**Team Leader’s Guide for 2017**

**This document is to help you and your Team know what to expect as you come to Guatemala and work with missionaries Drew & Cindy Metcalf, founders of *We Help Children Inc*.**

***You are responsible to share this with your Team & prepare them for their trip to Guatemala!***

**Please feel free to contact us with whatever questions you have regarding this information.**

**Write us at** [drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com](mailto:drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com) **& review our website** [www.WeHelpChildren.org](http://www.WeHelpChildren.org) **which explains our ministries helping children in crisis.**

**Scheduling**

Please schedule your trip as far in advance as possible.

For scheduling your flight, it’s best if you fly to Guatemala Aurora International Airport early morning (before 7am), around mid-day (between 10am and 2pm), or late night (after 9pm). These times are best because when we come pick you up at the airport in Guatemala City, the traffic is best during those times. At other times of the day, heavy traffic can take hours and we may be delayed in being able to pick you up.

**Team Size & Age**

We can host teams ***up to 10 people***. You will be staying in our ministry home with us where we also have living with us Guatemalan missionaries, children and teens healing, interns and volunteers. We will do our best to accommodate everyone. We have a phrase in Guatemala: “Everyone fits.” It is a joy to have your Team fit right in with us!

If your Team is mostly youth, we ask that there be one adult leader for every 5 teenagers.

If your Team is mostly adults, we ask that all children under 15 come with a parent.

**US Citizenship & USA Passports**

Due to presidential elections, border issues, rapidly changing laws, and potential paperwork problems, we ask that **only Team members who are US citizens** **come to Guatemala**.

We witnessed a resident of Guatemala who was going to college in the USA fly to Guatemala, but then could not get back into the USA because his paperwork was incorrect. So if you travel to Guatemala, PLEASE make sure you have more than enough legal proof of US citizenship and an official USA passport that does not expire in 6 months. It may not be good enough to have a green-card, permanent residence, a letter from your college, etc. You should have proof of USA citizenship and a valid USA passport. If you have any questions or want to fly with a green card, you need to visit the USA Immigration office first and get it in writing that you are approved to travel and return with no problems. If you have Immigration’s permission and decide to travel, make sure to bring all of your legal documentation, and even more than is required, just in case you are questioned at their airport.

We want you to be able to legally and safely get back to your home in the USA. When it comes to legal documents, it’s better to bring more than enough to show if needed.

**Projects & Project Funds**

Our Teams can help us with lots of children’s ministry we do – including serving inside of orphanages, working in poor communities, medical clinics, preaching and dramas, sharing testimonies, singing, puppets, skits, relief programs, school programs, parent training, various children’s ministries, Vacation Bible School activities, arts & crafts, sports & fun activities, Church services, construction and maintenance projects, etc.

Please be thinking of special ministries that your group can do with us. We find it most valuable when groups are willing to do Vacation Bible School and Children’s Church type activities (dramas, arts and crafts, singing, sharing testimonies, sports, fun activities, etc.)

If you prepare great activities like this in advance, we can take your group to many places to do your program. This is of great value to our ministry as you lead children to Jesus!

Since our ministry values having Guatemalan nationals lead ministry in poor communities, we will assign one of our Guatemalan missionaries to help your Team as you serve in those areas. Drew and Cindy will lead the ministries inside of orphanages.

We ask that you as a group help raise funds for projects that you or our ministry can utilize to help children in crisis. A suggestion is that each group raise a ***minimum of $1000.*** This will allow you or us to do projects helping children without taking money out of our current resources.

In addition to funds for projects, each member of your Team will need to cover the following expenses:

**Trip Expenses**

For Teams coming in 2017, to cover costs including food, lodging, utilities, transportation around Guatemala, etc. it will cost **$50/day per person**. Just multiply the number of days your Team wants to serve in Guatemala by $50/day and that is a baseline cost to start.

Examples

4 day Mission Trip = $200/person

5 day Mission Trip = $250/person

6 day Mission Trip = $300/person

7 day Mission Trip = $350/person

8 day Mission Trip = $400/person

9 day Mission Trip = $450/person

10 day Mission Trip = $500/person

Etc.

*This baseline cost does NOT include your airfare, luggage fees, travelers & medical insurance, project money you raise to help children, ministry donations, free-day activities, souvenirs, etc.*

**Payment**

At least a month before your trip, please mail a check with the group’s finances to our office address: **We Help Children, treasurer Krista Weaver, 418 Linden Street, East Earl, PA 17519.**

If you have any questions about payment, you may call Krista at 717-445-5426

**Ministry Donations**

Sometimes people like to bring donated goods to help our ministry to children in poor communities and orphanages. Suggestions for donations are backpacks, school supplies, art supplies, toiletries, toys, sports equipment, and games (that aren’t based on knowing English). Please do not bring hard candy. It is a choking hazard for children.

**Flights**

You will be flying into Guatemalan Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City. Tickets can range anywhere from $300 - $600, depending on what airport you leave from and special offers.

**Free Day**

After you are done with your ministry work, you may take a “free day.” There are options of where you can go as a group – including Antigua, Lake Atitlan, zip-lining, horseback riding, hiking a volcano, taking a bus tour, visiting and eating at an aquarium, going to the zoo, visiting a mall in Guatemala City, visiting local markets, etc. Depending on what your group wants to do, you will need to bring extra money (around $20 - $50) for that free day’s activities and souvenirs you may want to purchase.

**Taking special things home**

There will be time to shop for souvenirs and gifts to take home, likely on your “free day.”

Never, under any circumstances, attempt to smuggle illegal items in or out of the country, including

* Illegal drugs
* exotic animals
* guns
* ammunition
* stolen items
* etc.

Americans caught by the border patrol or airport security with these items have been taken out of the airport and placed in Guatemalan jail. Be careful that you don’t carry any of these items, *even by accident.* Do not carry packages for people that you don’t know exactly what it is and wouldn’t mind security searching. Know what’s in your bags at all times.

If you have any questions about what you can and cannot bring on the airplane, please call your airline.

**Forms to fill out**

1. Every Team member needs to fill out the “Volunteer Information Form” sheet
2. Every Team member needs to sign the “Liability Release”
3. Minors that are traveling without their parents will need to have a signed and notarized affidavit putting them into the temporary custody of the Team leader
4. Everyone needs to have a copy of their passport (just the face page)
5. Everyone needs to have a copy of their medical insurance information

Please collect these forms and copies and give them to us when you arrive.

**Insurance**

***We ask that everyone have medical insurance to cover their time in Guatemala.*** You must check with your insurance carrier to ensure that they will cover medical problems that may occur in Guatemala, and they will cover emergency flights back to the United States. If they do not, short term mission’s insurance may be purchased at a very low cost at any of these websites [www.GoMissionTrip.com](http://www.GoMissionTrip.com), [www.SevenCorners.com](http://www.SevenCorners.com) or [www.ImGlobal.com](http://www.ImGlobal.com) It is your choice where you get short term medical coverage. Just make sure that everyone has it!

It is important to remember that if you are admitted into a hospital in Guatemala, they will not allow you to leave until you are paid. So please make sure that someone on your Team can pay your bills using a working credit card if needed.

**First Aid Kit**

Please bring a first aid kit for the group.

**Required Immunizations**

* **Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date.** Routine vaccines, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life. You can check with your doctor about your [childhood and adolescent immunization schedule](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm) and [routine adult immunization schedule](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/adult-schedule.htm).
* **Hepatitis A**. Risk increases with duration of travel, and is highest for those who live in or visit rural areas, or frequently eat or drink in settings of poor sanitation. However, it can also occur in normal accommodations and food consumption.
* **Hepatitis B.** This vaccination should ideally begin six months before travel in order to complete the full series. However, the vaccination schedule should be initiated even if it will not be completed before travel begins. You may be able to receive a combined Hepatitis A and B series.

**Optional**

* **Rabies:** Recommended if you will be spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas or work that involves exposure to bats, carnivores or other mammals. Children are considered at higher risk because they tend to play with animals, may receive more severe bites, or may not report bites. If you are in an area of Guatemala where you would not be able to get the rabies injection within 24 hours of being bitten then it is recommended that you get this prior to traveling to Guatemala. Getting the rabies injection prior to being bitten will not prevent you from getting rabies but it will give you more time to get to a hospital where you should be treated for rabies.
* **Typhoid.** Vaccination is particularly recommended for those who will be traveling in smaller cities, villages, and rural areas off the usual tourist itineraries. Travelers should be cautioned that typhoid vaccination is not 100 percent effective and is not a substitute for careful selection of food and drink.
* **Malaria or Dengue.** **Areas of Guatemala with Malaria or Dengue:** Rural areas only at altitudes <1,500 m (4,921 ft). It is rare for malaria to be reported in Antigua, Guatemala City, or Lake Atitlán – but these diseases carried by mosquitos have been reported in surrounding towns and villages. Primaquine is a good option for an antimalarial drug in Guatemala. Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, or mefloquine can also be used instead. Individuals can protect themselves from mosquito bites more by using insect repellents, and wearing long sleeves and long pants.
* **Medicine for diarrhea.**Usually over-the-counter, such as Pepto-Bismol tablets and Imodium tablets are recommended.
* **Parasite medicines** At least once a year take medicine for worms or when you leave the country. These medicines can be purchased in Guatemala very inexpensively.
* **Zika Virus Precautions** This is especially applicable to pregnant women or women intending to become pregnant. Individuals can protect themselves from mosquito bites more by using insect repellents, and wearing long sleeves and long pants.

Your doctor can administer immunizations and answer your questions. Or you may call the Travel Health Center at 717-672-3133, located at 1887 Lititz Pike Suite 6, Lancaster, PA 17601

**Our Guatemalan Location**

From the airport in Guatemala City, if traffic is good, we are about 1 hour west. Our ministry home is right behind a very large orphanage called Casa Shalom Orphanage in “Colonia Jardines De Marbella” at Km 28.5, Carreterra a Barcenas a Antigua, San Lucas, Sacatepequez, Guatemala.

**Customs Forms**

The airline personnel will hand out customs forms to fill out on the airplane. Please have the Team members may check that they are tourists and write their foreseen address as

“Colonia Jardines De Marbella, Km 28.5, Carreterra a Barcenas a Antigua, San Lucas, Sacatepequez, Guatemala”

When you arrive in Guatemala City, each Team member will hand their passport and customs form to a Guatemalan official at the desk. The customs official will check their paperwork and ask them questions about their visit.

Next, each Team member will find their luggage, put it through a luggage scanner, possibly have it searched, and then wait for the rest of the group before leaving the customs area. If there is any missing luggage make sure it is reported to the airline immediately. Tell them that you need the luggage delivered to “Colonia Jardines De Marbella” in San Lucas, Sacatepequez and they can call this phone number for directions 3412-3091 or 5879-1521.

If everything goes as planned, someone will be waiting for your group outside of customs.

We cannot enter inside, so will be waiting outside. If there is no one there to meet you, please check the restaurant & coffee shop located to the right as you walk outside the airport. Please stay in the restaurant & coffee shop and wait. There are bathrooms, tables and chairs and food there. You may call these phone numbers to reach us 4277-2598, 5836-2321 or 5879-1521.

If you don’t have a cell phone that works in Guatemala, you can ask one of the baggage attendants and they should let you borrow their phone. Or often is a man at the desk right before you leave the airport building who will let you use his phone for $1.

**Money Exchange**

The best places to exchange your US dollars for Guatemalan money (called Quatzales) is inside an airport. International airports both in the USA and Guatemala have money exchange locations with a conversion rate of around $1 to 7.4 Quatzales. Do your money exchanging in the airport please. If you wait until you leave the airport, it can be difficult to exchange money. The reason is that Guatemalan banks are extremely strict about what money they will exchange. Banks reject all US dollars that have marks, stains, writing, tears, or the slightest issues.

**Emergency Contact Information**

If there is an emergency with your family back home, they can reach Drew & Cindy Metcalf in Guatemala by e-mailing [drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com](mailto:drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com) They can also call our Guatemala phone numbers 011-502-4277-2598, 011-502-5836-2321 or 011-502-5879-1521.

People back home will not be able to have regular contact with Team members because internet can be limited in third world areas. We ask that all Team members “disconnect” from their life back home and focus on God and their work helping children - not facebook or people back home. The very best thing that people back home can do is **pray, pray, pray** for Team member’s safety and success on their mission!

**Accommodations**

Teams will stay in our ministry home where we live and work with the Guatemalans. For sleeping arrangements, some people may get to sleep on normal beds, bunk beds, couches, inflatable beds, or with lots of blankets on the floor. We will make room for you among our full house! Each person needs to bring a set of single sheets, a pillowcase, and a towel to use.

There will be bathrooms with toilets, sinks, and showers. Please tell your group members that **they cannot flush toilet paper in Guatemala**.

We have a full kitchen for food preparation, as well as a generator if the power goes out.

**Food**

Food will be a mixture of foods you are used to, and typical Guatemalan foods, depending on the meal and the cook. Lots of rice and beans! Please have your Team ready to jump in and help cook. We will make sure the Team gets to eat at a Guatemalan market restaurant on at least one occasion. If there are any special dietary needs among the Team, please inform us in advance so we know how to prepare.

We have a child who is gluten-free, so if anyone on your Team cannot eat gluten please let us know and we can serve them the same food.

We will clean fruits and vegetables in purified water and special cleaner and do our best to keep food clean. Please be aware though that it is still possible for people to feel sick when they come into a new country. Foods, germs, the environment, everything is different and it takes time for stomachs to get accustomed. It would be a good idea to bring Pepto-Bismol tablets and Imodium tablets just in case.

**Water**

We will provide purified drinking water that is safe for the Team to drink. Team members should also bring a water bottle to use while they are here.

**Devotions**

Teams enjoy doing Devotions together. This is a great time to learn from God as a Team, discuss what God is doing in people’s lives, worship and pray together, and process the day’s ministry events. Please plan to lead daily Devotions.

You should encourage your Team to be journaling about their experiences and what God is showing them. This helps them to process what they are seeing and learning and to remember it once they get home. It also helps them feel close to God. Make sure everyone brings a journal, pens, their Bible, and a flashlight (so they can read and journal at night).

**Interacting with the Kids**

When interacting with children in orphanages or poor villages, we interact prayerfully, joyfully and respectfully. Imagine with us for a minute if a stranger visited your home and wanted to take your child’s picture and give them candy, toys, cuddles and affection? When interacting with new people of another culture, please be slow to get out your cameras for a big photo shoot and pass around toys, candy, cash or hugs. Take the needed time to get to know the children and build relationship.

The best way is always to ask permission first. Especially when we work in orphanages, we always ask permission from the House Parents. House Parents know their children the best and our goal is to keep the children bonded with their House Parents! Many of the children suffer from attachment disorder due to abuse, abandonment and traumas in their pasts. We are trying to help them heal and bond with their House Parents, so we honor their House Parents! Please respect this healing process and interact with them like any other child you’re just getting to know. Always be prayerful and respectful. *Please do not give out anything to children without first asking.*

**Basic Guidelines, Expectations, & Customs in Guatemala**

The following guidelines are basic instructions for missionaries, volunteers and Teams working in underdeveloped areas of Central America. Please review these guidelines, consider if you can follow them, and contact us with any questions.

We want you to enjoy your time, learn all you can, and do your best to maintain a positive attitude, humility, and flexibility.

**As You Visit a Community, Home or Orphanage:**

* **Be Thoughtful and Polite** – Third world cultures can be sensitive to Americans due to their past experiences with them and what they have seen in the news, movies or internet. What is valued in American culture can be offensive in third world cultures. (examples include being project-driven instead of relationship focused, having a take-charge attitude, being loud, demanding, bossy, insisting on personal space and rights, certain ways of dressing, not covering up, body piercings and tattoos, etc). Being a humble learner of the culture will go a long way towards being accepted and appreciated. Once you are accepted – they can listen better to your Testimony about the love of Jesus.
* **Conserve** – Some areas have limited amounts of clean water, internet, and electricity. Please help conserve utilities. Turn off lights, fans, etc when you are not using them. Do not take long showers or leave water running unnecessarily. Hot water, electricity and internet are expensive luxury items in underdeveloped areas.
* **Housing** – Your housing, room, bed, community, and orphanage work will vary and can change quickly. Please be prepared to move to another location if asked. Flexibility, great attitudes, prayer, humility and readiness to change are keys to success!
* **Speaking Spanish –** The ability to communicate in the local languages helps you integrate with the orphanages, communities and culture. It is important to work at learning from the culture you are serving. Do you have to speak Spanish or totally understand the local customs to serve in Central America helping children in crisis? Not necessarily. In some locations children and staff speak English too and accept the American culture. What’s important is a humble attitude and desire to learn the language and customs.
* **Meals** – If you are staying with a family or at an orphanage, please eat with them at the times they designate. Eat their food without complaint, unless of course you have food intolerances, which you would need to let people know beforehand. It is not wise to carry food to your bedrooms due to ants and bugs.

* **Clean-up** – Please keep your areas neat and tidy at all times. Your help may also be needed with cleaning, cooking, laundry, dishes, garbage, etc. Living in community requires each of us to do our part. Please model a great attitude for the children to see!
* **Maturity** – Maintain a level of professionalism in all of your relationships when you are serving and representing our ministry. Especially when working with children, **be the adult**.
* No pornography, drugs, alcohol, smoking, tobacco or addictions.
* Not one hint of immorality.
* No romantic relationships or flirting with interns, students, ministry or church group members, or people in the local community. *Avoid dating dramas!*
* One on one time with any child, youth, student, volunteer or missionary of the opposite sex should be avoided. This guideline prevents false accusations and relational misunderstandings. If there is a situation where you are going to help someone of the opposite sex, make sure a leader knows and approves, there is someone else with you, and it is in a public place.
* We realize that people have different standards on music, videos and movies. To alleviate any grey areas of personal integrity or preference, and to ensure that children do not see any questionable movies, videos or music, please do not have any music, videos or movies that you would not allow for children.
* Personal music and communication devices (ipods, ipads, tablets, phones, etc.) should not be used when you are with the children or building healthy relationships. Do not be on facebook or social media when you are with children. **Give children your attention!**
* **Attire / Modesty** – Don't dress for fashion or attraction; be practical. Bring clothes that cover you up. You should not wear clothes that are tight or revealing. It’s not about you and your attractiveness. It’s about ministry to the children.
* Women serving in indigenous communities in Central America: Please also bring a long skirt to wear in case you help children in an indigenous community or Church. You will be treated with more respect if you observe the culture’s dressing norms. No sleeveless tops, low cut collars or shorts above the knees should be worn. A good rule of thumb is to dress like the experienced missionaries.
* Pants/jeans are usually appropriate wear for men and women, as well as t-shirts and long shorts. Some missionaries prefer to wear long sleeved shirts and pants to protect against mosquitoes that can carry viruses such as Malaria and Dengue. No sleeveless tops.
* Please do not bring flashy jewelry or watches. These items give the wrong impression to the people who live in the poor communities and orphanages where we work. You do not want to make yourself or our ministry a target. Do not bring expensive items that can be stolen. Guatemala has professional pick-pocketers and purse cutters and they target tourists.
* Good tennis shoes or boots are recommended. Leave your stylish high heels at home.
* When packing a swimsuit, please do not bring a bikini or speedo. One piece swimsuits should be worn by females and swim shorts by males.

* **Visa** – Your visa is good for 90 days in Guatemala and you will receive that once you arrive at the airport in Guatemala.
* **Safe as a Group** – There is a lot to do and see in Central America. Your “free day” is a good time to take advantage of opportunities to tour as long as you stay with the group. Never go off on your own. Never accept free drinks from people you don’t know, because drinks may be drugged. ALWAYS TRAVEL AND STAY WITH THE GROUP.
* **Laundry** – You will be responsible for your own laundry. Each home and orphanage has their own customs to work with, so talk to the missionaries of that home to work into their routine. Almost every home has a “pila” – a concrete wash station where you can hand wash your clothes, as well as clothes lines outside where you can hang your clothes to dry.
* **Internet** – Internet will NOT usually be available. You may bring your own hand-held device, but please do not expect to connect. On your “free day” there may be restaurants that have free wi-fi services, but it’s not the norm in Central America. If you feel you absolutely need the internet, please purchase that plan for your phone before you come. Or you may bring an internationally unlocked phone and buy a chip (SIM card) when you arrive at the airport in Guatemala. The phone company who can sell that to you is called “Claro” and they have a small stand at the airport. However, it is our experience that sometimes phone sales people are not at that stands, so it’s not something you can count on.

Again, please do not use your phones and devices when you are with children. Remember to be present and available to God and those you are serving.

* **Illness / accidents** – Please let us know if you are not feeling well. We will want to know right away. In the event that urgent care is necessary, **you will need to be prepared to pay for medical services**. Health care for minor situations is relatively inexpensive in Guatemala. However, for major medical issues, you will need to come with your own medical insurance coverage, including coverage for an emergency flight back to the USA just in case. Hospitals in Guatemala do not let patients leave without first paying for services.
* **Security** – It is mandatory that you respect the rules of the home, orphanage and long-term missionaries when it comes to protecting your well-being. This relates to advice about which foods should be avoided, locations that may be deemed unsafe, and respecting/accepting changes to plans due to security concerns. Any risk that is taken unnecessarily can put you and the missionaries in more danger. Coming to help children-in-crisis in Central America is entirely your choice and you assume all risk. Listening to the long-term missionaries will go a long way, but does not guarantee your safety.

When traveling, it is wise to carry a copy of your passport and money dispersed in different pockets. Do not carry anything you would be upset if it gets stolen.

* **Community** – Please keep in mind that you will be living together with others in close proximity. Be respectful, prayerful, thoughtful and polite. Rude, immature and childish attitudes will be addressed immediately. Serving in poor countries and cultures means giving up personal luxuries and rights.

Failure to comply with these guidelines, expectations and customs may result in an early return to the USA at your expense.

**Questions**

Let us know what questions or concerns you have in advance. We are here to help you prepare, learn and serve children in crisis. Contact us is at: [drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com](mailto:drewandcindymetcalf@yahoo.com)

We prefer if the Team compiles their questions and has the email their list of questions.

This is easier than having us answer the same questions over with various individuals.

**Thank You**

We want to say how much we appreciate all the hard work you put in to make this trip happen. Without God using you and your leadership, it wouldn’t be coming together.

Thank you for all your work.

We look forward to seeing you in Guatemala, as God leads!