

## Work team FAQs

Bringing a team to help at ESD? Here is some basic information to get you started.

### AIRLINE INFO:

Don't even ask the ESD staff about this. You will have to begin your planning and preparations from your side. We don't know your location or how much it costs. You will arrive at SJU (San Juan International Airport) and we would love to arrange ground transportation if our vans are working. If they are not working, you will have to arrange van rental – this can be done online with your ticket purchases.

### HOW MANY CAN COME?

Our van holds 14 plus the driver, so your group will need to be limited to 14 people or less. We can bring a second van to the airport to pick up luggage and overflow bags etc.

Our visitor suites are not air-conditioned. There are fans. Each suite has been used for both men and women at various times in recent history.

The smaller suite has 8 beds and a small kitchenette/common room area. Three bedrooms: room one sleeps two (one bunk bed set and a door), room two sleeps two (with a privacy curtain), room three sleeps 4 (two bunk beds). The bathroom includes three each – shower, toilet and sink. None of the bathroom is truly private though there are stalls and shower curtains.

The larger suite has 9 to 11 beds and a nicer kitchenette area. There is a separate common room with a TV and DVD player, couches and table. This room can be used by your group for evening devotions and games. It is accessed by walking through the entire guest suite or by braving the fire escape.

The bathroom of this suite is a bit archaic. There are two toilet stalls, two showers and three sinks. There is a urinal as well.

This suite also includes three bedrooms. The first two cubicles have two sets of bunks each – sleeping 4 in each cubicle. These rooms have three walls and one window each. The interior walls do not extend to the ceiling so that ventilation can happen. The third room has three beds, no bunk beds, and a door.

If you are renting cars and other boarding facilities, you may bring more people!

We are willing to hold a few "training sessions" on signing so your team members can learn to communicate a bit with the deaf students and hearing impaired workers or visitors.

### WHAT IS A WORK DAY LIKE WHEN CLASSES ARE IN SESSION?

Our permanent worker's schedule is as follows

teacher's meeting at 7:15

Students arrive between 7:30 and 8

Flags and chapel 8 to 8:20ish, Chapel is a daily event. **We want your team to come to chapel! Actually, we will require your team to come to chapel if school is in session.** We want your team to share their testimonies, some skits and generally to participate with us. We may have prayer times or Bible lessons or just singing and praising God.

Students go to classes – older students have personal devotion time and younger students have calendar.

Classes 8:30 to noon

LUNCH (usually prepared by one of the teachers or a local volunteer)

We do not have a cook or office worker at this time (2010). We do not provide meals or same day receipts. In fact, we ask groups of any size **to bring their own cooks who will prepare lunches** for our students and teachers as well as your own team. So bring a cook and plan to include our population (about 18 in 2012) in your food count.

Tuesday and Thursday, we have a local friend who cooks for us – be prepared for some variation on rice and beans.

Break 12:30 to 1

CLASSES 1 to 3:30

We like to plan time with your team and will work that out with you. Our students enjoy joining our work teams for an afternoon at the beach or working along with you on projects at the school. We want to see you and them together as often as possible.

We welcome visiting workers into the classrooms. Sometimes to perform a specific lesson or task, sometimes to just observe. If any of your team members has a skill to share or interest in assisting in the classrooms, please suggest this to the school director before you come so that we can prepare our lesson plans to accommodate your team's skills. We have had cake decorating, cookie baking, auto mechanic, tire changing, surfing, carpentry, and various crafts brought to us in this way.

**Regarding gifts for students:** One group said, "We are bringing baseball caps and pencils/pens with the Canadian flag on them for the kids. Anything else in particular which they might like and which is not so available locally, or will they more appreciate a treat or two on outings?" Excellent question.

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. Many of our students have multiple copies of the Bible – it's a great gift but you can only read one Bible at a time. Think specific to your home area or think about items that are constantly in need of replacement – pencils, backpack, toothbrushes, combs, or other consumable gift or hats, small bracelets or something your team is wearing are also very nice reminder gifts.

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.

## WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORK TEAM?

Your team is responsible for all foods you will eat. ESD does not provide any food plan. We will have on hand those food items needed for your first meal – either preparing the food to share with you in welcome or having breakfast items ready for you to use when you wake your first morning. The dining room will be yours! Please keep it clean and ready for inspection should the health department choose TODAY for their investigation!

You pay \$10 per person per night to offset the cost of water and electrical use. Sometimes we even include pillows and clean sheets but we would prefer if you would bring your own sheets and take them home with you. We don't have staff to launder sheets and keep the guest facilities well organized.

If you want to use our laundry facilities, you pay extra for those. Because some people will wash their clothes daily, we do not count laundry use into the \$10 per night fee. Dryer use is expensive and we recommend \$5 per half hour of use. No one is keeping track but YOU so please honor this and keep track of your personal use.

You are responsible to designate ONE driver for a van on loan from ESD. You are responsible to return the van clean (even if we loan it dirty ☺) and filled as full as possible. We do not charge a per mile rate nor do we charge a daily rate for vans on loan. We do ask you to consider the cost of renting a van and then make a donation toward the insurance, maintenance and repairs, and future purchase of a new van ☺

All that we have belongs to God first and foremost. Please take care of it. If it's broken, let someone know or fix it. We use many of our resources regularly and need them to continue in working order.

## HOW MUCH DO WE WORK AND WHAT CAN WE DO AND SEE IN OUR FREE TIME?

Your evening time is YOURS! There are places to see and things to do so plan ahead. We will not impose our favorites on you but we will suggest. Check out our webpage Visiting the Island <http://www.esdluquillo.com/Pages/VisitingtheIsland.aspx> - some things can be done after a work day, others will need to be planned as day trips.

If you are a WORK team – using school vehicles, living in the dorms and coming to chapel - we really do expect to see some serious WORK done. If you are a senior trip with ministry aims, we will work on a less intense schedule of chores so that you get lots of sightseeing in as well.

Day trips may include sailing boats, catamarans, a ferry to one of our neighboring islands, a trip into the mountains or to the south of the island just to see the dry side.

Half day trips may include the rainforest, souvenir shopping in Old San Juan, other beaches, the Northeast Corridor Ecological Reserve, snorkeling.

There are a variety of beaches in the area for your after work/ after school hours enjoyment,

10ish – settle down, be **IN** your dorms with your supervisors. Most of our teaching staff live at the school and most of our teaching staff set their alarms to go off before or near 6 a.m. Please help the school ministry to continue to run smoothly and peacefully by helping our teachers to get their rest.

Satellite photo maps are available online. The ESD homepage has a Google map which can be clicked on. A larger map will pop up and you can get directions for various of our favorite island hang outs. PR tourism has a set of slides at [www.prtc.net/~gloriarod/PuertoRico.pps](http://www.prtc.net/~gloriarod/PuertoRico.pps).

ESD has a small buffet of sports equipment including basketballs, footballs, Frisbees, soccer balls, floor hockey equipment, bocce ball, volleyball, and badminton sets. We are also blessed to have a variety of snorkeling gear for loan.

#### WHAT ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS WITH OUR HOME TEAM?

Several groups have found it handy to set up a BLOG for their work team. They include all kinds of information which the home teams find helpful. BLOGS are free and easy to set up and maintain. Appoint a photographer and a blogger. Send out the address by e-mail and most of your supporters – prayer and financial – will have easy access to a DAILY UPDATE. Photos will ensure that they will see your WORK in progress and will provide peace of mind for any concerned persons at home.

Check out THESE BLOGS for past and recent experiences:

<http://deafmissionsteam2011.blogspot.com/>

<http://cbcpuertorico2012.wordpress.com/>

<http://christingley.blogspot.com/>

We have a wireless network that anyone may log into. There are some parental controls on the network. These will not be changed. The library computers have even more controls on them. These will also not be changed.

The school phone is not available. We actually recommend that you BE HERE WHILE YOU ARE HERE and leave your cellphone at home or in the OFF position except perhaps for a brief call at home at night or if the team is out on a day trip and separation may become a problem. The team leader should consider purchase of a cellular phone plan (pre-paid is good) for use during their visit if their cellphone server is not compatible with PR. Most US based cell phone plans will provide coverage while in PR – NEXTEL is the only one with questionable service so far.

Plan ahead with your church or neighbors to cover small emergencies Before you leave home, please leave numbers of people within the church who are willing to attend to urgent needs and immediate crises such as plumbing, snow removal, and dead car batteries. Your home church is part of your work team and will be happy to be able to support those you have left at home while serving at ESD.

#### ANYTHING ELSE?

The school library and chapel are air-conditioned. The chapel will be available on a limited basis for use **for an hour or two** each evening for group devotions. Electricity is expensive and we would prefer you to open windows and use fans but in the summer, temperatures are HOT and AC is a nice thing. Use it in moderation to keep costs down. We had a bill of over \$1000 for one work team... and their expense account did not cover this cost ☹. We must be stewards of the ministry in addition to seeking the luxuries of the chapel AC.

The team leader is responsible to be in the chapel while it is in use. The team leader is responsible for turning the AC on and off and making sure the facility is secured upon leaving. Any problems with this will result in the curtailment of the library privilege.

The team leader is responsible for everything and every one. ESD has had few reasons to deny a work team from returning though we have denied a few – these have been because of poor leadership. Please be prepared as the leader to take time daily to check in with team members and your designated ESD contact to ensure a good flow of information and communication between the full-time workers and your work team.

Be mindful of TEAM LIVING. Keep voices down. Respect boundaries – all kinds of boundaries... Be prepared to enter into the culture of the ministry – however it may be.

Be prepared to respect the rules of the school, dress code and code of ethics of the ministry.

Be prepared for God to work in your life!

If you have not read it yet, go to the ESD website and read about the history and purpose of the school. <http://www.esdluquillo.com>