

2015 International Youth Mission Trip

Quick Facts

- Where: Puerta Plata, Dominican Republic
- When: July 7 – 17, 2015
- What: Half-day construction projects and half day people ministry – either youth sports camps (basketball or volleyball) or children’s ministry
- Who: PCN’s mission team will be working with Merge Ministries, the same organization we partnered with on the 2014 Alaska mission trip. We will be the only mission team at the site.
- How much: Estimating \$1500 per participant, subject to change based on airfare rates

The Church and Community We Will Serve

- The church in Puerta Plata is of good size for Latin America. A couple hundred people attend including many youth (youth are people 15 years old and older who are not married).
- There is a church sanctuary, Sunday school rooms, a basketball court, a field for playing soccer or baseball, and a dirt parking lot. It is a large piece of property, but is located on the main street of Puerta Plata and a cross street to a very busy neighborhood.
- The church has a mission church about ten minutes away. This church is located in a very low-income community and is small. There are a lot of children at this location.
- The church has a second mission location about 30 minutes from the church in a rural community that is super low income.
- There is a purification plant on site as a ministry to people in the low-income community behind the church.
- It is possible that our team will be involved in all three locations, depending on the final size of our group and what Pastor Andres thinks will work the best.

Team Training - IMPORTANT

- A representative from Merge will be coming to PCN, probably either April 19th or April 26th to train our team. It is an interactive training that include 1) appropriate mission attitude and motivation for going on a mission trip, 2) cultural sensitivity training, specific information about the community we’ll be serving, and 3) ministry coaching/training.
- The training will last 5 hours, including a meal, and is intended for adult and youth participants. Parents of student participants are welcome to attend as well.

Transportation

- We are currently working on identifying the best airfares for large groups. You should plan on some overnight flights, either in the United States or in Santiago.
- Depending on flight departure and arrival times, we’ll either coordinate carpooling from PCN to SFO or potentially utilize The Marin Airporter.
- Merge will handle all ground transportation in the Dominican Republic, including any trips to multiple ministry sites, airport pick up/drop off, and to housing, if needed.

Travel Documentation and Requirements

- Entering into the Dominican Republic will require a passport, but not a visa. Apply for passports and renewals NOW.
 - <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/apply.html>
- Some countries require that your U.S. passport be valid at least 3-6 months beyond the dates of your trip. The Dominican Republic doesn't have a validity rule, but it is highly recommended that if your passport expires before that timeframe, that renew it before you travel.
- Each participant will need to purchase a tourist card upon arrival for \$10 USD.
- Permission forms – as we get closer to the departure date, we will be requiring a parental release form, medical release form, volunteer release form, liability form, etc.
- We will help facilitate notarization of required forms.

Immunizations and Health Safety

- All international travelers should get Hepatitis A and Typhoid shots, as well as be up to date on all other routine vaccinations and booster shots.
 - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/dominican-republic>
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/HAVfaq.htm#C2>
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/typhoid/default.htm>
- People primarily get sick from dehydration. The Dominican Republic is hot and humid all of the time. The team will be working hard, walking a lot, and playing hard. We need everyone to drink A LOT OF WATER (1 gallon per day). Everyone needs to bring their own water bottles. There literally will be tons of purified water available at the church, since there is a purification plant on site as a ministry to people in the low-income community behind the church. People are able to purchase purified water at a lower cost than retail.

Food

- Meals will all be at the main church. Merge will provide uncooked morning and evening meals. Morning will be typical American breakfasts with cereal, fruit, pastries, yogurt, juices, etc. The evening meal will be American-style sandwiches, cookies, chips, vegetables, fruit, etc. The noon meals will be cooked by women of the church and will be typical Dominican meals with rice, beans, meats, vegetables, etc.

Housing

- We will be staying in the homes of members of the Puerta Plata Church. The number of people who go to each home depends on the size of the home; two would be the smallest number and we could go up to as many as eight in one home.
- Depending on the number of adult volunteers, we will try to have an adult leader with each housing unit if possible, or at least put older same-gender students together in a home without a PCN adult leader.
- Some homes have extra beds and people from the team can sleep on them. Some people may need to sleep on a floor in a bedroom. We will probably bring some extra bedding/ pillows for team members who are sleeping on the floor of a home.

- Host families tend to feed their guests something even if they already have breakfast and dinner scheduled with the team. There may be coffee in the morning, bread, etc.
- Showers are readily available in every home.
- Merge highly recommends teams going to host families, but if there is significant reluctance to do this, we can stay at the church. However, there are no showers available (they would have to hook up a “camping-style shower to utilize), everyone would have to bring an air mattress, bedding, and pillow and would be sleeping on tile/cement floors in the sanctuary or in Sunday School classrooms.

Language

- If you don’t know Spanish, no worries, though it would be beneficial to brush up on some conversational Spanish. Many of the host families and Church members speak some English.

Recreational Activities – Will Happen, But Not Final Yet

- We will be engaging in ministry opportunities on Saturday and Sunday, to take advantage of the community’s availability. On Saturday, we’ll probably focus on interacting with youth and children either in sports or in a special outreach event. On Sunday, we will participate in worship and then probably will have a “family day” following worship with all of the host families.
- Towards the end of our trip, we will have a recreational day with just our team. Those details have yet to be worked out.

Handling Emergencies

- All host families have phones; all Merge staff members have cell phones.
- We will have a detailed process for handling any emergencies and contacting the appropriate people if and when necessary.

Other Logistics/Information

- As we progress, we’ll provide other kinds of information when necessary, such as the requisite forms, packing lists, itineraries, etc.
- If you are not on CCB (Church Community Builders), please see Jeff about being added to the 2015 International Youth mailing list, This will be the primary communication channel that important information and dates will be posted.