

The schedule: July 18-28, 2008. We'll be starting projects during our week that will be finished by a group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Loveland and Habitat for Humanity.

Activities: You'll work in some project: teaching, medical, construction, distribution of clothing and supplies. The cost of a home hovers around \$2000 each, a sum unattainable for most of the citizens of Somoto.

You'll experience the cultural life of Nicaragua, learn about the challenges and needs of the people, and what the community is doing to address them. We will bring items that will help—clothing, blankets, medicines, eyeglasses, school supplies and books.

There will be time in the evenings to meet the local folks and share with them in their lives. It's possible there will be day excursions arranged; there might be an extra cost for those.

Who can go? Anyone 15 or older is welcome. If you're not able to do heavy construction work, there is a critical need for literacy instruction and English instruction (and there's a cultural/historical reason behind that huge need), clothing distribution, health care, teaching, library work, and more.

Cost: \$1200 includes airfare and room and board (breakfast and dinner) for the week. \$100 will reserve your space, with payment spread out through June 2008. Lunches are on your own, and meals on travel days on your responsibility.

History of the Mission: Seven years ago, Loveland Habitat for Humanity started a program in Somoto. The mayor has invited them to return annually to continue this project for families in critical need of housing. (In fact, one group will be going in February 2008.) Trinity Lutheran Church of Loveland has taken up the project as well.

Lodging in Somoto: Hotel Panamericano, where amenities include a beautiful typical central patio, dining room, running water, private baths, safe food, a collection of local animals and a handicraft shop. Rooms have fans, but are not air-conditioned. You'll be amazed at the evening temperatures though! Laundry service can be arranged.

Typical foods of Nicaragua: The Hotel Panamericano will do its best to provide wonderful meals typical of the area. That means lots of rice and beans, and a little meat or egg put in occasionally. The best part—carefully washed and peeled local fresh fruits! We'll go over food and water safety before we leave. Meals on the worksites will be brown bags that you prepare from the local grocery store, Pali.

Weather expectations: The northern area of Nicaragua is hot during the day, but it can get cool during the night. It can rain at any time, and it's often foggy or misty. Average temp July-August is about 80.

Getting around: Few people in Somoto can afford to own vehicles. You'll walk and walk and walk. Construction traffic will be by rented trucks. A bus or vans will carry us from the airport in Managua to Somoto and back.

Health issues: Make sure your tetanus shot is up to date. The local clinics and Public Health can help. You may want to talk to your health care professional about other immunizations and health issues, including protection against malaria, diarrhea, and hepatitis. Bring your prescription medications in their original containers; bring an extra copy of the prescription with you. There is a medical clinic/hospital in Somoto for emergencies.

Personal health kit: Antibiotic cream, SUNSCREEN, insect repellent with DEET, PeptoBismol, Lomotil or Immodium, pain reliever of your choice, bandaids, Dramamine or Bonine if you are prone to motion sickness.

What to wear: Nicaragua is a very conservative country. Local women generally wear dresses or long pants rather than shorts, though the worksites stand outside of that rule a bit, and long shorts are accepted. Best to avoid tank tops and spaghetti straps for women. You'll notice that, while poor, the people are proud. The children are as clean as can be when they present themselves for school or church.

Bring clothes and shoes that are comfortable, perhaps some that can be left behind for someone to use there. Bring shorts (long ones, not short shorts) and long pants (not jeans, as denim takes forever to dry in this wet season) for work. Bring shoes for walking and working, a jacket, sweater, or hoodie, and a light rain jacket.

What else to bring? Tools of your trade!

Construction: hammers, work gloves, measuring tape, small square, nail pouch or tool belt.

Bible school: teaching supplies in general—crayons, markers, glue, paper, books, craft supplies and activities that we'll plan and organize in the coming months. We'll make and take some wood figures to build on the program we started last year, along with copies of the program manual, which has now been translated to Spanish.

Medical tools: whatever is your trade.

Musical instruments that are very portable

Reusable, refillable water bottle

Bible and journal

Reading materials

Passport

No passport? Inquire at the local Post Office. Your passport must be valid for 6 months after our scheduled return date. If it expires before then, you need to renew it now.

To get ready:

- 1 Get a passport, and/or check the expiration of the one you have. Make 2 copies of the ID page—one for trip leaders, and one for yourself.
- 2 Study up on your Spanish a bit—we may even do a little Survival Spanish before we leave
- 3 Gather the tools, supplies, clothes, and shoes that you can bring, and perhaps leave there, for someone to use.

- 4 Update your prescriptions and tetanus immunization.
- 5 Gather your personal medical kit and talk with your health care provider.
- 6 Check that your health insurance provider will reimburse emergency expenses that may occur in Nicaragua. Some do not cover expenses incurred outside the U.S.

For more information, contact Kathy Naples at 970-887-3066 or knaples@rkymtnhi.com