

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

# Orphanage Emmanuel

A Ministry of Amor Cristiano Internacional

## Initial Steps

If you are 18 years or older, and would like to apply for a volunteer stay at Emmanuel, you can find the forms needed online or please contact our volunteer coordinator Danielle Sanchez:  
[volunteoremmanuel@gmail.com](mailto:volunteoremmanuel@gmail.com).

If you are a minor, you can only apply to volunteer in the company of a parent. We ask that volunteers commit to serve at least two months. After reviewing the guidelines please contact our coordinator for any questions you may have.

If you are a former volunteer and are wishing to return, please contact us directly before you make plans or buy your ticket. It maybe necessary to fill out the application form, sign the Liability Waiver, and you must gain approval before returning again.



When David and Lydia Martinez were given a vision from God, showing them that His heart's desire was for them to provide for abandoned and unwanted children, they sold everything they owned and moved to Honduras to follow the Lord's calling in their lives. In Honduras, as a ministry of Amor Cristiano Internacional, they founded Orphanage Emmanuel. Their desire was for the Lord and Savior to be exalted and to care for His children. By the grace of God and His ability to touch the hearts of many people throughout the world, Emmanuel now houses and cares for almost 500 children of all ages. Through God's love and compassion for these children, a loving home and refuge has been provided for them along with all necessary home facilities. The beautiful setting of Emmanuel is surrounded by mountains, lots of fresh air, and plenty of space for the children to grow and develop. Much of the work at Emmanuel is dependent upon the visits from long-term and short-term volunteers.



## Background Check

We ask that each volunteer complete a background check. Emmanuel has chosen CastleBranch.com as an approved source for background checks. CastleBranch is a background check service that allows applicants to purchase their own background check. The results are posted to the web site in a secure, tamper-proof environment, where the applicant, as well as organizations can view the background check.

### Ordering Instructions:

1. Go to website and click on Place Order.
2. In the package box type OR02
3. Select method of payment.

Notify Danielle when you have submitted a background check, so she can access it. Results take approximately 48-72 hours.

## References

We ask that you have two references. They both need to be NON-family that has known you for at least a year or more. We ask that one of the references is a pastor at your church, and the other can be an employer, a professor or teacher, or another church leader. Please send them our reference form to fill out, and they will need to email it to Danielle directly at [volunteeremmanuel@gmail.com](mailto:volunteeremmanuel@gmail.com).

## Application Process

**Before accepting you as a volunteer, we will need your filled out application, a photo of yourself, 2 references, background check, and a liability waiver. We will not review your file until everything has been received.**

## Liability Waiver

As of March 1, 2011, all volunteers will be required individually to sign a liability waiver which states that they personally realize the risks involved with coming to a foreign country and volunteering under conditions found here. Please note that in the 25 years we have operated, Emmanuel has had an excellent record of low injuries, either among team members visiting, volunteers, staff or children who live here. Because of our size and all that goes on daily, the waiver is part of our policy as it is with many organizations of similar size and activity.



# Travel

## Insurance

We strongly suggest that all volunteers who come to serve at Emmanuel purchase travel insurance for medical and emergency evacuation purposes. Secondary health insurance of some type is also helpful to help cover the costs of any medical emergency accident. The only missionary travel insurance company that we have used before is Gallagher Charitable Intl. Insurance Services. Their website is: <https://www.travelwithgallagher.com/>



## Tickets & Travel

There is a new airport called Palmerola International Airport, located in Comayagua. We have access to people that can help pick up and bring you to Emmanuel, at a cost, that are reliable. When the airport starts having flights going in and out, we can better help with the best form of transportation from the airport to Emmanuel. Please be flexible, and I can help with all your answers when it comes time to book your ticket. People usually use Delta, American, or United for their flights however, it is whatever you feel comfortable with. FYI at the moment only American and United are flying into Palmerola.

## Visa

As a regular tourist, you should receive a 90-day tourist visa when entering Honduras. If they only grant you 30 days upon arrival then you are still entitled to 90 days total, you may just need to visit the migration office later on. Migration law in Honduras gives you the option of extending your 90 days by another 30 days at a cost of \$20. Please keep this in mind when you buy your ticket and **count** the individual days you will be in Honduras; don't just look at dates. You will be fined upon exiting the country if your visa is expired even if it is just one day. You can make a trip to Tegucigalpa to do this process, and we have a lawyer that is able to help with any questions concerning visas and the paperwork.

If you are scheduled to stay longer than these 120 days, then you must exit C4 Region for 72 hours in order to obtain another 90 days, with the option of buying the additional 30 days later. Currently traveling to Costa Rica or Belize will renew your visa, but you will **not** be able to renew it simply by traveling to the countries bordering Honduras.





# Lodging



## Food

You are welcome to eat all 3 meals together with the children for free in the comedor. The food is really good, and it is no problem make an extra plate for you! If you would like to cook meals yourself, you can buy groceries in the local town of Guaimaca. Volunteers have permission to go to town once a week. Town is very accessible: about a 10-minute walk. There are two grocery stores, pharmacies, a hospital, bakeries, and other shops. We ask that volunteers shop for food to last approximately 2 weeks to minimize the number of trips into town and if there is occurrence that you cannot make it to town one week you are prepared.



## Housing

You will live on campus at Emmanuel in the male or female volunteer house. Each volunteer house includes a full kitchen, laundry facilities, living room, bathroom, bedrooms, and outside area. You will not need to bring sheets or blankets to Emmanuel, only personal toiletries. You do not have to pay for your housing, water, nor electricity. We have our own deep wells on campus, so the tap water is safe to drink. We ask that you keep your house and area clean through your visit.

## Money

The currency in Honduras is Lempiras and the current exchange rate is about 24 Lempiras to 1 dollar. We recommend you **exchange** most of your **dollars** for Lempiras inside the **airport upon arrival**. Some larger stores in Tegucigalpa and the grocery store in Guaimaca **may** accept dollars and your visa card (Don't count on this as a rule). You can also use a Debit Card to withdraw money from ATMs or regular banks but **only** in Tegucigalpa, but sometimes it doesn't work. Visa is commonly used in Honduras. Credit cards may be used in town at certain places however, service is unreliable and your bank needs to know you are here so as not to block your card usage in country. It is best to bring money you will need for the duration of your stay and exchange your money for lempiras at the airport before you come to Emmanuel.

Orphanage Emmanuel is set up as a non-profit organization in the US. Tax laws prohibit us from accepting donations from you or your supporters with the intent of distributing those funds to you directly when you arrive in Honduras. We want to protect our non-profit status, so please do not ask us to "run money" through the orphanage account.

We are often asked how much money to bring for your volunteer stay, but it's quite difficult to give a good answer. The amount varies from person to person, depending on how long you are staying, how comfortable you are eating with the children, the amount of personal groceries you purchase, whether you buy a cell phone, how much you choose to spend in town, etc. The average monthly amount spent by volunteers can range from \$25 to \$75. If you have to leave the country to renew your visa, obviously you will need extra money for those travel costs. Some of our long-term volunteers have recommended \$4,000-\$5,000 per year to cover all expenses and travel.



## Phone/Internet

We certainly understand your desire to communicate with people back home, but we suggest that you try to refrain from excessive communication and allow your time at Emmanuel to be a retreat from the daily, hectic life back home.

We do not have internet available to volunteers on campus. You can, however, purchase a chip for internet or phone chip (for UNLOCKED US phone or for a Honduran phone) at the TIGO stand in the airport. The cost of a chip is a one-time cost of 100 lempiras (\$5) and a month of internet is 565 lempiras (\$25) for each month. Then you will want to put extra lempiras on your chip to have minutes to call locally or home.

Also, it is important to note, that the children here are not able to have phones, so please do not let them use yours for any reason at all. Be respectful of using your phone during your duties. You are coming here to help serve not to be on your phone all the time.

## COVID/Immunizations

The COVID vaccine is recommended to be able to volunteer. You will need to have at least the two doses, and bring your card with you. If you are not vaccinated, you will need to bring a negative covid test taken no more than one day (24 hours) before your arrival.

Your general practitioner can advise you regarding other immunization shots. We recommend that you have tetanus, Hepatitis A and B and Meningitis. You may decide to take malaria pills. However, you should be aware that they do not protect you completely from this disease and can have strong

## Other Items



## Language

The official language in Honduras is Spanish, and it will be helpful to you if you have studied the basics before your arrival to Emmanuel. Most staff and some of the other children can speak English, but all the activities with the children are conducted in Spanish. Most volunteers learn a lot of Spanish while working here.



## Personal Network of Support & Prayer

We recommend that you involve your family, congregation, youth groups, etc. in your stay at Emmanuel. Let them know where you are going and what you will be doing and ask them to actively pray for you and if possible, support you financially. You may want to set up a newsletter to send our regular news flashes or a virtual diary for your friends. This will be an encouragement and motivation for you during your stay.



## Typical Day at Emmanuel

Most volunteers are young and do not have a specific skill or trade they wish to perform while here. We will, after reading through your application, decide on your work areas. We will talk to you about skills, expectations, ideas, etc. Usually for the first month or so, we place you in specific activities and then little by little your responsibilities may change or expand. At Emmanuel, needs can arise suddenly and sometimes we will need your help unexpectedly. We expect you to be positive and flexible about unexpected tasks or changes in your daily routine—changes that may occur with little or no advance notice.

Some of the regular volunteer activities during the day include early childhood stimulation, giving out medicine, helping in the clinic, working with special needs children, work on the farm, doing Bible studies with the children, playing with the children, or other odd jobs. We use male volunteers mostly for construction, farming, and maintenance.

All volunteers are assigned to a house. We have 11 house 'areas' at Emmanuel. Being assigned to a house means that you assist the staff in the daily chores of the house such as bathing the children, supervising the children in their rooms, doing laundry, or other tasks related to the daily care of the children may be needed of you. You are expected to be at your assigned house in the mornings when the houses open and at all meal times.

Due to the different age ranges, the houses have different needs and dynamics, but once assigned to a house the staff will instruct you in your chores.

The days start early at Emmanuel. We open the houses at 6 A.M. The children are dressed and ready before the staff member arrives at 6 A.M. are working on their morning house chores.

On school days, most children are busy from 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Some of our special needs children, toddlers, and children who are periodically not attending class will be available for other activities during school time.

After dinner on Tuesday and Thursday Bible Studies are given in the yards and if any volunteer feels capable of giving studies, you are more than welcome to do one. Other days of the week after dinner, the children shower, do chores and settle in for the night. Schedules vary from house to house on what the children do.

Church services are held on Sunday mornings at 8:30 A.M. and on Wednesday evenings at 5 P.M.

Volunteers are given Sundays off from their assigned houses and duties.

## Daily Schedule

**This is an example. Things are always flexible at Emmanuel.**

6:00 Be at assigned house  
7:00 Kids' Breakfast  
8:00 be at your assigned task whether that is helping in the houses or other area around Emmanuel.

12:00 Kids' Lunch  
1:00 be at your assigned house or task  
3:45 Kids' Dinner

After dinner, help at your house with the end of the day chores (bath time, medicine, etc.)  
4:30-6 (times vary depending on house assignments) free from your daily chores  
8:00 curfew

# Volunteer Expectations

Serving as a volunteer at Emmanuel gives you an opportunity to work and share with children and youth from troubled circumstances. They did not have proper role models to imitate when small. It is our task and responsibility here at Emmanuel to guide, instruct and teach these children towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to encourage them to practice biblical values and standards. Everything we do and say in their presence or towards them will affect them in a certain way. We ask that you be willing to receive instruction as how to work and act around our children and that you will be open and submissive even if it seems hard or difficult to understand.

Working as a volunteer at Emmanuel should not be considered as just another adventure, a common summer job or an opportunity to get away from the daily stress and chores back home. We deal with the lives and education of hundreds of children and teenagers, and this is their home and refuge. They need role models in their lives and they need to see the adults around them reflect love, self respect, compassion and discipline. We welcome you to join us in this task.

Be aware what message your life, behavior and attitudes are sending to these children and teenagers who are constantly observing and learning from the people around them. Volunteers must be a good example to our children and youth and we expect that you will carry yourself in a respectful manner towards all personnel, children and visitors while here.

We welcome friendships and fellowshiping between volunteers and our children and youth, but keep in mind that your task is to support the adult staff, so your relationships with the children should not become a hindrance in this task. Volunteers are temporary and do not fully understand the long-term task at hand of raising the children. Nor do they fully understand the culture or motives of their behavior, and it is important that you show respect towards the staff and their decisions. If you have questions or doubts, please discuss it with us.

Be careful of your personal hygiene and the cleanliness and order of your living quarters. Just as we expect children and staff to be presentable and to keep their living quarters in order, we expect our volunteers to do the same. We have dress codes and standards in personal presentation, which do not change according to the latest fashions. We expect you to dress modestly, presentable and clean at all times. You are at all times an example to our children, and we hope that you will bear this in mind and respect our preferences while living here.

Boys are to wear pants or knee-length shorts, clean and presentable and adjusted at the waist, not below the waist exposing their underwear in public. Caps not worn sideways or backwards.

Girls are not allowed to wear sleeveless tops or transparent dresses or blouses. Skirts and shorts must be knee-length, and shirts must cover the belly button. Please refrain from wearing leggings or yoga pants outside of the volunteer house. This includes time off while at Emmanuel or outside the volunteer house. We expect girls to wear skirts to the church services.

We also respectfully ask that if you have any body piercing in the mouth, nose, belly or eyebrows that you remove them while here, and if possible, conceal any tattoos. Tattoos are considered gang related in Honduras and are illegal. Girls should wear no more than 2 pairs of earrings in each ear and they should be placed in the lower part of the ear lobe.

Male volunteers are not allowed in or on the porch at the female volunteer house at any time and vice versa.

We do not allow any courting or flirting between our volunteers and youth. Volunteers should avoid inappropriate physical contact with our children or youth, particularly those of the opposite sex.

Female volunteers are not allowed near the orphanage boys' dorms when the boys are showering, changing clothes, or getting ready for bed. Likewise, male volunteers are not allowed near the orphanage girl's dorms in similar circumstances. Since the dorm window curtains are not always closed, it's best for the volunteer to stay far away to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

No Volunteer is allowed to hit, insult or in any other way physically or verbally hurt any of our children. If you are having a discipline problem with a child under your care that you cannot solve alone, please call for a staff member to deal with the situation.

No drinking of alcohol or smoking is allowed at Emmanuel.

Need to be inside the volunteer house no later than 8PM due to security reasons.

All music should be Christian music that is listened to with the kids and in your house. Movies should not include any questionable content, and please do not lend out any movies or music without the permission of the staff member in charge.

Children are never allowed in your personal houses.

No volunteer has permission to take a child outside of Emmanuel premises without prior authorization.

Follow all guidelines of COVID-19 that are in place by the government and Honduran health department. These include wearing a face mask at all times around the children and washing of hands regularly.

*You will have a meeting with Danielle the day after you arrive to discuss your tasks and review the Emmanuel and COVID guidelines. You will be asked to sign a waiver after that meeting agreeing to what was discussed. If you have any questions or concerns this is the time to ask.*





## FAQs

**Is it safe to travel in Honduras?** Most volunteers travel via private taxi, which are persons known to Emmanuel and are certified tour guides. Safety is never guaranteed, no matter the country or city you live in. If you follow the guidelines and rules, we have set out you should have few if any problems.

**Can I bring my iPad or tablet to use?** You can, but you will not have access to WIFI.

**Can I run on campus?** You are welcome to run or exercise here however we ask that ladies not wear short shorts or leggings and only run in the main campus, not over on the farm when it is early in the morning or late in the day. It really needs to be daylight outside.

**My best friend wants to volunteer and serve with me, can we work together?** We try to assign duties as you desire with people you want to work with, however it is not always possible due to the needs we have at the time of your service. Sometimes God has lessons for us to learn in things that may seem more difficult or different than we anticipated.

**My spouse and I want to volunteer and serve with me, can we work together?** Often men are assigned during the day to manual labor on the farm and women to assignments with the children, kitchen, office or clinic so rarely do couples work together during the day.

**What is the weather like?** It is hot and dry typically January-May and cooler and wetter May-December. You can look up Guimaca on weather and see what it typically is during the year. People find that a sweatshirt or hoodie is helpful for cooler nights and sometimes during the day in rainy season.

**What if I test positive for COVID?** You will be placed under strict quarantine for a minimum of 14 days before retesting. Any costs that may accrue, you will be asked to cover.

## Things to Bring

- Passport and copy
- vaccination card
- medical grade face masks
- insurance policy and signed Liability waiver
- drivers' license and/or photo ID
- credit or debit card
- copies of important documents
- cash
- list of phone numbers and emails
- Prescription medications
- lice shampoo
- personal toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Medicines (Tylenol, anti-diarrhea medicine, period medicine, etc. You will be responsible for your own medical costs, if needed.)
- insect repellent.
- Linens and towels are provided, but you may prefer to bring your own pillow, linens, and towels
- Bible and Journal
- Camera
- Batteries
- Flashlight
- Water Bottle
- good book or movies
- T-shirts
- sandals and tennis shoes
- lightweight pants
- shorts and skirts (*knee length or longer*)
- jeans
- rain gear
- nice clothes for Sunday services (boys pants, girls skirts).

