



VOLUNTEER PREPARATION PACKET

CONTENTS

HONDURAN CULTURE AND FLEXIBILITY

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

HOUSING

SAFETY

HEALTH AND SANITATION

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

TRANSPORTATION

CELL PHONE AND INTERNET USAGE

PACKING LIST

BUDGET

Congratulations on your acceptance as a volunteer to Amor, Fe y Esperanza! We are certain that God will use your time in service to another culture to both bless Hondurans and you as well as you grow to know and love the people here.

Serving in a cross-cultural context has its blessings and its difficulties. The purpose of this preparation packet is to get you ready for times of growth and stretching that you will inevitably experience living and serving in a developing country such as Honduras. To make the most of your experience, please come with a humble heart, an attitude open to learning, and ready for adventure!

HONDURAN CULTURE AND FLEXIBILITY

After your first couple of weeks in Honduras you will begin to notice the differences between Honduras and the United States. Not only is the language, food, and driving different, but so is the way people interact with one another. The culture in Honduras may be different than you expect, but it is not better or worse than any other culture; it is just different.

When you arrive, you will receive an orientation at which the differences between Honduras and American cultures will be explained at length. At that point you can ask further questions. In the meantime, expect to make some cultural adjustments to politely conform to your host country. Remember that there are many Hondurans who understand English. Also know that as a foreigner, you are always being observed by others. Due to this reality, please be mindful of body language and facial expressions so as not to offend others.

If you come with the mindset to be flexible and serve, your experience will be much more enjoyable and fruitful. Many expectations will inevitably not be met, but keep an open mind at all times!

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

As a volunteer, your overall duty will be to support the AFE staff as they seek the holistic transformation of children and families of the garbage dump. Practically, that involves helping in areas where staff may be spread thin. Often, this includes tutoring, construction, translating, teaching classes, serving as a teacher's assistant, or helping in the clinic.

AFE is open from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm for morning classes (traditional students) and from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm for afternoon classes (adult learners and younger students who can only commit to 2-3 days of classes during the week). We expect our volunteers to be at AFE all morning. In the afternoon, you may be asked to teach classes every afternoon or for only 2-3 days a week. If you do not have afternoon class responsibilities, you may choose to stay at AFE and spend additional time with the kids or return to your home and rest. If you are a clinic volunteer, you will most likely work in the morning from 8:00 to 12:00 providing direct patient care, and then help in the afternoons on various projects concerning the clinic as related to AFE students and families.

HOUSING

You will stay with a host family in the Linda Miller Community near AFE. This family will provide both food and lodging. We have chosen families whom we know well and trust and whom are also leaders in our church. You will be given a room to yourself but will share the living area and bathroom with the rest of the family. Some houses in the Miller do not have running water but use a *pila* (large outdoor sink) to wash clothes by hand and barrels to collect water to wash dishes. This means you may be taking “bucket” showers and will be pouring water into the toilets to flush. This water is not safe to drink. The families will have pure water available to drink and with which to brush your teeth.

The host family is chosen by our director. Unfortunately it is not possible to contact them beforehand. **All payments will be made online on AFE’s website (www.afehonduras.org) four weeks prior to arrival date. Please do not pay the family directly!** It is common to bring a small “thank you” gift for the family such as candles, picture frames, or something decorative.

Regarding laundry, most families will not have a washing machine. You have two options: wash your clothes by hand or pay someone to wash your clothes for you. It will cost about the same as in the U.S. for a week’s worth of laundry so bring extra money if you choose to pay someone to wash your clothes.

SAFETY

Although Honduras is a beautiful country, it can also be a dangerous place if you make unwise decisions. Because of this, we ask volunteers to always keep their leaders aware of their locations. Within the Villa Linda Miller community, you can roam freely since it is a safe, contained community. If you wish to travel outside of the community, please talk to the volunteer coordinator, Hollie Macenczak. We will require you to return to Linda Miller before dark (5pm). No one, including long-term staff, travels downtown after dark because of the potential of violent crime.

These restraints on your personal independence may be an area that takes some adjusting to. Please prepare yourself for this because your safety is our number one concern.

HEALTH AND SANITATION

As previously mentioned, tap water is unsafe to drink. It is okay to bathe with, but we even suggest brushing your teeth with purified water. In addition to your home, purified water is available in most stores and restaurants.

When using the bathroom in your home and anywhere else in Honduras, please put your toilet paper in the garbage next to the toilet and not in the toilet itself. The pipes in Honduras are old and narrow and do not support toilet paper.

In case of sickness, there is the AFE Clinic available for minor illnesses. For more serious illnesses and/or injuries, there are several good local urgent care centers and hospitals. The most common sickness is gastro-intestinal infection, resulting in diarrhea. Many volunteers

come prepared with ciprofloxacin prescribed by their doctors. Hollie, the volunteer coordinator, is also a registered nurse who will be available for any problems day or night.

CHURCH INVOLVMENT

Amor y Vida is a dynamic church where the kids from AFE and many from the Miller community attend. In addition to a Sunday service there are small groups held in the houses of church members during the week. We encourage volunteers to engage with the church on Sundays by attendance and/or serving in some capacity and to also join a small group.

TRANSPORTATION

A small bus will take you back and forth from the Linda Miller community to AFE. It is called a “*rapidito*” and costs between 10 and 12 lempiras each way. This bus can also take you downtown during the day.

CELL PHONE AND INTERNET USAGE

We encourage you to get a Honduran cell phone so that we can communicate easily with you. The lower-end models cost around \$25 plus a \$5 chip/modem to activate the phone. There is an additional weekly cost to buy minutes to make phone calls. It is recommended that you buy around 50-100 lempiras (\$2.50-\$5) worth of minutes weekly to make local and international calls. Calling the U.S. with this cell phone is inexpensive (e.g., a 40-minute phone call costs a little over \$1).

You will not have access to internet at your home. There is Wi-Fi located at the seminary building near the Linda Miller church (Amor y Vida) that will be available for use if needed.

PACKING LIST

THE BASICS

- Cash
- Passport
- Copy of Passport to keep with you at all times
- Purse or book bag to carry personal items with you

CLOTHING

- Boots and appropriate jacket for rainy weather (especially if you are here during May-August)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- **At AFE:** Jeans or capris (no shorts), T-shirts or casual blouses (no tank-tops), casual flats or sneakers (sandals are okay but not recommended because of bug bites).
- **At CHURCH:**
 - Women: Dresses or skirts. Strappy sundresses are okay but be mindful of length (around knee-length)
 - Men: Slacks or jeans, dress shoes, and polo or collared shirt. Tie optional.
- **LEISURE:** Shorts are okay when around the house but not recommended when at AFE or outside of the Miller. Pajamas need to be modest as well. Sandals are useful in the Miller.
- **WARM-WEATHER:** Sometimes in the mornings it is cool or Tegucigalpa might have a “cold spell” (50 degrees). Bring one light jacket and at least one sweater or sweatshirt. Layers are great!
- **ATHLETIC:** Running shoes, shorts, T-shirt
- **SWIMSUIT:** This is just in case the opportunity arises
 - Women: Modest one-piece or shorts and tank-top over your two-piece
 - Men: Swim trunks

TOILETRIES

- Shampoo
- Toothbrush and Toothpaste
- Soap
- Razor
- Deodorant
- Sunscreen
- Bug Repellent
- Personal Medication (if necessary)
- Small first-aid kit if needed to be used at your host home
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons are sometimes hard to find here)

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- Any special snack or food items
- Books, magazines, Bible/journal

- Small flashlight
- Camera
- Reusable water bottle
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Watch
- Technology items such as laptops, iPhones and/or iPods. These devices are permitted to bring, but you are ultimately responsible for them in case of theft.

Note: Many items can be purchased in Honduras as well if you forget something or run out of whatever you have packed. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

VOLUNTEER BUDGET

MONTHLY COSTS

- Food/Lodging = \$150/week (\$600/month)
 - *Includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner cooked by your host family.*
- Transportation = \$6/week (\$24/month)
 - *A small bus runs between your community, AFE, and downtown. Each trip is around 10 or 11 lempiras. This weekly estimate is to go to and from AFE during the work week. Any additional trips you would like to take would be extra.*
- Minutes for Cell Phone = \$2.50-\$5/week (\$20/month)
 - *Cell phones are pre-paid and you can make calls to the U.S. affordably. This amount is an estimate and you might want to budget more if you think you will be using your phone more often. Also, if bringing an unlocked cell phone, this does not include additional money to buy data for internet usage.*
- Spending Money = \$50/month
 - *Includes dining-out, entertainment, sight-seeing and personal costs.*
- Doctor/Medication = \$10/month
 - *Doctor visits/medicines are paid out-of-pocket.*

ONE-TIME COST

- Cell Phone and Phone Chip = \$30
 - *We suggest buying a cheap cell phone during your time here. Expensive phones are frequently stolen. However, if you choose to bring an unlocked iPhone or other smart phone, you will need to buy a \$5 chip to activate the phone in-country.*

Total Budget for 1 month = \$734

Note: The above budget only covers your time on the ground with us at AFE. However, as stated in the application, you will be required to attend language school unless you are already fluent in Spanish. This will add additional items to your budget. Here are the items to consider:

1. **Cost of language school.** These schools are very affordable. Volunteers have had the best experience attending language schools either in Antigua, Guatemala or Copan, Honduras. If you need help finding a school, we are happy to make recommendations.
2. **Travel expenses to language school.** You will need to make arrangements with your language school for accommodations and transportation.
3. **Travel expenses from language school to Tegucigalpa.** After completing your time in language school, you will then need to make arrangements to travel to Tegucigalpa. There is a reliable and safe bus service called Hedman Alas (www.hedmanalas.com) that provides transportation from Guatemala and Copan to Tegucigalpa. You may also fly if you choose. If you attend school in Guatemala, there is an exit tax that you will need to pay before you can leave the country. It is usually \$5 - \$10.

We understand it can seem intimidating to manage all of this in a foreign country while learning a new language, but we are available to assist you in navigating through the entire process.

If you have any further questions, please contact the volunteer coordinator, Hollie Preston Macenczak, at holliepreston@gmail.com