

- 1) Medical Concerns - Do we need to get shots? What about protection from the sun, mosquitos, other issues, etc.?

*ASK your doctor if you need any shots. Your doctor knows your vaccination schedule and medical history. Your doctor has access to medical information regarding diseases and issues in Puerto Rico that may or may not apply to you personally.*

*USE common sense for summer.*

- *DRINK! Carry an empty easily identifiable re-usable water bottle through security at the airport – fill it at a water fountain. Our tap water is safe to drink and we use it in our dining room for drinking water. If you need filtered water, get a filtered re-usable water bottle. Drink water! Drink it often and daily. People dehydrate and it's never pleasant.*
- *USE SUNSCREEN always – it's the tropics. The sun is stronger than you think.*
- *USE BUG SPRAY – mosquitoes bite and make you miserable.*

- 2) Since we can find a lot of details about the history of ESD on the school's website <http://www.esdluquillo.com/Pages/History.aspx> without spending too much time, can you briefly summarize the history of ESD?

*In 1957, U.S. missionaries who were ministering to the deaf in Jamaica answered God's call to bring the Gospel to the deaf in Puerto Rico. These missionaries quickly learned that most of the deaf were illiterate. Without a language, how could these deaf understand the Gospel?*

*The first step for the missionaries was to establish a school. They opened a school in a farm house in Barrio Casa Blanca, Luquillo and incorporated their ministry in 1959 as Evangelical Deaf Missions. Several years later, an additional a two- story building was erected to house three classrooms, a library and audio/visual room downstairs and a dorm with and attached counselors residence upstairs. Since then, hundreds of students have passed through ESD. An actual number is not available but we have hopes of some day counting the files and creating a database of the information available – maybe one of your team has this kind of research and organizational talent and could do this while you are here.*

*Today's students continue to receive Christian education at a low cost.*

- 3) What are the current ages of the students at the school? How many students do you currently have?

*10 students presently ages 5 to 16*

*5 Juan Jose*

*5 Gaby (hearing sibling)*

*6 Saúl (Gaby's deaf brother)*

*6 Naiska from Hormigueros*

*7 Zumaya from Hormigueros*

8 Mizael

9 Kioney (Gaby's deaf sister)

11 Larimar (whose shoe size is also 11!)

16 Kristian

16 Kevin

- 4) What is your best guess as to the ages and number of participants we would have during our week in June?

10 ESD Students + 3 girls from Orocovis and their parents

We will also invite Ezequiel from Humacao (home schooled deaf child) and any other deaf youth we encounter in the area

maybe Adriana (23 former ESD student) and Yanina and Carlos- (the deaf parents of Naiska and Zumaya) and Victor and Sonia (former ESD student living in the area and his wife)

- 5) Tell us about the families who may be staying at the school during our week there (4 from Hormigueros, 5 from Orocovis)? What about the students who may stay in the dorm (ages & names)?

Juan (age 5) and maybe Kristian (16) since he lives in Rio Grande and also the people highlighted in the list above. ☺ The other students will be picked up or dropped off and taken/sent home daily – this detail will be discussed and resolved with the parents before you arrive. Plan on assigning a driver and a signing co-worker to do driving every morning of the program ☺

- 6) In your recent e-mail you mentioned that collecting school supplies for the students was a good idea? What types of items would you suggest? Should we collect things generally for the school or be making up specific packets for individual students or both? How many student packets would we need?

Our students receive many visitors each school year. **Gifts are not necessary.** In lieu of individual gifts, some visitors have treated the students to an ice cream sundae extravaganza at the school or brought in pizza for lunch or afternoon snack. Other teams have gone shopping and filled our pantry and freezer with basic food supplies before leaving.

You may collect items for the school – we use a lot of paper, printer ink, lamination supplies, cleaning supplies and food.

The **best gift** you can give the students is your friendship. Sending a letter with a picture of you and a special student you befriended of you after you return home will show the student(s) that you remember them and that you cared enough to send them something special. Remain in contact even if you only hear back once each semester.

*If you want to bring **individual gifts**, think specific to your home area or think about items that are constantly in need of replacement – pencils, backpacks, insulated water bottles, snack bags, toothbrushes, combs, or other consumable gifts, hats, 3 ring binders, small bracelets or something your team is wearing are also very nice reminder gifts. Many of these things ARE available here so you may want to save money and space by waiting until you meet the students and then go shopping one evening at our local K-or Wal-Mart and get things specifically for each child – they will need new school shirts and pants or skirts for school and these are expenses each family incurs. Costs are a little more sometimes depending in import and shipping fees to the island. You can always mail things from the States at relatively cheap rates.*

*(EXAMPLE: Many of our students have multiple copies of the Bible given by well-meaning people – it's a great gift but you can only read one Bible at a time and so some of the older students have 3 to 5 Bibles they are not using. It's a lovely gift but not one that meets a NEED in that their old Bible is relegated to a shelf or stuffed under their bed ☺ you follow me on this?)*

7) How long have you personally been at the school and can you give us a few examples of how have you seen God work in your life and in the life of the school in recent years?

*In the past week, I have*

- *shared the tears of a random visitor,*
- *listened to stories of sexual temptation shared by a young boy,*
- *challenged a worker to step out in faith to see that God is faithful, taught a new Christian that God's sovereignty extends to God bringing him to ESD at this time – that God knows the needs of those around him and that God is using him to meet those needs as well as his own,*
- *wrestled a small child into a chair as part of my decreasingly routine school work (he is learning that school means THIS and play means THAT),*
- *loaned a van to another ministry,*
- *driven our 95 year old volunteer to work each morning,*
- *discussed integrity and finances with our nonChristian accountant,*
- *encouraged a grandmother who has cancer and is losing her hair.*

*I am learning that God wants to use my hands and face and shoulders and brain and time and ALL for Him. And that faith means, I will do anything He brings to my attention. And that He is my Sovereign and Provider and Sufficiency.*

8) What kind of needs do the deaf in Puerto Rico have and how does ESD help meet some of those needs?

9) How does ESD address the spiritual needs of the students and their families? How would our team putting on a VBS/Day Camp Program at the school help to support the deaf students and their families and the work of ESD?

*Our most basic human need is to be loved and accepted. God wants to meet this need in our lives. He wants to love us totally and wants us to find our worth as people in His love and acceptance. Within ourselves, we have nothing to offer. The only thing I have to offer anyone is what God has given me, and that is Himself as my King and Creator.*

*Our daily prayer as a staff is that we would be God's hands to the children and their families. To be His arms drawing them to Himself. To be His face shining His joy into their lives. To pour His love into their emptiness. To allow His Word to become flesh through us.*

*When you come, you will feel God use YOUR hands to communicate His love to children who are often marginalized by their own families! You will feel God use your arms to hug a sick grandmother or a crying child or a tired missionary. You will feel God use YOUR face to express His compassion - in smiles, in laughter, in tears, in anger at the injustice. In doing this, you will help to teach the deaf or hearing person how to respond to life's traumas and joys in God's power. You will feel God change YOU as His love flows into your heart and out of your life. You will give a part of yourself and you will leave changed. I hope that you will be the BEST YOU that God has made you to be – that you will be more than yourself- that you will be YOU IN CHRIST and that you will become God's Word in the flesh!*

*The students and their families will see. I pray that they will see Jesus in you. I pray that YOU, becoming a living example of the Word of God, will impact them in a life changing way. That YOU touching their lives will draw them into a relationship with Jesus Christ THE WORD become flesh. That YOU allowing God to work in your life will transform you for His glory and that the transformation will extend to every person you meet at home and in life.*