YOUTH CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL

Community Description GT11-5B LA FLORIDA

LOGISTICS AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

YCI – RJI STAFF PROFILES

Monica Salas, Regional Programs Director, RJI:
Monica first got involved with RJI in 2005 for a special project with CIDA. She then became part of the RJI staff for research, monitoring and projects development. Monica currently works on program design, development and management for RJI.

Yazmín Ruiz, Regional Program Manager, RJI:
Yazmín has been working with RJI for ten years and coordinates all YCI volunteers on project. She first began as a volunteer, then a group leader, later assisting with program logistics and then as Logistics Manager.

Evelyn Arce, Program Coordinator, RJI:
Evelyn provides support to the group from RJI in charge of programming, coordination, administration and logistics of international volunteers program.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are 2 or 3 rooms of the Ecotourism Lodge available for the volunteers. You will be sharing the space with your fellow group members in the same room. There are beds available. Volunteers must bring their own equipment for sleeping. Toilet and showers are available.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The community is made up of 28 families of farmers that organize themselves and work together to control the land and its use. They live as part of a communal system that has been elected and supported by members of the community. People work entirely on the communal plantations and the ecotourism project. The community organization has a Catholic base. There is an association that controls the systems in the community; this association was elected by the habitants of La Finca. La Finca is located in the mountains, surrounded by forest that attracts many birds and butterflies but also mosquitoes.

Communications
There is cell phone reception in the community but there are no public phones. The staff has one cell phone for emergencies and volunteers can use it with cards for international calls as needed. Public phones and mail are available in Colomba

town (40 mins from La Florida). Mail can be unreliable because it takes 2-4 weeks to arrive in Guatemala. Most likely mail would arrive after project close.

Water
There is running water available. The water is pure and potable; source comes directly from the mountain. Water has been tested by health authorities. Water filter will be provided in addition to ensure health.

Electricity
There is electricity. The community has its own electricity generator. But the generator is not always functional, so volunteers should bring a flashlight and other light sources just in case. It is always important to save energy as much as you can.

Transport
To access public transport, volunteers have to walk 30 mins to the main road. From the main road, one bus goes to Colomba everyday (45 minutes away by bus).
The community has one truck available to respond to emergencies.

Money (currency, exchanging money)
You need to bring US dollars to change to "Quetzales", principal currency in Guatemala. Traveller checks are not recommended. The nearest Bank and ATM is in Colomba (45 min from the community). It is possible to exchange money at the airport when you arrive, but the exchange rate is always better in the banks. In addition to spending money, please remember that you will need to have $50 USD on you during the project to cover any medical expenses. You will also need to pay a $10 USD departure tax upon leaving Guatemala City by plane.

Weather to Expect
Weather in Colomba is hot and humid during the day and windy and cold in the afternoons. It usually rains in the afternoons. Is very important to bring sun protection to work during the day

Food
When you are on project you will be eating a typical Guatemalan diet. Due to the fact that you will most likely not have any form of refrigeration your diet will be vegetarian. You will be sent into your community with all of the staples that you will need. It's a basic diet; this includes rice, pasta, flour, sugar, beans, vegetables, fruits, spices etc. Just in case, it is important for you to bring multi-vitamins with you.

FINANCES & VOLUNTEER STIPENDS
RJI staff design budgets to cover all of your living and programming expenses while on-project. Staff are responsible for all financial management and reporting related

to these funds. This allows you more time for programming activities. You will be responsible for communicating with staff about programming plans to ensure that all activities are feasible within the budget. Staff, in turn, will keep you regularly updated on spending and make adaptations to budgets as projects require.

Within the budget, there is a stipend for materials and resources, communication and program related activities. Volunteers will also have access to a group budget for fresh vegetables and fruits and other needed supplies once living in the community.

Any travel and associated costs outside of the community that are not related to programming will be at the personal expense of volunteers.

Communication & Risk Management

Security

La Florida is very safe and people are respectful. YCI-RJI field staff will guide you on places that are safe to visit and make you aware of which precautions you need to take when traveling. It is important as a general precaution to lock your rooms when nobody is there and keep your valuables in a safe place. It is recommended to have a safe locked place to keep your belongings, such as a suitcase or bag with a lock.

To avoid theft, it is recommended that when leaving the community, you should keep your personal bags and important personal documents with you and close to your person at all times. It is advisable not to leave important personal documents in luggage compartments (above the seats) in buses.

Host Organization Information

Reto Juvenil Internacional

Address:
Reto Juvenil Internacional
PO BOX 420-2070
Sabanilla, Montes de Oca.
San José, Costa Rica
Office Ph: (506)2280-4325

Key Contact:
Yazmin Ruiz. Logistics Manager
Cell Ph: (506)8868-4486

Health Care

RJI has the systems in place to ensure you receive proper medical advice and treatment. In Guatemala you can have access of medical facilities and the private medical attention as needed.

The best way to avoid the most common illnesses like diarrhea and the flu is to follow strict hygiene practices not unlike the ones you follow back home.
Most likely you won't get sick if you follow the policies and health procedures.

Responsible Volunteering

Appropriate Clothing Guidelines

Summer clothing for hot weather is recommended. However, the weather can change and it's important to bring one or two sweaters in case it gets cold, as well as long-sleeved shirts and socks. You will need to wear longs after sunset according to YCI policies.

It is recommended for volunteers to wear conservative clothing such as long pants, long skirts or dresses, t-shirts and tank tops (not strapless). For swimming, it is recommended to bring a one-piece swimsuit or swim with a shirt. Use of bikinis are not allowed on the project site. It is also recommended to bring one nice dress for special activities with the community.

Gift-Giving Guidelines

Recommended Gifts to Consider Bringing

It is recommended to bring gifts that can be donated on a general basis, like materials for the school. Avoid giving gifts to specific individuals without advice. In the case of giving gifts to community members, the best gifts are useful items that may be needed in the community. These may include sports equipment, school supplies, educational games, etc. Please consult with RJI staff to determine appropriate gift-giving.