

Algonquin College Service Learning Experience

NICARAGUA March 20-April 2, 2010

Program Goals focus on providing students with an opportunity:

1. To learn about child and youth services in Nicaragua by meeting inspiring individuals who work with families to enact positive community development.
2. To view social justice initiatives by visiting local agencies promoting fair political, economic and social rights for children and youth.
3. To offer programming and work on a service project alongside volunteers and skilled Nicaraguans employed and empowered by your group's fundraising support.
4. To learn about themselves and their profession in a cross-cultural experience that enhances their personal, academic, and work prospects.
5. To have a safe, enjoyable and meaningful experience living with friendly host families, eating healthy food, and participating in adventurous educational and recreational activities.

Number of participants 7 minimum / 21 maximum including students and faculty.

Requirements An interest in child and youth services; openness to political, economic, and social justice issues; willingness to contribute hands-on programming and service project work; ability to learn about yourself in a cross-cultural context; positive attitude toward trip preparation, fundraising and group dynamics. Spanish is helpful, but not essential.

Preparation Attendance at meetings and fundraising events and pre-departure reading is essential. What to bring, health and safety advice, group expectations, cross-cultural adaptation, country background info, Spanish phrases, travel logistics, and other details are comprehensively covered.

Transportation American, Continental, Delta, and TACA Airlines all offer flights from Canada through the USA to Nicaragua. Groups assume responsibility for purchasing their own airfare and insurance or assistance can be provided upon request. Ground transport is by chartered bus, micro-bus, and taxi.

Accommodation and Food Clean, safe, and simple with selected host families all in the neighbourhood of Los Robles in central Managua. Participants stay in houses in pairs and share a bathroom and a bedroom with single beds. Breakfasts and dinners are prepared for participants; lunch is usually shared as a group; bottled water is constantly provided. Optional outings to cafés and restaurants.

Service Projects Are identified by local counterparts and supported by your group's fundraising efforts in Canada and presence alongside our partners in Nicaragua. We have worked collaboratively with Casa Canadiense, Habitat for Humanity, Vida Joven, two Christian Base Communities; Esmeralda Palacios, Generanda Vida, and Quincho Barrilete in Niquinohomo, Matagalpa, Jinotega, and Managua.

Recent projects include renovating and painting two rooms, repairing furniture, and teaching ESL at a youth centre; painting murals; building a stage and installing water tanks at a community centre; digging trenches for a new sewage system, repairing desks and replacing a roof at a pre-school; fixing lights, fans, and instruments at a music centre; landscaping burial plots at a cemetery; creating a multi-purpose playing field; building four family houses; and, constructing one small school.

Educational Visits May be arranged to the Canadian embassy, international aid and non-governmental organizations, micro-credit lending groups, fair trade artisans, the municipal dump, schools, and clinics.

Recreational Excursions May be arranged to historical sites and to a concert, beach, lagoon, volcano, market, zipline, dance club, or fitness centre. Mural, cooking or Spanish classes upon request.

Organizer & Facilitator Gonzalo Duarte, B.A., B.Ed., is the founder and president of Compañeros Inc. Since 1993 he has organized and facilitated 40 community-centred trips for over 500 hundred young and adult participants in 8 countries. His work as an educator and social entrepreneur inspires and achieves beneficial volunteer service and cross-cultural learning experiences for North and Central Americans.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Pricing Principles:

The people responsible for organizing and facilitating your safe, enjoyable, and meaningful trip are professionals with years of experience and values tailored to your group goals. Pricing fairly balances affordability for Canadians and financial viability for Nicaraguans. A modest income and fair wage recognizes staff's time, knowledge, skill, network, risk, and responsibility for you and your experience.

A significant portion of your money goes toward employing workers, purchasing materials, and favouring small businesses in Nicaragua. Since 2001 Compañeros Inc has infused over US\$250,000 into local economies via coordinators, translators, guides, guest speakers, host families, service projects, donations, tourist sites, shops, restaurants, drivers, cooks, housekeepers, and equipment rentals.

Compañeros Inc is an educational and travel coordination company with long-term reciprocal relationships that bridge academic, non-governmental, and grassroots communities in Canada and Nicaragua. Compañeros is an incorporated Canadian company driven by a commitment to excellent educational practices and the demonstration of socially responsible and ethical entrepreneurship.

Cost Explanation:

CA\$400 per person payable by/refundable until **October 30, 2009** includes:

- 60 hours of advance planning and organization of all pre-trip aspects
- 180 hours of daily on-trip facilitation of all in-country aspects from March 20-April 2, 2010
- Comprehensive preparation resources and unlimited consultation for up to 4 leaders
- Reservation assistance for all flight and travel insurance details
- Overhead expenses, contingencies, and modest profit to maintain Compañeros
- GST (Registration # 86337-4310)

US\$800 per person payable by/refundable until **January 30, 2010** includes:

- All ground transportation, driver, fuel, and parking from airport arrival to departure
- 13 nights of shared accommodation with selected host families
- 12 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 12 dinners, and continuous supplies of bottled water
- 180 hours of wages and expense for all in-country guiding, translation, and logistical coordination
- Funding of a local organization to identify, budget, and plan a service project; to employ skilled workers; to purchase local materials; and, to oversee Canadian and Nicaraguan participants
- Donations of funds and/or goods and services to 6 non-profit organizations visited by group
- Excursions to historical sites and to a beach, lagoon, volcano, market, and two colonial cities

The following is not included:

- Airfare and travel insurance = approx CA\$800 - early booking recommended
- 2 lunches = approx US\$20 total
- Optional fitness centre, dance club, zipline, mural, cooking or Spanish classes = approx US\$70 total
- Passport - no visa or immunizations are mandatory for Canadian passport holders
- Arbitrary fluctuations in currency, oil, food, or airfare rates that result in unforeseen surcharges

Participants are required to submit a complete and accurate **registration form** with emergency contact, health, and food restriction information; insurance, passport, photo, and reference awareness consent initializations; personal profile information; and, a signed liability waiver form.

Participants must carry a valid **passport** with an expiry date 6 months beyond the date of return. The name in their passport must match their plane ticket and registration. Participants are responsible for ensuring proper documentation for entry/exit via countries of transit and destination.

Participants are responsible for determining their own for trip cancellation, interruption, health, and baggage **insurance** coverage needs and demonstrating proof of coverage before departure.

The organizers reserve the right at any time before or during the trip to **cancel and revoke registrations** and refund participants in part or in full should they perceive correctly or incorrectly the participant constitutes a threat to the well-being and security of the program, other participants, and/or partner organizations. Should Compañeros Inc not be able to deliver the stated program it will endeavour to provide comparable alternatives and/or refund amounts remaining after existing liabilities are paid. Refunds for voluntary participant withdrawal are made entirely at the discretion of Compañeros Inc.