

## Opening Guidelines

As we all know, short-term teams are a relatively recent development. There are many ways to do short-term ministry. Perhaps you have had experience leading teams elsewhere, or even here. We are not saying that our way is the right and only way. However, our purpose here is to outline the expectations that we feel are necessary in order to be good stewards of the ministry the Lord has given us.

The prospective team leader should read, pray about, and agree to the philosophy and guidelines before NLCH can consider partnering with the team. Remember, we are inviting you into our home where we have in our care many precious and priceless treasures (the children), so one can understand that we must put their spiritual, physical, and soul-level needs before any other consideration. If the team does not agree with our philosophies, then it is understood that the team would best partner with another ministry. Those who have or desire long-term relationships and investments in the ministry will understand our stance.

## Short-Term Team Philosophy

Why do we do short-term teams? We want to provide an opportunity for others to come and assist us in ministering to the children that the Lord has put in our care. Through this process, we hope God shows them the heart He has for children in crisis. We think that the Lord's desire for His people is that they invest their lives in service to Him and His purposes--not just a week thing! We therefore have short-term teams to generate long-term fruit. In that light, we also see the impact that the experience can have on teams themselves. We would like to ensure that each team member can maximize this experience by enabling them to serve, learn, receive, grow, and respond in God-honoring ways.

## General Guidelines

The book When Helping Hurts (WHH) has influenced the short-term team philosophy of NLCH. For a better understanding of God's ministry here and for the personal benefits, we strongly suggest that every team leader read WHH. Even though we do not agree with every word of WHH, we believe that this book has added to our insight of God's direction for His ministry at NLCH. The purpose of reading the book is to provoke different thought processes before the trip. To Give or Not to Give is also a suggested reading.

When Helping Hurts focuses on holistic ministry: meeting the social, physical, and spiritual needs of a people. As Americans, we have the tendency to try to throw money at the situation instead of truly investing in the people. Making a difference is a long-term process, not a short-term process. We must respond to God's heart for people, which is relational.

Much good can come from mission trips, but negative things can happen as well. Our expectation is that the prospective team leader would be committed to learning and teaching his/her team the pros and cons of short-term teams, in order to maximize "the potential benefits and minimize the possible harm of teams" (WHH p. 179).

We would also expect that sufficient consideration (initially by the team leader and eventually by all team members) has gone into the decision to partner with us: 1) earnest prayer for oneself and the field, 2) motivations for service, 3) wise use of God's resources, 4) spiritual reputation of team members: if they are not productive at home, they will not be productive on the mission field, 5) willingness to invest time and energy in what can be a difficult situation without complaining (counting the cost), 6) purposing to learn from the different culture, not look down on it, 7) willingness to adequately prepare as a team before coming. This is not an exhaustive list, but gives one the idea of what should be considered.

## Fitting within NLCH's Strategic Plan

The potential team leader understands that his/her team will be a part of the long-term, strategic plan for NLCH (see attached document). In other words, NLCH will work alongside the team leader to determine if and/or what each team will do based on how that will fit into our strategy.

The prospective team leader agrees to adhere to the cultural norms and follow the rules that have been put in place. Those cultural norms and rules will be communicated with each team member and the team leader will take responsibility for members that do not cooperate. In order to comply with our strategic plan, our teams will have no more than 20 people simply because of the difficulty in housing, transporting, and hosting more people. We want to guard against the team becoming the ministry rather than being an asset for the ministry.

### **Screening, Training, and Funding**

The prospective team leader agrees to prepare some form of presentation for prospective team members “clearly explaining what the trip is and is not about” (WHH p176). It should be emphasized that each team member will need to be committed to praying for and serving our ministry. Individuals should then be given sufficient time to think and pray before committing.

The potential team leader agrees that individuals will not be allowed to come on the trip simply because he/she wants to go on the trip and can raise the funds. Team members should be actively involved in their own church. We are seeking teams interested in partnering with us long term, therefore this speaks to a dedication to serving the Lord that is evident in team member's lives. We desire teams that are coming to build relationships, remembering relationships are the focus, not the work projects.

The potential team leader understands that meeting before, during, and after the trip is necessary, with the purpose being to foster learning, growth, and community among the team and in each team member. Untrained short-term mission teams are a “significant contributor to harmful teams” (WHH p177). The team leader will be required to read and comply with the “NLCH Team Leader Handbook.”

The prospective team leader agrees that we are all broken and poor (whether relationally or materially) and that we are nothing without God's grace and healing. Therefore, we expect the potential team leader to emphasize to each team member that he/she is going as a learner (not necessarily as a teacher), instead of focusing on what he/she is sacrificing. The team's trip is to be “about ‘being’ and ‘learning’ as much as about ‘doing’ ” (WHH p175). Teams that come with this attitude are often amazed at what they learn from the children and the Guatemalan staff. After all, if individuals refuse to meet in order to learn before, during, or after the trip, do they really have a desire to serve, learn, receive, grow, and respond?

Individuals will devote more time to the learning process before, during, and after the trip if they have to pay and/or raise all or a part of their trip expenses. Therefore, NLCH strongly encourages every team member to personally pay for and/or raise at least a part of the trip's expenses. The end result will be that each member will experience more growth because investment in God's kingdom is a personal value.

#### **Statement of Agreement:**

I have read and agree to abide by this philosophy. I understand that upon my agreement, NLCH will prayerfully consider the long-term benefits of partnering with my team, and that NLCH will be in contact to continue discussing my potential team. After determining God's direction, NLCH will notify you of the decision.

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Name of Team Member

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Signature

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Date

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **New Life Children's Home**

The **PURPOSE** of NEW LIFE CHILDREN'S HOME is to lead each person into the reality and presence of Jesus Christ.

The **MISSION** of NEW LIFE CHILDREN'S HOME:

New Life Children's Home is a Christian ministry that offers love and holistic care for Guatemalan children and youth, attending to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs in a family atmosphere. NLCH promotes life change: a transformation through knowing Jesus Christ, imparting Biblical values and principles through a comprehensive, quality education.

The **VISION** of NEW LIFE CHILDREN'S HOME:

New Life Children's Home strives to prepare Guatemalan children and youth to be God-fearing persons of honor and principle; with the goal that they will one day be good husbands(wives), responsible parents, committed citizens of their country, Christian leaders, and professionals with respectable jobs, that help them to confront the challenges of life they will face.

The **VISION** for the School is to offer an education that is academically sound in a Christian atmosphere, challenging the student to develop academically while at the same time encouraging the student to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and nurturing him in his walk with the Lord.