



Therapy Missions

TEACH...TREAT...TRAIN

Mission Volunteer Handbook



A Message from Therapy Missions:

As you begin your journey as an international volunteer on a Therapy Missions mission we would like to thank you for your willingness to share your knowledge, skills and passion with those who care for the children and adults with disabilities throughout the world. You will be part of a team that will be working together towards the common belief that every person with a disability has the right to be an active participant in their community. We look forward to meeting you and sharing this journey with you.

Handbook Contents:

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who will I be teaching and training?

Therapy Missions forms “partnerships” with agencies, orphanages, schools, clinics or any other program that cares for the children and adults with disabilities within their community. We make a commitment to provide on going teaching and training to those identified local professional and para-professional staff, teachers, caregivers and family members who provide the rehabilitation services and every-day care. We empower those that we teach to train others.

How will the teaching and training take place?

Team members will work side by side with the local staff and caregivers as they evaluate and treat the children and adults with disabilities, demonstrating proper therapeutic techniques in a safe and healthy manner. Teaching can also take place during scheduled workshops or in classroom and conference settings. Teaching topics will be dictated by the needs of our partners and when possible, prepared in advance. Team members will be encouraged to share any area of therapy that they may feel an expertise in (ie: feeding, positioning, sensory play).

Therapy Missions is committed to on-going teaching and training beyond our on-site missions. We have a virtual training program that is available to our Partnerships throughout the year. You may be asked to participate in making a teaching module during the mission.

Do I need to bring therapy supplies?

Team Members can bring basic equipment supplies (box cutter, Velcro, duct tape, glue) to make any adaptive equipment that may need to be made during the mission. When ever possible we try to by the materials that we need (foam, PVS pipe, wood) locally. While stimulating local economies we can also identify and share with our partners where they can access the materials. We then work with our partners in making the adaptive equipment, ensuring that it can be replicated and repaired if needed.

During pre-mission planning you may choose to share a group activity or specific therapeutic technique and you may bring with you the needed supplies. Our partners may also request certain adaptive devices that cannot be purchased in their country (ie: adaptive feeding utensils) and you may bring a donation.

What types of disabilities will I be working with?

Each mission is unique. The ages of the people that you will be working with, as well as the disability that they have, will differ. Common disabilities include cerebral palsy, autism, Down Syndrome, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, stroke, brain injury and emotional disorders.

What is expected of me as a Therapy Missions Volunteer?

You are part of a team and will be asked to support your team members and follow the rules, daily assignments and activities as set by your Mission Leader. You will be provided with a schedule for the week and a daily assignment each morning.

COOPERATION...PATIENCE...FLEXIBILITY are a must as schedules and plans can change in an instant. Let your Team Leader know if you feel uncomfortable in a situation or if you have a concern for another team member.

Take time to get to know the staff and caregivers that you will be working with. Learn about and at all time respect the native culture. You will be entering into a true partnership with those that you are teaching and training. Be aware that although you bring new knowledge and skills, you also have much to learn. Listen carefully to what the needs are and respect the work that the staff and caregivers do on a daily basis.

Where will I stay?

Therapy Missions Teams stay at mission houses, retreats, hotels and private residences that are secured at all times. All arrangements are pre-arranged and the safety and security of our team members is our top priority. You will be asked to exercise caution at all times and never go out on your own. Meals will be provided by on-site by cooks or at local restaurants.

How will we get to our destination?

Your Mission Leader will make her/his plane reservations for the mission. The itinerary will be shared with you and you will make your own plane reservations trying to arrive and depart as close to the Leader's times as possible. Once the whole team has arrive you will be transported to your destination by pre-arranged transportation. We recommend that you research and purchase flights as soon as possible and that you purchase travel insurance.

What does the fee cover?

Therapy Missions charges a one-time fee that covers room, all meals, transportation within country and medical-evacuation insurance. It may also cover the cost of translators and costs of supplies needed during a mission. For most missions the fee will also cover a cultural outing. Fees vary depending on the mission. Out of pocket expenses may include incidental items or souvenirs. We caution you not to bring large amounts of cash.

For most missions Therapy Missions sets up a Team Crowdrise Fundraising page where team members can set up their own personal fundraising page to help pay for the fee. All donations to Therapy Missions as well as your expenses for your trip are tax deductible.

What happens if I have to cancel?

All donations and fees are non-refundable. If an individual mission volunteer has to cancel the funds can be kept by Therapy Missions to be used on a future mission.

Therapy Missions Rules and Guidelines

Thank you for choosing to participate in a mission with Therapy Missions. We welcome you and hope that your mission will be a meaningful experience and an opportunity to share your passion for helping others. Please keep in mind that as you experience and work in a foreign culture you are representing Therapy Missions at all times. Please be patient and think of your team's best interest before your own.

Culture – We ask that you spend some time before the mission learning about the history and culture of the country where you will be traveling. If you are traveling to a country that does not speak English please try to learn a few phrases that you can use to greet those that you will be working with. (We will provide translators). Be open to trying new foods and learning about the way of life from those you meet. And always act respectfully towards all locals and their way of doing things.

Safety – The safety of our team and team members is our main priority on any mission. Always be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to your belongings. Crime and petty theft are more common an occurrence in many of the cities that we travel to. You may be working in climates that are excessively hot and sunny.

To ensure a safe mission experience:

- Do not carry excessive cash or wear unnecessary jewelry
- If available, place all valuables in a safe (passport, tickets, money)
- Stay with your team at all times. If you need to leave for an emergency inform your Mission Leader.
- Travel in groups, never alone.
- Beat the heat - Wear a hat if working outside. Be sure to drink lots of water. Take breaks as needed. Take good care of yourself!!
- Be aware of the mosquito threat and protect yourself accordingly.

Alcohol/Tobacco/Drug Policies

- **Alcohol:** No alcohol is allowed while staying at a Mission House. For teams staying at residences or hotels, the team leader will review policy.
- **Smoking:** No smoking is allowed at a Mission House.
- **Drugs:** Use or possession of illegal drugs is prohibited and may be cause for immediate dismissal from the mission.

Photo Policy and Social Media – Be knowledgeable of the photo policies of our partnerships. Always ask for permission before taking a photo. Please refrain from posting photos without proper prior approval.

What to bring on a Mission

- ✓ Clothes to work in: Short sleeved tops or scrubs, capris or pants (No tank tops or shorts) Closed toes shoes
- ✓ A few nicer outfits for diner outings or Mass (optional)
- ✓ Swimsuit and Beach Towel (There may be a beach day!)
- ✓ Towel for the shower
- ✓ Shower shoes
- ✓ Spending money for souvenirs
- ✓ Inexpensive camera
- ✓ Hats
- ✓ Sunscreen/Sunglasses
- ✓ Raincoat
- ✓ Toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, shampoo, conditioner, baby powder, etc)
- ✓ Antibacterial hand gel/wipes
- ✓ Flash light
- ✓ Any prescription or non-prescription medicines that you need
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Copies of your passport
- ✓ Snack Foods
- ✓ Mosquito repellent
- ✓ Ear plugs

- ✓ Backpack, fanny pack or tote bag
- ✓ Pen and note book
- ✓ Good scissors
- ✓ Box Cutter
- ✓ Duct Tape
- ✓ Gorilla Glue
- ✓ Velcro
- ✓ Needle and thread (heavy work)
- ✓ Tape Measure
- ✓ Wet Ones