



### *2020 Mission Trips*

*Central Valley, Costa Rica*

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Thank you for your interest in Strong Missions and in serving the people of Costa Rica. We explain the mission part of your trip here, and any additional fun activities are included in the accompanying “Fun Activities” packet. We are flexible regarding group size, trip length, and arrival and departure dates and times. You can even arrive and depart midweek when airfare is at its lowest. We can accommodate all types of skill sets and accept various types of work teams as well as teams that offer gifts in the arts or sports. We offer pastor and family discounts, as we understand some families are limited in their household economy yet not in their hearts for service. We look forward to partnering with you in service to the poor and disenfranchised of Costa Rica, and to the relationships that will grow from your experience with us.

#### **I. MISSION TRIP COST**

For teams staying with us *in our facility*, the per person cost for

- 5 nights is \$730
- 6 nights is \$770
- 7 nights is \$810
- 8 nights is \$850
- For other lengths of stay please contact us directly. For teams with less than 10 participants add \$50 per person to cover additional transportation costs.

***What's included?*** All lodging, meals, building materials, administrative fees and transportation are included. Transportation includes transit to and from the airport, worksites, a nearby Sunday tour or church followed by an afternoon tour, a weekday trip to an inner city or rural ministry site, as well as children's transportation to and from the mission for kid's activities.

***What's not included?*** Flights are not included. Educational Opportunity Tours in Florida and Highpoint Travel in Dallas specialize in mission travel if you need

assistance. Driver's tips are not included. We recommend \$20 per full day of transportation for tips, and this can be given directly to the driver at the end of each day or to the transportation coordinator at the end of the trip. You will also receive a registration packet with a list of things to bring and a "Fun Activities" packet containing options for additional outings.

## **II. 2018-2019 PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES & ADDITIONAL INFO**

Photos and more information of teams and projects as well as the link to our blog can be found at [www.facebook.com/strongmissions/](http://www.facebook.com/strongmissions/) and [www.strongmissions.com](http://www.strongmissions.com). Through mutual trust between SM and the community all projects have been requested by families, churches, schools, children's shelters, city councils, etc., and have been researched to evaluate need and feasibility. Programs provide physical resources and pertinent information and training to the people so that they can better reach and serve their own communities.

### **A. 2019-2020 Construction and Other Projects**

Work in our area includes 2 local children's shelters along with various projects in public schools. We also continue to work on infrastructure and with children in challenged inner city and rural areas, as well as continued construction of our community center and retreat center at the mission. Work spans from light to heavy construction, installing tire playgrounds, working with kids, sewing projects, and community gardening.

### **B. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

Vacation Bible School style activities such as crafts, games, songs, etc., are encouraged. Teams prepare such activities to bring with them, and are encouraged to think outside of the box so as not to duplicate past teams' efforts. Translators are provided. Arts and sports teams can participate with local children as well through camps.

## **III. LODGING**

### **A. Strong Missions Center**

Strong Missions' lodging is first come, first served. It consists of bunk-bed group lodging and shared showers.

### **B. Hotels and B&Bs**

For those wanting a little more luxury, please allow us to reserve your space with an area hotel or B&B for an additional cost.

#### IV. PASTOR AND FAMILY DISCOUNTS

The base costs keep us doing the work we do, but if pastors need help we offer a \$200 discount. Also, to assist families with somewhat limited resources, those coming from the same household economy are offered a \$400 discount off the 3<sup>rd</sup> person's cost and \$200 off of each additional person.

#### V. INSURANCE & UMVIM TEAMS

To be recognized as UMVIM a team must register with your conference UMVIM office. Personal accident insurance is recommended for work here. If you are not covered by your U.S. policy for international travel, insurance can be purchased through the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries regardless of church affiliation. You can register your team and send payments directly to them. For details on the 3 plans offered, please visit: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer-Opportunities/Resources/Insurance/Insurance>. Other options for mission insurance can be found online.

#### VI. METHODS OF PAYMENT/ BANK TRANSFER INFORMATION

We are working at this time so that all mission costs included in this packet may be sent, by check or online, directly to our 501(c)3 public charity at the South Carolina address. Additional activities and hotels found in the "Fun Activities" packet can be paid by PayPal or by bank transfer directly to our Costa Rican agency. Funds for non-mission related activities cannot be paid to the charity organization. You will receive two invoices, one for the mission trip and one for additional fun days and overnight trips.

#### VII. STRONG MISSIONS REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT/REFUND POLICY

Strong Missions requests a deposit of \$100 per person along with your team registration form to reserve your space. We ask that final payments are sent to our 501(c)3 public charity mailing address below, or electronically deposited at least 2 months prior to your arrival. In case someone is not able to make the trip Strong Missions will refund any money that has not been used prior to your arrival. The total deposit amount will be deducted from the final payment.

Deposit checks can be sent to:

**Strong Missions Inc.**

**PO Box 16132**

**Greenville, SC 29606**

Please note team name, trip date, and *"trip deposit"* on the memo line so as not to confuse this with a donation.

## **VIII. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Every member of the team must sign our policy upon arrival. It can be found at: <https://docs.google.com/open?id=0B5nooaBuEOHsZGhTSVIFcE1Rc21ORnpwMWtwN2JXdw>.

## **IX. ADDITIONAL COSTS AND SPENDING MONEY**

Many locations accept credit cards, but a few are cash only. ATM's are available in most parts of the country. Most places will only accept \$20 bills or lower, and we will change money for you as well. Make sure all bills are not torn or marked, or we cannot accept them, as the banks and vendors here will not accept them from us.

## **X. THINGS TO BRING (to be copied and distributed among team participants)**

Remember that the church here is more conservative than in the U.S./Canada, so clothing should be much more modest for church services and activities held in churches. We ask that teams abide by typical school rules for clothing (no spaghetti straps, fingertip-length shorts, etc.), for such activities.

### **Required Items**

- Flexibility and an open heart along with a desire to help the poor, build relationships and experience a culture different than your own
- Bus Driver's tips (typically \$20 or more per team per day depending on team size)
- Passport
- Personal toiletries & towel
- Raincoat or poncho
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent with Deet
- Individual, refillable, water bottle
- Pants/jeans, extra-long shorts, or capris for work (the longer the better)
- Gloves, eyewear and closed-toed shoes for work (and some activities on fun-trips)
- Pillow and pillow case
- Extra money, (esp. small bills – 1s, 5s, 10s) for snacks, souvenirs, meals, fun trips, etc.- bills cannot be torn, marked or spotted
- Personal medications

### **Suggested Items**

- Small flashlight
- Swimsuit & beach towel depending on your choice of fun trip
- Good walking shoes/hiking boots
- Shorts & Sandals for fun trip and time off
- Long pants and light jacket for cooler night weather at mission and mountain excursions
- Small backpack for daily and fun trip use

- Camera and binoculars
- Travel alarm clock
- Hat or cap
- Rubber boots or two pairs of old shoes during the rainy season
- Spanish dictionary/phrase book
- Donations for local families/children and for work (tools), school supplies, clothing, shoes, toys, soccer balls, hygiene items, First Aid materials, etc.)