



PRELIMINARY TRIP INFO FOR TRIAGE TRIP TO RURAL GUATEMALA

TRIP DATES: October 8 – 17, 2010

PRELIMINARY ITINERARY:

- Fri. Oct. 8: early morning depart Vancouver. Late evening arrival in Guatemala City. Transfer to hotel in Antigua.
- Sat. Oct. 9: free day in Antigua, a colourful colonial city with plenty of character. There are lots of ruins of churches and convents, shops and restaurants, a local market and craft stalls.
- Sun. Oct. 10: drive to the rural area where the team will be working (usually 4-6 hours drive)
- Mon. Oct. 11: clinic day
- Tue. Oct. 12: clinic day
- Wed. Oct. 13: cultural day (this may be a different day. Organized by Partner for Surgery).
- Thu. Oct. 14: clinic day
- Fri. Oct. 15: clinic day
- Sat. Oct. 16: drive back to Antigua, free afternoon and update of supplies/meds inventory (if necessary). Farewell dinner – courtesy of Partner for Surgery.
- Sun. Oct. 17: early morning transfer to Guate City, flight to Vancouver

TEAM: 4 medical practitioners, possibly 1 non-medical person and 1 translator

TRIP DESCRIPTION: On these types of trips we work closely with our affiliate Partner for Surgery (PfS). PfS does all the local ground logistics for the trips and HANDS provides a small group of about 6 people to run the clinics. These clinics are set up in outlying rural areas where the focus is to find patients who need surgery. We also bring a small pharmacy with us and try to help all patients who come to see us. The patients we find who require surgery are scheduled to have their procedures done either by the next HANDS surgical team or other volunteer surgical teams.

Partner for Surgery uses local "gerentes" (area managers) to advertise and promote the clinics. They and the other PfS staff are a most important link between the local people and our team. On some trips we may see a total of 300 patients during the four one-day clinics, and on other occasions 800 patients may turn up in the four days.

The days can be long and the daily commute can be anything from half an hour to 2 hours. Clinics can be in health centres where facilities may be quite comfortable or they may be in church halls or schools where we may have to provide cubicles for doctors by hanging up sheets. Sometimes there is electricity and running water in these locations sometimes there is not.

We bring all our supplies from Vancouver and it is transported with the team in big red bins. These bins take up the check-in luggage allowance of team members so personal luggage is limited to carry on. We purchase most of our meds from a central depot in Montreal but we may require medical staff to help in obtaining some items if they can. U.S. volunteers may also be required to bring some of their own supplies.

Transport to these rural locations is in the Partner for Surgery minibus and the team size will vary depending on how much room is available.

Accommodation is organized by Partner for Surgery and they do their best to find suitable lodgings but in outlying rural areas there often is little choice. In Antigua accommodation is comfortable with en suite bathrooms with hot showers, outside of the town it is likely to be in basic hotels. The rooms usually have their own bathrooms, albeit with simple showers that may or may not be hot. Rooms are usually doubles but in some instances it is possible to provide a single room at an extra charge.

Meals are also organized by Partner for Surgery. Breakfast and dinners are likely to be in the hotel or a suitable local restaurant. Lunches are usually sandwiches. Lunch and dinner on the first Saturday in Antigua are not covered. On the last Saturday PFS invites the team for dinner at a restaurant in Antigua.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS: Participants need to be comfortable working in rural areas where conditions are basic. They need to be flexible and able to take things as they come. Medical staff will be working with non medical people who are very willing and hard working but may not have experience in what they are doing and thus may need explanation. Since many Mayans do not speak Spanish there is often a three way translation process. Everyone is required to do what is necessary on a trip and to work as a team. Please understand that work days may be long and food and accommodation will likely be simple while in the rural communities.

Medical personnel need to provide a copy of current professional registration and a short CV (CV not required for those who have been on a previous HANDS team).

COSTS (in Canadian dollars):

- Flight CAD\$1100 check (budget figure for a flight from Vancouver. Flights are usually less).
- Ground package CAD\$780 per person for a team of 5 people (this may vary according to team size). This is for double occupancy – additional \$80 if you would like a single room for the 3 nights in Antigua (subject to availability). This covers accommodation, breakfasts in Antigua, meals while in rural areas, airport pickup/drop off (if traveling with the group) and local transport.
- Not covered - meals in Antigua on first Saturday (other than breakfast), airport pickup/drop off if not arriving/leaving with the group, spending money, travel insurance with medical evacuation.

Note 1: *All volunteers flying from Vancouver must travel with the team and transport 1-2 bins of supplies. Project HANDS will arrange those flights. If you are from different locations you will need to book your own flight. If your flights coordinate with the main team it will be possible to include you in the group airport pickup/drop off, otherwise you will need to arrange the pickup/drop off yourself, and meet the group at the hotel in Antigua (we will provide you with the details of our local travel agent and she can book a taxi for you – about \$30US one way).*

Note 2: *If you are extending your stay in Guatemala and would like local assistance, our local travel agent can make arrangements by email or once you arrive in Antigua.*

Note 3: *HANDS is a registered Canadian charity and can issue tax receipts to Canadian participants. If you are a U.S. citizen we can process your payment through our American affiliate Partner for Surgery, so that you can obtain a deduction.*

REGISTRATION: The registration form is available at www.projecthands.org. Click on Trips and then your trip dates. Please note that a place is not secure until a completed registration form and deposit have been received.

PRE TRIP FAMILIARIZATION: It is our aim for team members to be familiar with what to expect on a trip, however, each location and facility are different. We provide what info we can and also have a Team Handbook on line to help you in preparing for the trip. Just go to www.projecthands.org, Trips and your trip date. If necessary an Addendum to the Handbook will be sent to you closer to departure.

We also try to arrange a time when participants can meet each other, receive information, and ask questions, however, this is not always possible if people do not live in the Vancouver area.

Working in Guatemala is a wonderful experience and we hope that you will find it as rewarding and interesting as we do. The Guatemalans are gentle, modest people and history has dealt them a very bad hand. Mayans make up half of the population and they continue to be marginalized. Most live below the poverty line in rural communities where they rarely have running water or electricity and live in what can only be described as shacks. They often have little or no access to healthcare, and little education (especially women) and are extremely naïve about health and hygiene. Many of the patients you will see will be Mayan.

Should you wish to see photographs from some of our past trips there are some on our website at www.projecthands.org. If after reading this package you have any questions please do not hesitate to email or call. It is important to us that participants are informed and comfortable with all aspects of the trip so if we have missed anything please let us know and we will do our best to answer your questions.

If you would like to participate in this trip please let us know as soon as possible as places fill up quickly and we would hate for you to be disappointed. If these trip dates do not work for you but you are interested in a future trip please let us know and we will keep you informed.

Wishing you the very best and looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

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