



## Introduction and General Information

Point of Contact:

Javier Rodriguez, Director of Operations: [agapeinaction.usa@gmail.com](mailto:agapeinaction.usa@gmail.com),  
USA: +1 (713) 859-4789, GUATEMALA: +502 5086-4852

Agape in Action's mission is to care for physical ailments and to go beyond the stethoscope to minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of the indigenous Mayans in the mountainous Quiche' province of the Central Highlands of Guatemala.

We accomplish this by working in close cooperation with local medical officials, hospital facilities and partner with other missions and clinics. We support pastors in rural areas with medical clinics in their churches, as well as join with other missionaries to reach deep into remote areas to hold clinics. Our dorm facility, located on the grounds of the Santa Elena National Hospital, serves as a comfortable, convenient and secure site to host visiting missionary teams. We provide financial support for deserving students in medical and nursing schools.

We are very excited about your interest in joining with Agape in Action for a short term mission trip. If there is something that you have a question about that is not covered in this informational packet, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **Team Member Trip Registration Form:**

The team member registration form will need to be filled out by ALL participants on our website.

### **Room and board:**

A \$50 per night cost includes lodging and food for 3 meals a day. Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be cooked by our staff at the dorm. Unfortunately we can not meet personal dietary requirements. However, you are welcome to pick and choose from what is available for that meal of the day.

Most teams will sleep 4 to a room in bunk beds. Each room has its own bathroom with a shower and hot water. You will also have access to a common room and large kitchen with refrigerators. By Guatemalan standards, these are very nice accommodations.

**What to Wear:** This is just a guideline. Consult your team leader for their specific requirements.

No shorts, short skirts/dresses, or tank tops at clinics. In general, locals are accustomed to only wearing shorts for sports and don't go around town in them. Please dress modestly and not so much like tourists. Remember we're here for a higher purpose. Also, be aware that it can get hot during the day (80's) and cold during the night (40's) depending on the time of year. Bring at least one decent jacket or sweatshirt and clothes of different levels of warmth. May through October is the rainy season. If you are coming during this time, bring some rain gear. If you are coming outside of this time it is very unlikely that there will be any significant rain.

Regarding white coats (medical teams), there are a few white coats available here. Short/long coats do not mean anything here like they do in the U.S. so bring whatever you would like. If you are planning to work in the hospital (ask your team leader), bring a white coat if you have space.

For Surgical Teams: We have plenty of scrubs in all sizes available at the dorm but please bring what you feel most comfortable in for clinics and/or surgery.

### **Packing List for Personal Gear:**

- Personal medications
- 1 pair of good walking shoes/tennis shoes, 1 pair of sandals, 1 pair of shower shoes(optional)
- Sun Protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Toothpaste, toothbrush, floss and shaving gear
- Shampoo & soap
- Wet wipes and/or antibacterial gel
- Camera & batteries
- Sweatshirt , jacket or long sleeve shirt (can get cold at night)

**Do NOT Bring** expensive jewelry or jewelry with sentimental value, bedding (sheets, pillow and pillowcases are provided), electrical appliances that require a lot of voltage

### **Internet:**

There is wireless internet access available (most of the time). It clocks downloads at about 880Kbs on a good day, which is more than sufficient for typical use but quite short of achieving lightning speeds. We just have to share and be mindful of others using at the same time.

**Calling home:**

Any Smartphone VOIP application like FaceTime Audio (iPhone users), Whatsapp, Skype, Viber, Facebook Messenger, Hangouts will get the job done.

**Health Information:**

Volunteers are urged to consult a health care provider who specializes in travel medicine. If you have a medical condition, consult your physician and make the necessary plans and/or accommodations. No immunizations are required to enter Guatemala but many are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationGuatemala.aspx>

Agape in Action urges all volunteers to have up to date "routine" shots such as the MMR vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus(DPT) vaccine, and the poliovirus vaccine. Volunteers who might be exposed to blood or body fluids are particularly urged to be vaccinated against hepatitis B.

**Malaria:**

Malaria has not been an issue in Quiche due to the fact that is in the mountains. It is not mandatory to take anything for malaria prevention, but you may talk to your physician or a travel clinic for more information.

**Bringing in Meds:**

Guatemala has strict laws regarding medicines. DO NOT BRING ANYTHING CONTAINING PSEUDOEPHEDRINE (SUDAFED) NOT EVEN FOR PERSONAL USE. THIS IS AN ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE IN GUATEMALA.

Surgical Teams: There will be additional forms given to your team leader for bringing in meds to the country. Please consult your team leader if you have questions regarding this.

**Giving Money/Gifts:**

Well intentioned giving in the past has caused problems for previous teams. If you want to give someone money, please ask someone at the Mission for guidance first. Once you give someone money, others will likely be knocking at your door looking for theirs. Adults and children alike may want to instantly befriend you. After befriending you, they may ask you for something like money, shoes, a backpack, etc. Again don't hesitate in asking Mission staff for guidance. If you give a "gift" to one, others may come to you for theirs.

**Bringing Money:**

We recommend bringing some American cash and a credit/debit card. If you bring cash, you can exchange it at a bank in the airport or in town but the exchange rate will not be as good. MAKE SURE to call your debit and/or credit card companies before you leave and let them know that you will be using your card in Guatemala so that you won't have any issues once you arrive. Guatemala uses Quetzales and the exchange rate is roughly Q7.6 to \$1.

**Final Tips:**

- Leave copies of your itinerary and passport data page with family or friends so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency
- Leave a copy of your credit card information with family or friends that you are taking with you to Guatemala in case you need to cancel it unexpectedly if it is lost or stolen. Also have the number to the credit card company with you SEPARATE from your credit card in case you need to call and cancel.
- Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime. To avoid being a target of crime, do not wear conspicuous shoes, clothing or jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of money.
- Do not leave unattended luggage in public areas and do not accept packages from strangers.
- Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. Citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov>. Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling overseas.