



## **Student Service Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **About School the World**

School the World is a non-profit organization committed to improving the quality of and access to education in the developing world. In the past seven years, we have built 47 schools throughout Guatemala and Honduras by partnering with the local government and rural community leaders. Aside from building schools, we train teachers at local universities, empower parental engagement through bi-monthly meetings, and sustainably stock libraries through a matching program. In 2016, we began introducing an initiative around PLAY to our strategy. Play is proven to increase students' mental and physical health, learning skills, gender equality and life skills. We committed to building play spaces to facilitate free play, organized recess games, and eventually an inter-school soccer league and have since built 23 playgrounds at our existing schools.

### **Who**

Any high school student can apply to participate. Younger students are welcome to apply, but require a parent to travel with them at chaperone cost.

### **What**

Students commit to contributing \$3,600 to fund a primary school building and/or a playground in Guatemala. Students travel with School the World during February, March or April school break, or one week in the summer.

### **Where**

Students complete their service work in the rural Western Highlands of Guatemala (the department of Quiché) and experience the Spanish colonial city of Antigua.

### **When**

Our student service trips coincide with typical spring and summer school vacation weeks. Our travel season runs February – April & July. Once 2018 vacation weeks are scheduled, we will schedule dates for the coming year. For February, the trip will be within the following dates: February 17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>. In order to minimize travel costs, we hold group flights as far in advance as possible.

### **What Will Students Do?**

Students raise the funds to build a primary school building and/or a playground for students living in poverty. At the end of the week in the community, everyone (including the entire community and Mayor) will participate in a Dedication Ceremony to celebrate this support for education. Among other things, they can expect to mix cement, construct equipment and paint. Students also will have time within the classrooms to help teach lessons as well as complete a home visit to understand daily life within the community.

While raising funds in the months leading up to the trip, the students will learn about successful fundraising tactics as well as attend educational seminars to learn about the region's history and culture. These pre-trip meetings also discuss global literacy and what it means to be a global citizen.

### **Is It Safe?**

Safety is our top priority. We personally investigate and inspect medical facilities, housing and food preparation. We evaluate each building project for any potential safety concerns. We use only known drivers and vehicles; we require certificates of insurance and maintenance. We carefully vet all of our communities and spend considerable time in them before even beginning any build. There also will be at least two STW leaders (one U.S., one local) and adult chaperones with each group. STW minimum chaperone to student ratio is 1:6.

We purchase insurance with each airline ticket to cover medical risks, emergency medical evacuation and cancellations due to death, illness and similar situations. Families have the option to purchase additional "Cancel for any Reason" insurance should they choose to.

We have been working in Guatemala since 2009; have a strong local team of 10 and relationships with prominent business leaders and families in Guatemala. We also work in two of the safest departments in Guatemala: Quiche and Totonicapán.

Two safety markers used by other student exchange groups are State Department warnings and the presence of the Peace Corps. There are no State Department warnings for Guatemala and the Peace Corps are present there. The Peace Corps are training a new class for Guatemala and have no plans to leave the country in the foreseeable future. We monitor any change in this activity prior to and during all trips.

## **Requirements**

- Complete and submit an application with 250-word essay.
- Submit an initial payment of \$750 by application deadline and raise or contribute (or a combination thereof) an additional \$2,850 at deadlines TBA. (Fundraising training and support is provided to all students.)
- Complete and submit all required waivers of liability signed by both the student and a legal guardian to be distributed at later date via SchoolDoc, online system.
- Submit an accurate health history and a certification of good health from a physician, including a statement that the student does not have any physical, psychological or medical condition that would inhibit participation in the mission.
- Visit travel clinic to obtain any recommended vaccinations with preliminary itinerary at least three weeks prior to trip.
- Participate in pre-trip seminars to review trip preparation and general history/culture of Guatemala.
- Complete and send thank you letters to all donors within two weeks of donation/travel and provide STW with spreadsheet of all donors (we will provide templates).
- Mandatory parent/guardian participation in final pre-trip team meeting.
- A passport valid for at least 6 months after trip return date.
- Cooperation with all pre-&post-trip student responsibilities such as community follow up and submitting your photos to our online account.

## **Chaperones**

We accept applications for parent chaperones. Chaperone trip fee of \$2,500 covers all travel/room and board expenses. If teachers are interested in forming a group or joining students from their school, please reach out to us for discussion. If a group of 12-15 students is formed from school faculty, we will sponsor a teacher to travel.

## **How Will Students Raise The Funds?**

STW will provide the students with a “Fundraising Toolkit” and guide the students through letter-writing, online campaigns, provide a list of suggestions for independent group event, and will facilitate at least one group fundraising event, proceeds of which will be split among those who participate. Every student will have the opportunity to create their own individual online fundraising page through our website.

**What If Students Do Not Meet The Fundraising Deadlines?**

If students do not meet the fundraising deadlines, we require parents to make up the difference between the amounts due and the amount raised. Non-compliance will result in removal from the program. If you would like to discuss special circumstances please call Natalie Tarutis at 203-464-3167.

**Are There Refunds?**

Please see our full refund policy at [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org).

**Are There Any Other Costs?**

There will be no other required STW costs. If students choose to participate in an extra activity in Antigua, i.e. climbing a volcano or experiencing the zip lines of a nearby coffee farm, there will be an additional cost of \$25-\$45. Students may choose to tip any hospitality vendor, and/or bring additional spending money for souvenirs. Students should bring their own money for meals during travel in airports.

**Where does STW general funding come from?**

One of our past funders was USAID, a division of the US State Department. We also receive substantial support from many generous individuals, corporations and foundations such as The Harbourton Foundation, the General Electric Company, the GE Foundation and Dole.

**Will there be any cultural activities?**

Yes, there will be afternoon cultural activities varying per trip (e.g., visiting local Mayan ruins, caves where the Mayans hid from the colonial Spaniards, and the colorful market of nearby Chichicastenango, the largest open air market in Central America). They also will spend at least one day and evening in Antigua, the Spanish colonial capital of Central America, and have the opportunity to participate in an extra cultural activity (i.e. climb the Pecaya volcano or experience the zip lines of a nearby coffee farm).

For more information about our programs, our leadership and our Board of Directors visit our website: [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org)

For any questions, please contact Natalie Tarutis at [natalie.tarutis@schooltheworld.org](mailto:natalie.tarutis@schooltheworld.org) or our office staff at (617) 867-9500.