

## University of Guelph School of Environmental Design and Rural Development Service Learning Experience in NICARAGUA - May 2-29, 2010

**Program Goals** provide participants with an opportunity:

1. To meet inspiring individuals who influence development through political, economic, and social agencies in the Western Hemisphere's second poorest country.
2. To exchange and apply academic perspectives by designing and building a beneficial community service project alongside Nicaraguan residents, university students, and professionals.
3. To learn cross-cultural skills by practicing Spanish, living with a host family, and befriending students.
4. To reflect on experiences and how the people and adverse conditions they encounter may stimulate further academic research and career prospects.
5. To enjoy safe excursions to a Pacific beach, a volcanic lagoon, the colonial city of Granada, an artisans village, a market, and cafes.

**Number of participants** 10 minimum, 20 maximum

**Requirements** An interest in meeting inspiring people who walk the talk; openness to political, economic, and social issues; willingness to contribute hands-on work to a community service project; 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. In-country language lessons are available and translation is provided.

**Preparation** Participation in advance preparation meeting 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 Managua. 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** (1) Clean, safe, and simple with selected host families together 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. (2) During the design and build segment of the community project Canadian and Nicaraguan participants will live together on-site in tents or dormitories. (3) An end of trip debriefing session will be at a comfortable eco-lodge at a volcanic lagoon. Most meals and bottled water will be provided.

**Service Project** University of Guelph participants will partner with experienced student leaders from the University of Central America and various local professionals to design and develop a beneficial community project in a pre-identified barrio in Managua.

Compañeros has previously partnered with 8 grassroot community organizations to renovate and paint training facilities, repair furniture, and teach ESL at a youth centre; to paint murals; build a stage and install water tanks at a community centre; to dig trenches for a new sewage system, repair desks, and replace a roof at a pre-school; to fix lights, fans, and instruments at a music centre; to landscape burial plots at a cemetery; to create a multi-purpose playing field; to build four family houses; and, to construct one small school.

**Visits and Meetings** Will be arranged at the Canadian embassy, the University of Central America, the Institute for Rural Development, and at CANTERA, Un Techo Para Mi Pais, and La Chureca.

**Excursions** Will be arranged to sites in Managua, a Pacific beach, a volcanic lagoon, the colonial city of Granada, an artisans village, a market, and cafes. Other sites may be added.

**Organizers & Leaders** Prof Larry Harder is Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture in the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development.

Carolina Streber is completing her Bachelor's degree in Architecture at Universidad de Centro Americana (UCA) and has worked in the private and public sector to design and construct socially beneficial and beautiful projects.

Gonzalo Duarte is the founder and president of Compañeros Inc. Since 1993 he has organized and facilitated 40 community-centred trips for over 500 hundred youth and adult Canadian participants in 8 countries.

## PRICING PRINCIPLES

Professionals with extensive knowledge, skills, in-country networks, and years of experience coordinate your safe, enjoyable, and meaningful Service Learning Experience. Program pricing, therefore, fairly balances affordability for Canadian participants and financial sustainability for staff in Nicaragua.

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

Compañeros Inc is a travel education coordination company focused on bridging Canadians and Nicaraguans. Driven by best practices and socially responsible entrepreneurship, Compañeros is proud of its association with the University of Guelph and committed to contributing to every participant's successful educational experience.

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

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

- Coordination and organization of all pre-trip aspects (300+ hours approx)
- On-trip leadership and facilitation of all in-country aspects (300+ hours approx)
- Comprehensive preparation resources and unlimited consultation
- Reservation assistance for flight and travel insurance details
- Office and travel expenses
- GST (Registration # 86337-4310)

**US\$2000** per person payable by/refundable until **March 30, 2010** includes:

- All ground transportation, driver, fuel, and parking from airport arrival to departure
- 27 nights of shared accommodation in host families, tents/dormitories, and an eco-lodge
- 22 breakfasts, 22 lunches, 22 dinners, and daily supplies of bottled water
- All in-country accompaniment, guiding, translation, and logistical coordination
- Employment of service project supervisors and purchase of materials for community project
- Donations of funds and/or goods to 4 non-profit organizations visited by group
- Excursions to sites in Managua and to a beach, lagoon, volcano, market, and colonial city.

### The following is not included:

- Airfare and travel insurance = approx CA\$500 (from Detroit) or CA\$1000 (from Toronto)
- 5 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners. Approx total = US\$100+
- Optional activities (e.g. cafes, zip-line, music club, shopping). Approx total = US\$100+
- Entrance visa = US\$5. No visa or immunizations are mandatory for Canadian passport holders
- Arbitrary fluctuations in currency, oil, food, or airfare prices 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.