



THE VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE



TRAVEL. VOLUNTEER. LEARN. GROW.

GUATEMALA

 common**hope**

¡BIENVENIDO! WELCOME!

So you have decided to come to Guatemala to work hard and open your heart to something new? A few years ago I decided to do the same, as a way to learn more about Guatemala and give back to the country where my children were born. Little did I know that life would eventually lead me to serve thousands of Guatemalan children who struggle in poverty—children just like my own.



So, a warning. This could get under your skin and into your heart.

It started when I joined a Common Hope Vision Team. We built a house for a single mother of two, who had worked more than 200 hours to earn her new home. We dug ditches and sewed curtains. We packed school supplies with high school kids. And we were invited to visit with families in their homes. The images of those houses with their cornstalk walls and dirt floors stuck with me. It was then that I finally realized the everyday reality of poverty.

I came home and suddenly saw all of the abundance around me. I realized how much we have as Americans and gained a new appreciation for daily conveniences like dependable running water. At first I was overwhelmed with the privilege that comes with being born in a rich country. Now I understand it as a blessing because I can use my privilege to help families who are no different than yours or mine except they were born into a life of poverty. And the truth is, by giving back our lives become richer through new friendships, greater sense of purpose, a renewed sense of gratitude, to name just a few.

John Huebsch, who founded Common Hope with his family, started hosting Vision Teams because the experience of Guatemala helped him to understand himself and his place in the world. He wanted to share this experience with others who wanted to learn. If you are open, I believe you will leave Guatemala enriched by your experiences, too.

As you prepare for your trip, you will learn about Guatemala's violent past. Things are different now, and we don't mean to scare you, but we also want you to know the truth. Clearly, traveling to Guatemala isn't as safe as sitting in your living room, but life isn't about staying as safe as possible. We have brought more than 3,000 people to Guatemala on Vision Teams without one serious problem. We know how to do this, and we will be with you. Most people come a bit nervous of the unknown and leave eager to return. I hope you have a wonderful experience.

We look forward to seeing you in Guatemala,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shari". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Shari Blindt
Executive Director

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UNDERSTANDING COMMON HOPE'S APPROACH



THE COMMON HOPE MODEL



GRADUATION



EDUCATION



HEALTH CARE



HOUSING



FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

MISSION STATEMENT Common Hope promotes hope and opportunity in Guatemala by partnering with children, families, and communities who want to participate in a process of development to improve their lives through education, health care, housing, and family development.

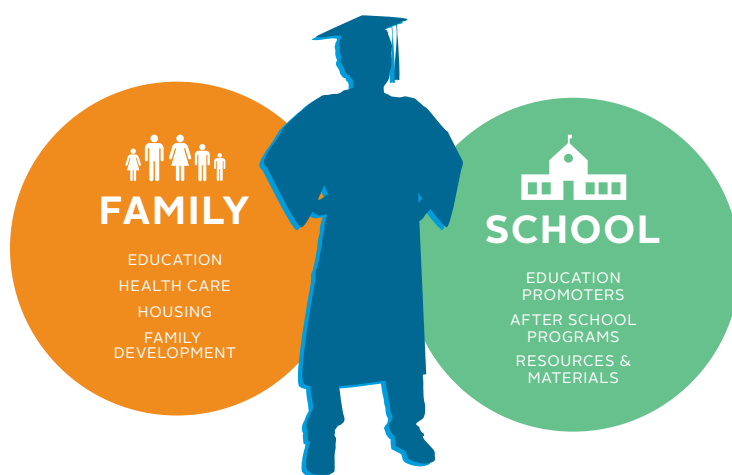
Common Hope's comprehensive, holistic model addresses insufficiencies in education, health care, housing and family development that prevent children from attending and staying in school.

As demonstrated for more than 30 years, these programs break the cycle of poverty in Guatemala through a partnership with families that preserves dignity, builds ownership in the process, and produces better results. The model creates the necessary supports for families to keep their children in school rather than going into the workforce as a child to supplement the family income. When a family is accepted into the program, Common Hope surrounds the family with opportunities that make school possible. Common Hope aids in the costs of attending school, provides access to health care, assists in finding and enhancing housing and delivers family development services, thus, eliminating the existing tension between a child's education and the family's most basic needs.

Common Hope also invests in improving the quality of education that our students receive by partnering with public elementary schools in communities where our families live. Through a partnership with teachers and school principals, schools are implementing classroom management systems to create healthier, more productive learning environments. Our program provides training and resources for teachers to foster reading and literacy, and improve mathematics instruction to build stronger foundations for children to continue their learning throughout their school years.

Common Hope has grown to serve more than 14,000 individuals in 27 communities in the Central Highlands of Guatemala through its family and school partnerships. More than 5,000 students benefit from our programs in education, and their families are building stronger, healthier lives.

Common Hope proudly acknowledges that it is not an organization making hand-outs, but rather, a partnership of helping hands making a difference in Latin America. Thank you for being one of those helping hands!



HOW VISION TEAMS **FIT IN**



Vision Teams are the backbone of Common Hope's support system. You will witness our programs firsthand then return home to share with others the difference they, too, can make in the life of a child and family. [The Vision Team Experience provides:](#)

CULTURAL EXCHANGE Through interactions with families and Common Hope staff, you will immerse yourself in the beautiful culture of Guatemala.

WORK TEAMS While in Guatemala, your hard work—packing school supplies, counting medicine, organizing the warehouse, working in construction—helps staff to provide crucial services to families.

ADVOCACY When you go home, you can share the Common Hope story with your friends and family—helping to broaden our network of support and donors.

FUNDING Your team fundraises, which directly benefits our families, helping where needed most. Many teams also bring school supplies and in-kind donations collected as you prepare for your trip.

SPONSORSHIP Before or during the trip, many of you will decide to sponsor a student and visit them during the week—an unforgettable experience!

You are embarking on an incredible journey that will challenge and change you. As a Vision Team member you will have the unique opportunity to visit Guatemala, learn about its culture, history, and people and work alongside staff to provide important services to families—your work will be demanding, but the time and energy you share will leave an impact and impression for years to come.

COMMON HOPE HAS THREE GOALS FOR OUR VISION TEAMS:

- 1. To provide Common Hope's affiliated families and staff with services, skills, and resources.**
- 2. To better understand the complexities of poverty, reflect on the need for Common Hope's programs, and learn about Guatemala.**
- 3. To embrace Common Hope's vision, take it back home with you, and help connect resources to our needs.**

Common Hope aims to foster encounters for our Vision Teams that educate, provoke compassion, and challenge complacency. We hope that this transformational experience will inspire you to become an advocate for Common Hope.



UP NEXT? Finding the Vision Team Experience that's right for you!



FINDING THE EXPERIENCE **THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU**







WHAT VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Cultural exchanges are plentiful and becoming more and more popular. Common Hope has been providing these opportunities long before it became a trend. With a Common Hope Vision Team Experience, you can trust that we are creating cultural change and filling lives with hope.

COMMON HOPE'S VISION TEAM OPTIONS

-  **The Common Hope VISION TEAM Experience**
Our most popular experience! Includes 8 days/7 nights, 10-15 members, \$1,000 fee
-  **The Common Hope TEAM-BUILDER Experience**
Great for families or corporate teams! Includes 4 days/4 nights, 6-15 members, \$600 fee

CONSIDER THIS When choosing the Vision Team Experience that is right for you and your team, consider the following factors that will help you plan your trip:

1. The length of stay
2. The depth of your experience
3. Specific goals you hope to accomplish
4. The number of times you may have visited Guatemala previously
5. If you've traveled on a Common Hope Vision Team in the past
6. With whom you will be traveling

No matter what you're looking for, we're confident we have an experience that will be the right fit for you and your team—one that is life changing and leaves you inspired, fulfilled, and hungry for more!

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY Guatemala was plagued by a 36-year civil war, making work in Guatemala as challenging as humanitarian work in any developing country. There are cultural challenges, socioeconomic challenges, and continued ambiguity in changing times. Other factors such as the Guatemalan government, forces of nature, and even traffic can have unexpected influences on your trip. *For these reasons, we strive to meet every team's expectations but ask our guests to be flexible and patient. Your safety always comes FIRST in planning your experience.* If you have chosen to join us, you do so knowing that your trip activities may need to be adjusted. Thank you in advance for your flexibility.

Jet on over to pages 11-12 to see detailed info on each Vision Team option!



HOW ARE **TEAMS FORMED?**

HOW ARE VISION TEAMS FORMED? Vision Teams can be formed in a variety of ways. Churches, civic groups, schools, corporations, small businesses, families, or even groups of friends can form a Vision Team. The only requirement is that your team must have 10-15 members or at least 6 members if you opt to do the shorter Team-Builder Experience.

WHO FORMS THE TEAM? Each team must have a designated Team Leader who is in charge of forming the Vision Team. The Team Leader will work closely with the U.S. Vision Team Manager at Common Hope to:

- Schedule the trip
- Recruit team members
- Plan orientation meetings
- Guide the team while in Guatemala
- Foster the team's continued engagement with Common Hope post-trip.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO FORM A TEAM? Under special circumstances, dates on the Trip Calendar will be opened to individuals who would like to participate in the Vision Team Experience but do not have a team. The U.S. Vision Team Manager then creates a team from a group of individual joiners OR places individuals on existing teams that need additional members. If you are interested in joining a team, contact the U.S. Vision Team Manager at 651-917-0917.





OUR VISION TEAM **EXPERIENCES**

THE VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE

- 8-day/7-night experience, includes travel days (Sunday arrival - Sunday departure)
- 10-member minimum, 15-member maximum
- \$1,000 fee per person. Fee includes lodging, meals, transportation to and from the airport, all activities, and translation services
- Airfare is NOT included in fee
- \$500 fundraising minimum per person
- Must be 18 years of age or older OR accompanied by a designated chaperone

You will spend seven days engaging in various activities at the project site and in the surrounding villages. The work day goes from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

WHAT DOES THE VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE INCLUDE? Every standard Vision Team Experience includes the following:

- Your experience starts with two pre-trip orientation sessions on what to expect in Guatemala, staying safe and healthy, and preparing for your trip
- Ground transportation to and from the airport and to all activities during your trip dates (transportation before or after your trip dates is NOT provided)
- Stay at the Common Hope site in Antigua, including a full tour and brief history of our programs.
- Hands-on work in construction; most teams help build a home for a family in need
- Visit families in our programs with a Common Hope social worker in nearby villages
- Volunteer experiences in different programs areas such as education, pharmacy, youth support, warehouse, maintenance, library, or daycare. Your volunteer experiences will vary based on Common Hope's needs at the time of your trip
- Participation in a *Day-in-the-Life* experience in a family's home
- A visit with your sponsored student if you are a sponsor or choose to become one
- Guided reflections with your Vision Team Coordinator
- Contextual discussion with an executive staff member in Guatemala
- Dinner in Antigua to celebrate your week
- Cultural activity or tour on the weekend to enjoy the beauty and people of Guatemala (See pages 14-15 for information on cultural activities)

ESTÁ BIEN ACOMPAÑADO - YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS! The U.S. Vision Team Manager will be with you every step of the way to prepare you for your experience in Guatemala. During your trip, your Vision Team Coordinator will be there to guide you in your learning and discovery, and answer any and all questions you may have.



THE TEAM-BUILDER EXPERIENCE

- 4 night's lodging, 3 days of volunteering (Sunday arrival - Wednesday or Tuesday arrival - Friday)
- 10-member minimum
- \$600 fee per person. Fee includes lodging, meals, transportation to and from the airport, all activities, and translation services
- Airfare is NOT included in fee
- \$300 fundraising minimum per person
- Must be 18 years of age or older OR accompanied by a designated chaperone

This experience is for those looking for a shorter trip. Though it is shorter than our standard team experience, you still get an in-depth look at Common Hope's work in Guatemala.

Team members spend three days engaging in various activities at the project site and in the surrounding villages. The work day goes from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

WHAT DOES THE TEAM-BUILDER EXPERIENCE INCLUDE? Every Team-Builder Experience includes the following:

- Your experience starts with two pre-trip orientation sessions on what to expect in Guatemala, staying safe and healthy, and preparing for your trip
- Group transportation to and from the airport and to all activities during your trip dates
- Stay at the Common Hope site in Antigua, including a full tour/brief history of our programs
- Visit families in our programs with a Common Hope social worker in nearby villages
- Volunteer experiences in different program areas such as education, pharmacy, youth support, warehouse, maintenance, library, or daycare. Your volunteer experiences will vary based on Common Hope's needs at the time of your trip
- A visit with your sponsored student if you are a sponsor or choose to become one

ESTÁ BIEN ACOMPAÑADO - YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS! The U.S. Vision Team Manager will be with you every step of the way to prepare you for your experience in Guatemala. During your trip, your Vision Team Coordinator will be there to guide you in your learning and discovery, and answer any and all questions you may have.



*Some things are equally great no matter which team experience you choose.
Turn the page to learn more!*

EVERY EXPERIENCE INCLUDES

ACCOMMODATIONS Regardless of which experience you choose, your accommodations at Common Hope's project site in Antigua will be the same. Though they are humble, most visitors find our accommodations to be quite comfortable!

Vision Teams stay in our volunteer quarters in private dorm-style rooms. All of our accommodations include:

- Private rooms with bunk beds and bathrooms (a few rooms with double beds available)
- Bedding and towels
- Private showers with hot water
- Large open-air living space with couches, refrigerator, microwave, and sink
- Use of washer and dryer
- Three on-site meals per day (Team members are required to help with some preparation and cleanup)
- Filtered water that is safe to drink
- Accommodations for dietary needs (allergies, vegetarian meals, etc) as able
- Phone calls to the U.S. (\$0.25 per minute charge)
- Internet access and usage during free time (connection can be spotty)

TRAVEL EMERGENCY MEDICAL INSURANCE Common Hope purchases travel emergency medical insurance policies for each Vision Team member in the case of a medical emergency during your trip. The specified coverage is for the duration of the trip only and it is not intended to replace personal medical insurance. It does not cover pre-existing conditions. A brief summary of benefits is below.

SCHEDULE OF BENEFITS

- \$50,000 Accident/Sickness medical limit per insured person per policy period
- \$35,000 Emergency Medical Evacuation/Repatriation expense
- \$10,000 Return of mortal remains expense
- \$2,500 Local ambulance expense
- \$10,000 Accidental death and dismemberment principal sum
- \$500 Deductible—the insured pays the first \$500 of eligible expenses per policy period. Thereafter, the policy pays 80% of eligible expenses for \$5,000 then 100% to the medical limit.






SAMPLE ITINERARY

SAMPLE ITINERARY
COMING SOON

CULTURAL ACTIVITY
OPTIONS LISTED
ON THE NEXT PAGE



CULTURAL ACTIVITY OPTIONS



CHOCO MUSEO TOUR | EASY Visit Antigua's newest museum, Choco Museo, for a fun chocolate workshop!

- Learn from a chocolate expert about the significance of cacao to the Mayan people and its uses throughout history.
- Taste chocolate beverages prepared according to tradition
- Make your own chocolate and truffles to take home!

COFFEE FARM TOUR | MODERATE | DRY SEASON ONLY Tour the coffee fields with Felix, our coffee farmer extraordinaire!

- Enjoy a complete tour of Felix's beautiful coffee fields and farm on the side of the volcano.
- Learn about the coffee harvesting process from field to cup and help with some of the farm work.
- Afterwards, share a traditional meal with Felix's family.



WEAVING COOPERATIVE TOUR | EASY Learn about the unique and beautiful Mayan weaving traditions!

- Spend time with the wonderful Mayan women of the Santiago Zamora weaving co-op located 30 minutes from Antigua.
- Experience the history and traditions of Mayan weaving as the women tell their stories, then try your hand at weaving!
- Afterwards, enjoy local food and shop for textiles.

MAYAN RUINS OF IXIMCHE | EASY Tour crumbling pyramids, grassy plazas, and quiet fields in this ancient Mayan city! (8 person minimum)

- An all day activity! You will leave the project site at 8 am and travel about one hour to Iximche via shuttle.
- Your guide will walk your group through the ruins and describe the history of the site for a couple hours.
- Traditional Mayan ceremonies can often be seen!
- Afterwards, enjoy traditional Guatemalan cuisine at Chuchoy.



LA TORTILLA COOKING CLASS | MODERATE Learn to make authentic Guatemalan cuisine!

- Start the class with a tour of the Antigua market, learning its history and buying ingredients for the dishes you'll make.
- After the market, a Guatemalan chef will teach you to make a traditional Guatemalan entree, three sides, and a dessert.
- Finally, enjoy your meal on a beautiful rooftop terrace and take home the recipes!



WALKING TOUR OF ANTIGUA | MODERATE Get a glimpse behind the walls of this historical city!

- Enjoy a complete tour of Antigua and all of its main attractions
- An English-speaking guide will show you the ruins, old convents, the famous arch, and historical sites.
- Tour is approximately 3 hours long.



CENTRO CULTURAL LA AZOTEA | EASY A coffee museum, a Mayan music museum, and cultural center all in one!

- Tour is available in both English and Spanish!
- Learn about the coffee process from plant to cup and hear the sounds of traditional Mayan instruments.
- At the end of the tour you can enjoy a cup of fresh coffee!

MASS AT THE CITY CATHEDRAL | EASY Those of all faiths are welcome to attend the service in this remarkable cathedral!

- Attend mass at the Cathedral of Antigua, just off the main plaza and see its remarkable beauty.
- Originally built between 1534 and 1690, the cathedral was rebuilt several times due to damage from earthquakes.
- Service is in Spanish and is one hour long.



INDEPENDENT TIME IN ANTIGUA | EASY Take time to shop and explore the Antigua market and visit local artisans.

- After lunch at a local café, spend the afternoon exploring the beautiful city of Antigua.
- Meet local artisans in the beautiful Antigua market, shop for treasures, and tour the city streets.



HOW DO I FUND MY TRIP?

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF MY TRIP? There are three parts to the total cost of your trip:

- **The fee** is the amount you pay, which covers the complete cost of your experience in Guatemala
- **The fundraising** requirement is the money you raise, which helps fund Common Hope's mission.
- **Airfare** is purchased separately and is not included in the fee.

PRICING FOR INDIVIDUALS

EXPERIENCE	FEE Ages 14+	FEE Under 13	FUNDRAISING MINIMUM	TOTAL*
Vision Team Experience (Off Peak May & September)	\$1,000 (\$750)	\$500 (\$500)	\$500/pp (\$500/pp)	\$1,500/pp** (\$1,250/pp)
Team-Builder Experience	\$600	\$300	\$300/pp	\$900/pp**

*Airfare NOT included in fee **Customization of any experience is available for \$200+/per person

PRICING FOR FAMILIES

EXPERIENCE For families	FEE Ages 14+	FEE Under 13	FUNDRAISING For family of 4*
Vision Team Experience (Off Peak May & September)	\$1,000/pp (\$750/pp)	\$500/pp (\$500/pp)	\$1,000/per family (\$1,000/per family)
Team Builder Experience	\$600/pp	\$300/pp	\$600/per family

**Airfare NOT included in fee

*For families with more than four members, fundraising is \$250/per additional member; i.e. a family of 5 would have a \$1,250 fundraising requirement; \$1,000 + \$250

WHEN ARE MY APPLICATION AND PAYMENT DUE?

DO I HAVE TO PAY EVERYTHING RIGHT AWAY? No, your total fee and fundraising requirement are not due right away. When you decide to book your Vision Team Experience, only a deposit is due at that time.

- \$500/per person for the Common Hope Vision Team Experience
- \$300/per person for the Team Builder Experience
- \$500 Team Deposit (only ONE PER TEAM)



PAYMENT SCHEDULE & COMMITMENT

TEAM DEADLINES		EXPLANATION
9 to 18 months before you want to travel	Check the Vision Team Calendar and reserve your date. Your team application and deposit of \$500 are due to hold your date.	Team application and deposit are due to reserve a trip date and remove it from the Vision Team Calendar. Deposit is non-refundable but may be used toward a rescheduled trip date if canceled six months prior to travel.
60 days following Common Hope's receipt of the team application and deposit	A minimum of 50% of team members must submit individual applications and deposits in order to retain reservation date.	Due to high demand for team dates, a minimum of half of your team members must be registered in order to maintain your reservation. If 50% of the team is not registered after 60 days, we will notify you if your date is being requested by another party.

MEMBER DEADLINES		EXPLANATION
6 months prior to travel	All member applications and deposits due.	Deposit is \$500 for Vision Team or \$300 for Team-Builder. Deposits can be paid by credit card or check.
60 days prior to travel	Final payment is due.	Payment by check or credit card must be made 60 days prior to travel.
One week prior to travel	Fundraising minimum due unless other arrangements are made.	Fundraising balance will be charged to the credit card on file if it is not received within one month of returning from trip.



CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

CANCELLATION POLICY In order to reserve your spot as a Vision Team member, you must submit your application with your deposit. This deposit is not refundable but is transferrable (date or person) up to six months prior to travel. Your final payment is due two months prior to your trip's departure.

The deposit can be applied to a future Vision Team Experience if the cancellation is made within six months prior to travel.

- In case of natural disaster, medical emergency, civil or political unrest, or other refundable event, refunds will be issued to the party or person who made the payment.
- Natural disaster, family emergency, medical emergency and death in the family will be reviewed for possible refund on a case by case basis.
- In the case where a regional medical alert is issued by the CDC (example, Zika Virus) but travel is possible, deposits are not refundable.



POLICIES MAY SEEM BORING, **BUT THEY'RE IMPORTANT!**

FEE SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS

- Common Hope does not make fee adjustments based on shorter travel periods or offsite accommodations.
- The fundraising balance will be charged to the credit card on file if it is not received within one month of return from trip.
- In the event that unforeseen or additional costs exceeding \$200 are incurred in order to provide a customized trip, Common Hope will notify team members in order to secure approval.
- Common Hope reserves the right to deny travel applications based on legal or regulatory considerations.







NOW IT'S TIME! PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP TO GUATEMALA



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

TRIP ESSENTIALS

-  **Passport** A valid passport is required to travel to Guatemala. Please review your passport ahead of time to ensure it doesn't expire within 6 months of travel.
-  **Vision Team Application and Liability Release Form** These documents must be turned in prior to travel. The U.S. Vision Team Manager will provide them to you.
-  **Attendance at Team Orientation Meetings** You are required to attend at least two orientation sessions prior to your trip.
-  **Review** this Vision Team Resource Guide

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP The most important thing to remember is to **keep it simple!** Pack clothing that can be layered. Team members should be able to pack all of their personal belongings in one carry-on bag. There is a laundry facility on-site for teams to use.

When you are packing, remember that you may be working outdoors. Work pants, t-shirts, and comfortable work shoes are a must! PLEASE, NO SHORTS are allowed during the work week.

PACKING PARTIES Vision Team members are asked to donate their checked luggage space to be packed with supplies. These supplies might include sponsorship mail, school supplies, hygiene supplies, or other needed supplies for our programs.

BRING PHOTO COPIES OF YOUR PASSPORT AND CREDIT/ATM CARDS Keep copies separate from your original documents in the case that they are lost or stolen.



PACKING LIST

- ☐ Work pants
- ☐ T-shirts for work days (no tank-tops)
- ☐ Comfortable work shoes
- ☐ Casual outfits (shirt, pants, long skirts, capris)
- ☐ Long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt, or jacket (for layering)
- ☐ Rain jacket or poncho
- ☐ Bandana
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Hat for sun protection
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Work gloves

- ☐ Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- ☐ Ear plugs
- ☐ Camera and charger
- ☐ Small backpack
- ☐ Travel alarm
- ☐ Toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.)
- ☐ Journal and pen
- ☐ Flip-flop sandals (for showering)
- ☐ Insurance cards and other important documents
- ☐ Prescription medications (packed in their original containers)
- ☐ EPA Registered insect repellent

DO NOT BRING:

- ⊗ Valuable jewelry
- ⊗ Linens or towels (these are provided)
- ⊗ Electrical adapters (current is the same)
- ⊗ Candy or small gifts to hand out
- ⊗ Shorts/short skirts



PRE-TRAVEL MEDICAL/HEALTH INFO

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS Pack enough medication to last the entire trip. Be sure to keep your prescription medications in their original containers and only travel with medications that you own (or your child's). If you wear contact lenses, pack a back-up pair, as well as a pair of glasses and a copy of your lens prescription.

If you take more than two prescribed medicines, a narcotic, or need to carry needles and syringes for health purposes, please ask your physician to describe your medical condition in writing in the event that clarification and/or confirmation of your condition is needed.

IMMUNIZATIONS No immunizations are required for travel to Guatemala. However, Common Hope follows CDC recommendations*, which currently include:

- A tetanus booster because Vision Teams typically perform construction work.
- Hepatitis-A vaccination, a two-shot series, the first of which should be given 4-6 weeks before departure for maximum immunization. The second shot is given 6 months after the first.
- Hepatitis-B vaccinations, a three-shot series. The second dose must be given at least one month after the first dose. The third dose must be given at least two months after the second dose and at least four months after the first.
- Typhoid vaccination, which could be pills or a shot. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

Cholera and typhoid do exist in Guatemala but do not pose a problem when food is carefully selected and properly prepared. PLEASE, DO NOT EAT STREET FOOD. Malaria does not pose a health risk in Antigua and New Hope Village due to high altitudes, however, team members should wear bug spray to prevent infection of dengue, chikungunya or zika.

Please note that Guatemala and the Common Hope project site are not ADA compliant. There are many stairs to access sleeping quarters and the streets in Guatemala are cobblestone, very uneven, and can be dangerous for those walking with a cane. Bring masks if you have asthma. Volcanoes in the area occasionally cause ash to be present in the air.

TO SUM IT UP

- + **Pack your prescriptions** in their original container. If you use medical needles, take a narcotic, or are prescribed more than two meds, bring a doctor's note.
- + **Immunizations are recommended but not required** for travel to Guatemala.
- + **Bring a mask if you have asthma.** Volcanoes occasionally spew ash into the air.

**In addition to these recommendations, Common Hope suggests that each individual contact their physician, local health department, or Centers for Disease Control for more in-depth information on the areas that you are traveling to discuss appropriate options. Calling CDC at 1-888-232-3228 can provide region-specific information on travel clinics.*



OTHER TRAVEL RESOURCES

NEED MORE INFORMATION? Below you will find more online resources that can help you prepare for your trip. If at any time you have questions about traveling to Guatemala, you can contact the U.S. Vision Team Manager at 651-287-0716.

- **Center for Disease Control website** will provide you with the latest health recommendations pertaining to travel to Guatemala: www.cdc.gov/travel
- **US State Department website** has important information from the US Embassy regarding obtaining or renewing passport. You can also review the Consular information sheet on Guatemala: <http://travel.state.gov/>

EXCHANGING CURRENCY You can exchange currency before you travel or when you arrive. If you'd like to exchange before you go, contact your bank for current exchange rates and currency availability. Do this ahead of time as banks don't always keep Guatemalan currency (Quetzales) on hand.

If you prefer to exchange currency in Guatemala, your primary currency exchange should be made at the counter in the airport. Bring clean, new bills or withdraw money from an ATM upon arriving. Please also note:

- Traveler's checks or personal checks are not always accepted in Guatemala.
- Guatemalan banks will not exchange old, torn, or marked bills.
- A credit card (VISA is recommended) can be used in some stores and restaurants but not in the markets.

RECOMMENDED READING can be found below. We offer a list of books and articles on Guatemala's history and culture that you may find interesting and informative.

- *Guatemala: Never Again!* Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHAG) : This book is a detailed report of human rights abuses in Guatemala
- *I, Rigoberta Menchu* Rigoberta Menchu Tum : This book is a personal account by the Guatemalan indigenous leader who won the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize
- *To the Mountain and Back: The Mysteries of Guatemalan Highland Family Life* Joann E. Glittenburg : This book is a personal account of the author's experiences in the highlands of Guatemala and her own growth as a nurse, anthropologist, and person becoming aware of the world community.
- *Bridge of Courage, Life Stories of the Guatemalan Companeros and Companeras* Jennifer Harbury : This book shares stories of how and why people made the decision to work the revolution in Guatemala.
- *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* Steven Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer : This book is a comprehensive account of the CIA operation which overthrew the democratically elected government Jacobo Arbenz in 1954.
- *Weaving Common Hope* Zach Thomas : This book explains how Common Hope began and developed its multi-faceted approach to addressing poverty.

TRAVEL MAP

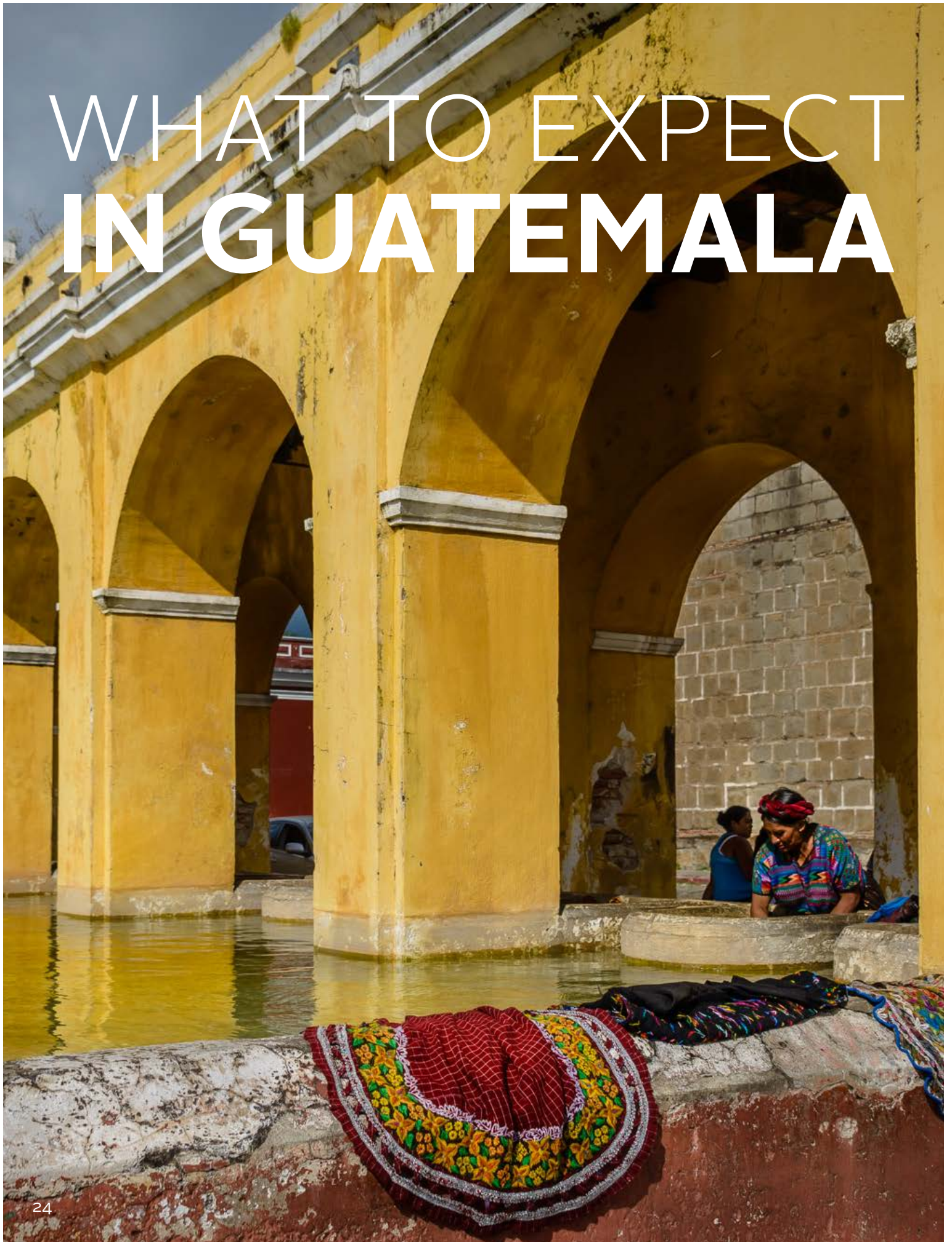
GEOGRAPHY OF GUATEMALA The country of Guatemala is approximately the size of the state of Tennessee and is home to more than 14 million people.

COMMON HOPE SITES

- **Antigua** is approximately one hour from Guatemala City and it is home to Common Hope's Family Development Center, which serves as the main base of operations for our work in Guatemala. Many of the communities Common Hope works in are located in the Antigua Valley. Antigua is known for its Spanish Colonial architecture and is a very popular tourist destination.
- **New Hope Village** was built by Common Hope in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch devastated the area. It is home to approximately 50 families. Common Hope also operates a school in the community.
- **San Miguel Milpas Altas** is a village 20 minutes east of Antigua. It is home to approximately 1,600 people, most of whom work as day laborers in gardening, farming, and carpentry.
- **San Rafael and Santa Marta** are two indigenous communities located 40 minutes northeast of Antigua. The residents are Mayan and speak Kaqchikel, one of over 20 Mayan languages.



WHAT TO EXPECT IN GUATEMALA



CULTURAL CONTEXT

LIFE IN GUATEMALA Guatemala is a geographically diverse country with tropical rain forests, mountains, volcanoes, lowland forests, and beaches. Guatemala's main exports include coffee, bananas, sugar, vegetables, and textiles.

For many, it is difficult to find work that pays enough to support a family. In Guatemala, 26% of the population lives on less than \$2 per day and 54% live below the country's poverty line. The World Bank and UNDP characterize Guatemala among the most unequal countries in Latin America and the world.

EDUCATION IN GUATEMALA Many families cannot afford to send their children to school, and the literacy rate, at 69% is among the lowest in Latin America. Only 32% of children complete junior high and only 17% receive a high school diploma.



HEALTH CARE IN GUATEMALA Health care is limited to 9.7 doctors for every 10,000 people, and many people suffer from easily preventable or treatable diseases like asthma, diabetes, and diarrhea. Malnutrition is common, with 13% of children being underweight.

FLEXIBILITY AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS The most important thing for any Vision Team member to have is a flexible attitude, an open mind, and an open heart. The pace of life in Guatemala is more relaxed than what you are most likely used to. More often than not, schedules and people can run late. In Guatemala this is not considered rude. Please do not become frustrated. Rather, enjoy the beautiful scenery, soak in the culture, play with the children, and make the most of the opportunity!

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN GUATEMALA Your Team Coordinator in Guatemala will provide you with an orientation that will help you navigate greeting and interacting with Guatemalans, how Western culture is perceived, maintaining a positive image, etc.



STAYING SAFE IN GUATEMALA

YOUR SAFETY IS COMMON HOPE'S PRIORITY Like every place in the world, Guatemala deals with crime and violence on a daily basis. Guatemala is the largest and most populous country in Central America, and it has seen crime increase in recent years. These trends complicate our work, yet make it more necessary. To be clear, Common Hope does not believe that it is unsafe to visit Guatemala. However, we acknowledge that street crime and gang activity are a reality. We do everything possible to avoid known dangers and reduce exposure to risk.

Common Hope has 30 years of experience keeping visitors and staff as safe as possible. We cannot guarantee your safety, but we will do everything in our power to minimize your exposure. The Vision Team's safety comes before the Vision Team's experience, so we ask you to be understanding if an activity must be canceled due to security reasons. We expect visitors to follow our safety advice and understand that our policies are in your best interest.

[You will receive an extensive safety orientation upon arrival in Guatemala, but here are some general safety guidelines and recommendations to familiarize yourself with before your trip.](#)

HOW COMMON HOPE HELPS ENSURE YOUR SAFETY

- Our Antigua site where Vision Teams stay has walls, barbed wire fencing, locked gates, security cameras, radios, and cell phones. Access to the grounds is monitored by security guards at all times.
- Regular rounds are made at each project site throughout the day and night.
- Our staff is in regular contact with international and national officials in Guatemala including the UN, US Embassy, and local officials regarding security.
- Staff and long-term volunteers stay up-to-date on local situations and potential unrest, and they make informed decisions based on that information.
- Guards and members of the staff are trained in how to deal with emergency situations, and more importantly, in how to avoid potential problems.

HOW YOU CAN ENSURE YOUR OWN SAFETY

- Always remember you are in a foreign country. Do not be careless in public places.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Be particularly conscious of your personal belongings such as money, cameras, backpacks, iPhones, etc.
- Carry only what you need! Do not carry items with you that you are not willing to lose should something happen.
- Do not go out alone or leave the project site without letting a staff member know where you are going even if you've traveled to Guatemala before.
- If you find yourself in a dangerous situation, stay as calm as possible and do not resist.
- Only utilize taxis with which Common Hope has an established relationship. Staff in Guatemala will give you a list of these.
- **Respect Common Hope's recommendations and do not leave the project site in the evening. Do not walk alone outside of the project site. Do not wander off by yourself during visits to surrounding communities.**



STAYING HEALTHY IN GUATEMALA

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY HEALTHY Part of being a good Vision Team member is deliberately doing what it takes to stay healthy during your trip. That being said, some team members get colds or mild stomach flu when they travel. Here are a few tips we recommend to Vision Teams that will help you stay healthy.

- Wash your hands frequently and dry them completely.
- Shield yourself from the sun. Wear hats and sunscreen.
- Stay hydrated! Drink lots of water. Water at the project site is purified and safe to drink.
- Only use ice that you know has been made from purified water.
- Keep your feet protected by wearing shoes. Closed-toe shoes are best for construction.
- Eat only cooked vegetables and always peel fresh fruit before eating.
- Do not eat fruits that have been peeled for you, like mango sold on the street.
- Do not eat street food! It may look tempting, but there is no way to ensure that it has been properly cooked.
- Avoid eating all fish and raw shellfish.
- **Know your limits and do not push yourself beyond them!** If you are uncomfortable with any activities you are asked to do, especially in construction, please don't hesitate to notify your Team Coordinator. Common Hope understands that some of these activities can be strenuous for some and we are happy to find activities that are within your limits.

IN THE CASE OF INJURY OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY Team members will have access to Common Hope's on-site clinic and our medical staff will assist you in the event of a medical problem or injury. You will also have access to a first-aid kit.

Vision Team members are also covered under Common Hope's temporary insurance. More information can be found on page 21.



TURN THE PAGE FOR **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION!**



VISION TEAM **POLICIES**

REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMON HOPE As a Vision Team member, you are a representative of Common Hope. For 30 years, the organization has worked to earn a strong and positive reputation in Guatemala, which must be maintained in order to continue the important work we do. The negative or unsafe behavior of a Vision Team member could jeopardize that reputation, so we ask you to be caring, respectful, polite, and open-minded while you are in Guatemala.

APPROPRIATE DRESS Please note that Guatemala dress is more conservative than many places in the United States so please take this into account when packing. While at Common Hope or taking part in Common Hope's planned activities, the following are not allowed:

- Shorts and tank tops
- Clothing referencing alcohol or drugs

ALCOHOL AND SMOKING Alcoholism is a problem in Guatemala and affects the wellbeing and stability of over half of our affiliated families. Therefore, we ask volunteers to be respectful and refrain from discussing drinking, joking about alcohol, wearing t-shirts with alcohol brands, abusing alcohol while on your trip, and drinking on site. Common Hope will not tolerate drunkenness among its volunteers and reserves the right to send volunteers home at their own expense if they abuse alcohol.

- Common Hope is a dry campus, under no circumstances can you drink alcohol on site.
- Common Hope will not tolerate drunkenness among its volunteers and reserves the right to send volunteers home at their own expense if they abuse alcohol.
- The misuse of alcohol by a volunteer physically endangers both the volunteer and the reputation of the organization.
- Volunteers must not discuss drinking or joke about alcohol
- Volunteers must not wear shirts with alcohol brands
- Smoking is not permitted in the villages
- If you smoke, you may use the designated smoking area on-site at Common Hope

SPONSORSHIP VISITS AND GIFTS The opportunity for a sponsor to visit their student is a wonderful time to build this relationship, therefore, we want the focus of the visit to be on the interaction between the sponsor and the student and not be overshadowed by gifts.

The best gift you can give to your sponsored student and family is your physical presence and interaction with them. No other gift is necessary. If you feel the need to bring something else, we highly recommend:

- Purchasing a food basket for your sponsor student and his/her family
- Bringing one small gift that can be shared and/or is educational. Good examples include:
 - Book in Spanish
 - Game
 - Soccer ball
 - Coloring book with some crayons

HANDING OUT TOYS AND CANDY Please do not hand out items such as candy, balloons, toys or money to Guatemalan children. It sets a difficult precedent and complicates our work. We would, however, be happy to accept items for our program staff to distribute in appropriate ways.



EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY In the event of an emergency, friends or family can reach you by calling the Common Hope office in St. Paul, Minnesota during normal business hours or leave a message if the office is closed.

They can also attempt to contact you at the project site in Antigua (Familias de Esperanza) in the case of emergency.

Team members will be able to call home from Guatemala and they will have access to the internet during their trip. Please do not have postal mail sent to team members as they will not reach them due to the slow and unreliable Guatemalan mail system.

COMMON HOPE U.S. OFFICE

1400 Energy Park Drive
Suite 23
St. Paul, MN 55108

Phone: 651-917-0917
Fax: 651-917-7458
Email: info@commonhope.org

FAMILIAS DE ESPERANZA, ANTIGUA

Km 2, Carretera a San Juan del Obispo
Antigua, 03901 Sacatepéquez
Guatemala, Centro América

*Phone: 011-502-7-922-6600
(Phone will be answered in Spanish)

OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Before Travel or while still in the U.S. please contact the U.S. Vision Team Manager.

Monday-Friday, Kallie Office Number: 651-287-0716
Travel-related emergencies only, Kallie Cell: 612-210-6776

Monday-Friday, Guatemala Hospitality Office U.S. Extensions: 651-287-0742
Monday-Friday, Erin Treinen Office: 651-287-0740

Guatemala contact information

Hospitality Department Cell: 502-5482-7419
Erin Treinen, Hospitality Manager: 502-4264-9205
Voyageur Tours (Shuttle Service) Office phone: 502-7832-4237 /
Voyageur Tours Cell Phone: 502-3009-4864

To dial Guatemala from the U.S. first dial 011-502
To dial the U.S. from Guatemala first press 001 followed by the area code (001-area code)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL VISION TEAM QUESTIONS

WHAT MAKES THE VISION TEAM EXPERIENCE SPECIAL? Unlike other international volunteer experiences, you will have hands-on experiences working in a variety of program areas. The Common Hope Vision Team Experience is a great blend of hands-on hard work and educational and cultural experiences. Vision Teams build a home for a family in need, accompany social workers on their routes, meet and learn from Common Hope affiliated families in "A Day in the Life" activities, and lend a hand in priority tasks.

WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL I DO ON MY TRIP? Vision Teams engage in a variety of activities. Please see pages 10-11 for more details.

DO I HAVE TO SPEAK SPANISH TO GO ON A TEAM? No, Spanish is not required to travel on a Vision Team. Teams will be accompanied by bilingual staff members during their volunteer week so that language barriers do not impede volunteers' work or experience.

CAN I SPONSOR A STUDENT ON MY TRIP? Absolutely! During your time in Guatemala, chances are that you will meet a boy or girl who is in need of a sponsor. Sponsoring a student is a great way to build a personal relationship, make an impact in the life of a family, and stay connected to Common Hope's mission when you return home. For more information about sponsoring a student, call 651-917-1045.

HOW DO I FORM A VISION TEAM? Teams can be formed in a variety of ways; a group of coworkers, family members, friends, or people from your church, school, or civic organization. There are also some opportunities to join an existing team as an individual. See page 9 for more information.

DO I HAVE TO BOOK MY OWN AIRFARE? Vision Team members have two choices; book your own airfare or allow the U.S. Vision Team Manager to book airfare for you.


FEES, FUNDRAISING, AND COST QUESTIONS

WHAT DO VISION TEAM FEES COVER?

- Pre-trip planning and support from Common Hope staff
- Airport pickup and drop off
- Ground transportation to and from activities
- 8 days and 7 nights at Common Hope's project site
- Emergency travel insurance
- All volunteer and cultural activities
- 3 meals a day plus snacks
- Access to laundry
- A dinner out in Antigua
- A cultural activity of your team's choice
- Sponsorship visits (if applicable)
- Administrative costs

WHAT ISN'T COVERED?

- Airfare
- Souvenirs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Additional food or activities added while in country
- Additional transportation outside of trip dates



IS THERE A SPECIAL RATE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES? Yes, children 13 years and younger receive a special discounted fee. Families also fundraise per family rather than per person. See page 16 for more information.

ARE MY VISION TEAM FEES TAX DEDUCTIBLE? Your Vision Team fee covers the cost of providing a service, therefore it is not a tax deductible contribution. Please consult your tax preparer to determine if you're eligible to deduct unreimbursed travel expenses paid while serving as a volunteer.

WHERE DO MY FUNDRAISING DOLLARS GO? You can be assured that 100% of the funds you raise directly support Common Hope children and families and all donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. All those who donate to your fundraising efforts will receive a tax-deductible letter from Common Hope.

WHY IS THERE A FUNDRAISING REQUIREMENT? For the last 30 years, Common Hope has grown and developed by word of mouth. We believe that each individual can make a big impact simply by reaching out to their network for support. Fundraising is a way for team members to support Common Hope's mission and connect others to their experience.

HOW DO I START FUNDRAISING? Once your deposit is received, Common Hope will set up an online fundraising page for each Vision Team member and team. Team members can easily share their fundraising page with their network via email or social media. For more information, check out Common Hope's Fundraising Guide for useful tips!

CAN MY CHURCH, ORGANIZATION OR BUSINESS SPONSOR MY TRIP? Yes, your Vision Team experience can be sponsored by your church, business, or civic organization. Fees and fundraising requirements remain the same per individual.

CANCELLATIONS, REFUNDS, AND DUE DATES

WHAT IS THE CANCELLATION POLICY? Please see page 18 for Common Hope's cancellation and fee schedule policies.

WHAT IS THE REFUND POLICY? Please see page 18 for Common Hope's refund policy.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM LATE MAKING A PAYMENT? If you are late making a fee payment, the credit card on file will be charged. See page 14 for more information.

WHEN IS MY FUNDRAISING MINIMUM DUE? Please see page 19 for the fundraising schedule.



REQUEST YOUR **APPLICATIONS**

COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATIONS Thank you for your interest in Common Hope Vision Teams! Please [email the U.S. Vision Team Manager](mailto:kallies@us.commonhope.org) at kallies@us.commonhope.org or call 651-287-0716 to request a copy of the Team Application and Team Member Application. To apply, simply complete the application(s) and return it to the U.S. Vision Team Manager.

WHAT WILL I NEED TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATIONS?

Team Leaders will need to complete the Team Application, which contains:

- your contact information
- basic information about the tentative size of your team
- proposed travel dates
- which team option you are interested in

Team members will each need to complete the Team Member Application, which contains:

- basic contact information
- passport information
- dietary and health information
- emergency contact information
- credit card information

US » Common Hope

1400 Energy Park Drive
Suite 23
St. Paul, MN 55108

phone 651.917.0917

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GUATE » Familias de Esperanza

Km. 2 Carretera a San Juan del Obispo
Antigua, 03901 Sacatepéquez
Guatemala, Centro América

www.commonhope.org

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Common Hope's mission is to promote hope and opportunity in Guatemala, partnering with children, families, and communities who want to participate in a process of development to improve their lives through education, health care, and housing.

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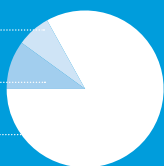
USE OF FUNDS »

Fundraising - 7%

Management - 11%

Programs - 82%

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3-year
average



Common Hope is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1986 and is audited annually. Contributions are 100% tax deductible as allowed by law.

Common Hope would like to thank Martin LaVenture, Léna Seltzer, and Chelsea Petree for some of the photos you see featured in this book.

