

# FARM OF THE CHILD

**Volunteer Handbook  
2008**

And whosoever welcomes in my name one such child as this, welcomes me . . .  
. . . Y el que recibe en mi nombre a un niño como éste, a mí me recibe.

Matthew 18:5

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Volunteers aren't paid... not because their work is worthless,  
but because it is priceless! --- Anonymous

# Volunteer Commitment

All volunteers are asked to commit to the following mission statement, philosophy, and principles.

## Mission Statement of Farm of the Child

In gratitude for the grand love that Jesus Christ gives us,  
we decide to unite ourselves and form a community  
to care for needy children and to promote the development  
of a productive society of devout Christians.

All volunteers are asked to sign the volunteer commitment form to verify that they understand the aforementioned statement and commit to:

honor the mission statement of Farm of the Child.

lead a moral life that honors the dignity and equality of each individual, using the Catholic Church as their guide.

participate in activities agreed upon by community such as mass, prayer, retreats, and spiritual events that will nurture more personal and communal spiritual life.

offer their gifts and energy to form community and to adapt to the changing needs of the community and project.

strive to be patient, caring, and flexible in response to the challenges of community life and cross-cultural living.

be accountable to themselves and their house community for responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and constant communication.

spend time and form friendships with the children on the farm that witness the love of Christ.

Accepting God's call to be a volunteer at the Farm of the Child is a serious commitment. You have been chosen for a reason and have a special place to fill. There will surely be challenging times, as there will be joyful times. Please take this commitment seriously and refer back to it during difficult moments remembering that you have made a decision. The children, the house parents, the Honduran staff, the religious sisters, and your fellow volunteers, are relying on your full participation and dedication.

THE FOUR PILLARS  
OF  
VOLUNTEER LIFE:

Community

Spirituality

Service

Simple Living

# Community

*A community is not simply a group of people who live together and love each other. It is a place of resurrection, a current of life, one heart, one soul, one spirit.*

Community and Growth, Jean Vanier

Volunteers at Farm of the Child come together in community because they feel called to live together, pray together, share in each other's lives and work together to respond to the needs of the poor, most especially the children of Honduras. All volunteers live together in a Catholic faith-based community. The success of the community depends on each individual's commitment to accept, challenge, respect, and care for one another. Communal life requires that its members share in house responsibilities and participate in the established house activities, business meetings, community prayer times, and the larger Farm community activities. Living and working so closely with others can be difficult at times, but through effort, dedication, good communication, perseverance, and love, community life can be a nurturing environment and an enriching experience for its members.

The individuals that are part of the community make it what it is; together they work to set the guidelines and expectations. Community members are all asked to commit to the same basic ideals and to follow the basic guidelines. However, each member has different ways of participating in community life and each brings meaningful gifts to the community as a whole.

Each volunteer works to clean the house and prepare meals. Volunteers commit to sharing meals together in the volunteer house, praying together daily and participating in a weekly community night that includes dinner, personal sharing, and an hour of reflection and discussion. Additional community activities may be decided upon by the group.

Farm volunteers are holy, amazing people. Although, community life can be one of the most rewarding aspects of the Farm experience, it can be challenging, as well. In preparation for this challenge, volunteers are encouraged to begin praying for the community, now, during this time of preparation. Naturally, community members sometimes disagree with each other. Willingness to accept the majority decision of the community is sometimes difficult but important. While some standards of community life are decided upon and changed from one community to the next, others remain the same for all communities. The commitments to attend daily prayer (page 6) and to abide by certain standards of dress (page 12), for example, are on-going commitments that may be particularly challenging. Also, dating among volunteers is prohibited. Because volunteers are "holy, amazing people" who share similar values, this could be the most difficult rule to follow. It is never too early to begin praying for community! Each community member will face different struggles and receive different graces. These are just examples mentioned in hopes that volunteers will begin to prepare spiritually for the challenges of community life even before physically joining the Farm community.

# Spirituality

*Blessed are the humble of heart; they will receive the land that God has promised.*

Matthew 5:5

Spirituality is the basis and heart of our community life. Volunteers come to the Farm to personally develop their relationships with God and to share their unique spirituality with one another. All volunteers are asked to participate in the established community. The foundation of our community is based on our shared prayer life and spirituality. When facing hardships in relationships with others and in our work, our community prayer life serves as a source of strength to resolve difficulties. In order to share our gifts and serve others in the volunteer community and the larger community around us, we must nourish ourselves individually and as a community with prayer.

Volunteers are asked to make commitments to community prayer. Each weekday morning, all volunteers gather at 5:55am outside of the church for a time of volunteer prayer before joining the house parents, house helpers, religious sisters, and children inside the church at 6:00am for prayer. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings, the Liturgy of the Hours is prayed. Individuals take turns offering personal reflections and additional spiritual readings of choice as part of the morning prayer. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, there is a Communion service led by one of the Eucharistic ministers of the Farm community. On Sundays, the entire Farm community attends mass in Trujillo. Volunteers also commit to attend evening prayer on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights at 7:00pm. Evening prayer takes on a variety of formats. On Tuesday nights, the Farm community prays a rosary in the chapel. On Wednesdays, the Farm gathers for a night of community catechesis and formation, and on Thursday nights, there is a Holy Hour in the chapel.

On Monday nights, while the children participate in a family spiritual night in their homes, the volunteers participate in community night. Community night is an opportunity for volunteers to pray together, reflect, and discuss. Volunteers take turns leading community night and can choose the topic of discussion. The success of the volunteer community relies on the commitment by all volunteers to participate fully in these spiritual activities.

The volunteer community is welcome to complement the established prayer commitments with other personal and community spiritual activities. In the past, volunteers have organized evenings of Praise and Worship and a Bible study group. Currently, volunteers pray together in front of the Blessed Sacrament for 15 minutes after Thursday night's Holy Hour, and volunteers are then welcome to stay and continue Eucharistic Adoration for several hours afterwards. Once a week, women from the local villages and the Farm gather to discuss the challenges of the Gospel in their lives. Volunteers may choose to join in these already established activities or to create new opportunities for worship as desired.

Additionally, members of the Farm's U.S. support team and volunteers at the Farm are currently paired up as prayer partners. Prayer is such a powerful way to connect all of the members of this awesome mission!

# Service

*Out of His solitude, Jesus reached out His caring hand to the people in need. In the lonely place His care grew strong and mature. And from there He entered into a healing closeness with His fellow human beings.*

Out of Solitude, Henri Nouwen

Jesus came to this world to serve others in order that we might receive fullness of life. His service grew out of his immense compassion for His people, for us. He fed the hungry, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the dead live. Jesus serves by offering His compassion and divine gifts. And He has called us to do the same, "I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least important of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me!" (Matthew 25:40) We are called to share our own compassion and our own gifts with those in need, to share our lives, our experiences, our faith, our happiness, and our sadness with our brothers and sisters.

The Farm offers an invaluable opportunity to serve others. In addition to one's primary job responsibilities, circumstances arise daily that challenge volunteers to act out of compassion, to share their gifts, lives, and time with those in need. Neighbors arrive early in the morning with an emergency ailment; a poor man asks for food; an abandoned child needs a home; a young orphan acts out in his desire for attention. These cases exemplify daily situations where volunteers must view the face of Christ in another and ask how Jesus would respond to these needs. How must we respond to this situation? The many questions and situations call volunteers to step out of their comfort zones and to stretch themselves. Sometimes tangible solutions can be offered. Often, however, no solution to the problem exists except for the presence of a loving, compassionate and listening ear and the strength of prayer.

One of the local Hondurans, who has worked closely with the farm, once said to tell prospective volunteers that they have to be ready to love. It is crucial that volunteers are prepared to love all those with whom they come into contact. Without that mentality, the experience will be very frustrating. There is no doubt that it will be challenging to love some of the people, but this job demands love 100% of the time. Often times, true love is tough love. What people are lacking physically or emotionally cannot always be fixed with a handout although that would be the easy solution. What they need is to experience God's love through you.

Though volunteers offer much to the children and the people in the surrounding area, we inevitably receive more than we actually give. By opening ourselves up to others, allowing ourselves to love, to care, and to share our gifts, we serve others. In turn, we are served by others, receiving their generosity, time, wisdom, and love.

# Simple Living

*All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed.*

Acts 2:44-45

Those who come to work at the Farm of the Child have the common interests of living in Christian community and sharing their lives and the Gospel with the poor and the marginalized. We hope that these personal commitments will contribute to the transformation of the social structures that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. The act of simplifying one's lifestyle contributes, in a very important manner, toward the goal of fighting poverty and injustice.

Since most volunteers come from backgrounds of higher education which create many opportunities to build a stable future, most volunteers will never know what it means to live a life of involuntary poverty and injustice. We are not called to live this same life. However, we are called to enter into a life of accompaniment with our brothers and sisters that strives toward just changes.

As foreigners, volunteers are viewed differently. How we live and act greatly impacts how the entire volunteer and farm community is perceived. Living simply allows us to break stereotypes and helps us to communicate more openly and honestly with the local Hondurans.

Simple living is a commitment to both an ideal and an action. When we surround ourselves and fulfill our wants and needs with material goods, we have little room for God's presence and grace to work in our lives. By decreasing our dependence on these goods, we recognize our greater need for God's guidance in our lives and open ourselves up to spiritual fulfillment.

Volunteers at the Farm of the Child make a commitment to simple living. Some choices are personal (i.e.: use of spending money, use of free time, etc.) while others are communal decisions to live more simply (i.e.: types of food we eat, limits on watching movies, etc.) As part of their commitment to simple living, the current community has decided to limit movie watching to once every two weeks, to eat a simple lunch of beans and rice on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and to share with each other the goodies and sweets sent by loved ones. All are asked to commit to the ideal of simple living and to be willing to incorporate this into their experience in Honduras. Volunteers encounter opportunities to recommit to this ideal on a daily basis.

# The “What Have I Gotten Myself Into?” Timeline

As you start to prepare for your term of service with the Farm of the Child, you might find yourself asking this question. The answer: an amazing adventure of love! It is our hope that, in conjunction with this handbook, the following timeline will help to provide you with some sense of peace/organization/understanding about the journey on which you are embarking. Additionally, we are here to help! Throughout the application process, you have likely been in touch with former volunteers Andrea McMerty-Brummer, Chris Bystedt, and/or Tricia Zackrisson. As you prepare to begin your adventure in Honduras, former volunteer and New Volunteer Liaison, Katherine King, is also available to answer questions and provide support. She can be reached by e-mail: [knking77@yahoo.com](mailto:knking77@yahoo.com) or by cell: 857-998-7029.

## March

- Accept invitation to serve at the Farm. (Look at that- you can already check something off!)
- Sign and return volunteer commitment form.
- Read the Volunteer Handbook (**especially the section about finances- p. 20!**) This handbook contains information that former and current volunteers have found useful. It also may contain the answers to many of your questions.
- Take a deep breath and get ready for the adventure of a lifetime!

## April

- Participate in fundraising conference call
- Begin letter writing campaign, calls and visits to potential donors
- Make sure vaccinations are up to date
- Make sure passport is up to date
- Fundraise!

## May

- Begin reading to prepare for Honduras.
- Pick departure dates for August- if you choose, coordinate your plans with the others in your group.
- Invite parents to participate in the informational and reassuring Parents Conference Call
- Purchase plane tickets (reimbursable, provided you raise sufficient funds)
- Practice your Spanish.
- Fundraise ☺

## June

- Arrange for language school reservations.
- Talk to your prayer partner. (Someone will contact you.)
- Fundraise (is there a theme here?)

## July

- Keep Fundraising! (It's worth it, I promise!)

## August

- Travel to language school
- Study, study, study!

## September

- Study and practice your Spanish.

## October

- Travel to Finca and begin orientation.

# Farm of the Child

## General Information

### FARM OVERVIEW

The Farm of the Child functions as a result of a cooperation of efforts from the Franciscan Sisters, the volunteers, the house parents, and the U.S. Board of Directors. Franciscan Sisters serve as the Farm's Director and Assistant Director. The Sub-Director is chosen from among the volunteers and works closely with the Director to supervise the entire project. The Sisters, the volunteers, and the house parents collaborate in the day to day functioning of the Farm and work at the heart of the mission- "to care for needy children and to promote the development of a productive society of devout Christians." The U.S. Board of Directors, made up of former volunteers and long-time Farm supporters, serves as an advising group to the Farm and assists the Farm in such aspects as fundraising and volunteer recruitment. The U.S. Board also has one grant-funded position; former volunteer, Andrea McMerty-Brummer '02-'05, is the Program Administrator. Andrea communicates with the Farm's Director and Sub-Director on a regular basis as she works to support the mission.

### LAYOUT OF THE FARM

As of February 2008, the Farm has six orphan houses filled with children, a convent-which also houses the administrative offices, a house for a volunteer couple, and the volunteer house. There is a medical clinic, a food/supply storage building, a few construction storage rooms, a carpentry shop, and an auto repair garage. The school is composed of six separate classroom buildings and a school administration and library building. The Farm has its own chapel, and a middle school for 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades (colegio) has recently been completed. Additionally, the Farm rents two houses in La Ceiba, Honduras (a larger city about 3 hours west) where the adolescents- separated by gender- live with a volunteer and a Honduran staff member.

### THE "DAY TO DAY" AT THE FARM

While no day at the Farm is "typical," life at the Farm tends to follow this general schedule:

- 5:30am- Wake up
- 5:45am- Volunteers' Gathering Prayer (at the volunteer house)
- 6am- Morning Prayer for entire Farm community (in Chapel)
- 6:30am- Breakfast; Morning Chores and Routine
- 7:30am- School/ Work Day begins
- 12:30pm- School Day ends; Lunch
- 1:30-2:30pm- Study Hour
- 2:30pm- Afternoon Activities/Vocational Programs/ Work
- 6pm- Dinner
- 7pm- Rosary/Prayer/Adoration
- 9pm- Bedtime

## **VOLUNTEERS' ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Farm has running water (cold, mountain) and electricity. All single volunteers live together in a beautiful, cement house with its back porch overlooking the Trujillo Bay. Two to three individuals share a room, each having a bed, a few shelves and little extra storage space. Married volunteers have separate but similar housing across the Farm. Volunteers hand wash their clothes or may choose to pay a local woman to wash their clothes.

Volunteers receive a weekly supply of food similar to that which the orphans receive. The diet includes rice, beans, pasta, vegetables, flour, sugar and coffee. Portions of chicken, fish, beef, eggs, milk, and margarine are also distributed.

A couple of thoughts... make sure you like to eat beans (and lots of them). There is a water purifier in the house for those with weaker stomachs. Hopefully, abnormal bowel movements will be limited, although we cannot guarantee intestinal normalcy.

## **WHERE IS THE FARM IN RELATION TO TRUJILLO?**

The Farm of the Child is located on the beach, about 7 km west of Trujillo. It takes about thirty minutes to get to town from the Farm by car. Volunteers may take a bus that passes the Farm a few times throughout the day or combine trips using a Farm vehicle with other volunteers to take care of business in town. Generally, all volunteers go to town at least once per week.

## **THE FARM SURROUNDINGS**

The Farm is surrounded by a few wealthy property owners along the coast and many campesinos (peasant farmers) in a few nearby villages. In the last couple of years, people have also begun to inhabit the land that borders the western edge of the Farm. As this settlement continues to grow and change, so do the dynamics of the Farm "neighborhood."

## **SAFETY ON AND AROUND THE FARM**

On the Farm, we have had few problems with safety. We are a pretty large community; approximately 90 people live on the Farm (orphans, volunteers, house parents, and administrators.) The Farm, like most properties, has a guard on duty 24 hours a day- more as a deterrent for possible prowlers than out of necessity. Activity on the Farm begins early in the morning and continues throughout the day until 8 or 9 p.m. at night. All are safe to walk around during these times without worry. From sundown to sunrise, the night guard walks around patrolling the property, and most areas of the Farm are well lit at night- women may still feel more comfortable walking in pairs if their destination takes them to an unlit section of the Farm.

The Farm is located in a rural area, but as mentioned above, there are new settlements in the immediate surroundings. It is advised that all use caution when off the Farm. No one should walk alone off the property after dark, and women leaving the Farm should walk in pairs even during the day. It is suggested that volunteers travel in pairs for general safety reasons. One doesn't need to be fearful, just smart!

## OVERVIEW OF FARM RULES

Each member of the Finca community is responsible for respecting all members of the community, refraining from vulgar language, insults, inappropriate drawings, inappropriate or sexual gestures, theft, deceit, and manipulation. Additionally, all members of the Finca community are asked to maintain confidentiality with respect to the lives of all children and adults, as well as any internal situation. In order to establish a family where adults serve as models for children, we ask **all** members of our community to live by the following guidelines:

1. **Dress Code:** Clothing should be modest, setting a good example for our children and with awareness of the local culture.

**Women:** (including mothers, house helpers, and volunteers)

***Clothing:*** When standing with arms extended down at one's sides, one's fingertips should still touch the cloth of her skirt or shorts. Underwear and bra must be covered. Clothing cannot be too tight (air has to be able to pass between clothing and skin). Shorts must be worn over bathing suit (one piece suit or two pieces that does not show stomach).

***Shoes:*** Shoes or sandals must be worn while walking outside (except when playing soccer or on the beach)

***Jewelry:*** Only one earring per ear, worn on lower lobes. No piercing in other parts of the body. No toe rings. No tattoos (volunteers who have tattoos are asked to keep them covered by clothing if possible).

***Makeup:*** Girls must be 15+ to wear makeup and pluck eyebrows. No makeup in excess. Nail polish must be soft colors.

**Men:**

***Clothing:*** Shirts must be worn at all times, except when playing soccer, on the beach, or in your own house. Shirts must be right-side out and front-forward. Excessively baggy pants are not permitted, nor "sagging" of pants or shorts, or any other clothing styles associated with gangs.

***Shoes:*** Shoes or sandals must be worn while walking outside (except playing soccer or on the beach).

***Jewelry:*** No earrings or other body piercing allowed. No tattoos (volunteers who have tattoos are asked to keep them covered by clothing if possible)

***Hair:*** Any hair cut associated with gangs is not permitted (mushroom, braids, ponytail, long hair, dyed hair, etc).

In the Church

***Clothing:*** Long pants or skirts are required at any church service in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed (Mass, Holy Hour). Shirts may not be too tight, be transparent/translucent, or show the midriff. Shirts must be tucked in entirely or untucked entirely.

2. **Bikes** – Kids cannot ride bikes after dark.
3. **Money** –If the kids are given money as a gift, it has to be reported to the house parents and turned in to their individual account. The kids may have access to a maximum of 20 Lempiras per month. Adolescents in the Ceiba Project have greater access to money,

which they earn at summer jobs. You will learn the specifics of money rules once you arrive at the Finca.

4. **Workshops/Store Rooms** – Kids may not enter workshops or store rooms without adult supervision.

**Leaving the Finca** – Children under 15 cannot leave the Finca without adult supervision. Volunteers have to ask house parent permission to take kids anywhere. If they are leaving the immediate vicinity of the Finca (to Trujillo or another city), permission must be granted from the Director. Overnight trips require advance notice. Female volunteers and staff need an adult male to accompany certain trips with children into mountain villages and sometimes other locations.

5. **Dating** – Dating is not permitted between any members of the Finca community. No dating between kids, kids and staff, between staff (including volunteers). Adolescents are permitted to date under certain guidelines:

- a. They are 18+ years old
- b. They are not dating someone associated with the Finca
- c. They are completing all of their responsibilities.
- d. Those in charge of the adolescent home are aware of the relationship, have met the significant other and approve of the relationship.
- e. They behave appropriately within the relationship (i.e. No making out in the street).
- f. They are not engaging in sexual activity.

6. **Responsibility of Volunteers/Sisters** – Volunteers and Sisters need to personally ask house parents for permission to send kids on errands or invite them to participate in any activity that is not part of the weekly activity schedule (i.e. Read a book in the volunteer house, cook dinner, go swimming, etc). The volunteer or Sister is responsible for the child while s/he is in his/her care.

7. **Responsibility of House Parents/Helpers:**

**Vigilance:** The house parents/helpers must know where their kids are at all times. House parents are responsible for children from other houses while they are visiting their house. An adult must be present in at all times or, if appropriate, a child over the age of 15 may be left in charge, when parents/helpers are somewhere on the Finca premises.

**Other Parents:** Parents/helpers from other houses may not send children from other houses on errands or invite them to participate in activities outside of the weekly activity Schedule without permission from the child's house parents/helper.

**Discipline** – Keeping in mind that our children have suffered many traumas, it is strictly prohibited to hit the kids with a belt, hand, stick or any other object. Nor is it permitted to pull a child by the ear or the hair, to pinch, knock on the head, force to kneel, place soap in the mouth, etc.

8. **Prayer:** Times of community prayer in the morning and evening are required for all volunteers, children, parents, house helpers and Sisters.

9. **Fruit:** Fruit may not be picked from the orchards or nursery and community gardens without permission from the head of agriculture. Fruit trees in the yards of each house belong to the house and permission must be granted from the house parents/helper for children from other houses to pick their fruit.
10. **Climbing Trees, etc:** Children must have permission to climb trees and be supervised by an adult. Children may not play in uncleared, forested areas, nor construct enclosed structures such as forts or houses.
11. **Curfew:** Children must be in their respective houses by 9:00PM. They must have permission from their house parents to participate in activities, such as study with a volunteer, alter curfew.
12. **Cars:** The person who drives is responsible to make sure the car is cleaned of garbage after use.
13. **Alcohol and Drugs:** Drugs are not permitted under any circumstance. Alcohol is only permitted on special occasions but only when children are not present and never in excess.
14. **Swimming:** Children are not allowed on the beach or in the rivers without adult supervision.
15. **Activities:** Children must attend all programmed activities for which they are enrolled. If they are not going to attend or are going to be late, the leader of the activity must be informed.
16. **Animals:** Each house may have domestic animals such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, etc. Each house may only have 1 dog and 1 cat. Mistreatment of plants and animals is prohibited.
17. **Music:** Music must be played at a moderate volume and not before 6AM or after 9PM.

# Service Opportunities

Volunteers make a 27-month commitment to the Farm of the Child. Volunteers arrive at the Farm on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008, after completing two months of Spanish language training. This term of service will end in December 2010.

Upon arrival at the Farm, the volunteer team will evaluate current Farm needs and divide responsibilities according to the different gifts of each volunteer. Depending on the number of volunteers, current Farm needs, and job preferences, some jobs will be modified and volunteers will share roles or assume more than one responsibility. *Job assignments are made after arrival to the Farm. It is essential for the functioning of the Farm that volunteers are open to and flexible with job placements.*

Every volunteer will have his/her own responsibilities. Volunteers are asked to be flexible and to respond to the varying needs and emergencies that arise in this community situation. All are asked to assist in the team effort. At times, volunteers are needed to assist in cases of medical emergencies, to unload provisions, to handle behavior problems, to substitute for an absent teacher, and to baby-sit kids when a house parent needs to leave on short notice for a few days. This is life as a volunteer in an orphanage!

As a result of job modifications, some of the following service opportunities are not currently active. These opportunities are listed because they continue to be future possibilities. Inactive positions are denoted with \*\*.

The following are service opportunities at the Farm:

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The SUB-DIRECTOR works closely with the Director of the Farm of the Child to supervise the entire project. This volunteer handles communications and special projects and assists the U.S. Board of Directors with volunteer recruitment and fundraising.

The ACCOUNTANT is responsible for the accounting, budgeting, and payroll to local employees. This volunteer is responsible for communicating the financial situation with the Farm director and the U.S. Farm Accountant. Although accounting training would be helpful, the accounting process is rather straightforward and relatively easy to learn. One only needs to be organized and have lots of patience!

## **SCHOOL**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS with a college degree in any discipline are needed to work in our small, Catholic grade school and middle school. The school has historically had an even mix of Honduran teachers and volunteer teachers to cover all grades ranging from pre-kinder to ninth grade. One of the teachers will be asked to serve as SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR. Another teacher will be asked to serve as SPECIAL NEEDS/RESOURCE ROOM TEACHER ministering to those children with special needs.

## **SOCIAL WORK**

Volunteers with a college degree in any discipline, lots of patience and an extraordinary amount of compassion can work as SOCIAL WORKERS. We need three social workers/counselors to investigate cases of orphaned and abandoned children, to handle the paperwork for their adoption to the Farm, and to maintain their files. Social Workers also assist in the day-to-day running of the orphanage by supporting the house parents and children, regulating discipline, and supervising "family life" in the orphan homes. COUNSELORS trained in the areas of mental health and psychology would be especially helpful for the children, providing them with much needed therapy.

## **HEALTH CARE**

DOCTORS, NURSES, PHYSICIANS ASSISTANTS, AND/OR MIDWIVES staff our health clinic, offering consultation days for members of the Farm community, local villages, and mountain communities. There is also a great need for health education in the area; medical personnel are encouraged to develop outreach programs.

## **MAINTENANCE/ CONSTRUCTION**

The MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR oversees maintenance on the Farm and construction projects when they arise. Additional MAINTENANCE and CONSTRUCTION WORKERS interested in building, carpentry, electrical work, plumbing or maintenance of cars/equipment are needed.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR works with local families and leaders to build understanding and trust, to establish common goals, to create necessary projects/programs, and to bring the Finca's abundant resources to the surrounding communities.

## **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

The volunteer SPIRITUAL LIFE COORDINATOR works together with the Franciscan Sister in charge of religious life to organize and plan all spiritual activities on the Farm. The volunteer SPIRITUAL LIFE COORDINATOR also helps to develop and implement new ideas for volunteer spiritual growth and plans volunteer retreats.

## **ADOLESCENT PROGRAM**

Currently the ADOLESCENT PROGRAM is in its fourth year of operation. During its first three years, the Adolescent Program was based in Trujillo, but in January 2007, the program moved to La Ceiba- a city approximately three hours west of Trujillo. The program was initially begun so that the adolescents could attend 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades (colegio) in Trujillo. However, because Trujillo's school system is so inefficient, the school at the Farm was expanded to include colegio. At present, Farm adolescents join the Adolescent Program when they are deemed mature enough to do so and/or they have graduated from 9<sup>th</sup> grade on the Farm. This year, nine youth are living in the two, single-sex adolescent homes rented in La Ceiba. They live in Christian community, and they work and attend school in La Ceiba.

By living in La Ceiba, our youth have access to vocational opportunities, jobs, mentorships, church activities and youth groups, organized cultural and athletic events, and much more. This exposure is crucial to the social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development of our youth as they prepare for adulthood. Great effort is being made to maintain close ties between the Farm and the Adolescent Program. One of the Franciscan sisters directs the program and makes weekly visits to La Ceiba to collaborate with the house "parents." The success of the Adolescent Program relies heavily on the commitment of the HOUSE "PARENTS"- one volunteer lives in each of the adolescent homes (a male with the young men and a female with the young women.) Volunteers with a desire to share their talents through an adolescent ministry are needed for the roles of the Adolescent Program House Parents. The Adolescent Program House Parents participate in volunteer community life in a modified way since they live three hours from the larger volunteer community. However, they have the unique opportunity of sharing in that adolescents' community.

## **SMALL JOBS**

Every volunteer has multiple small jobs along with his/her main job. The small jobs do not need to be in the same field as their main job. Some of the options for small jobs include:

SPONSOR-A-CHILD PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR  
DONATIONS & CLOTHING BODEGA COORDINATOR  
FOOD BODEGA COORDINATOR  
WOMEN'S MINISTRY COORDINATOR  
MEN'S MINISTRY COORDINATOR  
VOCTIONAL PROGRAMS  
TUTORING PROGRMAS  
LIBRARIAN  
SOCCER COACH (boys and girls)  
SWIM COACH/SWIM LESSON INSTRUCTOR  
GIRL SCOUT LEADER & BOY SCOUT LEADER  
ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR  
HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR

# Honduras

Honduras is a small country in Central America, bordered by Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Caribbean Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. The majority of the population lives in rural areas. Honduras's economy is based on agriculture, and it is the poorest country in Central America.

## POPULATION

The population of Honduras is 6.4 million. This population is composed of mestizos (people of mixed European and Indian descent: 90%), indigenous peoples (including 7 different Indian tribes: 7%), blacks (2%) and whites of European descent (1%).

## GOVERNMENT

Honduras has a democratic government with the new constitution of 1992 providing for an elected president, a legislature and a judicial branch. There are two major political parties, the National Party and the Liberal Party. In 2006, Manuel Zelaya of the Liberal party took office.

## MILITARY PRESENCE

Although Honduras has had a civilian government since 1982, the military has had a long history of influencing and controlling politics and the government. Since the end of the Sandanista-Contra war in Nicaragua, the military continues to decrease in size and its presence in politics lessens. In October of 1997, the country underwent a milestone when, for the first time ever, the police force changed from military to civilian control.

## POLITICAL CLIMATE/SAFETY

The political climate is relatively calm in relation to other Central American countries. There are many tourists and foreigners living in Honduras and there is no need to worry about political violence at this time. Foreigners should be aware, however, of petty crime and violence in the cities and certain rural areas in Honduras. Most foreigners do not have any problems with violence if they make good decisions and do not put themselves in dangerous situations (i.e. walking around in unpopulated areas alone, hanging out in local cantinas late at night, etc.)

# Trujillo

Trujillo, first settled by Christopher Columbus, is a small tourist town located along the Caribbean coast. Its population is composed of blacks, indigenous peoples, and mestizos. Many foreigners have moved to Trujillo to enjoy the weather and the low cost of living in Honduras.

## CLIMATE AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

White, sandy beaches line the clear blue-green water of the Trujillo Bay. Sounds like a resort, huh? It could be. The nearby mountains covered with lush green rainforests and filled with many forms of wildlife further deepen its beauty. Temperatures are really hot and humid most of the year. Tropical storms give a break in the heat during the rainy season that runs anywhere from October to March. Trujillo is sometimes affected by hurricanes, but the Finca has a well-practiced evacuation plan that you will learn when you arrive.

## WHAT IS IN TRUJILLO?

In Trujillo, one can find the Catholic cathedral and head of the diocese, a few restaurants and hotels, basic supermarkets, hardware stores and clothing/houseware shops. In the stores, selection is minimal and one may or may not find what is desired. The supermarkets and clothing/houseware shops sell a few American brand items.

## ENTERTAINMENT

In Trujillo, there are a few decent restaurants and many local hangouts where you can grab a bite to eat.

Enjoying the great outdoors is the primary entertainment for most volunteers. For those who enjoy nature, the beach is a beautiful place to hang out. There are many great places for hiking in the rainforest in nearby mountains, a few waterfalls for swimming, and some great sites for snorkeling.

## TRAVEL

It is easy for one to travel from Trujillo. Buses run many times daily to the major cities and less frequently to the Mosquitia (covering the eastern portion of Honduras) and other small towns. For those craving fast food, movies, and a town with stoplights, an occasional weekend getaway in La Ceiba (about 3 hours by bus) may be in order.

# Finances

We understand that finances can be confusing! Please read this section carefully, and then, feel free to ask questions. . . Katherine's e-mail address again: knking77@yahoo.com!

Farm of the Child is a small, non-profit organization dedicated to serving the orphaned children and the poor in Honduras. All donated funds are used to provide for the children and to support our community outreach programs. Farm of the Child exists because generous people offer to donate money and time to its cause. Benefactors and volunteers make the vision a reality!

While at the Farm, volunteers are provided with room and board. However, volunteers need to raise money on their own to take care of expenses such as travel fare, language school, medical insurance, vaccinations/shots prior to departure, and spending money. We will guide our volunteers in fundraising methods used by previous volunteers. Do not let the idea of fundraising scare you! Motivated volunteers have successfully raised sufficient (even extra) funds to take care of their volunteer expenses. See the following section on "Hints on Fundraising" for more details.

*FINANCES CAN GET PRETTY TRICKY. ALL MONEY SENT TO THE FARM OF THE CHILD (EVEN FUNDS RAISED BY INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS) IS THE ORGANIZATION'S MONEY. THIS MONEY DOES NOT BELONG TO AN INDIVIDUAL PERSON. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS CONCEPT, PLEASE ASK ABOUT IT. PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO PREVENT CONFUSION LATER.*

## DONATIONS:

People interested in supporting you in your time at the Farm may send donations in one of two ways:

1. Donors may send checks made payable to **Farm of the Child**. Dan Mechenbier, father of former volunteer Andrea McMerty-Brummer, manages donations. Andrea manages reimbursements. (Please note: Because Andrea lives in Honduras, her mailing address for reimbursements is the same as Dan's.) Donation checks should be sent to Dan's home address, but they **SHOULD NOT BE MADE OUT TO DAN!** Checks should be made payable to **Farm of the Child** and sent to the following address:

Farm of the Child  
c/o Dan Mechenbier  
1616 Nottingham Knoll Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32225

Donors MUST specify that the money is to be earmarked for your personal expenses (as specified by the Farm) by either:

\* *writing the volunteer name on the **memo line** of the check*

or

\* *including a note indicating to which volunteer account the money should go*

Though funds are earmarked to cover your expenses, the money is not yours to use as you choose. The Farm of the Child has tax-exempt status in the United States and is a 501 (c) 3 organization. Therefore, donations made to the Farm, even when earmarked for an individual volunteer, must be used according to the regulations established for 501 (c) 3 organizations. See "Donation Use" section below to see what expenses may be covered.

If you would like to receive copies of the donation checks earmarked for you, please send 8 to 10 self-addressed, stamped envelopes to Dan Mechenbier so that he can mail the copies to you.

2. Donors may send contributions directly to you if they prefer to do so. These checks may be made out to you, and you may use this money in any way you would like. *The Farm will not have any control over these funds.* Accordingly, contributions made in this way will not be eligible for a 501 (c) 3 tax deduction.

Because the Farm can only offer tax exemption to U.S. donors, volunteers from countries other than the United States will need to handle their donations this way. The bank that the Farm uses only accepts U.S. checks and charges a conversion fee for each foreign check processed. Volunteers from outside the U.S. may still send their received donation money to Dan so that he can set up volunteer accounts for them. They should first collect all/most of their donations and deposit the non-U.S. checks into a bank account in their own country. They should then send one U.S. money order to be deposited in the Farm's bank. Because of the large fee charged per foreign check, it is worth your while to make sure you understand the process of transferring donations from another country to the Farm's account. If you have questions about this process, DO NOT hesitate to contact Katherine.

If family members or friends would like to send you funds once you are at the Farm (for you to use personally), checks should *not* be made out to the Farm of the Child. Have them contact Andrea McMerty-Brummer at farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com to find out when the next visitor will arrive at the Farm. Money can be sent down to you with a visitor.

## DONATION USE

Since Farm of the Child has U.S. tax-exempt status, any contributions that are sent to the Farm, including the contributions earmarked for the volunteers, must be distributed in a specific manner.

As a non-profit organization, Farm of the Child cannot legally offer unrestricted access to these funds. Funds must be used to support the volunteers' work at the Farm. Acceptable use of funds include:

- \* plane tickets/travel expenses
- \* language school
- \* medical insurance
- \* stipend for spending money
- \* vacation stipend
- \* stipend for transition/return to the U.S.

**At the completion of the volunteer's service (even if a volunteer leaves before completing 27 months of service) all unused money will be used for general project needs.**

## ITEMS REQUIRING RECEIPTS

Volunteers choose and purchase their own airplane tickets and insurance plans. The Farm can reimburse volunteers for the amount necessary (assuming the volunteer has raised sufficient funds) for airplane tickets, insurance payments, and vaccinations. Receipts are needed for these items. *Funds may be used to purchase a maximum of three round trip tickets (one to take you to Central America and then one a year for vacations).* Volunteers may be reimbursed for other preparation expenses when receipts are provided.

## VOLUNTEER STIPENDS

Personal expenses including clothes, phone calls, hygienic products, personal travel, movies, dinner at restaurants, and vacations are the responsibility of the individual volunteer. Volunteers may receive a maximum stipend of \$200 every three months for these personal expenses *provided there are sufficient funds in their personal volunteer account.* Stipends are only given on the day designated by the Farm accountant. *No advances are given on stipends nor are loans given to volunteers.* The stipend is more than sufficient to cover all necessary expenses, but volunteers are responsible for budgeting their money wisely. Volunteers may want to consider opening a bank account (in U.S. dollars) once they arrive in Trujillo to safeguard their money.

If you are unable to raise sufficient funds to cover the monthly stipend, contact Andrea at [farmofthechild\\_usa@yahoo.com](mailto:farmofthechild_usa@yahoo.com) to discuss alternative options. Volunteers are welcome to use the shared donated goods that the project receives.

## VACATION STIPEND

Volunteers may receive a maximum of \$250 per year as a vacation stipend *provided there are sufficient funds in their personal volunteer account.* This stipend may be used for trips within Honduras or for any expenses incurred during a visit home. If the volunteer does not plan to use the \$250 in Honduras, he/she can request that the check be sent to his/her home in the U.S. for spending use while in the U.S.

## LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Volunteers may receive a stipend for language school *provided that sufficient funds were raised.* The amount of the stipend varies depending on the amount of time spent in language school. Basically, the Farm allots \$50/week for a personal stipend and \$200 for travel to the Farm. If, for example, the chosen language school costs \$175/week for classes and room/board, those studying for eight weeks would receive a stipend of \$2000. Volunteers only spending four weeks in language school would receive \$1100. The stipend

may vary slightly depending on the price of the language school chosen. No receipts for this are necessary.

**Volunteers should request the stipend from Andrea McMerty-Brummer one month before departing for language school.** (The Volunteer Expense Reimbursement Form on page 25 can be used for this request.) If you have additional necessary expenses, save your receipts and request reimbursement from the Farm. See "Reimbursement" section below.

Volunteers who are in the process of raising funds (but have not raised sufficient funds at the time of departure) should contact Andrea (farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com) regarding the possibility of receiving an advance to cover language school costs.

## LOAN PAYMENTS

You may be able to get student loan payments deferred during your term of service at the Farm. If necessary, Andrea (farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com) can provide you with a letter verifying your service commitment to the Farm. Some volunteers have been unable to get student loans deferred. If student loans **cannot be deferred**, volunteers are encouraged to include "payment of student loan interest" as part of their fundraising appeal. In such cases, volunteers can use fundraised money to pay for the *interest* accrued during the term of service on non-deferrable student loans. Non-deferrable student loan interest will be considered a necessary expense for the volunteer, and therefore, its payment is an "acceptable use of funds raised for a non-profit organization." This is only the case for student loans that **cannot** be deferred for the volunteer's term of service. Please remember to inform your benefactors that part of their donations will be used to pay student loan interest.

## THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you letters are sent to all benefactors, and benefactors are automatically placed on the Farm's quarterly newsletter mailing list, unless requested otherwise.

## TAX RECEIPTS

Tax receipts are automatically sent to all contributors from the U.S. for tax purposes. *The Farm only has tax-exempt status in the U.S.*

## RECORD KEEPING/ACCOUNT BALANCE

Four times a year, a list of donations/expenses will be sent to each volunteer at the Farm.

## TRANSITION STIPEND

A transition stipend of \$500/year of service is available upon completion of the term of service. This will assist in the volunteer's transition to the U.S. after working at the Farm. We ask that volunteers raise funds to cover this stipend. If a volunteer does not have sufficient funds to cover the stipend, the U.S. Board of Directors may decide to cover the stipend, ***as long as the Farm has sufficient funds to do so.***

## REIMBURSEMENTS

Andrea McMerty-Brummer manages reimbursements. (Please note that because Andrea lives in Honduras, Dan Mechenbier's mailing address will be used for both donation *and* reimbursement purposes.) There has been a lot of confusion in the past with reimbursements. The Farm needs the following in order to reimburse expenses:

- \* Receipts (important!!!)
- \* Volunteer name
- \* Name of person to whom the check should be made
- \* Address to where the check should be sent
- \* Total amount to be reimbursed

On the following page, you will find the "Volunteer Expenses Reimbursement Form." If you complete this form when requesting reimbursement, you will be sure to include all necessary information. Leave copies of this form with your parent/friend that handles your donations/expenses in the U.S. while you are in Honduras so he/she can request reimbursement when necessary.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Volunteer finances can be confusing. Katherine (knking77@yahoo.com) will be more than happy to answer your questions.

## DONATED ITEMS

As you share with others the story of the Farm, you may come across benefactors who wish to donate items to the mission in addition to/in lieu of money. If you find yourself with donated items that you are physically unable to take with you to the Farm, please contact Andrea McMerty-Brummer (farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com) about possible options for shipping items to Honduras.



# Hints for Fundraising

Fundraising is a big job! Get yourself psyched up because it takes a lot of energy and perseverance. Don't worry; even though it seems like a huge project, you can accomplish the goals you set for yourself. Here is how you can start off...

- 1) Set a budget for yourself. Here is a *sample budget* of expenses for a 27-month volunteer term. Look into these prices since cases may vary. For example, the cost of your plane ticket depends on your city of departure. Different health insurance companies have different rates.

## SAMPLE BUDGET:

Airplane tickets (3)	\$2000	(includes one trip to the U.S. during each year of service)
Language school	\$1800 - \$2100	(for 8 weeks of classes and housing- depending on prices of language school chosen)
Travel from language school to the Farm	\$200	
Health insurance	\$2000-\$3000	(remember, health insurance is mandatory!)
Shots/vaccines prior to arrival	\$500	(from city/county health clinic)
Preparation costs	\$200	(phone calls, mailings, bug spray, etc.)
Residency costs	\$300	(applied for after arrival at the Farm)
Personal stipend	\$1800	(\$200/3 months)
Vacation stipend	\$500	(\$250/year)
Transition stipend for return home	\$1000	(\$500 for each year of service)
-----		
Total budget for 27 months	\$10,300-\$11,600	

\*\* Volunteers recommend bringing personal money (about \$30/wk) for entertainment expenses during language school.

Aim high on your budget. Be realistic and give yourself a little room for change in prices or anything else unexpected. If you do not raise sufficient funds, you can

choose the less expensive options. For example, you can choose the cheaper health insurance company, travel by bus instead of by plane from language school, and choose the cheaper school. You can also choose to live on a more modest stipend, not receive a vacation stipend, minimize travel to the U.S., etc. The above budget is helpful for setting a goal, but you must make a personal choice in each of the above areas.

Money tends to trickle in from donors throughout your time at the Farm. The amount that trickles in is directly proportional to the communication (i.e. newsletters, letters, etc.) that you have with your current or potential donors. In other words, write newsletters!

- 2) Make a list of possible sponsors. You will need to make contact with any individuals or groups that might offer you some assistance with your service as a volunteer. Get a list together. Here are some ideas of whom to ask:

- Family members
- Friends
- Churches
- Church groups (choirs, adult reflection groups, youth groups)
- Religious orders
- Diocese (local bishop)
- Local businesses
- Clubs for businessmen and businesswomen (i.e. Rotary Club)
- University departments (Administration, Spanish, Theology, Social Work depts.)
- Any student group/organization/fraternity/sorority
- Foundations/Grant organizations (check public library/internet for reference info.)
- Hospitals
- Community Organizations/Neighborhood groups
- Primary Schools/High Schools

- 3) Make contacts. Write letters. Okay, now the grunt work begins. You have your list. Now write yourself a good, basic letter requesting money. A couple thoughts on your letters...

Always direct the letter to an individual. This could be the director of the club, the head of a youth group, the president of a company or the pastor of the parish.

Start out with your reason for writing. For example, "I write to you requesting a donation to assist in covering my expenses as a lay missionary in Central America."

If you are writing to an organization or business, ask for a specific amount of money. This varies depending on the group/individual that will receive your letter. If you are writing to a wealthy club or organization, ask for \$500 or \$1000. If you are asking a friend or a relative, you should decide for yourself whether or not you want to ask for a specific amount. In some instances, you will not feel comfortable indicating an amount of money. Remember, be realistic. Ask the people with big money to donate big and ask the people with less money to donate less.

Give a brief history of the project. *Sell the project!!!* Share the background of the project. Talk about your commitment to the Farm and the people it serves. Let your

excitement show! People want to participate in programs that are life-giving and empowering. Not everyone has the opportunity to spend two years in Latin America, but make him or her feel a part of the experience. Andrea McMerty-Brummer can provide a copy of the brochure, a photo album, and articles on the project for fundraising.

Share your proposed budget. People don't like to give randomly without any idea of how the money will be spent. In brief form, list your budget.

Reiterate your request for financial assistance. Indicate to whom they can send the money. For tax purposes, people should make their donation out to **Farm of the Child**. Farm of the Child is a U.S. 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt organization. See the sheet on Volunteers' Finances to learn how donations/accounts are then handled.

Indicate that you would like to share more about your plans with them. Depending on the recipient of the letter, it is just a phone call or a lunch date to talk about your project. For groups and churches, it might be best for you to talk to the whole parish during a meeting or a mass. Some organizations require filling out an application. Check this out ahead of time and indicate that you would be interested in speaking to the parish or request an application.

Let them know that you will contact them again. Don't wait for a company to get around to doing something about your letter or initial contact. Tell them that you will call them or stop by on such and such a date. Be pro-active! Obviously if they show no interest, you need to know when to quit with them.

- 4) Sell the project in person or over the phone. Get some brochures and photo albums from Andrea McMerty-Brummer (farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com.) When you have that follow-up meeting or contact with the person or group, sell the project. **THE BEST WAY TO RAISE MONEY IS TO SHARE YOUR EXCITEMENT AND MAKE THEM FEEL A PART OF THE SERVICE WITH THEIR DONATION.** If you believe in what you are doing, they will recognize that and want to be a part of it. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR MONEY!!!** You need to get over the embarrassment of asking for money. Don't beat around the bush. Make it clear in your letters and your talks that you are looking for financial assistance. It is for a good cause!
- 5) Hold other types of fundraisers. Be creative. You can come up with other ways to fundraise. When I was seeking funds, friends in a band from my University held a benefit concert to raise money for the Farm of the Child and my volunteer expenses. Think up new ways to raise funds! Current volunteers suggest a fundraising dinner. Invite family and friends; charge per plate, and use the dinner as an opportunity to talk about your mission.
- 6) Always send prompt thank-you notes. Send newsletters. Upon receiving a donation, send a thank-you note right away. Indicate that you will continue to keep them informed about your experience at Farm of the Child. It is a good idea to send a personal quarterly newsletter to share your experience with your supporters. They need to feel a part of the mission! As a side note, many volunteers have found it helpful to leave address labels with a parent or a friend so that he/she can send the personal newsletters from the U.S.

Sooo, there you have some hints. Be persistent. Know that you might have to write a ton of letters! For every five that you might send, you might get one donation. That donation could be for \$15 or for \$1000. Keep plugging along! You will appreciate your money that you use this next year if you work hard to get it! Get started now!

Muchisimas suerte y que Dios te bendiga!  
(Much luck and may God bless you!)  
Christine (Adela) Turner, Former Volunteer '95-'97

## OTHER SUGGESTIONS

\*\*Inquire about your diocesan "Propagation of Faith" fund. Some volunteers have received monthly donations from the fund for the entire term of service; others have had their medical insurance covered by the fund.

\*\*Current volunteers have suggested focusing on benefactors that may give larger donations; this route can be more time efficient. Some have had success with specialized grants through their diocese or other larger organizations.

\*\*Creating a personal website to document your experience at the Farm can also serve as a great fundraising tool. You can update your website from Honduras (or from the U.S. when you're home for a visit,) and you can encourage benefactors to share in your experience by visiting the site! (For examples, visit [www.ehempstead.bravehost.com](http://www.ehempstead.bravehost.com) or [www.myette.org](http://www.myette.org))

\*\*Use the internet; do a "fundraising" search. The Fundraising Bank ([www.fundraising-ideas.com](http://www.fundraising-ideas.com)) provides a directory of fundraising products and companies.

\*\*One volunteer suggests making a donation form (with your name and Dan Mechenbier's name and address) for people to send in with their donations. Such a form will indicate to Dan that the donation is for your account even if the donor forgets to write your name on the check's memo line, and "it seems more official!"

\*\*Current volunteers report great success from speaking at churches.

\*\*Volunteers who have been through the process encourage, "Don't wait to raise money!" While fundraising efforts can be continued from the Farm, it's easier to do it in advance.

## SAMPLE FUNDRAISING LETTER

# Farm of the Child

Dear

June 12, 2003

Imagine yourself on a tropical Caribbean coast, taking in the sunshine, the beautiful water, the sand in between your toes, the luscious rainforest... Now, imagine yourself in the poorest and least developed nation in Central America, where poverty and hunger surround you, leading to disease, violence, crime, and substance abuse. You witness these conditions weakening and destroying families, leaving many children orphaned and abandoned. In reality, these differing descriptions of a tropical paradise and a disease-stricken country are the very same place: **Honduras**.

Along the northern coast exists a faith-filled community called **Farm of the Child**, dedicated to raising children to be healthy and strong citizens of Honduras. With an **orphanage, school, medical clinic, and outreach programs**, the Farm of the Child is making a tremendous impact in the lives of children and adults in Honduras. This summer I have the incredible opportunity to join the volunteer team at the Farm of the Child for two and a half years. I am very excited to have been chosen to be a part of the Farm of the Child community, striving each day to witness Christ in my life and the lives of the people of Honduras in a very challenging, yet rewarding way.

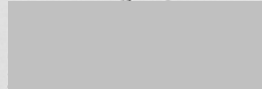
In recent years, the Farm of the Child has grown strong, as has my passion to be a part of this incredible mission. I invite you to join in the efforts to help build a future for the beautiful children of Honduras. While two and a half years in Central America may not be on your top ten list, your support is needed in several other ways. First and foremost, I ask for your **prayers of support** for the amazing work taking place at the Farm of the Child and for all members of the Farm community: the children, houseparents, local employees, and the 14 international volunteers like myself. I encourage you also to **learn more about Farm of the Child** [www.farmofthechild.org](http://www.farmofthechild.org) and **share this information** with your family, friends, and church.

Finally, I need your **financial support** to make my time in Central America possible. **Your generous support will be very much appreciated, as I hope to raise \$10,000 in the next month** to cover the expenses of travel fares, shots and vaccinations, language school in Guatemala, preparation costs, and medical insurance. I have enclosed a pledge support card for your convenience. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I look forward to sharing the work I am doing with you over the next two and a half years. God Bless!!!!

*~ Mary Beth Stryker*

~Mary Beth Stryker

Address until July 31, 2003



Address from August 1, 2003-Dec, 2005

Finca del Niño  
Apartado Postal #110  
Trujillo, Colón  
Honduras, Central America  
[thembstryker@hotmail.com](mailto:thembstryker@hotmail.com)

# Language School

We require that all volunteers speak Spanish before arriving to the Farm. If you have no clue how to speak Spanish or are not quite confident in your speaking ability, no need to fret. It is nothing that two or three months of intense language training in Central America will not change! After a few months, you should have a good handle on the language. And besides, you will have plenty of time to practice with the kids on the Farm.

For volunteers who do not speak Spanish, two months of language school are a minimum requirement; however, it is suggested that volunteers with no background in the language at all consider three months of school. On the other hand, volunteers who already speak Spanish may feel that they do not need two months of language school. It is strongly recommended, however, that all volunteers go to language school for at least one month. Volunteers have discovered that each group begins to develop its sense of community during language school. Current volunteers **strongly recommend** attending language school together; this is something to keep in mind when choosing a school and/or city.

However, it is also important to realize that the amount of effort you put into your studies and forcing yourself to speak Spanish will directly correspond to the amount of Spanish that you learn. It is entirely possible to go to language school for two months and learn little Spanish (especially if you spend all your time speaking English with other North Americans). Make the extra effort to speak Spanish and to go beyond your comfort zone. It will certainly pay off when you get to the Farm.

Most schools offer one-on-one language instruction for four to six hours a day (depending on the student's preference). Schools arrange for students to live and eat with a local family. Spending time with a host family offers opportunity for practice.

We have some information on schools in Antigua, Guatemala; Quetzaltenango, Guatemala; and Copán, Honduras. There are benefits and drawbacks to studying in each of the different cities.

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA is a quaint, beautiful city and a popular tourist spot. It is also a mecca for language schools. There are about sixty schools of differing quality and price throughout the city. One can "shop around" and find the school of choice or change schools from week to week for some variety. There are many other tourists and other students in Antigua; this makes it difficult for some to immerse themselves in the culture, and many find themselves speaking too much English outside of class. In Antigua, some students room in boarding houses with families. Students do not receive the same type of language immersion in this setting. It can get cool during that time of year, so be sure to bring appropriate clothing and raingear. Taxis (\$20) and shuttles (\$6) are readily available to travel from the airport in Guatemala City to Antigua. Most schools will arrange a ride in advance though is it more expensive (\$30).

QUETZALTENANGO (a.k.a. XELA), GUATEMALA is a less-touristy city (not quite as charming) with fewer language schools (although they are just as good), and some people find it easier to immerse themselves in the culture to learn the language. It is a short bus ride from Lago de Atitlan and other weekend vacation spots. Most living situations are with local families. The city is located about four hours by bus from Guatemala City. During August and September, it can

be rainy and **very cold** (especially at night); volunteers should be sure to bring appropriate clothing: sweaters, jackets, rain gear, warm socks, etc.

COPÁN, HONDURAS is a comfortable town in Honduras and is one of the ancient sites of Mayan ruins. Tourists pass through; however there are only a couple of language schools there. Students do not have the option of choosing from a wide array of schools. We have heard good things about the Escuela Ixbalanque there. With so few students in the area, it is easy to get immersed in the culture. And besides, if you study in Copán, it is cheaper to buy plane tickets when your country of destination and your country of departure on your return trip are the same.

We would suggest making plans with a school before you arrive. But leave yourself the option to change plans once you have tried it for a week or so. Don't pay for the whole two months in advance! Plans can be made ahead of time or you can wait until you get to Antigua to visit some schools and choose. It is very normal to switch schools, instructors, families, and even city during your language study. You need to get the most out of this experience. Some instructors/schools are better than others, and sometimes you just need variety. Don't be afraid to change your plans once there!!!

A few other points to know . . .

- \* More expensive schools are not necessarily better.
- \* If possible, request a living situation where you will be the only student, not one of five in a boarding house.
- \* A change of scenery can be helpful; traveling on the weekends is a good way to learn the language through experience.
- \* Current volunteers expressed difficulties acquiring cash while in language school. Traveler's Checks, a credit card, and a little cash (about \$200) are recommended.
- \* The Visa CIRRUS card works in Honduras, but it **does not** work in Guatemala; do not rely on it for language school. The Visa PLUS card works in Guatemala.
- \* Many language schools will only accept cash or Traveler's Checks. It probably will not be possible to pay with a credit card at language school.

Following is a list of some possible language schools. Surf the internet for language schools; don't limit yourself to this list! **Prices change**. Contact the schools to confirm current prices before registering. Current prices will also help when preparing a budget and requesting the language school stipend.

## ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

Proyecto Bibliotecas Guatemala, "PROBIGUA"	\$90/4 hours 5 days a week
tel/fax: 011 502 8 32 0860 (in Guatemala)	\$10 for each additional hour
e-mail: probigua@conexion.com	\$60/week room/board with family

\* Money is used to start new libraries. PROBIGUA has good field trips.

\* Former volunteers have had good experiences with Probigua and highly recommend requesting to live with Elsa Mendezibal and requesting to have Milvia as a teacher.

Proyecto Linguistico	Call for information
Francisco Marroquin	
4a. Ave. Sur #4	
tel/fax: 011 502 8 32 0406 (in Guatemala)	

Centro Linguistico Maya  
Angel Arturo Miranda Bacza  
5a. Calle Poniente No. 20  
tel: 011 502 8 32 0656  
e-mail: clmmaya@guate.net

\$85/4 hours 5 days a week  
\$10 for each additional hour  
\$50/week room/board with family

Christian Spanish Academy  
A-0047 P.O. Box 669004  
Miami Springs, FL 33266  
e-mail: chspanac@infovia.com.gt

\$95/4 hours 5 days a week  
\$10 for each additional hour/week  
\$60/week room/board with family

\* It is not necessarily better than the others just because it is more expensive.

## QUETZALTENANGO, GUATEMALA

Proyecto Linguistico Quetzalteco de Español  
915 Cole Street #363  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
tel: 1 800 963 9889 (in U.S.)

Call for information

Instituto Centro Americano  
R.R. #2 Box 101  
Stanton, NE 68779  
tel/fax: 1 402 439 2943 (in U.S.)  
e-mail: icaxela@c.net.gt

Call for information

\* Former volunteers have had positive experiences here.

Escuela de Juan Sisay  
tel: 011 502 8 61 6344 (in Guatemala)  
www.juansisay.org

\$135-\$145/week  
Call for more information

\* Run by socially aware individuals. Provides additional information on political and social issues. Provides opportunities to tutor and to participate in community service. Provides good, optional afternoon activities and weekend trips, but they are not included in the price. Members from the three most recent groups of Finca volunteers have attended Juan Sisay, and they highly recommend it. One volunteer particularly recommends requesting to live with Maria Cifuntez-Lopez.

Centro Pop Wuj  
tel/fax: 011 502 761 8286  
e-mail: popwujxe@infovia.com.gt

\$140/week includes room/board with family

\* Use part of tuition for community projects.

Casa Xelaju  
web: www.casaxelaju.com

\$140/week includes room/board with family

## COPÁN, HONDURAS

Escuela de Español  
tel: 011 504 651 43 90  
e-mail: eldamanchame@hotmail.com

Academia de Español Guacamaya  
tel: 011 504 651 43 60  
e-mail: guacamaya\_@latinmail.com

\$210/week includes room/board with family

Escuela Ixbalanque  
tel/fax: 011 504 651 44 32  
e-mail: ixbalan@gbm.hn

\$185/4 hours, 5 days/week  
(includes room and board with a family)

## MÉXICO

Tlatoani Language School  
Calle Primera Norte No 8  
Buenavista de Cuéllar, Gro.  
México, C.P. 40330  
www.eltlatoani.com  
info@eltlatoani.com

\* Farm volunteers have not attended the Tlatoani School, but we received a compelling request from one of the school's directors, Lic. Tom Shortell, FFP (tom@eltlatoani.com or tshort@alltel.net) asking us to include the information in the handbook. For more details, visit the website or contact Tom Shortell directly.

# List of Health Insurance Companies

Health insurance is required for all volunteers!

The following is a list of health insurance companies recommended by current volunteers. Do not limit yourself to this list!

Seven Corners Inc.

[www.sevencorners.com](http://www.sevencorners.com)

**\*\*\* Several current volunteers have a group health plan through Specialty Risk International; each group member pays \$925/year. If you are interested in joining the group plan, please contact Andrea McMerty-Brummer for details.**

Wallach and Company Insurance

(540) 687-3166 or (800) 237-6615

International Health Shield Reliance Insurance Company

(800) 635-1519 (?)

Mark Sneed, [health@missionaryhealth.net](mailto:health@missionaryhealth.net)

Adam Bates, [adam@missionaryhealth.net](mailto:adam@missionaryhealth.net)

Insurance Services of America

"A Christian Organization Serving Missionaries Overseas"

P.O. Box 1617

Chandler, AZ 85244

800-647-4589 / 866-793-4779 fax

480-821-9052 Worldwide

[www.missionaryhealth.com](http://www.missionaryhealth.com)

International Medical Group, Inc.

407 North Fulton St.

Indianapolis, IN 46202

(317) 655-4500

(800) 628-4664

fax: (317) 655-4505

[www.imglobal.com](http://www.imglobal.com)

# Need Help with Travel Plans?

The following are a few travel agents that have given good rates in the past. Call around; don't limit yourself to this list! As a side note, if you live in an area with a large Latino population, you may be able to find a travel agency which specializes in discount flights to Latin America.

Mario Filardo  
WTS/Raptim Transport  
102 Union Wharf  
Boston, MA 02109  
www.wtsraptim.com  
info@wtsraptim.com  
tel: (800) 368-6757 or (617) 367-6757  
fax: (617) 589-3708

Lucy King, Owner  
Quality International Tours  
Miami, FL  
www.qualityintours.com  
Travel@qualityintours.com  
tel: (800) 525-9777 or (305) 477-9777  
fax: (305) 593-0969

Exito!- Latin American Travel Specialist  
www.exitotravel.com  
tel: (800) 655-4053  
M-F 7am-5:30pm (PST)  
\* Highly recommended by current volunteers.

Student Travel Agency (STA)  
www.statravel.com  
tel: (800) 781-4040

Triple A (AAA)  
www.aaa.com  
tel: (888) 859-5161 (this number may be only for Mid-Atlantic States)

Cosmos Travel (Latin American Specialist)  
5639 Columbia Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041  
tel: 703-671-4100  
fax: 703-671-1467

latindiscountair.com

# Traveling to Farm of the Child

## TRAVELING TO THE FARM OF THE CHILD FROM THE U.S.

American, TACA (800-535-8780), and Continental have daily service from the U.S. to San Pedro Sula, Honduras. From the San Pedro airport, ask a taxi (about 200 lempiras or \$10) to take you to the Cotraipbal or Cotuc bus stations (they are close together and both have direct buses to Trujillo). The schedule constantly changes, but you can generally catch buses beginning at about 7AM and ending at about 3PM or 4PM. Tickets can be bought the day of your trip at the station (about 132 lps. or \$7). You should be able to make the trip in one day (weather and road conditions permitting). You have to hurry, but you can usually make the 3 p.m. bus for Trujillo after flying to the San Pedro airport. Contact the Farm a few days in advance to let them know when you will arrive in Trujillo. Someone from the Farm will pick you up where the bus drops you off in Trujillo and take you to the Farm.

## TRAVELING TO GUATEMALA FROM THE U.S.

In more recent years, some volunteers who have purchased one-way tickets to Guatemala have received messages warning that they would need appropriate visa documentation in order to enter Guatemala with a one-way ticket. Although Farm volunteers had been purchasing one-way tickets to Guatemala for years, the 2004 group of volunteers was the first one to receive such a message. At that time, we contacted the Guatemalan Tourist Office at the Guatemalan Embassy regarding the warning. According to the Embassy, an individual entering Guatemala with a one-way ticket would not experience any problems provided he/she had a valid passport that would not expire during the allowed length of stay in Guatemala. (Generally, visitors entering Guatemala without a visa are allowed to stay for 90 days.) Volunteers who would prefer to contact the Embassy directly can do so at:

Guatemalan Embassy  
2220 R St., NW  
Washington, D.C.  
(tel) 202-745-4952  
Guatemalan Tourist Office  
(tel) 202-518-5514

## TRAVELING TO THE FARM OF THE CHILD FROM GUATEMALA

You can travel by air or land to the Farm from Guatemala. If you choose to fly (more expensive), you can make plans with any travel agent in Guatemala when you are studying. You do not need to make plans from the U.S. Flights from Guatemala to San Pedro Sula run often. From San Pedro, the same bus mentioned above will get you to Trujillo.

If you choose to go by land, there are a couple of options. If you want to go by bus, use a Central American travel guide (in any U.S. bookstore) for directions/information on the bus companies and schedules in the various cities. Another option for land travel is to go by van. In the past, groups of volunteers have hired a van with a driver to take them part of the way. Van trips are a common tourist attraction in Guatemala. Therefore, it is not too difficult

to find a local travel agency that will hire out a driver to take the group from Guatemala to Copán or even to San Pedro Sula or to La Ceiba.

Things to consider when going by land . . . amount of luggage (will it be too much of a hassle?), expense (cheaper to go by land), time (takes more by land), and desire to see more of Central America (can stop in Copán on the way). If you travel by land, it is better and more fun to go in a group of at least two. Contact other volunteers to make plans. Be sure to have some cash for the trip. You need to pay an exit fee when you leave Guatemala (\$25 in airport or approximately \$3 by land). You also need to pay an entrance fee when entering Honduras by land.

## GENERAL TRAVEL TIPS

When traveling around Central America, there are certain things that you will catch onto quickly (i.e.: always bring toilet paper and hand wipes if you're particular about cleanliness). You may want to have a hidden money pouch which you can tuck under your clothes for safe keeping of money, passport, etc. (any travel store sells them). For safety's sake, try not to carry a lot of cash and keep small bills. However, also keep in mind that small towns may have difficulty with traveler's checks (or odd bank hours), so keep enough cash on you to get by until you know you can next get money. You may also want to make copies of any important documents (such as your passport/drivers' license) and store them in various places in case of theft. Theft is unlikely, but it's always better to be safe than sorry. Current volunteers have found that VISA (CIRRUS in Honduras & PLUS in Guatemala) cash machines are more readily available than MasterCard machines.

# Climate Information

## WEATHER AND APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

For most of the year, it is pretty darn hot in Trujillo. It does not usually cool down too much in the evenings. During the rainy season, however, it can get a little cooler, especially in the evenings.

*What does this mean in terms of clothing?* It is fine to wear shorts and t-shirts on the Farm; it's casual. When on official business in town, volunteers should dress up a little more and wear nicer shorts, pants, jeans, sundresses, or long skirts. The teachers wear pants/skirts and a collared shirt to school every day. The local people do not usually wear shorts. Even in the heat, the men wear long pants and the women wear long pants, long skirts or dresses. Men wear slacks/jeans and women wear nice slacks/dresses to mass. Foreigners can be seen around town in shorts, but it is always good to keep the local customs in mind. Bring clothes for warm weather and dress for comfort. It is also highly recommended that you bring some warm, fast-drying clothes (i.e. nylon) for rainy season. It's amazing how cold the rainy season can feel to someone acclimated to the Honduran heat! Also, Guatemala tends to be cooler during the "language school months;" you might want to pack your warm clothes toward the top of your bag in case you need them while you're there.

## MOSQUITOS AND OTHER FUN CRITTERS

Mosquitoes come and go throughout the year. When they are around, they usually come out and are most bothersome in early morning or at dusk. If they become too bothersome, use repellent, put on long pants and long-sleeve shirts, or stay inside during those times. Houses have screens, so most mosquitoes are kept out if the doors are not left wide open. No one at the Farm sleeps with a mosquito net. At certain times of the year, gnats are out and they can get through the screens, but sleeping with a sheet usually keeps them from biting. *Repellent is expensive to buy in town. We suggest buying your supply at home and bringing it down with you.*

# The "Must Have" List of Things to Pack

Passport

Driver's License

Medical insurance card/info.

Traveler's checks, some cash, credit card (don't rely on just one system: EXPERIENCES VARY! Some volunteers report difficulty in cashing traveler's checks while others recommend bringing enough traveler's checks to pay for language school, reporting that it's convenient to cash traveler's checks at the bank and then pay the school in cash.)

underwear

socks

shorts

t-shirts

lightweight pants/jeans

4 or 5 long skirts/sun dresses (women only)

a few long-sleeved shirts or sweatshirts (it gets cool in the winter months!)

raincoat (ponchos are great!)

umbrella

swimsuit

sandals/shoes that you can wear while hiking in the rain or crossing rivers (Texas, chacos, and crocs work well!)

tennis shoes or some kind of walking/hiking shoes (we have some beautiful mountains for hiking nearby)

towel (2 of them)

sheets

flashlight

batteries (rechargeable batteries are good to have)

sunscreen (HIGHLY recommended! Be sun smart!)

hat/baseball cap (good for sun protection!)

travel, battery-operated alarm clock

U.S. stamps (it's cheaper and more reliable to send mail home with our frequent visitors)

Lightweight blanket (for use during the rainy season)

\* This is just a basic list to give you an idea what you might need. You will probably pack more. Don't pack too much, though. Volunteers tend to accumulate things at the Farm. Be aware that what you bring to the Farm will not return in the same condition as when it arrived. The heat, humidity, sand, dust, and salt air do amazing things to bikes, guitars, computers, CD players, etc. If you're really attached to an item, you may want to think twice before bringing it.

\* Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, body wash, contact cleaner, deodorant, etc.) can be purchased in Trujillo or in La Ceiba. It is not necessary to bring down 2 years worth of supplies.

# The "Junk You Might Like to Bring" List of Things to Pack

Spanish textbook  
Spanish/English dictionary (helpful for language school)  
Books (novels, theology books, etc. have accumulated in the volunteer house over time)  
journals  
prayer book (Stations of the Cross, Prayers of the Rosary, etc.)  
chloroquine pills (enough for language school; if you choose to take them, the Farm has a supply)  
calendar  
stationery  
envelopes (Normal envelopes become glued shut with the humidity. Buy glueless envelopes or wait until you get down here to buy some.)  
addresses of family and friends  
pictures of friends and loved ones  
camera/film/batteries (Film and batteries can be bought here, but they are expensive.)  
Radio or CD player  
CD's  
bug spray/itch cream  
sunglasses  
snorkeling gear  
flip-flops  
backpack  
tent  
Swiss Army knife  
water purification tablets (for traveling off the beaten path)  
hand sanitizer for traveling  
book lamp  
bike  
laptop computer (please keep in mind that the humidity and the salt air are particularly hard on electronics)  
jump drive (flashcard)- HIGHLY RECOMMENDED  
musical instruments  
key ring  
daily planner/agenda  
contacts/saline solution (most volunteers do not have problems wearing contact lenses)  
glasses repair kit/extra pair of glasses  
spices  
water bottle  
deck of cards/board games  
waterproof watch  
money pouch for traveling

# Anything Else You Might Need to Know about the Farm Regarding...

## JOB RESPONSIBILITIES/FLEXIBILITY

We ask volunteers to take their job commitments seriously even though they are not paid with cash for their work. The success of the project as a whole depends on the commitment of each individual to his/her responsibilities.

Volunteers work at least a 40-hour week. Each one has a different schedule depending on his or her responsibilities. In addition to everyday tasks, special projects and emergencies always arise in this type of community situation. Although difficult, we ask that all look at the Farm's needs as a whole over individual jobs and tasks for the day. Volunteers should be flexible and available to assist the team effort in areas outside their job description.

*Volunteers are expected to be "present" and pitch in when necessary. This is not a 9-5 job where you take off for town every weekend. All volunteers have a responsibility to the children and the community. This does not mean that you don't have time off for yourself. You need to take days away or else you will go crazy! But please remember the "spirit" of the community and the project when you do make your plans. All the volunteers should not be gone at one time. In general, volunteers should go to Sunday mass with the group and participate in community meals/activities. With this "spirit" in mind, volunteers should not take on extra paid positions outside of the Farm.*

## VACATIONS/VISITORS

Volunteers work hard, but at the same time, they need to set aside free time for themselves each week. Saturdays and Sundays can usually be taken as free days, depending on job responsibilities. One Sunday a month, all members of the Farm community gather together to share a meal at midday. Volunteers organize the cooking and take part in preparing for the meal.

Volunteers are allowed six weeks of vacation per year, however no more than three weeks should be taken at one time. All vacations should be discussed with the sub-director prior to making plans. We need to make sure all responsibilities are covered! Teachers may want to plan their vacations around the school schedule to minimize time away from their classrooms. Volunteers are encouraged to spend at least the first six months at the Farm before returning home on vacation (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

The Farm also welcomes one or two week visits from family and friends. We can suggest a nearby hotel. We ask that visits be discussed with the sub-director before any specific plans are made. Time that volunteers take off work when visitors are at the Farm should be counted as part of the six-week vacation time.

## MEDICAL

Volunteers are welcome to utilize the services of our health clinic staffed by other volunteers. In cases where volunteers develop health problems on the Farm or on work-related trips, Farm of the Child will pay for all diagnostic tests, procedures and treatments performed by local doctors, and for a stay up to 3 days in a local hospital. All further costs will be met by the individual. **All volunteers must have health insurance; it is the responsibility of each volunteer.**

## VACCINATIONS

Individuals should check with a county/city health center to find out up-to-date information on recommended vaccinations and preventative medicines for travel in Guatemala and Honduras. The Center for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) is an excellent resource for learning more about the various vaccinations and what is recommended. Common recommendations include Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus and malaria. Some vaccinations must be started a few months before departure, so do not wait until the last minute to investigate. Current volunteers recommend the oral typhoid vaccine because it is good for 5 years while the injected vaccine is only good for 2 years. Different diseases are more common from country to country. If you plan to study in Guatemala or to travel outside of Honduras, be sure to check on recommended vaccinations for the different areas. It is also a good idea to know your blood type before arriving in Honduras.

Regarding malaria...yes, it does exist along the northern coast of Honduras. Some volunteers have caught it. It feels like a bad flu with joint ache, backache, headaches, stomachaches and any other kind of ache. It does pass though! Cloroquine pills (used as a preventative measure and also to treat symptoms) are extremely expensive in the U.S. and very cheap in Honduras. One must make a choice whether or not to use the cloroquine pills as a preventative measure. The CDC now suggests that taking chloroquine for long periods of time is NOT harmful. However, it remains a personal decision. Many volunteers opt to take the preventative treatment during the rainy season when there are high malaria rates (approximately October to February) and whenever there are random outbreaks of malaria in the area. Ask your doctor for advice on this matter! In malaria treatment, cloroquine is used (in high doses) to minimize painful symptoms. Don't buy more than a few pills in the U.S.; the Farm clinic has chloroquine. You may even want to check with some of the former volunteers listed in this handbook to see if anyone has any extra cloroquine pills (to start you off) before you buy them.

## RESIDENCY

Once in Honduras, the Farm will apply for Missionary Resident status for all its volunteers. The only document you will need is your passport.

## DRIVING AT THE FARM

The Farm owns three vehicles to be used for Farm business and activities; two of the cars are standard transmission so volunteers should consider learning to drive a stick shift car prior to arrival at the Farm. In order to drive, volunteers must have their Honduran residency cards and a valid U.S. driver's license.

## TIME DIFFERENCE

Honduras is on Central Standard Time (though on Mountain Daylight Time during daylight savings time).

## EXCHANGE RATE

As of March 2008, the exchange rate is approximately 19.15 lempiras to \$1 (U.S.). *U.S. dollars are the only foreign currency accepted in Trujillo banks (and most Honduran and Central American banks).*

## VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

The Farm of the Child volunteer orientation begins on October 1<sup>st</sup>. It is crucial that volunteers arrive at the Farm on October 1<sup>st</sup> (*not early and not late*) so that all can be present for the orientation activities. Orientation typically lasts about three weeks. The first two weeks consist of a blend of informative and thought-provoking discussions; with hands on activities to encourage new volunteers to meet the children, house parents, and workers; and trips to Trujillo and the surrounding communities. Some time during the second week, all volunteers take off for a day retreat to reflect and share with one another. The third week generally consists of shadowing people around the farm to assist new volunteers in discerning where they are being called to serve and to gain a greater appreciation for each person's contribution to the Farm.

Following the orientation, new volunteers will jump into their new positions assisting the volunteers who currently hold the position. Since volunteers arrive on October 1<sup>st</sup> and depart in early December (two years later), there is about a two-month overlap where all 18-20 volunteers are present together (about half of the "old" volunteers will depart in December leaving approximately 12-14 volunteers to continue the mission). While a little chaotic, this overlap is a terrific opportunity for the new volunteers to learn from the voices of experience.

Orientation for re-entry into the U.S. after the term of service at the Farm has been completed has also proven very helpful for returning volunteers. The Catholic Network of Volunteer Services offers a weekend-long From Mission to Mission Re-entry Retreat-Workshop for volunteers returning from international service. The retreat is held at various times throughout the year, in various locations. Therefore, volunteers arriving at the Farm in October 2008, and completing their terms of service in December 2010, would be invited to participate in the Re-entry Retreat during the spring or summer of 2011. Former volunteers

highly recommend attending. More information about the retreat will be available closer to the date. Volunteers with remaining funds in their personal volunteer accounts can request use of these funds to assist in covering retreat costs and transportation with necessary.

## RECOMMENDED READING

Former volunteers have asked for a list of recommended books that might help to prepare them for life in community, for life in a developing country, and for life in Honduras. Below is a list of books that we hope will help you prepare both spiritually and intellectually for the soul-searching and thought-provoking years that await you at the Farm.

***Community and Growth: Our Pilgrimage Together*** by Jean Vanier – Community life is one of the greatest gifts and greatest challenges of the Farm experience. It truly requires a great deal of work, preparation, and attention. Jean Vanier has wonderful advice and insight on community living. This is a MUST read!

***Don't Be Afraid Gringo; A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart: The Story of Elvia Alvarado*** by Medea Benjamin – Volunteers who have read this book say it is an excellent rural Honduran perspective on poverty, justice, and the efforts of the “gringos” in Honduras.

***Story of a Soul, The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*** – St. Thérèse is the patron saint of missionaries, and the volunteer house is named after her. Her “little way” of loving God and her community members calls each of us to sainthood.

***Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*** by Walter Lafeber- This book provides a historical background on the relationship between the Central American countries and the U.S. As a person from the U.S. who is going to live and serve in Central America, it is important to know the role our country played in the development of these countries. The book is a bit of a “heavy” read, but it is certainly worthwhile.

***Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide*** by Robert McAfee Brown – This book is geared toward North Americans with no experience of the topic, and it comes highly recommended by a current volunteer!

***Enrique's Journey*** by Sonia Nazario – This book tells the true story of a Honduran boy who traveled to the States in search of his mother who had moved to the U.S. to earn money for her family in Honduras.

# Communications with the U.S.

Mail is pretty reliable. It usually arrives (going or receiving) in approximately 2-3 weeks. Letters get lost randomly, but not too often. Packages usually make it intact to the post office. If possible, it is usually best to send padded envelopes as opposed to boxes (boxes tend to take longer). If you have something valuable though, don't send it via mail. Find out from U.S. contacts whether or not someone is going down to visit and send your package down with them. Mail can be sent to the Farm using this address:

Finca del Niño  
Apartado Postal #110  
Trujillo, Colón  
Honduras, Central America

Someday the Farm could have a phone line, but that is at least several years away. As of December 2007, volunteers must go into town to make or receive calls. Two of the internet cafés in town provide the opportunity to call the U.S. for 2 lempiras/minute; however, the connection is somewhat unreliable. Volunteers are typically able to call home on special occasions. In order to be fully present to the Finca community, the volunteer community has decided not to have or use cell phones while at the Finca.

In case of emergency, your family and friends (if they can speak some Spanish) can call the Franciscan convent in Trujillo at 011 504 434 4246. The Farm also has its own telephone in a room at the convent; the number is 011 504 434 4526, though it is rare that someone is there to answer this line. Calls made to this number are usually at prearranged times.

Volunteers are able to use one of the four internet cafés in town; they charge about 20 lempiras/hour for the service. It is recommended that volunteers not count on being able to use e-mail on a regular basis. It is incredibly time consuming and sometimes unreliable. It can also be difficult to get into town on a regular basis depending on one's position at the Farm. It is a convenience, but family and friends should know in advance that it can be challenging to maintain frequent e-mail correspondence from the Farm.

# Important Contact Information

Andrea McMerty-Brummer  
Former Volunteer/ Program  
Administrator  
La Ceiba, Honduras  
tel: (727) 475-4459 – US number!!  
e-mail: farmofthechild\_usa@yahoo.com

Dan Mechenbier  
Donations  
1616 Nottingham Knoll Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32225  
e-mail: djmech3@aol.com

Katherine King  
Former Volunteer/New Volunteer  
Liaison  
New York, NY 10003  
tel: (857) 998-7029  
e-mail: knking77@yahoo.com

Chris Bystedt  
Former Volunteer/ New Volunteer  
Support  
Orange, CA  
tel: (714) 457-6413  
e-mail: chrisbystedt@yahoo.com

Adela Turner  
Former Volunteer/Board of Directors  
Vice President  
Alexandria, VA  
e-mail: farmofthechild@juno.com

# More Questions?

## Parents Worried about this Crazy Idea You Have to Work in Honduras?

### Don't Fret, Call Us!

We suggest calling/e-mailing one or more of the former Farm of the Child volunteers listed on this page or on the previous one. They can offer insight into the experience. They are more than happy to discuss Farm life, relate their experiences and answer any questions you might have.

Mary Beth Stryker ('03-'05)  
MaryBethStryker@alumni.nd.edu

(402) 541-2195  
Boston, MA

Monica O'Reilly ('02-'04)  
moreillyvt@gmail.com

(802) 999-6235  
Boston, MA

Janel Bromberek ('02-'04)  
j\_bromberek@yahoo.com

(816) 589-2550  
Kansas City, MO

Kara Elias ('01-'03)  
karita@catholic.org or  
kara\_elias@hotmail.com

1-(780)-438-4323  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
CANADA

Rachel Sacksteder ('99-'01)

(937) 554-6208  
Dayton, OH

Listed below are also the phone numbers of a few of the parents of former volunteers. Feel free to call to hear what they have to say.

Julie Zackrisson  
mother of former volunteer, Tricia Zackrisson  
Charlottesville, VA

(434) 296-4615

Helen Johnson  
mother of former volunteer, Felicia Johnson O'Brien  
Basking Ridge, NJ

(908) 766-4691

# Prayers in Spanish

Volunteers are not required to learn these prayers in advance, but you might find it helpful for attending mass while at language school and settling into life at the Farm. The Farm Prayer (back cover) is prayed at the Farm daily. Additionally, many former volunteers continue to say this prayer after they leave the Farm. Prayer is a great way for the entire Farm community to stay connected. You are invited to join the volunteer community by praying the Farm Prayer during this time of preparation.

## Our Father

Padre Nuestro, que estás en el cielo,  
Santificado sea tu nombre.  
Venga a nosotros tu reino.  
Hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo.  
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.  
Perdona nuestras ofensas,  
como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.  
No nos dejes caer en la tentación,  
y líbranos del mal. Amen.

## Hail Mary

Dios te salve, María.  
Llena eres de gracia.  
El Señor es contigo.  
Bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres,  
y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús.

Santa María, Madre de Dios,  
ruega por nosotros pecadores,  
Ahora, y en la hora de  
nuestra muerte.  
Amen.

## Glory Be

Gloria al Padre,  
Al Hijo,  
y al Espíritu Santo,

Como era en el principio,  
ahora, y siempre, por los  
siglos de los siglos.  
Amen.

## prayer of repentance said during mass

Yo confieso ante Dios Todopoderoso.  
y ante Ustedes, hermanos,  
que he pecado mucho  
de pensamiento, palabra, obra y omisión,  
por mi culpa, por mi culpa, por mi gran culpa.

Por eso ruego a Santa María, siempre Virgen.  
a los ángeles, a los santos,  
y a Ustedes, hermanos,  
que intercedan por mi,  
ante Dios, nuestro Señor.



## Farm of the Child Prayer

Lord Jesus, protector of orphans and all who depend on you, as we begin this day we turn our hearts towards you. We give thanks for the gift of your great love and for the chance to serve you in all that we do today.

We ask that your grace and mercy be poured out on our beloved Farm of the Child, on our children, on our house parents, on our Franciscan sisters, on our volunteers past, present, and future, on our board members, on our support personnel, on our benefactors, and on all whom we serve in Honduras through our various ministries.

As a member of this community entrusted with maintaining, protecting and strengthening this mission, I ask for the following in order to better carry out my responsibilities:

A humble heart free from the desire of being esteemed,  
A meek heart that bears with everyone,  
A patient heart happy in the most trying circumstance,  
A peaceful heart at peace with self and others,  
A heart poor in spirit detached from the things of this world,  
A heart full of love that finds happiness in suffering with others,  
A prayerful heart that loves to be in communion with you,  
A holy heart whose only desire is that God may be known and loved by everyone,  
A pure heart like Mary's which seeks to love and serve God alone.

May we as a community be one in heart and mind so that we may help to bring about the Kingdom of God through your mission, Farm of the Child. Amen.

Let us seek Mary's intercession by reciting one Hail Mary.

## Oración de la Finca del Niño

Señor Jesús, protector de huérfanos y todos los que dependen de ti. Mientras empezamos este día levantamos nuestros corazones hacia ti. Te damos gracias por el regalo de tu gran amor y por la oportunidad de servirte en todo lo que hacemos hoy.

Pedimos que tu gracia y tu misericordia sean brindadas en nuestro querido Finca del Niño, en nuestros niños, en nuestros padres de casa, en nuestras Hermanas Franciscanas, en nuestros voluntarios, en nuestros miembros de la Junta Directiva, en los demás empleados, en nuestros bienhechores, y en todos los que servimos en Honduras por medio de diversos ministerios.

Como miembro de esta comunidad, confiada en mantener, proteger y esforzar esta misión, pido por lo siguiente para llevar a cabo mejor mis responsabilidades.

Un corazón humilde libre del deseo de ser estimado.  
Un corazón manso que soporte a todos.  
Un corazón paciente feliz en las circunstancias más difíciles.  
Un corazón tranquilo en paz conmigo mismo y los demás.  
Un corazón pobre del espíritu desprendido de las cosas de este mundo.  
Un corazón lleno de amor que encuentre felicidad en sufrir por los demás.  
Un corazón fiel que busque estar en comunión contigo.  
Un corazón santo con el único deseo que Dios sea conocido y amado por todo el mundo.  
Un corazón puro como el de Maria la cual busca amar y servir solamente a Dios.

Como comunidad esperamos ser uno en corazón y mente para poder ayudar a desarrollar el Reino de Dios por medio de tu misión Finca del Niño. Amen.

Pedimos la intercesión de nuestra madre Maria, orando un Ave Maria.