

Volunteer

Guidelines

Introducing Emmanuel

When David and Lydia Martinez were given a vision from God, showing them that His heart's desire was for them to provide for abandoned and unwanted children, they sold everything they owned and moved to Honduras to follow the Lord's calling on their lives. In Honduras they founded 'Emmanuel', for the Lord and Savior to be exalted and His children cared for. The first Christmas back in 1989 was spent together with 5 children and no electricity or clean drinking water. By the grace of God and His ability to touch the hearts of many people throughout the United States and Europe, Emmanuel now houses and cares for more than 400 unwanted, abandoned and abused children of all ages. Through God's love and compassion for these children a loving home and refuge has been provided for them along with all necessary home facilities. The beautiful setting of Emmanuel surrounds it with mountains, lots of fresh air and plenty of space in which for the children to grow and develop. Much of the work at Emmanuel is dependent upon the visits from long and short term volunteers. We welcome both male and female volunteers all year round to come and work with us.

Scheduling your stay

Once you have decided to apply for a volunteer stay at Emmanuel please visit our website and download the necessary application and reference forms. These must be filled out as detailed and accurate as possible and emailed or posted to us. Once your application has been read and screened we will contact you directly regarding the available options. Please send all the documentation to emmanuel@libdata.com or by regular mail to: Orfanatorio Emmanuel, Attention Katja de Hernandez, apdo Postal 20496 Comayagua, Honduras, Central America. We recommend that if at all possible you choose to scan and email all the information to us. In order for us to keep communication and expectations clear we have defined any applicants staying here shorter than 30 days as a 'volunteer visit'. You should contact Katja de Hernandez directly before applying if you want to stay less than 30 days at Emmanuel. If you stay longer than 30 days and less than 6 months we call you a short-term volunteer and you will need to do the complete application process. If you stay longer than 6 months we call you a long term volunteer and the application process is the same as a short term volunteer. If you are a couple or a family, please contact us also before starting the application process.

Before you Leave home

Be aware of all the practical issues that you will need to tend to before leaving your home, it may take longer than expected, so start in good time!

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Airline tickets, travel insurance and immunizations.

It is good to start looking for the cheapest option some months ahead of time. Some volunteers book an open return ticket in order to decide on their departure date later on. Changing your departure date once in Honduras will cost a minimum of \$150.00. Check with the airline the specific rules for how much luggage you can bring as this can vary according to company. Make sure you arrive at Tegucigalpa Airport (Called Toncontin) as this is most convenient for your further transportation. Make sure you buy a travel insurance that covers loss of luggage and serious injury or illness resulting in hospital stay. Your travel agency can recommend the best solution for you. Your general practitioner can advise you in what shots you will need. We recommend that you have tetanus, Hepatitis A and B and Meningitis. You may decide to take malaria Pills too, however you should be aware that they do not protect you completely from this disease and can have strong side effects on you. We have until this day never had a case of malaria among our volunteers.

Visa, currency and language

As a regular tourist you get 90 days of visa when entering Honduras. If they only grant you 30 days upon arrival then despair not, you can still have another 60 days by visiting the migration office later on. Migration law in Honduras gives you the option of extending your 90 days with another 30 days of visa. This will cost you \$20.00. If you are scheduled to stay longer than that you then have two options available: Either you must exit Honduras and travel to Mexico or Belize in order to obtain another 90 days of visa or you can let your visa run out and pay a fine at the migration office a couple of days before leaving the country. The fine is currently 70.00\$ plus a 20.00\$ fee for each month you have stayed without visa. For some this is a safer and cheaper option than traveling to Belize by themselves. You can also apply for a 1-year permit, which will cost you around 100.00\$ and a lot of paperwork. The currency in Honduras is Lempiras and stands in 19 Lempiras to 1 dollar. You can change dollars in the airport upon arrival and also withdraw money from automatic or regular banks in the capital. American express and Visa are commonly used in Honduras. In many places you can also pay with dollars although this is not a good deal for you in the long run. Please make sure you have some cash with you upon arrival and that you change them into Lempiras so that your initial transportation and groceries costs are taken care of. While staying at Emmanuel you will need some spending money. The amount varies from person to person and it all depends on how comfortable you are eating with the children and how often you go to town. The average monthly amount spent by volunteers is \$25.00. The official language in Honduras is Spanish and it will be greatly helpful to you if you have studied the basics before arrival. Some staff and children speak English but all the activities with the children are conducted in Spanish. Most volunteers learn a lot while working here.

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Your personal network of support and prayer

We recommend that you involve your family, congregation, youth group etc. in your stay at Emmanuel. Let them know where you are going and what you will be doing and ask them to actively pray for you and if possible support you financially. If you are staying for a longer period then you can set up a newsgroup and send out regular news flashes or even set up a virtual diary for them to visit at www.blogger.com This will be an encouragement and motivation for you during your stay. This also opens up for the possibility of communicating specific needs that you encounter in your activities with the children and ask for assistance among people in your personal network of support.

Your chores and activities

Most volunteers are young and do not have a specific skill or trade they wish to perform while here. We will, after reading through your application, decide on your work areas. At arrival we always sit down with you and talk about skills, expectations, ideas etc. usually we will accommodate you the first month or so in specific activities and then little by little your responsibilities will expand and you will discover new options and possibilities. We are always open to ideas and suggestions although this does not necessarily mean that we will agree on or allow them. Some of the regular volunteer activities are early childhood stimulation, giving out medicine, helping in the clinic, internet café, doing bible studies with the children, playing with the children, sports, crafts, music, odd jobs such as painting fences or cutting hair. We have options too within construction, farming, horsemanship (if skilled) or maintenance. You can explain your interests and skills in your application, however be prepared that we might call for your help in an area unknown to you and we will expect that you will be positive and flexible about unexpected tasks or changes in your daily routine. At Emmanuel needs can arise suddenly and sometimes we will need your support unexpectedly. Most volunteers learn a lot about themselves during their stay and also get to try a variety of activities while here. If you have a special skill you would like to share make sure to mention it in your application and upon arrival.

Food, Lodging and Transport

If you arrive by plane we will make the necessary arrangements to have someone meet you at the airport and accompany you out here. Make sure you provide exact information on arrival date, time and flight. If you arrive by bus, then you will need to stay overnight in the capital and travel out here the following day. In order to have someone come and meet you at the hotel and accompany you out here we will need to know your arrival date and what hotel you are sleeping in. We recommend 'Hotel Guadalupe' in Barrio Guadalupe. It has its own restaurant and internet access and is clean and cheap. Make sure you change money into our local currency upon arrival so that you have enough for taxis, restaurants etc. Please feel free to give Volunteer

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Coordinator Katja a call when you have arrived to the hotel to confirm further arrangements. Her cell phone is: 99 85 02 01.

Once at Emmanuel you will be accommodated in the volunteer house if female and in the Boys Dorm if male. The volunteer house includes kitchen, laundry facilities, living room, outside area and several bedrooms. You will be expected to keep the facilities clean and in order at all time. Male volunteers will be accommodated either in a separate room or in the small boys dorm and laundry facilities will be indicated upon arrival. You are welcome to eat all 3 meals together with the children. If you would like to cook meals yourself we expect you to assume the cost of this. Practical details regarding meals, grocery shopping etc will be given at your first volunteer meeting at Emmanuel. You will not need to bring towels or sheets to Emmanuel, only personal toiletries.

The Daily Routine

The days start early at Emmanuel. Children and Staff wake up at 4:00 A.M. and after getting dressed and cleaning the houses we all gather in a morning circle. The small circles are Monday - Thursday and start a little before 6:00 A.M. The boys gather in one circle and the girls and toddlers in two circles. Fridays all the children, Staff and Volunteers gather in 'Big Circle'. We expect our volunteers to participate in the morning circles. This is our way of starting each day worshipping the Lord with a short devotion and time of singing. On school days most children are busy until lunch time. Only special needs children, toddlers and children who are periodically not attending class will be available for other activities in the mornings. After lunch most children are available for activities. The older children are either working, in class or in the yards. The younger children are in the yards. The volunteers are welcome to organize activities with the children in the yards from 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Bible studies are given Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the yards at 3:00 P.M. and if any volunteer feels capable of giving studies we will schedule this after arrival. After dinner the children shower, do chores and settle in for the night. If you would like to do special activities with older children from 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. please arrange this before hand with volunteer coordinator Katja or appropriate staff. Church services are held on Sunday mornings at 9:00 A.M. and on Wednesday evenings at 5:15 P.M.

Phone Calls / Emails

Upon arrival you may call your family from the office to let them know you have arrived safely. Any emergency or important calls may also be done from the office. We do not allow volunteers to use the wireless internet access on their personal laptops. Our internet system here is fragile and easily overloaded. All your social calls, email corresponding and internet surfing is referred to the Internet Café on our property, administered by Emmanuel and opened with the purpose of benefiting volunteers, teams and visitors here.

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Things to Bring

Passport, vaccination certificate, Insurance Policy and papers, tickets, drivers license, visa card, prescriptions for your medicine, copies of important documents you are bringing, cash, camera and charger, list of phone numbers and emails, malaria pills, lice shampoo, personal toiletries. Pepto-Bismol, sunscreen, calamine lotion, Benadryl, Insect repellent any other medicine you know you will need, small padlocks for your backpack, plenty t-shirts, long sleeved sweat shirt, long skirts, sandals and tennis shoes, summer trousers, shorts (knee length or longer), jeans, a good book or movies, important personal items.

Being young at Emmanuel

Some volunteers are just about the same age as our oldest 'children'. We pray you will prepare yourself for an experience where you strive to show respectful and thoughtful behavior especially towards our youth, who perceive and view many matters differently than in the states or Europe. We appreciate if the young female volunteers dress modestly and avoid exaggerated physical contact with our young boys. Also we do not allow girls in the Boys area while they are showering or changing uniforms. Likewise we expect the male volunteers not to be in the girl's area when the girls get ready for showers and bedtime. We do not allow any courting or flirting between volunteers and our youth.

Behavior and attitude

Being a volunteer at Emmanuel, means that you get an opportunity to work and share with children and youth from troubled circumstances. Our children have suffered loss, abuse or rejection in their past. They have not been taught what is right or wrong and they did not have proper role models to imitate when small. It is our task and responsibility here at Emmanuel to guide, instruct and teach these children towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to encourage in them biblical values and standards. Everything we do and say in their presence or towards them will affect them in a certain way. We ask that you be willing to receive instruction as how to work and act around our children and that you will be open and submissive even if it seems hard or difficult to understand. We welcome friendships and fellowshiping between volunteers and our children and youth, but keep in mind that your task is to support and cooperate with the adult staff and that your relationships with the children should not become a hindrance in this task. Volunteers are temporary and do not fully understand the long-term task at hand, the children, their motives or their behavior and it is important that you show respect towards the staff and their decisions. If you have questions or doubts please come and ask us instead of getting your conclusions from the children or other volunteers. No volunteer is allowed at any time to take children outside of the orphanage premises without prior authorization. No volunteer is allowed to hit, insult or in other ways physically or verbally hurt any of

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our children, if you are having a disciplinary problem with a child under your care, please call for a staff member to deal with the situation.

Personal Presentation

Working as a volunteer at Emmanuel should not be considered as just another adventure, a common summer job or an opportunity to get away from the daily stress and chores back home. We deal with the lives and education of hundreds of children and teenagers and this is their home and refuge. They need role models in their lives and they need to see the adults around them reflect love, self respect, compassion and discipline. These are characteristics that we every day try to teach these children and volunteers are expected to join us in this task. Be aware what message your life, behavior and attitudes are sending to these children and teenagers, constantly observing and learning from the people around them. We expect that you will be submissive to our teachings and rules while living here and that you will be open to instruction and correction when needed. Volunteers must be a good example to our children and youth and we expect that you will carry yourself in a respectful manner towards all personnel, children and visitors while here. That you will be careful of your personal hygiene and the cleanliness and order in your living quarters. Just as we expect children and staff to be presentable and to keep their living quarters in order, we expect that our volunteers do the same. We have dress codes and standards in personal presentation which do not move or change according to the latest fashions – we expect you will dress modest, presentable and clean at all times. Girls are not allowed to use sleeveless tops without a cover up, transparent dresses or blouses and skirts must be knee long. When in church we expect the girls to wear a skirt. Boys are to wear trousers or knee length shorts, clean and presentable and adjusted at the waist, not below the waist exposing their underwear in public. Shirts must be tucked inside the pants and caps not worn sideways or back ways. We try to teach our young children to dress modest and decent and we hope you will do the same while volunteering here. You are at all times and example to them and we hope that you will bear this in mind and respect our preferences while living here. We also respectfully ask that if you have any body piercing in mouth, nose or eyebrows that you remove them while here and if possible conceal any tattoos.

No drinking of alcohol or smoking is allowed at Emmanuel. All music listened to in the volunteer house or on portable Cd-players and MP-3's should be Christian music. If you wish to lend out music or movies to the children please show it to the staff member in charge first.

Please be at the volunteer house no later than 8:00 P.M. It gets dark early in Honduras and at 6:00 P.M. the night guards lock the outer gate and start their watch and continue until 5:00 A.M. We ask this for safety reasons, but also because the same rule applies to our children and youth.

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Final comments

It is our hope that your stay here at Emmanuel will be rewarding and teaching in all ways. We will do our best to guide you through the process before and during your stay and our volunteer coordinator will be available to you in the process of preparing to come and also while you are at Emmanuel. Regular meetings will be held for all volunteers to discuss schedules and activities and any other relevant matter. You may contact us for any questions at emmanuel@libdata.com or U.S. Phone number 423-4434337.

We are looking forward to welcoming you at Emmanuel!