

## JULY NEWSLETTER, 2023

### LAST MINUTE PACKING TIPS

1. Pack light. We should be able to have clothes washed once while there.
2. Pack a reusable water bottle. **VERY IMPORTANT**
3. If you have status with United, please let us know ASAP.  
[brigade.info@hondurasgoodworks.org](mailto:brigade.info@hondurasgoodworks.org) . We will be asking you to check as many team bags as you can for free. (Not more than 2—as that is the limited Honduras allows anyone to bring in)
4. Again, we ask that everyone that can to only bring carry-on luggage to minimize luggage fees. Please let us know if you must check a bag.
5. You must provide # of checked bags on the prearrival form, so Skip will be assigning a checked bag to several of you before you fill out that form. In the next week, so please respond to us NOW regarding #3,4.
5. Providers: Bring your stethoscope, otoscope if you have it, (we have tips), and good pen light.

### COVID IN HONDURAS

People in Honduras are anxious once again about CoVid, as cases are rising. Currently they have 500 people in hospital. A team that traveled in June had 4 people come back with CoVid, probably acquired in one of the airports according to their calculations. It is not mandatory yet, but the Honduran government is recommending wearing masks, and the villagers will probably be doing so. We will have enough N95 masks for everyone on the team, but if you prefer a different kind of mask, bring it. If you aren't up to date on your boosters we recommend you do that now. The nuns do not leave the retreat center, and so our coming and going does pose some risk to them. We want to minimize us being a risk to the patients we are seeing, as well.

Anyone who has unexpired COVID home test kits that you are willing to donate, please bring them in case we need to test any team members.

### FORMS TO ENTER HONDURAS

Everyone must complete a precheck form online to enter Honduras and get a QR code with permission to travel emailed to them. I believe it cannot be filled out before a few days before our arrival.(not sure how early we can do this. Definitely get it done by the day before your travel) Our early team will be doing this first, and we can let the rest of you know any issues then.

Here is the link: [entrance form](#)

- #10: The purpose of the trip is tourism.
- #15: For address of where we are staying: CENTRO "MONTAÑA CLARA MARÍA" KM. 25 CARRETERA AL ZAMORANO, ENTRADA POR EL DESVÍO AL CHAGUITE, F.M.
- #17: For number of carry on and checked bags, please indicate your total: for ex. you may have a checked team bag plus your carry-on=2. **Since this form has to be filled out ahead of time, Skip will be contacting you to assign team bags before we travel.**
- #18: put zero.

After submitting this form, you should receive a QR code with permission to travel. Print it out and bring it with you to the airport.

## **UNITED AIRLINE TRAVEL**

If you are traveling on the group travel, and didn't purchase your own ticket, you should have received confirmation regarding your ticket along with the group confirmation number. If you have United FF miles or global entry, or something similar, you should go online and add it to your ticket if it's not already there. (We neglected to ask about global entry numbers, so that definitely will be missing).

## **UPDATED INFO RE HOUSTON AIRPORT for August 3rd:**

Meet at the United Airlines **Group Check In counter on Level 1 in Terminal C at 6:30am. (the arrivals level)**. NOTE, THIS IS NOT THE INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL. Please don't be the one that holds up the whole group checking in.

Please plan to wear your team T-shirts on the day of travel. They will be given to you at the airport or at the Marriot the night before.

## **Have your passport handy.**

**We need several people outside Terminal C by 6:15am am to help GA unload** the duffle bags from his truck.

Please follow these guidelines for check-in:

- You can check in electronically (If you are on the group reservation use your name and group check in number), **but do not check a bag ahead of time. Even if you purchased your own ticket, please don't check a bag ahead of time.**
- Meet at the group check-in desk, and we will check in as a team. 18 of you should already have been assigned a team bag check. Skip and Dennis will be in charge of herding you all!
- HGW will be paying for the checked bags.
- Give Skip the baggage claim ticket for team bags. Keep your baggage tag if you check a personal bag.
- **DO NOT** tip anyone for group activities. Skip is in charge of all tips for porters if they help unload the truck at the airport in Houston. But we should be able to do this with the team's heavy lifters!.
- Once through security, **FILL YOUR WATER BOTTLE. You won't get access to clean water in the airport in Honduras until through customs, which could be hours.**
- **GET FOOD/SNACKS. You won't have access to food/snacks in the airport in Honduras until through customs.**

## ***Palmerola International Airport, Comayagua, Honduras (XPL)***

- The first step upon arriving in Honduras will probably be to have your QR code checked and then go through customs. You will need your passport. Once you're through, go to baggage claim area and find your personal luggage if you checked any. Keep it with you as you wait. If it does not arrive, let Skip know.
- Do not leave the baggage claim area until told to do so by Skip! Please use the restroom here if needed so you don't wander off once we are through baggage claim.

- We will collect all team bags into one area. Skip will count bags and present the team luggage claim tickets to airport personnel. Only when we have confirmed all luggage is accounted for does anyone leave the baggage claim area.
- Customs can take hours. If that happens, we will probably let all but a few go through and find our greeting team, get the trucks, etc. If that happens, take your personal luggage with you. All the luggage will be put onto the school bus that will be meeting the team, so as not to be traveling with luggage in open truck beds.
- Once outside the baggage area the advance team will be looking for team T-shirts to greet us. They will have chosen porters to take our luggage to the bus and trucks which have been rented for our transportation. Keep your carry-on with you at all times until you see it loaded onto the bus, and stay together. Please don't wander off!
- Tips will be taken care of. Do not tip anyone, and don't give money to beggars.
- Our advance team will arrange for a trusted money changer to change your dollars to lempiras. DO NOT DO it with anyone else. At times he will want to do the exchange on the bus, at other times in a particular spot inside the airport. Please stay together so you will know when and where this is happening. During the week you might want to buy snacks, adult beverages for social hour and souvenirs, so exchange accordingly. The shops in the tourist town we visit on our free day does accept credit cards.
- Water and pizza will be provided for us in the bus and trucks. Name tags and T-shirts will be provided in Houston, so that the advance team knows who to share these with. Because our funds are limited, unfortunately we are not able to purchase enough water and pizza to share with airport workers.
- The bus will be loaded with all bags by porters and team members as needed.

#### **DRIVERS IN HONDURAS:**

- If you have been designated as a driver, go with Dennis to the car rental agency with your driver's license. Once outside the airport, you will be directed to the bus and the trucks.
- Each truck will have a translator, and most should have one local Honduran to help guide us. It will be about a 2.5 hour drive to the Retreat Center.
- We will divide into 3 groups of 4 trucks. Each team of 4 trucks will be taped with a colored duct tape, so you can identify your caravan. Drive to keep the 4 trucks within eyesight of each other. Pull over or slow down if you lose sight of the driver behind you.
- The bus will take some of the team also. You will be stopping briefly in Tegucigalpa to pick up the Honduran volunteers who live there, and then continue on to the Retreat Center.

#### **WORK THURSDAY NIGHT**

- Hopefully the early team will have completed packaging and organizing all the medicines— if not, there may be some work to do, so stay tuned.
- If you are bringing guardian materials, please give them to Dr. Ann Messer, who will be organizing the kits.
- After dinner and a commissioning/welcoming service, Brenda will want to meet with the providers and pharmacists.
- RNs should gather and review the treatment boxes. Not all will be doing treatment each day, but it's important all know what we have to work with.

- We are all one team and just remember, many hands make light work.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

6:30 am: Breakfast. **REMEMBER TO REFILL YOUR WATER BOTTLE FROM ONE OF THE DISPENSERS FOR YOUR USE DURING THE DAY.**

7:10 am: Musicians start in chapel. Please gather!

7:15 am: Morning gathering and announcements. Attendance essential so you know where you are assigned each day.

8:15 am: Depart

Lunch: Our team will supply our food, and sodas. We invite the Honduran volunteers to eat first.

Return: Time Varies. AODs--Measure how long it takes to get to your village and allow time to return, stop for snacks and get back before dark.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:15pm: Small groups--Time for sharing spiritual insights, frustrations, decompressing. You will be in the same small group all week, so you will have an opportunity to get to know each other a little. You may bring your adult beverage if you like.

8:00 pm: Work Detail--8-10 people will be assigned each night during the week to repack and reorganize boxes for the following day. Social hour for everyone else. Adult beverages allowed.

9:00pm: Optional Compline: an evening service of quietness and reflection before the end of the day.

9:50pm: Please dispose of all beer bottles, etc in the proper containers. We must be respectful of the nuns who live here!

10:00pm. Quiet. Time to be in one's room. No one should wander the compound after this time, as guard dogs are let out after we are all back in the dormitory area.

## FREE DAY

Our last day, Wednesday August 9<sup>th</sup> is a day to relax and regroup. Lunch is on your own. Options include

- going to Valle de los Angeles on the bus, and trucks as needed. It is about a 90 minute drive and is a lovely tourist town, with excellent souvenirs and good lunch spots. Ceramics, carved wooden boxes, leather goods, tapestries. We would love for some of you to purchase something to donate to our fall fundraising auction. Items made in Honduras always sell well.
- Usually, some people choose to climb the big dusty hill behind the town of Yuscaran. This can be challenging due to the heat and lack of shade on much of it. If we do have people who want to go, they should leave by 7am.
- Also we need several folks to stay behind and help take inventory of our left overs, and sort which donations go where, what goes back in storage etc.
- Other options may be available.
- That evening we hope to have a fiesta, where the local Hondurans join us. We would begin with a time of sharing the week's experiences, followed by pizza and music, perhaps dancing etc!

## **SAFETY RULES**

1. Whenever traveling by truck, 2 trucks, at least, should travel together. You should have a translator in each truck (preferably a Honduran), and a list of phone numbers in each truck of the other team members.
2. No one is to ride in the back of a pickup.
3. When walking in the villages at lunch time, no one is to walk alone. Always go with a group.
4. Be aware of your surroundings when shopping at the gas station. We have always felt it was safe, but just be aware. Again, go with someone else.
5. Don't drink the tap water! Don't get ice in your drinks!
6. There are several safe places to eat in Valle—ask those on the team who know.

To answer questions or for technical help, please contact us through [brigade.info@hondurasgoodworks.org](mailto:brigade.info@hondurasgoodworks.org) .