition to individual fees, Common Hope requires each team to make a fundraising commitment. We ask that each team raise a minimum of \$4,000 before traveling to Guatemala. Fundraising is a great way to engage friends and family and contribute to the children and families you will meet while in Guatemala.

Payment

It is the responsibility of the team leader to collect all paperwork and payments from their team members and uphold the payment schedule set by the US staff. Checks should be made payable to Common Hope. Please include a note or write your team name in the memo field of your check, including all fundraising checks. Payments can also be made by credit card by calling the US office at 651-917-0250.

At Time of Booking	\$400 non-refundable team deposit *
Date 6 months out	\$400 deposit per person is due (with application form)
Date 3 months out	Airfare (if purchased by Common Hope) is due in full
Date 1 month out	\$400 balance per person is due
Date 1 week out	\$4000 fundraising goal per team is due

*A \$400 non-refundable booking deposit is due from the team leader or the organization hosting the team (e.g., school, church, business representative) when the trip is scheduled.

Cancelation Policy

Common Hope requires a non-refundable \$400 booking deposit per team to reserve space on the calendar. Although we assume a team of 10-12 persons, a minimum of six team members must submit a completed application and half their fee (\$400) six months prior to the departure date. Unless Common Hope is able to recruit additional volunteers, teams unable to meet the six member minimum will be cancelled or rescheduled for later in the year as space allows.

Every team member who purchases airline tickets through Common Hope can choose to purchase ticket insurance. If a team member declines ticket insurance, and subsequently cancels, the team member is responsible for all airfare payments and is subject to charges from the airline/travel agent to change ticket dates.

TEAM MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

1. **Passport** – A valid passport is required to travel to Guatemala. Please see page 14 for more information on how to obtain or renew a passport.
2. **Application and Waiver** – Each Vision Team member must submit Common Hope’s Application and Waiver form. You may obtain a copy of this form on our website, www.commonhope.org, or contact the US staff.
3. **Team Meetings** – We strongly encourage all teams to meet at least two times prior to the trip. Your team leader will work with US staff to facilitate these meetings which provide orientation information as well as background information about Guatemala.
4. **Payment** – All team members are required to have paid in full one month prior to their departure. Cost for the trip for a single volunteer is \$800. Airfare is an additional cost. Each team member is expected to contribute to the team fundraising requirement of \$4,000.

SECURITY IN GUATEMALA

As every place in the world, Guatemala deals with crime and violence on a daily basis. Guatemala is the largest and most populous country of Central America and has seen crime increase in recent years. *These trends complicate our work, yet make it more necessary.*

We want to be clear that Common Hope does not think it is unsafe to visit Guatemala; however street crime and gang activity are a reality. We cannot ensure safety, but we can avoid known dangers and reduce our exposure to risk. We do our best to monitor the incidence of violence and criminal activity in the areas where we work and then make informed decisions about safety.

Why are there security and safety problems in Guatemala?

- It is a country of extremes in poverty, inequity and corruption.
- The country has a fragile democracy that is struggling to overcome the effects of a 36 year-long civil war marked by state repression and terror.
- Judicial and penal systems are quite weak, and so there is a lack of consequences for criminal behavior, which in turn brings about a vigilante response to crimes.
- Guatemala has seen an increase in gang violence and citizen vigilante group retaliation.

What is Common Hope doing to ensure my safety?

Common Hope has 25 years of experience keeping visitors and staff as safe as possible. We cannot guarantee your safety, but we will do everything in our power to minimize your exposure. We encourage you be attentive to our safety advice, understanding that our policies are in your best interest.

Our Antigua and New Hope Village Project sites have walls, barbed wire fence, locked gates, security cameras, guard dogs, panic buttons, radios and cell phones. Access to the grounds is monitored at all times. Our staff is in regular contact with international and national officials in Guatemala including UN, US Embassy, and local officials regarding security. Staff and long-term volunteers stay up-to-date on local situations and potential unrest and they make informed decisions based on that information. Guards and members of the staff are trained in how to deal with emergency situations, and more importantly in how to avoid potential problems. Regular rounds are made at each Project site throughout the day and night.

What can I do to ensure my own safety?

- Always remember you are in a foreign country and do not be careless in public places.
- Be aware of your surroundings and be particularly conscious of your personal belongings such as money, cameras, backpacks, etc.
- Carry only what you need. Do not carry items with you that you are not willing to lose, should something happen.

- Do not go out alone or leave without letting staff know where you are going. Ask questions and express concerns to appropriate staff members.
- If you find yourself in a dangerous situation, stay as calm as possible and do not resist.
- **Respect Common Hope's recommendations and do not leave the Project in the evening. Do not walk alone outside of the Project, especially in the surrounding communities, and do not wander off by yourself during visits to surrounding communities.**
- Only utilize taxis with which Common Hope has an established relationship. Staff in Guatemala will give you a list of these; the taxi gives you a receipt and gets paid later by Common Hope.

Political Involvement

Volunteers are prohibited from becoming politically active with issues pertaining to Guatemala in their home country or in Guatemala. This helps ensure the safety of Common Hope's staff and the affiliated families. One unintended political mistake by a volunteer could jeopardize the care received by thousands of people and threaten the organization's existence.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH GUIDELINES

No immunizations are required for travel to Guatemala. However, Common Hope recommends:

- A tetanus booster because Vision Teams usually perform construction work.
- Hepatitis-A vaccination, a 2-shot series, the first of which should be given 4-6 weeks before departure for maximum immunization. The second is given 6 months after the first shot.
- Hepatitis-B vaccination which is a 3-shot series. The second dose must be given at least 1 month after the first dose. The third dose must be given at least 2 months after the second dose and at least 4 months after the first.

Typhoid and cholera do exist in Guatemala, but do not pose problems when food is carefully selected and properly prepared. Malaria does not pose much of a health risk in Antigua and New Hope Village due to high altitudes.

Prescriptions

Pack enough prescription medications to last the entire trip. As you pack, remember that most airlines require that medications be in original container. If you wear prescription contact lenses, pack a back-up pair, as well as a second pair of glasses and a copy of your lens prescription.

Medical Conditions

Ask your physician to describe your medical condition in writing if you take more than two prescribed medicines, a narcotic, or you need to carry needles and syringes for health purposes. A health clinic is located on both sites. Common Hope staff will assist you in the event of a medical problem. Common Hope recommends that each individual contact their physician, local health department, or Centers for Disease Control for information on other areas that you may be traveling to discuss appropriate options. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) 1-888-232-3228, can provide region-specific information on travel clinics.

Stay Healthy in Guatemala

Part of being a good team member is deliberately doing what it takes to stay healthy during your trip. Please make wise choices to benefit not only yourself but your team members as well.

- Wash your hands frequently and dry them completely.
- Shield yourself from the sun. Wear sunscreen.
- Keep your feet protected. Wear shoes.
- Drink only purified water. Common Hope provides water and water bottles for volunteers.
- Drink plenty of liquids. Avoid dehydration. Carry purified water with you at all times.
- Use only ice that you know has been made from purified water.
- Eat only cooked vegetables and always peel fresh fruit before eating.
- Do not eat fruits that have been peeled for you, such as mango sold on the street or in the markets.
- Avoid eating all fish and raw shellfish.
- Know your limits and do not push yourself beyond them.

TEMPORARY MEDICAL & EMERGENCY INSURANCE

All Vision Team members are covered by Common Hope's temporary insurance. The specified coverage is for the duration of the trip only, is not intended to replace personal medical insurance, and does not cover pre-existing conditions. A brief summary of benefits is below. A detailed policy description is available by contacting the US Vision Team staff.

Schedule of Benefits

\$50,000 Accident/Sickness medical limit per insured person per policy period

\$500 Deductible – the insured pays the first \$500 of eligible expenses per policy period. Thereafter, the policy pays 80% of eligible expenses for \$5,000, then 100% to the medical limit.

\$35,000 Emergency medical evacuation/repatriation expense

\$10,000 Return of mortal remains expense

\$2,500 Local ambulance expense

\$10,000 Accidental death and dismemberment principal sum

Description of Medical Benefits

When a covered injury or illness is incurred by the insured person the company will pay reasonable and customary medical charges for covered expenses, excess of the deductible and coinsurance as stated in the schedule of benefits. In no event shall the company's maximum liability exceed the maximum stated in the schedule of benefits. The deductible and coinsurance amount consists of covered expenses which would otherwise be payable under this policy. These expenses must be borne by the insured person.

EXCHANGING CURRENCY

Traveler's checks/personal checks are difficult to use and not always accepted in Guatemala. It is best to bring clean, new currency. Guatemalan banks do not like to exchange old or torn dollars. A credit card (Visa is recommended) can be used in some stores but not in the markets. Keep in mind that only up to \$400 worth of non-textile goods purchased out of the US is duty-free.

Standard ATM machines can be found at the airport and throughout Antigua. ATMs in Antigua should be used as a supplemental source of money. Your primary exchange should be made at the counter in the airport, or by a withdrawal at the airport ATM upon arriving. Common Hope does not keep cash on hand to provide money exchange for visitors.

GETTING READY TO GO



TRIP LOGISTICS

Common Hope employs staff in the US and Guatemala who work together to provide the best possible experiences for our volunteers. Your team will be assigned a team coordinator on our Guatemalan staff. This individual is responsible for making all arrangements for your team including meals, transportation and activities. Your team coordinator will be on hand in Guatemala to meet your group at the airport, serve as a translator throughout your trip, facilitate reflection session during weeknight evenings, and provide general support during your stay at the project site.

Travel Day

When you arrive in Guatemala City you will be met by drivers from Voyager Tour Services, bearing “Common Hope” signs. Shuttle buses will transport your team to Antigua; the drive from the Guatemala City airport to Antigua is about one hour. At the project site your team will receive an orientation and tour from your team coordinator, meet other Guatemalan staff, and review basic information on Common Hope’s programs, as well as safety and security.

Accommodations

Most teams stay at the project site in private dorm rooms. If your team wishes to make alternate arrangements please have your team leader speak with US staff prior to traveling. The accommodations include:

- Rooms with bunk beds and bathrooms, a couple of rooms with double beds
- Bedding and towels
- Hot showers
- Large open-air living space with couches, refrigerator, microwave, and sink
- Use of washer and dryer
- Meals on-site, may be required to help with the preparation and cleanup
- Well water safe to drink from the tap
- Dietary needs (allergies, vegetarians, etc.) will be accommodated as best we can
- Phone calls to the U.S. charged .25 cents per minute
- Access to laptop computer and internet services

Question/Answer Sessions with Staff

During the week your team will visit with staff and hear short presentations about Guatemala, Common Hope, and our programs to learn more about our work.

Sponsorship Visits

Visits will be arranged for sponsors so they can meet their sponsored child and family. Please refer to the *Sponsorship Information* section of this handbook visit guidelines. If you would like to sign up to sponsor a student before your trip please contact the US office staff.

Work Activities

On week days your team will be engaged in various work activities at the project site and in surrounding villages. The typical work day begins at 8:00am and concludes at 5:00pm. The schedule will be arranged by your team coordinator in the weeks prior to your arrival. Your team should be prepared to help cover all scheduled jobs. Please be respectful of the hard work the coordinator does to create the work schedule.

CONSTRUCTION

Common Hope families can work volunteer hours to earn building material they could not otherwise afford. Help build a house, or help with other construction related projects. This work can be strenuous, as many families live at a high elevation.



AROUND THE PROJECT SITE

Help in the library, kitchen, pharmacy or warehouse. During your trip we may ask you to help young students with puzzles or homework in the library. You and a few teammates may help our kitchen staff prepare typical Guatemalan meals. We also frequently have volunteers help out in the warehouse organizing donations, or packing food baskets for families.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Assist in the medical or dental clinic, or with professional trainings for staff. Trainings may have a medical, dental, nutritional, or developmental focus, or an IT or business skills focus. Let us know if you have other suggestions. Please also let us know if you speak Spanish, as that will help us make better use of your skills.



LESSONS, ARTS AND CRAFTS

Teach a basic lesson or craft, or assist teachers in daycare and public school. We welcome volunteers (Spanish speaking and non-Spanish speaking) to share creative activities with our students and staff. If you would like to plan a lesson or craft activity please fill out the appropriate forms from the US office. **Please note that Guatemalan school is in session from the end of January through the beginning of October. Teams traveling in late October, November, December and early January should be aware activities with the students will be limited.**

SOCIAL WORK VISITS

You will have the opportunity to accompany a social worker on home visits. You will shadow a Guatemalan social worker and travel to villages around Antigua. Staff will be on hand at the project site to debrief with you and the social worker when you return.

Weekend and Evening Activities

Your team can choose from a number of weekend activities in and around Antigua to share as a group. A weekend dinner in town is planned for each team. On weekday nights your team is expected to stay onsite during the evening hours unless you make other arrangements BEFORE arriving in Guatemala. This is a safety measure enforced for all project visitors and staff.

Final Day

Common Hope staff will host a *despedida* party for your team to say thank you and farewell. Your team will be shuttled to the Guatemala City airport and fly home.

WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

As a group your team may chose to participate in the following experiences on your weekend days in Guatemala. Our hospitality staff will make arrangements for you as a group. If you would like to travel outside the Antigua region or make arrangements for other activities, we ask that you add an extra day or two to your time in Guatemala. We are happy to give recommendations, but you are expected to make arrangements on your own.

Volcan de Agua hike | Morning | Strenuous- Dry Season only

The tour begins at Don Filiberto's home where you will have a light breakfast of hot chocolate and sweet bread before starting the hike. Don Filiberto will lead you up the Water Volcano to his land where he grows food to support his wife and children. There he will speak about his family's experiences during the 36 year civil war. Fresh guacamole, refried beans, and tortillas are made by his daughters are served at the rest stop to refresh everyone for the trip back.

*This is a steep hike of approximately 2.5 miles and is recommended for those who are in good physical condition only.



San Juan del Obispo tour/Tray-table Making | Morning or afternoon| Easy

San Juan del Obispo, a town outside of Antigua, is one of Guatemala's oldest villages and is rich in architectural and cultural history. Roberto and his wife Elizabeth, who are residents and business owners in San Juan, are local experts and will give you an in-depth tour of San Juan del Obispo, including its well known museum housed in a former convent. After the tour, join Roberto in his carpentry shop to observe the typical artisanship of Guatemalan woodworking. After a carpentry lesson and small snack, Roberto and Elizabeth will take you to their artisan shop complete with

Roberto's wares as well as other famous San Juan products, such as homemade chocolate and jewelry. (Optional: Make your own breakfast tray-table with Roberto's guidance and materials, for an additional cost)

Walking tour of Antigua| Morning | Easy

One of Antigua's knowledgeable English-speaking tour guides will lead this complete tour of the town and all of its main attractions. Get a glimpse behind the walls of this historical city—explore ruins, old convents, and historical sites while learning about its architecture, history, restoration and cultural trends. The tour is approximately 3 hours long and will make several stops at various locations, with the last stop being the Jade Factory right off of Central Park.



Independent time in Antigua | Afternoon | Easy

After lunch in town at a local café, spend the afternoon shopping in the beautiful Antigua market. Visit the locales where many artisans showcase their goods, or tour the city streets to find treasures in small, local shops.

Weaving Cooperative tour | Morning or afternoon | Easy

Spend the morning with the wonderful Mayan women of the weaving co-op *Santiago Zamora* located 30 minutes outside of Antigua. The women of this village have a unique story and many Mayan traditions they will explain and share. Listen to their history, see how traditional weaving is done, and even try your hand at weaving and tortilla-making. After the presentation, a small mid-day meal is prepared with local food. There will be the opportunity to shop for textiles after the tour.





Mayan ruins of Iximche | All Day | Easy

Leave the project at 8 AM in a Voyager van and an English-speaking guide, and travel to the Mayan ruins of Iximche, about an hour from Antigua.

At Iximche, you will spend the morning touring crumbling pyramids, grassy plazas and quiet fields where Mayans once lived. The guide will walk the group through the ruins and describe the history of the site for a couple hours. There is the distinct possibility of observing a Mayan ceremony regularly held on the grounds. On the way back to Antigua, the group will stop for lunch at a delicious local restaurant called Katok, where traditional Guatemalan cuisine is served.

Macadamia nut farm | Morning or afternoon | Easy

Visit this organic nut and coffee farm just outside Antigua and learn how they are sharing their knowledge with small farmers all over Guatemala. You can enjoy macadamia pancakes, chocolates, and even macadamia facials while learning about the genetic variety they have taken 30 years to develop. See how a single farm has contributed to replanting the tropical forest and empowered local farmers. Tour is best between December and April. Fresh organic macadamia nuts, chocolates and other products are available for purchase. <http://www.exvalhalla.net/index.htm>



Centro Cultural La Azotea | Morning or afternoon | Easy

La Azotea Cultural Center combines a coffee museum, a Mayan music museum, and a Guatemalan cultural center all in one! Enjoy a guided tour in English or Spanish. Learn about the coffee process from plant to cup, hear the sounds of traditional Mayan instruments, and compare the differences between various villages surrounding Antigua. At the end of the tour, enjoy a delicious sample of fresh coffee and the opportunity to purchase coffee, chocolate, Mayan instruments, and other items in their gift shop.

www.centrozotea.com



Mass at the city Cathedral | Sunday evening | Easy

Attend mass at the Cathedral of Antigua, just off of the main plaza. This beautiful structure is one of the main landmarks of the city. Originally built between 1534 and 1690, the cathedral was rebuilt several times due to damage by earthquakes. Those of all faiths are welcome to attend the service in the remarkable cathedral. Please note that the service is delivered in Spanish. 1 hour long. Usually starting at 6pm.

SPONSORSHIP VISITS

It is an incredible experience for sponsors to come to Guatemala to visit their sponsored children and their families. We offer the following information to help make your sponsorship visit more comfortable. Please inform Common Hope's US staff in advance of your desire to visit your sponsored child so that all arrangements can be made before arriving in Guatemala.

Your visit alone is a significant gift to your sponsored child. If you do choose to present a gift to your sponsored child we ask that you keep it small. Common Hope offers sacks of food for purchase to present to the family of your sponsored child. One bag costs \$30 and contains items like rice, corn, and beans. To purchase one, please notify the US staff so we can ensure we have it prepared for your Sponsorship visit. Payment should be made through our US office before you leave.

We suggest bringing your gift in a backpack or bag so that your visit isn't initially characterized by gift giving. Try not to present your gift to your sponsored child in the first few minutes of the visit. It is best to establish a relationship before giving material goods. Follow the lead of the social worker and translator – they both have experience dealing with sponsorship visits. **Please do not ask the child or the family of their needs directly. Their social worker has the resources to provide additional or emergency assistance if the family needs it.**

PACKING FOR THE TRIP

The most important this to remember is -- keep it simple. Upon returning from your trip, you should be able to unpack and see that you have worn or used everything. Pack clothing that can be layered because the mornings and evenings can be cool.

Carry-on Luggage

Vision Team members help Common Hope by donating their checked luggage space. This arrangement helps us inexpensively deliver mail and supplies to our facilities in Guatemala. Team members should pack their personal items in one carry-on bag. There is a laundry facility on site for teams to use over the course of their stay.

Checked Luggage

Supplies carried down by a Vision Team might include sponsorship correspondence, school supplies or hygiene supplies. See the Common Hope website for current needs. Common Hope hosts packing sessions at its St. Paul warehouse for those teams traveling from Minnesota. Your team leader will arrange a time with the Common Hope Vision Team staff for your team to pack before your departure. If your team is departing from outside of Minnesota, your team leader will arrange a pre-trip packing session if your group has done a supplies collection

Suggested packing list for personal items:

- ___ Sturdy work pants (no shorts please)
- ___ T-shirts for work days (no tanks please)
- ___ Comfortable work shoes
- ___ Casual outfit (shirt, pants, long skirt, walking shorts)
- ___ Long sleeve shirt/sweatshirt/sweater/jacket
- ___ Rain poncho (rainy season is May - October)
- ___ Bandana or kerchief
- ___ Water bottle (twist-off lid is best)
- ___ Hat for sun protection
- ___ Sunglasses
- ___ Work gloves
- ___ Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- ___ Ear plugs
- ___ Camera
- ___ Camera batteries (are expensive in Guatemala)
- ___ Fanny pack or small back pack

- ___ Travel alarm
- ___ Toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc)
- ___ Journal and pen
- ___ Snacks (granola bars, candy, micro. popcorn)
- ___ Flip-flop sandals (for showering)
- ___ Insurance cards or other important documents
- ___ Prescription medications *packed in their original containers*

Bring photocopies of these items and keep them separate from your original documents:

- ___ Passport
- ___ Credit cards or ATM cards

Do Not Bring:

- Valuable jewelry/watches
- Linens or towels (these are provided)
- Electrical adapters (the current is the same)

TRAVEL RESOURCES

In an effort to make our resources as accessible and up-to-date as possible we have consolidated them on the Common Hope website. Visiting our site will be helpful as you prepare for your trip. The information there will compliment what you find in this manual.

Application and Waiver (PDF and Word)

You can download the forms necessary to participate in a vision team from the Common Hope website. Please submit to the US office through your team leader.

Center for Disease Control Website

Please visit for the latest health recommendations pertaining to travel to Guatemala. wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/

US State Department Website

Please visit for important information from the US Embassy and to review the Consular information sheet on Guatemala. Information about obtaining or renewing passports is also available through the State Department website. <http://travel.state.gov/>

Passport Information

Travelers are required to have a passport to leave the US and enter Guatemala. You will need to present your passport when checking-in at the airport. Consult the US Department of State website (www.state.gov) for the most up to date processing information.

Vision Team Photo Diary

Pictures of your team's experience in Guatemala will be posted each weekday day while you are away. We encourage you to share our website link with family, friends and co-workers who might want to read about your story.

Volunteer Network

The Common Hope Volunteer Network is a place where our volunteers can connect, share their experiences and ideas, and motivate and inspire one another to keep involved with Common Hope's mission. Check it out to learn more about how to support Common Hope: <http://www.commonhope.org/volunteernetwork/>

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Guatemalans do most tasks by hand and are very skilled and strong. You will see Guatemalans manually washing clothes, mixing concrete without machinery, and hauling wood on foot. Given the premium that our culture puts on efficiency, many people are quick to think of the Guatemalan way of doing things as inferior. Common Hope asks that volunteers try to be open-minded and not assume that their own way of doing things is necessarily superior; it is just different. We encourage you to learn their methods and to appreciate them.

Representatives

As a Vision Team member, you will be representing Common Hope. Common Hope has a very strong and positive reputation in Guatemala which we have worked hard to earn and would like very much to maintain. We ask that you be as caring, respectful, polite, and level-headed as you can be while you are in Guatemala.

Drinking and smoking

Smoking and drinking must be handled sensitively due to cultural differences. Alcoholism is a big problem in Guatemala. The concept of social drinking does not exist as it does in the United States and elsewhere, so most Guatemalans assume that drinking alcohol indicates a desire to get drunk. For these reasons volunteers should refrain from discussing drinking or joking about alcohol, even in English. Common Hope will not tolerate drunkenness among its volunteers and reserves the right to send volunteers home at their own expense if they abuse alcohol. Drinking is not allowed on site because it interferes with the ability to work and is not consistent with the goals of the Vision Team experience.

Smoking is a habit that the impoverished families we work with cannot afford. Smoking is not permitted in the villages. However, if you wish to smoke on-site, we will show you designated areas where it is okay to smoke on site.

Handing out toys and candy

We ask that you not hand out items such as candy, balloons, toys, or money to Guatemalan children that you meet. Handing out gifts sets a difficult precedent. If the children see visitors with unlimited wealth and resources to give away, they may become more prone to asking for things of our staff, instead of actively working toward goals to earn a better way of life. We would, however, be happy for you to bring items down for our social workers to distribute in appropriate ways through our gift program.

Greeting Guatemalans

Guatemalans are very friendly and very formal. They greet each other all the time and will greet you frequently. It is a simple sign of respect to return the greeting. We encourage you to know and use the appropriate greetings and responses, so please review the Basic Spanish Words and Phrases and learn some of the most important ones: *buenos días, buenas tardes, buenas noches, mucho gusto, etc.*

There are culturally appropriate ways of making contact with Guatemalans. For instance, women often greet each other by taking each other's arm at the wrist or just below the elbow. Most men do not do this, but often shake hands. Men and women may shake hands with each other, but are generally conservative as far as physical contact goes. Sometimes Guatemalans will give a light kiss on the cheek to someone they know fairly well. If you are unsure about what is appropriate, follow the lead of the Guatemalan you are greeting.

When you enter someone's home remember that the yard is considered part of the home. Do not enter without saying *con permiso* and waiting to be invited in.

Guatemalans are quiet people

Keep in mind that Guatemalans are gentle, quiet people in comparison to North Americans, who have a reputation for being fairly loud and boisterous. When your team is walking through a village or is at a restaurant, you may find that your group talks more loudly and makes more noise than anyone else around. This is okay, but it is something to be aware of.

Cameras and photos

Guatemalans, with the exception of some children, are much more sensitive about having their picture taken than others may be. Many do not like having their picture taken. Before you take a picture of a Guatemalan, you should ask permission -- something as simple as *un photo por favor?* They may ask to be paid in exchange for letting you take their picture. It is up to you whether or not you want to pay them for their photo. Never take photos of the Guatemalan military or security.

If you take photos of any of Common Hope's affiliated families and would like to send them copies it is extremely important that you get their name and affiliation number. Otherwise, it may be difficult or impossible for us to determine who to deliver the photos to later. Do not promise to send photos if you may not be able to follow through, they will take your word and anxiously await copies of photos that you promise to them.

Correspondence

If you want to exchange letters, pictures or other items with Guatemalans you meet through Common Hope, we ask that you go through the US office and do not exchange addresses with them directly. We have a system in place to deliver correspondence between you and the sponsored families. By sending correspondence through our US office, you are protected from having the child or family write to you directly to ask for money or other items. We can also assure you that your correspondence will make it to them, as the Guatemalan mail system is very slow and unreliable.

Flexibility and open-mindedness

If you have forgotten everything else, the most important thing to remember is to have a flexible attitude and an open mind and heart. The pace in Guatemala is different and more relaxed than our rushed, time-conscious pace of life. If your driver is late to pick you up from the village where you have spent the afternoon building a family's house, don't get frustrated, but think instead about enjoying the beautiful scenery, playing with the children, and learning about Guatemala and its people.

RECOMMENDED READING ON GUATEMALA

Reading about Guatemala and its people is perhaps the best way to prepare for your trip. Guatemala's history, both ancient and recent, is important to understanding its present situation. We also encourage you to consult your local library for other titles and reference materials on Guatemala. History, culture, maps and other visuals can also be found on the internet.

Guatemala: Never Again! Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHAG)

This book is a detailed report of human rights abuses in Guatemala.

I, Rigoberta Menchu Rigoberta Menchu Tum

This book is a personal account by the Guatemalan indigenous leader who won the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

To the Mountain and Back: The Mysteries of Guatemalan Highland Family Life Joann E. Glittenberg

This book is a personal account of the author's experiences in highland Guatemala and her own growth as a nurse, anthropologist, and person becoming aware of the world community.

Bridge of Courage, Life Stories of the Guatemalan Companeros and Companeras Jennifer Harbury

This book shares stories of how and why people made the difficult and dangerous decision to work for the revolution in Guatemala.

Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala Steven Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer

This book is a comprehensive account of the CIA operation which overthrew the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. First published in 1982.

Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy Victor Perera

This book is a compilation of reporting, personal narrative, and oral testimony focused on four Guatemalan towns which have been the object of an ethnic extermination campaign.

Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala Daniel Wilkenson

This book traces the history of Guatemala's 36-year civil war through personal interviews that with plantation owners, army officials, guerrillas and the impoverished civilians stuck in the middle.

Weaving Common Hope Zach Thomas

This book explains how Common Hope began and developed its multi-faceted approach to addressing poverty.

BASIC SPANISH WORDS AND PHRASES

As a Common Hope Vision Team volunteer, it is important to have at least a basic understanding of the Spanish language. Although many staff members speak English, you will be working in communities and alongside people who do not. Please use this form as a basic guide. Common Hope encourages Vision Teams to practice Spanish individually, at home, or in a class and together at team meetings prior to the trip.

Pronunciation: Spanish pronunciation is basically as written, with the following exceptions:

a:ah	example: adios (goodbye)is pronounced "ah-deeos "
e:a	example: ¿Que?(what?)is pronounced "k "
h:(silent)	example: hola (hello)is pronounced "olah "
i:e	example: aqui (here)is pronounced "a-kee "
j:h	example: rojo (red)is pronounced "ro-ho "
ll:y	example: me llamo (my name is)is pronounced "may yamo "
ñ:nya	example: baño (bathroom)is pronounced "ba-nyo "
q:k	example: pequeño (small)is pronounced "pa-kay-nyo "
rr:rolled r	example: pero (but)is pronounced as you see it, but perro (dog) requires you to roll your tongue
u:oo	example: azul (blue)is pronounced "ah-zool "
v:b	example: verde (green)is pronounced "ber-day "
x:sh	example: Xela is pronounced "shay-la "

Basic Phrases

Sí	Yes
No	No
No hablo español	I don't speak Spanish
Buenos días	Good morning
Buenas tardes	Good afternoon/ evening
Buenas noches	Good night
Hola	Hello
Adios	Good bye
Hasta luego	See you later
Por favor	Please
Gracias	Thank you
De nada	You're welcome
Disculpe	Excuse me
Con permiso	Excuse (getting by)
Cómo se llama?	What is...your name
Me llamo...	My name is...
Bien, gracias	Fine, thank you
Mucho gusto	Pleased to meet you
Como se dice. . . ?	How do you say. . . ?
Cuanto cuesta?	How much does this cost?
Más	More
Menos	Less

Que?	What?
Cuando?	When?
Donde?	Where?
Cuanto?	How much?
Cuantos?	How many?
Por qué?	Why?
Habla inglés?	Do you speak English?
Comprendo	I understand
No comprendo	I don't understand
Me ayuda,por favor?	Can you please help me?
Tengo hambre	I'm hungry
Tengo sed	I'm thirsty
Tengo calor/frío	I'm hot/cold
Estoy cansado/a	I'm tired
La cuenta,por favor	The check, please
Yo quiero...	I want...
Yo necesito...	I need...
Donde está...?	Where is...?

Basic Vocabulary

el hotel	the hotel
el proyecto	the project
el restaurante	the restaurant

el baño	the bathroom
damas	ladies
caballeros	gentlemen
la cuenta	the check
el carro	the car
grande/pequeño	big/small
temprano/tarde	early/late
barato/caro	cheap/expensive
facil/dificil	easy/difficult
abierto/cerrado	open/closed
bueno/malo	good/bad
arriba/abajo	above/below
con	with
y, o	and, or
nada	nothing
también	also
aqui/alli	here/there

Family

madre/padre	mother/father
hijo/hija	son/daughter
abuelo/a	grandfather/mother
tío/a	uncle/aunt
niño	child
bebe	baby
hermano/a	brother/sister
primo/a	cousin
esposo/a	husband/wife
amigo/a	friend
padrino	godparent

Construction

la caja	box
la madera	wood
la casa	house
el techo	roof
el suelo	floor
la bodega	warehouse
el martillo	hammer
el clavo	nail
el serrucho	saw
la lamina	corrugated roofing
la puerta	door

la ventana	window
el ayudante	worker
la pala	shovel
las planchas	cement blocks
la arena	sand
el cemento	cement
la carreta	wheelbarrow
la mezcladora de cemento	cement mixer

Colors

rojo	red
verde	green
amarillo	yellow
negro	black
blanco	white
cafe	brown
azul	blue

Numbers

1	uno	30	treinta
2	dos	40	cuarenta
3	tres	50	cincuenta
4	cuatro	60	sesenta
5	cinco	70	setenta
6	seis	80	ochenta
7	siete	90	noventa
8	ocho	100	cien
9	nueve	1000	mil
10	diez		
11	once		
12	doce		
13	trece		
14	catorce		
15	quince		
16	dieciseis		
17	diecisiete		
18	dieciocho		
19	diecinueve		
20	veinte		

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of emergency, friends or family can reach you by calling the Common Hope office in St. Paul during normal business hours or by leaving a message at other times. They can also attempt to contact you at Familias de Esperanza in Guatemala if necessary, but the Guatemala numbers should only be used for emergencies.

Team members will be able to call home from Guatemala and have access to the internet during their trip. Please do not have post mail letters sent to team members as they will not reach them due to the slow and unreliable Guatemalan mail system.

Common Hope, St. Paul Office

550 Vandalia St.
PO Box 14298
St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone: 651-917-0917

Fax: 651-917-7458

E-mail: info@commonhope.org

Familias, de Esperanza, Guatemala

Km 2, Carretera a San Juan
Antigua, 03901 Sacatepéquez
Guatemala, Central America

Phone/Fax: 011-502-7-922-6600*

*Be aware that the phone is answered in Spanish. A person who speaks only English should speak slowly and clearly and an English speaker will be put on the phone.