

GUATEMALA

Trip Intro

Our Partner: Hope of Life

Carlos Vargas, a native Guatemalan, is the founder and director of Hope of Life, a social and humanitarian organization founded to promote the social, educational, medical, and spiritual development of poor Guatemalans. Hope of Life employs native Guatemalans to run the facilities as well as help with the organization's many programs.

Hope of Life is made up of comprehensive programs that reach out to thousands of needy Guatemalans. In a nation where 50 percent of the population is at or below the poverty level, and 30 percent find themselves in extreme poverty, programs such as this can be their last chance before starvation or disease.

The various facilities and ministries of Hope of Life are located on a secure compound in the village of Llano Verde. There is a hospital (which is still being completed), Baby Rescue Program, children's home, school, special needs home (Kelly's House), and elderly home. Hope of Life also works in different areas all over the country with children's programs, feeding centers, and more.

In Preparation

| Documents | FAQs | Packing List | Items for Hope of Life |

Document Requirements

Passport – you will need a passport valid for at least 6 months past the trip dates in order to travel. Please go to <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport> for more information on obtaining or renewing a passport. Please allow 4-8 weeks for processing.

Visa – citizens of the United States are not required to apply for a Guatemala visa. Please inquire for more information if you hold a passport of any other country.

World Help Documents - Each trip participant is required to turn in the documents listed below in order to travel. These will be provided to you, along with a due date for their completion.

- Completed [Trip Information Form](#) (online form)
- Copy of photo page of *passport*
- Signed and notarized *Waiver and Release Form**
- Completed *Medical Directive*
- Signed *Hope of Life Zika Waiver* **

**This is a legal document required by our Board of Directors for anyone traveling on a World Help trip. If you would like to see a copy of the waiver form prior to making your first payment, please let us know. Parents/legal guardians of traveling minors will need to sign this document for them.*

***Due to the current outbreak and spread of the Zika virus throughout Guatemala, our partner, Hope of Life, requires a signed waiver from each traveler.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is Hope of Life located? The Hope of Life compound is located in the village of Llano Verde, and the city of Zacapa.

What medications/immunizations should I take before traveling? For the most up to date travel health information please visit www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations, and select Guatemala. There are no required immunizations, but it is recommended that you be up to date on your Hepatitis A and B, and Typhoid shots. We also recommend that you consult with your personal physician before the trip.

If you choose to take anti-malaria medication, note that the recommended type for Guatemala is Chloroquine 500mg, taken once a week. The main side effect is nausea, though taking it with dinner will minimize this. Risk of sunburn is heightened when taking anti-malaria medication, so the use of hats and sunscreen are essential, as well as constant hydration.

It is also recommended that you request a prescription of Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) to take with you on the trip in case you should have any diarrhea/stomach problems.

Can I book my own airline ticket? As a participant on a World Help trip, we will be handling all of your ticket purchases. We will work closely with you and our travel agent to give you the best options possible, and will ensure you are arriving and departing when needed.

What is the weather like? Winter temperatures in Guatemala are normally mild. During summer months however, the humidity is very high and the heat can be intense. Check online for the weather in Zacapa, Guatemala prior to your trip to get a better idea for what the expected temperatures will be for your time on the ground. Here are some suggested websites:

www.wunderground.com || www.accuweather.com

Will there be water provided during the day? There will always be plenty of water for your group to drink throughout the day, whether you are at the compound, or out in a village. Hope of Life uses jugs of purified water for teams, and you **must bring** a reusable water bottle with you to fill up for drinking. We do ask that you take hydration very seriously and make sure that you drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

What type of electrical converter do I need to take? The currency in Guatemala is the same as in the United States, so you will not need any adapters or converters.

Can I spend US dollars? Hope of Life has a gift shop and you can make purchases using US dollars. If you buy something in the airport, they will also take US dollars, but give you change back in Guatemalan quetzals.

If you choose to use a personal debit/credit card during the trip, be sure to call your bank ahead of time to inform them of your destination and dates of travel. International charges often cause them to freeze your card otherwise, as a protective measure against fraud.

Will I have internet access? We encourage everyone to “fast” from the internet for the week as much as possible and focus on the mission and how God wants to use you during the week and what He wants you to learn. However, we understand the need for some to have access in order to communicate to home or work. Hope of Life will allow access to the internet on campus for a fee of \$10 per device for the week. This fee can be paid with American dollars in the gift shop on campus. Some groups have a designated Facebook page that one person from the group is responsible to update every evening. Family and friends can follow the team during the week and know how to pray for them.

I sponsor a child through World Help or through Hope of Life in Guatemala; will I be able to meet my child? What type of gift is appropriate to bring to them? It is the responsibility of the team’s leader to let World Help know who in the group sponsors a child in Guatemala through World Help or Hope of Life. This list should include the sponsor’s name, the child/children’s name and their sponsor identification number. We will give this list to Hope of Life and they will arrange a time during the week for everyone to meet with their child. Hope of Life will do everything they can to get all of the children there during the week, but occasionally a parent will tell them that it is just not possible for them to come. In this case, the sponsor can bring a gift and Hope of Life will deliver it to the child and send the sponsor a photo of the child with the gift. They usually have a party in one of the pavilions by the pool and if you would like to go swimming with the child you can do that. You may also choose just to spend time with them, coloring or playing a game. Hope of Life will provide an interpreter to help with the communication.

There is an important rule that everyone needs to abide by. A sponsor may bring gifts for their child but please do not give them money. Sponsors often bring a school backpack filled with school supplies, coloring books and crayons and a toy such as a soccer ball for a boy and doll and hair accessories for a girl. If during the time the sponsor spends with the family they are told of a need they want to meet, please do not promise anything before talking to the Hope of Life sponsorship representative first. They will find out if it is a legitimate need and how much it would cost to meet the need. If you want to do

something and Hope of Life says it is ok, you can give the money to Hope of Life and they will purchase what is needed and send you a picture of them giving this to the child. If you have any questions about this please talk to your World Help leader while you are in country.

Is it appropriate to leave the interpreters, drivers and security guards that served our group during the week a tip before the group leaves? Yes, but it is best to do this as a group. Towards the end of the week but not the night before, the group can take a collection and decide how much to give to the people that served them during the week. Sometimes you will have a different driver or guard each day and in this case it will not be necessary to tip everyone but if you had a consistent driver and guard each day it is nice to show them they were appreciated. The interpreter you had during the week is the person who served the group the most. It is good to bring along a few thank you cards so everyone can sign and put your tip inside.

Is it ok for me to give my contact information to people in the village? Hope of Life and World Help both strongly discourage team members from doing this. When someone in an extremely impoverished village has the contact information for an American they sometimes feel like that is an opportunity to get “things” or “money”. For example, one trip leader gave her phone number to someone and when she returned home, she received a call telling her that their little boy needed surgery but they could not afford it. If he did not have the surgery, he would go blind. Fortunately, the woman who received this message called World Help to ask what she should do. World Help contacted Hope of Life who went to the village to investigate. They found the little boy and he was fine. It was all a fabricated story with the hopes of getting money from an American. Even if they don’t ask for money but instead send someone a long list of things to bring them, it could actually put that person in danger. If people in the village see a group bring a suitcase full of things to one person, it could cause them to be vandalized or physically hurt. It can also cause jealousy and division in the village. Our goal is always to support the pastor and village leader and bring unity and not division. We do not want the people in the village to see the pastor of the church as being unfair by showing favoritism to certain people.

Packing List

Clothing

- ✓ Casual shirts (short and long sleeves)
- ✓ Casual shorts/pants/jeans
- ✓ Light weight jacket/sweatshirt/sweater
- ✓ Sleep wear
- ✓ Undergarments and socks
- ✓ Belt
- ✓ Comfortable shoes
- ✓ Swimsuit
- ✓ Hat for protection from the sun
- ✓ Nicer outfit for “Fiesta Night”
- ✓ If in country over a Sunday, please bring a church outfit (Men: pants and collared shirt / Women: modest length skirt or dress)

Personal Items

- ✓ 2 towels (one for shower and one for pool)
- ✓ Razor
- ✓ Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- ✓ Soap
- ✓ Shampoo
- ✓ Deodorant
- ✓ Comb/Brush
- ✓ Band-Aids
- ✓ Antiseptic Cream
- ✓ Chapstick
- ✓ Nail clippers
- ✓ Personal medication (Tylenol, allergy medicine, prescriptions, etc.)
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Imodium AD (anti-diarrheal) and Pepto Bismol (for nausea)

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Reusable water bottle for drinking (**mandatory**)
- ✓ Tissue packets
- ✓ Antiseptic handwipes or hand gel
- ✓ Travel alarm clock
- ✓ Watch
- ✓ Camera/Video camera (extra batteries)
- ✓ Journal or notebook
- ✓ Pencil/pen
- ✓ MP3/CD player and batteries
- ✓ Contacts/glasses (cleaners/solutions for contacts)
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Travel cash for souvenirs and the days traveling to and from Guatemala
- ✓ Neck pillow for the plane
- ✓ Sunscreen/suntan lotion
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Insect repellent
- ✓ Ziplock/plastic bags
- ✓ Snacks (energy bars, granola bars, candy, gum, cereal bars, crackers, dried fruit and peanuts)

What can I take for those at Hope of Life?

For the children at the orphanage:

- Candy (nothing that will melt) – *any candy will be given to the house parents to be distributed by them at the best time and as a reward for good behavior, etc.*
- Small toys/stuffed animals/balls
- Hair ties for girls
- Children's clothing and shoes, all sizes
- Children's underwear and pajamas
- Single bed sheets
- Crib sheets for the toddlers

For the Hospital/Baby Rescue Center:

- Infant/baby clothing, especially Onesies
- Infant/baby toys
- Burp cloths, bibs, etc.
- Crib sheets
- Hooded bath towels

Other:

- Kitchen towels for the kitchen workers
- Lotions, soaps, toothbrushes, etc. for the Elderly Home

Once on the Ground

| Accommodations and Food | In-country Healthy Practices |

Accommodations and Food

Hope of Life

Rooms – The accommodations at Hope of Life are very clean and safe. While most of the rooms do not have air conditioning, there are fans in all of them that provide plenty of ventilation. The evenings are cooler, so the fans are very adequate.

While we are sometimes able to accommodate couples or families in a room to themselves, please be prepared to have your group be split up among rooms only for women and rooms only for men. For larger groups there will be an average of 4-6 people per room.

Bathrooms – All of the rooms are located near bathrooms, which are designated for either men or women. The bathrooms are all equipped with toilets, sinks, mirrors, and most of the showers will have warm water. It is always a good idea to wear a pair of flip-flops in the showers.

Meals – Breakfast, lunch and dinner are prepared fresh at Hope of Life every day. The food is very good and safe to eat. The juices and drinks served with the meals are also safe to drink.

We do advise that you do not consume any food from street vendors in the villages.

Pool – There is a beautiful pool at Hope of Life available for your enjoyment in the evenings and free time. We do ask that swimming attire be modest.

Fiesta Night – On one of your final nights at Hope of Life, they will host a large dinner and program for everyone there. It is appropriate to dress up a bit for this night.

Other

If your group chooses to spend the night in Guatemala City or Antigua at any point during your trip, we will take care of those hotel reservations. We have several hotel options, all of which we have used many times and are very safe and comfortable.

In-Country Health Practices

Food

- Do not eat any food other than the food provided at Hope of Life and/or restaurants you are taken to
- If you usually have trouble with different foods, try to stick to things you know and/or bring snacks and granola bars with you

Water

- Do not drink tap water
- Hope of Life uses jugs of purified water for teams, and you must bring a reusable water bottle with you to fill up for drinking
- Do not get ice in your drinks
- Use bottled water to brush your teeth- Do not use tap water
- Do not open your mouth in the shower or swimming pool
- Make a point of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, especially when working in the sun (there will always be plenty of bottled water provided)

Other

- Use insect repellent all day every day
- Wear closed toe shoes when going to ministry sites
- Wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer before going in and out of any ministry sites, both at Hope of Life and in the villages
- Shower before visiting the hospital if you have been in a village or at the dump, in order to avoid contaminating the children with any outside germs
- Use sunscreen daily
- Never leave Hope of Life compound by yourself or without letting your group leader know where you are going

Important Trip Notes

| [Flight Policy](#) | [Safety Policy](#) | [Trip Payments](#) | [Medical Insurance](#) |

Flight Policy

World Help will take care of booking all flights for trip participants using an experienced travel agent. We will work closely with the trip participant and our travel agent to give the participant the best options possible, and will ensure that the individual is arriving and departing when needed. We feel that this will allow participants to have the best experience on our trips.

Safety Policy

World Help is extremely cautious when taking groups on international trips. We do our best to ensure a safe environment for our trip participants, including our choice of lodging, food, and transportation for each group. We make sure that we are up-to-date on current events within each country, and would never proceed with a trip if we had reason to fear for the participants' safety. Our in-country partners are also trust-worthy, reliable, and knowledgeable with handling American group trips.

Trip Payments

All payments made to World Help are tax-deductible and non-refundable. As a non-profit organization we are legally unable to provide refunds for tax-deductible donations. If you should choose to back out from the trip for any reason, you will be able to use your money paid for the project of your choice.

International Medical Insurance

Each trip participant will have international medical insurance purchased in their name through Faith Ventures for the duration of the trip. This is covered in the trip cost. It covers medical expenses or procedures that might be incurred while overseas. If you would like more details on the specifics of the coverage, go to <http://www.faithventures.com/wpccStatic/files/2015/BATX.pdf>

If you should require medical assistance during the trip, there is a good hospital within 30 minutes from Hope of Life, in the city of Zacapa.

