

# Volunteer Kit Joint Therapy Outreach Inc.

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## About Joint Therapy Outreach Inc.

Joint Therapy Outreach Inc. is an Australian based, not for profit, Christian organisation.

We make a difference to the lives of people in less resourced communities (currently in Vanuatu) who have disabilities and medical issues. We provide support for immediate needs, such as providing wheelchairs, and provide training. We work with local groups to enable development of skills and ongoing provision of services.

A team of professionals and students has visited the island of Espiritu Santo, in 2010, 2011, 2012 and both Espiritu Santo and Tanna in 2013 providing hands on therapy and medical services, providing and fitting wheelchairs, and delivering training.. Currently we visit for about 2 weeks in early July.

JTO provides the opportunity for professionals, students and others to experience a life changing short term volunteer opportunity, while improving the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities living in impoverished circumstances.

We freight wheelchairs and other therapy equipment in advance. Wheelchairs for Kids provide us with specially designed rough terrain wheelchairs, and we are happy to receive donations of other equipment including adult wheelchairs, commodes, walkers etc.

**History:** In December 2009, the story was told of a mother in Vanuatu who gave birth to a premature baby who had a disability. Traditionally these children were hidden in the home as disability was not recognised in Vanuatu prior to the 2000's. However, this young mother refused to let her baby die or be shunned by society and thus, without training, funding or family support she cared for and stimulated this baby as best she could with her mother instinct. Dorian did not stop here though but began collecting any children in the area that had disability, bringing them to her own home to stimulate and assist as best she could. This story was the driving inspiration to develop a team who could travel to Vanuatu and assist the people who had a disability and their families.

## **Mission Statement:**

- a) To provide health and therapy support/services to people with disabilities and health challenges in impoverished circumstances
- b) To facilitate workers to go and implement the primary object of the association
- c) To actively raise funds to promote the principle object of Joint Therapy Outreach internationally.
- d) ) To operate Joint Therapy Outreach in a manner consistent with recognised Christian principles and values.
- e) To pray for the people and work of Joint Therapy Outreach locally and internationally.

## **Membership**

Membership of the Association is open to any committed Christian who can support the objects of the association, who holds a personal faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, and maintains a lifestyle consistent with accepted Christian principles and values. If interested please request an application form.

## **Volunteers;**

Any one is welcome to volunteer with us, providing they have appropriate qualifications and/or skills. If you have a passion to serve the people of Vanuatu and to work with us then we welcome you.

## **About Vanuatu**

Vanuatu, officially the Republic of Vanuatu, is an island nation located in the South Pacific Ocean.

Capital – Port Vila

Currency: Vanuatu vatu

Population: 245,619 (2011) (World Bank)

Official language: French Language, English Language, Bislama Language

Government: Republic, Unitary state, Parliamentary republic



Vanuatu is a land of volcanoes and magic, underwater ship wrecks, ancient art and dance, waterfalls and blue-holes, organic foods and a myriad of hidden bays and beaches. .. lush, tropical islands... the warm, turquoise waters... the friendly people... the colours, the culture... and the fantastic food!

The islands were originally home to Melanesians for over 2,500 years. Then, in the 15th century, Vanuatu had its first European settlers in the 19th century. Known as the *New Hebrides*, they were administered jointly by Britain and France for 73 years until Vanuatu's independence in 1980.

Made up of 83 small islands, (13 larger islands and about 70 smaller ones), about 65 of them being inhabited. The capital Port Vila is found on the island of Efate, however the largest island is Espiritu Santo (usually called Santo). The archipelago of islands is of volcanic origin. There are some active volcanoes in Vanuatu and this causes the shoreline to be rocky with fringe reefs and the ocean floor to drop away quickly. Most are mountainous and covered in lush rain forests. Many are protected by coral reefs

Vanuatu is in a sub-tropical climate with 9 months of hot weather followed by a few months with cool dry conditions.

While most of the outer islands maintain their traditional Melanesian lifestyle, the impressive city of Port-Vila is crammed with colonial buildings, expats, duty-free shops, casinos, open-air markets, upscale restaurants and tourists.

The four mainstays of the economy are agriculture, tourism, offshore financial services, and raising cattle. There is substantial fishing activity, although this industry does not bring in much foreign exchange. Exports include copra, kava, beef, cocoa, and timber, and imports include machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, and fuels. Excellent coffee is grown on the island of Tanna, (and can be purchased and brought back into Australia). Tax revenues come mainly from import duties and a 12.5% VAT on goods and services. Economic development is hindered by dependence on relatively few commodity exports, vulnerability to natural disasters and long distances between constituent islands and from main markets.

Outside of the immediate tourist sites, poverty is obvious. Most people rely on subsistence farming. Medical services are extremely limited.

### **Volunteer code of ethics**

Volunteers with Joint Therapy Outreach Inc. agree to uphold the “mission statement” and abide by this code of ethics

- Always behave in a culturally appropriate manner
- Understand and respect local cultural views
- Maintain high standards of personal and professional behaviour and integrity
- Always engage in person and family centred practice and work in a culturally sensitive manner
- Avoid all discriminatory practices
- Always work as a team player
- Understand and comply the rules of the organisation
- Respond to directions and instructions from the team leader

### **Placement information**

#### **Culture**

Dress requirements are that you are modestly covered! Ladies: Loose clothing that does not accentuate the curves is required! Below knee length loose skirts

(trousers of any sort are not appropriate) however culottes are a useful item of clothing. Shirts – need to cover the shoulders, be high enough to not show cleavage when leaning over and working. Sleeveless is OK but not strappy. Gentlemen – shirts with sleeves are usually worn (singlets are not appropriate). You will be working mostly sitting on the floor, so consider appropriate wear. The temperature is usually hot and muggy – lightweight clothing is best, preferably cotton. Light colour is better for not attracting mosquitoes.

Swimming – it is acceptable to wear bathers at a hotel with swimming pool, or at the beach.

Footwear; everyone wears thongs everywhere. Good walking shoes/sandals may be useful for sightseeing/ going bush.

### **Language;**

Most people speak either English or French and Bislama (a Pidgin English). Here are some links which you may find useful to start learning some Bislama.

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/bislama.php>

<http://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/langnet/definitions/bislama.html>

### **Roles/ skills**

The people who have comprised our teams so far

- Occupational therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Speech Pathologists
- Medical practitioner
- Students second year and onwards are welcome, provided a qualified practitioner is on the team and willing to provide supervision.
- Handyman
- Cook/manager

Other possible roles include

- teacher/ special education teacher
- nurse
- dietician
- Other – if you believe you have useful skills please contact us to discuss.

We work predominantly with children, however do also see adults. Expertise in paediatrics, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism, neurological conditions, musculo-skeletal conditions, spinal injury, communication and eating disorders, and many other areas will be useful, however are not essential.

### **Working conditions**

Working conditions can be challenging. We have been fortunate to work mainly in a large hall, but other locations are people's homes, or the centre of a village compound under a tree. It is impossible to predict how many people will attend on any day, and may include large numbers. People usually attend with the family, all sitting around the 'clinic' waiting their turn. There is little privacy, as the people are community focused, and neighbours support and interpret for each other. Vanuatu is very 'event' focussed and NOT time focussed. So a start time of 8.00 am may have people starting to arrive at 10.00am. As long as the event happens that is OK!

The people we have worked with are so very appreciative of what we are able to provide.

You may see someone for an hour or two on the day of their visit and that may be all the input we are able to provide. They may have travelled some distance from another village and need to return home that same day.

All costs incurred by the client are covered by JTO. Client transport and food costs for the visit are typically paid for by JTO.

We need to be culturally sensitive and not make recommendations or provide equipment that cannot be sustained once the team leaves. I.e anything battery operated is useless. Thickening of drinks is a particular challenge for SP's.

## Volunteer skills

All volunteers will come with professional qualifications or other skill sets. Successful volunteering involves more than these skills, and requires personal and interpersonal skills to meet the challenges involved in working in a different culture. Some of the attributes required to enable successful volunteering in this setting include

- Strong commitment to the role
- Expectation of personal excellence – or giving your best
- Hard work ethic
- Being open to new cultures and new experiences
- Desire to learn
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Problem solving skills
- Getting out of your comfort zone
- Embracing change
- Humility
- Excellent communication skills
- Being a team player

## Locations

On our previous visits we have been to the island of Espiritu Santo, staying in the main town of Luganville, and also visiting the bush area of Big Bay.

In 2013 we also visited the island of Tanna and worked with the support of the community based disability committee. The committee represented many areas of the community, and coordinated and planned our visit there to maximise the impact of our visit.

## Costs

Volunteers are responsible for all their own costs. These are estimated to be \$2500 - \$3000 including flights, insurance, accommodation, food and incidentals.



## Travel arrangements

Once dates etc are organised, flights will be advised. It is recommended that the team travels together, however if you wish to have different plans please discuss this with JTO. This is a great opportunity to extend your travel for some tourism in Vanuatu or eastern Australia.

## Health

General good health status is important, as conditions are pretty basic, medical services, supplies of medication are severely limited or non-existent. A reasonable standard of fitness and endurance is required to work in basic conditions in hot and humid climate, and we may have to walk to a village through jungle paths.

It is essential that you check with your GP or the Travel Doctor [www.tmvc.com.au](http://www.tmvc.com.au) to ensure that you have the required vaccinations for the trip. Malaria medication is strongly recommended. Doxycycline or malarone are often used medication. LARIUM is NOT RECOMMENDED due to potential side effects.

Tropical strength mosquito repellent is essential. Please read the label carefully; it must contain DEET to at least 30%. Some better known brands are labelled as 'tropical strength' but do not have this percentage of DEET and are useless.

## Insurance

Travel insurance must include medical evacuation. Evidence of such insurance will need to be provided to JTO.

- Professional indemnity; It seems quite unlikely that you would be sued for malpractice in Vanuatu. However please check with your professional indemnity provider to request cover for your time in Vanuatu.

## Accommodation

Accommodation: We prefer for the team to all stay at the same venue if possible, as we will often meet, debrief, record client notes etc. in the evening. Accommodation

will be sourced and booked by JTO, but everyone is responsible for paying for their accommodation. This is usually in back packer style accommodation. We endeavour to have accommodation with kitchen facilities, with either someone to act as cook or we share cooking and catering responsibilities.

## **Safety**

No drinking kava, no drugs. The niVan people are charming and friendly and the environment is generally safe. However common sense prevails and it is strongly recommended to always go out in pairs, especially after dark.

There are no poisonous insects or animals on Vanuatu.

## **Alcohol and drugs**

Prescription drugs for personal use are permitted. Taking or carrying of illicit drugs will invoke immediate disqualification from the team, and you will be required to leave the team. Joint Therapy Outreach Inc. will have no further responsibility for team members who are disqualified from the team.

Team members will not frequent Kava bars, or imbibe Kava.

Limited, responsible social drinking is acceptable in certain situations; check with the team leader to avoid cultural offence.

## **Partners and Children:**

Married couples can volunteer for the team; however both partners would need to have appropriate qualification or roles in the team. Please be aware that this can cause frictions, in wishing to spend time alone with your partner, or being part of the team. The first allegiance is to being a team member.

Joint Therapy Outreach is unable to cater for children on volunteer placements.

## **Selection process**

Please complete the application form at the end of this package. Email to [admin@jto.org.au](mailto:admin@jto.org.au)

## Pre-departure

Team members from Perth will have an opportunity to meet up for a briefing. Time and location TBC.

## Contact details

- Email; admin@jto.org.au
- Facebook; Find us at "Joint Therapy Outreach" Please 'like us' to spread the word,
- Website – [www.jto.org.au](http://www.jto.org.au)