



## **Family Service Learning Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **About School the World**

School the World is a non-profit organization committed to improving the quality of and access to education in the developing world. In the past nine years, we have built 75 schools throughout Guatemala and Honduras by partnering with the local government and rural community leaders. Aside from building schools, we train teachers, empower parents through bi-monthly meetings, and sustainably stock classroom libraries through a matching program. In 2016, we began introducing an initiative around PLAY to our strategy. Play is proven to increase students' mental and physical health, learning skills, gender equality and life skills. We committed to building play spaces to facilitate free play, organized recess games, and eventually an inter-school soccer league and have since built 43 playgrounds at our existing schools.

### **Who**

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) who wish to participate in a service program with their children. The typical age range for children will range from middle school through lower high school grades.

### **What**

Families commit to paying a per person fee and participating in fundraising efforts to cover construction and material costs for the project. Travel fees can be paid in full or families can choose to fundraise for their trip in addition to the fundraising efforts necessary for the project.

### **Where**

Families complete their service work in the rural Western Highlands of Guatemala (the department of Quiché) and experience the Spanish colonial city of Antigua.

### **When**

For the 2019 travel season, we are targeting one week during July for our family service program. This week is July 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

### **What Will Families Do?**

Families raise the funds to build a primary school building and/or a playground for children living in poverty. At the end of the week in the community, everyone (including the entire community and local Mayor) will participate in a Dedication Ceremony to celebrate this support for education. Among other things, service travelers can expect to mix cement, install play equipment and paint. Families will also have time within the classrooms to help teach lessons as well as complete a home visit to understand daily life within the community.

While raising funds in the months leading up to the trip, families have the option to learn about successful fundraising tactics as well as attend educational seminars to learn about the region's history and culture.

### **Is It Safe?**

Safety is our top priority. We personally investigate and inspect medical facilities, housing and food preparation. We evaluate each building project for any potential safety concerns. We use only known drivers and vehicles; we require certificates of insurance and maintenance. We carefully vet all of our communities and spend considerable time in them before beginning any build. There also will be at least two STW leaders (one U.S., one local) as well as adult chaperones with each group.

We purchase insurance for each traveler to cover medical risks, emergency medical evacuation and cancellations due to death, illness and similar situations. Families have the option to purchase additional "Cancel for any Reason" insurance should they choose to. Reach out to a member of our staff to discuss as needed.

We have been working in Guatemala since 2009; have a strong local team of 12 and relationships with prominent business leaders and families in Guatemala. We also work in two of the safest departments in Guatemala: Quiche and Totonicapán.

A safety marker used by other exchange groups is the presence of the Peace Corps, who are highly present there. The Peace Corps are training new classes for Guatemala and have no plans to leave the country in the foreseeable future. We monitor any change in this activity prior to and during all trips.

## **Requirements**

- Complete and submit an application to Natalie at [natalie.hambor@schooltheworld.org](mailto:natalie.hambor@schooltheworld.org) or by sending to the School the World office.
- Submit an initial payment of \$500 per traveler (families have the option to raise the remaining balance of our per person travel fee in addition to the fundraising requirement for the school and/or playground build).
- Complete and submit all required waivers of liability signed by both the student and a legal guardian to be distributed at later date via SchoolDoc, an online management system.
- Submit an accurate health history and a certification of good health from a physician, including a statement that the student does not have any physical, psychological or medical condition that would inhibit participation in the mission.
- Visit travel clinic with preliminary itinerary to obtain any recommended vaccinations at least three weeks prior to trip.
- Passports valid for at least 6 months after trip return date.

## **How Will We Raise the Funds?**

STW will provide the families with a “Fundraising Toolkit” and will guide families in online campaigns and provide a list of suggestions for independent & group events. Every family will have the opportunity to create their own online fundraising page through our peer-to-peer platform.

## **What If Families Do Not Meet the Fundraising Deadlines?**

If families do not meet the fundraising deadlines, we require payment to make up the difference between the amounts due and the amount raised. If you would like to discuss special circumstances please call Natalie at 617-867-9500.

## **Are There Refunds?**

Please see our full refund policy at [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org).

## **Are There Any Other Costs?**

There will be no other required STW costs. If families choose to participate in an extra activity (volcano hike, zipline, etc.) in Antigua, there will be an additional cost of \$25-\$45. Families may choose to tip any hospitality vendor, and/or bring additional spending money for souvenirs. Families should bring their own money for meals during travel in airports as well as for any checked baggage fees.

**Where does STW general funding come from?**

One of our past funders was USAID, a division of the US State Department. We also receive substantial support from many generous individuals, corporations and foundations such as The Harbourton Foundation, the General Electric Company, the GE Foundation, Cigna and Dole.

**Will there be any cultural activities?**

Yes, there will be afternoon cultural activities varying per trip (e.g., visiting local Mayan ruins, caves where the Mayans hid from the colonial Spaniards, and the colorful market of nearby Chichicastenango, the largest open-air market in Central America). They also will spend at least one day and evening in Antigua, the Spanish colonial capital of Central America, and have the opportunity to participate in an extra cultural activity (options provided at later date).

For more information about our programs, our leadership and our Board of Directors visit our website: [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org)

For any questions, please contact Natalie Hambor at [natalie.hambor@schooltheworld.org](mailto:natalie.hambor@schooltheworld.org) or our office staff at 617) 867-9500.