

Charlottetown & Area United Churches of Canada Service Learning Faith Experience

NICARAGUA July 4-17, 2010

Program Goals provide participants with an opportunity:

1. To work on a community service project alongside volunteers and skilled Nicaraguans employed and empowered by your group's fundraising support.
2. To meet inspiring individuals who have overcome adversity, who embody bold personal change, and who are positive community development activists.
3. To see social justice and environmental initiatives in action by visiting local agencies promoting fair political, economic social, and ecological rights for children, youth, and families.
4. To learn about faith in a cross-cultural experience that enriches your personal values and stimulates academic and career prospects.
5. To have a safe, enjoyable, meaningful, and carbon-neutral experience living with friendly host families, eating healthy food, and participating in adventurous educational and recreational activities.

Number of participants 7 minimum / 21 maximum

Requirements Willingness to contribute hands-on work to a community service project; an interest in meeting inspiring people who walk the talk; openness to political, economic, environmental, and social justice issues; 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 Participation in preparation meetings, 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 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 effort 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, fitness centre, and two cities. Mural, cooking or Spanish classes on 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 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, and level of 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
- 120 hours of daily on-trip facilitation of all in-country aspects from July 4-17, 2010
- Comprehensive preparation resources and unlimited consultation for leaders and students
- Reservation assistance for all flight and travel insurance details
- Overhead expenses, contingencies, and modest profit to continue Compañeros
- GST (Registration # 86337-4310)

US\$800 per person payable by/refundable until **June 1, 2010** includes:

- All ground transportation, driver, fuel, and parking from airport arrival to departure
- 13 nights of shared accommodation with selected host families and at a beachhouse
- 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 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\$1200 - early booking recommended
- 2 lunches = approx US\$20 total
- Optional fitness centre, dance club, zipline, cooking, mural 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.