

2012

General Volunteer Orientation Handbook



Safe Passage
Camino Seguro



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Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in Safe Passage/Camino Seguro!

We would like to thank you for your willingness to share your time, energy and skills with us. As a volunteer, we want your time at Camino Seguro to be full of valuable experiences for both you and the children and families you work with. The following handbook will provide you with an overview of the project as well as some guidelines to prepare you for your time in Guatemala.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Volunteer Coordinator. We look forward to working with you!

Volunteer Coordinator and Team



Hanley Denning

(1970 - 2007)

Dec 1999 - Safe Passage first opened its doors, in a church next to the Garbage Dump

2000 - Guatemala City Municipality provided Safe Passage with a small building

2002 - Construction began on a new building for Safe Passage

July 2004 - Safe Passage opened it's doors to what is now Educational Reinforcement Center

2006 - Construction began on the new Early Childhood Intervention Center

Summer 2006 - Safe Passage opened the doors of the Early Childhood Intervention Center or "Guarderia"

Jan 2007 - Hanley Denning died in a car accident

Feb 2007 - Dedication of the "Guarderia"

July 2007 - Barbara Nijhuis joins Safe Passage as the New Executive Director

1. Our History

Safe Passage/Camino Seguro was founded in 1999 by Hanley Denning, a young woman from Maine, U.S.A.

Hanley came to Guatemala in 1997 to learn Spanish since she was unable to communicate with her Spanish speaking students while teaching at an at-risk school in North Carolina.

While in Guatemala, Hanley began volunteering with children and adults living in small towns near Antigua, and one year extended into two. Just when Hanley was preparing to return to the United States, she was convinced by a friend to visit to the slums adjacent to the Guatemala City Dump.

That experience changed her life. The reality facing children at the Guatemala City garbage dump was unlike anything she had ever seen. She knew she had to do something.

The very same week she visited the dump; she sold her computer, her car and, using some money she had in savings, opened the doors of Safe Passage by enrolling 40 of Guatemala's poorest children in school. These children couldn't afford the books, school supplies and enrolment fees required by public schools. This initial group received tutoring, a healthy snack, and the care and attention they so desperately needed. Another 70 children participated in a drop-in program when they weren't working in the dump.

In addition to covering the costs of materials necessary to enroll in public school, the families of the children involved with Safe Passage were provided with food to compensate for the income that was lost when their children attended school instead of work. Within its first several years (1999-2003), the number of children being served by the Project grew from a handful to over 200 children, attending public school for half the day and attending the project for the other half of the day.

During this time, the Project also opened an early education center for younger children so that their older siblings could be freed of child-care responsibilities. The 'Guarderia', or nursery, provided a setting in which young children could be safe, well fed, and prepared for primary school.

From its humble beginnings in a small church just across the street from the garbage dump, Safe Passage/Camino Seguro now, through the combined efforts of staff, volunteers, and donors, offers a wide range of services at two major sites to over 500 children and their families including:

- Payment of all educational fees and supplies for students attending public school
- Educational support and reinforcement of learning for students
- Medical services for all students, families, and staff in the project
- Economic support through monthly food supplies for families
- Counseling and emotional support from Guatemalan social workers
- Educational programs for family members
- And more!!!

2. Our Core Beliefs

Our Mission

“Creating Hope and Opportunity through the Dignity and Power of Education”

Safe Passage/Camino Seguro works to provide hope, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and opportunity to at-risk children and their families through the dignity and power of education. We encourage the children to have high aspirations and endeavors to nurture their interests, dreams and talents in a caring, safe, and respectful environment.

The project of Safe Passage/Camino Seguro grows out of the following core beliefs:

Each and every person has an inherent dignity

Every child in the project is a human being with inherent dignity. Each child has unique gifts and talents that should have the opportunity to be developed and expressed.

Poverty restricts personal growth; Education provides opportunity for children’s ongoing growth and development

The children being served by the project are growing up in extreme poverty, which can have very negative effects on their physical, intellectual and emotional growth. By providing access to public and private education, additional educational support within a nurturing environment, and vocational training, Camino Seguro is enhancing each child’s opportunity to develop into a person who can utilize his or her personal gifts and talents.

Learning cannot occur without additional support systems in place

Simply having children attend school will not guarantee that they will benefit from an education. Children and their families must be supported in a variety of ways in order for them to learn. Children must receive adequate nourishment on a daily basis. Children must be physically healthy enough to learn and thus require adequate medical care. Children must also experience a positive and consistent emotional environment in order to feel safe enough to learn.

Children need a variety of learning experiences to develop fully as human beings

Children need to be exposed to a variety of activities that promote cognitive development, creative thinking and the development of curiosity. Combining children’s natural gifts and talents with different opportunities for learning and exploration will enhance their intellectual growth and ability to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers.

It is never too late to help a child

Because many of the children will come into the project without any prior educational experience, we believe that it is important that we develop programs that accept and support each child regardless of their age, past educational experience, and particular learning needs.

People working together can make a significant difference in the world

Individuals, when combining their efforts with those of other people, do have the ability to make significant changes in the lives of individual people and society in general. Each person who contributes their time, talent, and economic support is assuming the larger responsibility for the well-being of others and the betterment of our world.

3. Our Fundamental Values

The project of Safe Passage/Camino Seguro has as its basis the following fundamental values:

Justice (Fairness)

We all have a sense of what is “just” or “fair.” It is clear that the children living in the area of the Guatemala City garbage dump have not received the same access to adequate shelter, food, education and medical services as many other children in other parts of Guatemala and the world. Safe Passage/Camino Seguro was founded in order to address that injustice and to provide the children with the educational opportunities to find alternatives to living and working in the garbage dump. We also feel that our own organization must be fair, just and equitable in its relations with all of the various members of our community. It means that we strive to utilize established policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure that individuals and groups within the organization are treated equitably and without favoritism.



Honesty

We have come together as a community to serve the needs of the children living in poverty. The strength of any community is highly dependent on the trust that is shared between each person within the community. Lying, cheating and stealing all undermine that sense of trust and the ability of the community to work together effectively. Therefore, we ask all members of our community to speak truthfully in all matters, to abide by the rules established by the project, and to not take anything from the project that has not been earned through honest and open effort.

Respect

Honesty in words and actions builds a sense of safety and security within a community. Respect and courtesy towards others build a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding. Because Camino Seguro is an organization that blends a number of cultures, it is important that each of us seek to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, and also recognize the biases that are contained within our own points of view. In addition, by practicing common courtesy, being attentive to the needs of others, and maintaining the dignity of other people, even in their absence, does much to bridge cultural differences and create a sense of harmony and mutual regard.

Contribution

Choosing to be a part of the Camino Seguro community means that you have willingly taken on the task of serving others. Regardless of role or responsibility within the community, each of us is expected to contribute to the mission of the project and to the common good of the community it serves. This requires persistence in the face of personal challenge as well as being able to shift the focus away from “me” to a more balanced focus on how “we” can be more supportive and caring in our responses to the children and our co-workers. Because of the difficulties we are likely to encounter in our day-to-day activities in the project, we will be constantly challenged to move from a self-centered perspective (“This doesn’t make *me* happy.”) to a contributing perspective (“How can I be of most help in this situation?”).

4. Our Key Objectives

The project of Safe Passage/Camino Seguro has embraced the following key objectives:

To help children see themselves as worthwhile, competent and responsible people:

Frequently children growing up in poverty will experience attitudes and interactions that reinforce the idea that they are not worthy of respect or that they have only limited skills or abilities. It is through positive verbal interactions, ongoing encouragement, and providing the children with the support that they need to successfully complete their school assignments that the project seeks to develop in each child the confidence that they are indeed worthwhile, competent, and responsible. The project also seeks to help children develop strong study skills and behaviors that are respectful towards other people and their environment.

To help children see themselves as successful life-long learners:

Educational research has shown that when children are able to experience relatively frequent success in their learning, they will continue to pursue additional learning. When they generally experience failure academically, they will quite naturally seek to avoid future engagement with the school experience. Therefore, it is critical that volunteers help the children understand and work through obstacles that impede their learning as well as help to design learning activities that are at the appropriate level of difficulty for the children that they work with.



To help children become effective communicators:

Research indicates that children from poverty are not familiar with and/or have difficulty in utilizing the more formal levels of language used in writing and dialogue. It is important that volunteers assist the Guatemalan staff in developing language activities in reading, writing, listening and speaking, that help to build an expanded vocabulary, more complex sentence structures, improved use of grammar and conventions (spelling, punctuation, etc.) and quality of presentation (legibility, projection and enunciation, graphics, etc.).

To help children explore their creative potential:

The Guatemalan school system relies heavily on rote learning and didactic teaching methods in their approach to education. We seek to complement that approach to education by providing children with learning activities in the arts (visual art, music, drama, dance, etc.) that allow for creative expression and the discovery of individual talents and skills.

To help children become critical thinkers and effective problem solvers:

In addition to activities in the arts, children need to be provided with the skills and tools needed to process information from a variety of sources, identify problems, analyze relevant data, and develop workable solutions in a variety of settings. Volunteers should work to develop learning activities that require children to utilize and develop logical, critical, and divergent thinking.

To help children see themselves becoming leaders and role models in their community:

Hopefully, the children who attend Camino Seguro will have more choice and opportunity in their futures because of the educational support that they have received from the project. It is also hoped that they will come to understand how their success and hard work can be an inspiration to others in their communities. Finally, as they have received support from others, may they too be able to offer support and mentoring to others in the future.

5. General Expectations of Volunteers

Photo of volunteers in recommended/correct Safe Passage uniform



Yelle Stempfelet and Gabriel Tobas (April 2010)

The project of Safe Passage/Camino Seguro has the following general expectations for its volunteers:

Each volunteer will carry out the duties of his or her assigned volunteer placement

- The role and duties of each volunteer in the project will be determined by a discernment process between each volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator. Components of that discernment process will include consideration of the skills, interests, and capabilities of the volunteer as well the needs of project for personnel in particular areas.
- If a volunteer feels that a particular placement is not a good fit, he or she may request an alternative placement. *However, each volunteer should understand that the needs of the project may at times have to take precedence over the individual preferences of the volunteer.* We therefore ask volunteers to be open and ready to take on a variety of tasks as the needs of the project are constantly shifting as volunteers come and go.

Each volunteer will abide by the Safe Passage/Camino Seguro Dress Code.

- We expect all volunteers to wear their Camino Seguro shirt, long pants and closed toed shoes at all times when working in the project, including while on lunch break. Guatemalan staff are required to abide by the same dress code.
- Piercings (in visible places other than the ear) should not be worn and tattoos should be kept covered. Men are asked to not wear earrings in the project.

Each volunteer is expected to be punctual and consistent in meeting their volunteer commitment and responsibilities.

- We expect all volunteers to be at their respective jobs at the assigned times according to the project's daily schedule and to follow the volunteer expectations as established for each classroom.
- We expect each volunteer to inform their Volunteer Site Coordinator if, for any reason (i.e. sickness, personal emergency, etc.), the volunteer is to be late or unable to show up for work.
- If the volunteer has a need for time off from the project (i.e. for visa renewal, personal appointments, family visits, vacations, etc.) that need should be communicated to the Volunteer Coordinator in advance and specific time-off arrangements will be made.
- The volunteer is expected to inform the Volunteer Coordinator of their departure date from the project no less than two weeks prior to their departure.
- Volunteers who fail to maintain a satisfactory attendance record (90% or higher) may be asked to leave the project.

Each volunteer is expected to work with the children and the families being served by the program in a respectful, positive, and affirming manner.

- The volunteer will respect the privacy of the children and families in the project. No photographs of the children or the families may be taken outside of project activities, nor may a volunteer visit the home of a child or take a child on a non-project sanctioned activity without written consent from the Project administration.
- Volunteers are expected to interact with the children in a respectful and consistent manner. The volunteer is expected to refrain from using profanity while working in the project. The volunteer is

expected to follow the Project's established system for discipline and may never use physical force or corporal punishment when working with the children.

- The volunteer is expected to interact with the children in a positive and affirming manner. Volunteers should make every effort to develop positive relationships with the children through words or encouragement, smiles, and displays of appropriate affection.
- Volunteers are to refrain from smoking or consuming alcoholic beverages in front of the children in the project. In addition, volunteers are not to come to the project smelling of alcohol. Smoking anywhere on project property is strictly forbidden.
- The volunteer is expected to establish appropriate personal boundaries with the children. While affection is valued in the Project, the use of affection must also be tempered by good judgment. Affectionate behavior with the younger children should not be disruptive to the general focus of the class. Affirmation with older students should generally be verbal in nature and physical contact limited to a "pat on the back" or a hand on the shoulder.



Each volunteer is expected to work with their co-workers, Guatemalan staff and administrators, other volunteers, and Project leadership in a respectful and honest manner.

- If a conflict arises between a volunteer and a co-worker (either Guatemalan staff or other volunteer), the volunteer should consult the Volunteer Coordinator on the most appropriate way to come to a resolution of the problem.
- If a question or concern regarding policy or an operating procedure arises, the volunteer should discuss his or her question regarding that policy or procedure privately with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers should avoid becoming engaged in rumor or gossip.
- Volunteers are highly recommended to refrain from personal relationships with staff members.
- Volunteers are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries between their private lives and Project responsibilities.
- Volunteers are expected to interact with their co-workers in a respectful manner. This precludes the use of profanity, racist or demeaning language, or sexually harassing language while working in the Project.

Each volunteer is expected to be familiar with and abide by the general policies and procedures as developed by the Project Administration.

- Volunteers are representatives of their home country and of Safe Passage during their time as volunteers, both in the project and during off-work hours and weekends. With this responsibility comes the need to uphold and respect the policies of Safe Passage.
- Volunteers are required to travel to and from the project site in Guatemala City only in the bus arranged by Camino Seguro. Any exception to this must be arranged in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers may not walk around the neighborhood near the garbage dump, nor are they allowed to visit the homes of the children of families without approval of Safe Passage and without a Guatemalan staff member. This rule also applies during non-work hours and on weekends. They must use the Camino Seguro shuttle for transport between sites in Guatemala City.
- Volunteers are prohibited from becoming politically active with issues pertaining to Guatemala in their home country or in Guatemala. This helps ensure the safety of Safe Passage's staff and the affiliated families. One unintended political mistake by a volunteer could jeopardize the care received by thousands of people and threaten the organization's existence.
- Volunteers will become familiar with and follow the procedures and guidelines established for their specific volunteer placement.



6. Volunteer Placement Options

Guatemala City:

- **Educational Reinforcement Center**

Our main project building is located approximately five blocks from the Guatemala City garbage dump. This site is where the majority of our volunteers donate their time working directly with the children (ages 7-21) who are attending public or private school half the day and our program the other half of the day. Here, volunteers work with Guatemalan teachers in grade-level classrooms as tutors, co-teachers, classroom aides, and special activities leaders (i.e. art, music, theater, etc.)

(Note: Working at this site requires a full day commitment from 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM plus commute time.)

- **Early Childhood Education Center – The “Escuelita”**

In January of 2007, we moved into our new Guardería which is located approximately 150 yards from the entrance to the garbage dump. In 2012 the Ministry of Education approved the center as a certified pre-primary school. At this facility we serve children from 2 to 6 years of age. Based on an educational philosophy of providing pre-school children with ample opportunity for self-directed creative play and learning activities, as well as guided activities in music, movement and art, this facility provides an excellent environment for early childhood brain development and social-emotional growth. In addition, we provide nutritional meals and training in basic hygiene. Here, our volunteers work with Guatemalan staff to provide basic child-care (hygiene and feeding), assistance and guidance in the child-centered learning activities, and the development and implementation of the various guided learning activities.

(Note: Working at this site requires a full day commitment from 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM plus commute time.)

*At both the Educational Reinforcement Center and the Escuelita volunteers may have down time during the day depending on the position and daily schedule.

- **Special Programs**

Special programs offered by the Project include our English program, Adult Literacy, Saturday Clubs, and Creative

Expression (visual art, music, dance, and theater.)

(Note: Schedules for these programs may vary.)

Antigua

- **Administrative Offices**

The office in Antigua supports the work that occurs at the Guatemala City site by providing overall coordination and administrative support. Volunteers working in this area tend to be long-term, qualified in specific areas, assist in sponsorship, accounting, and volunteer coordination.

(Note: The work schedule for this site is flexible and dependent on volunteer availability and program needs.)

Volunteers are required to travel to and from the project site in Guatemala City only on the bus arranged by Camino Seguro. Volunteers need to be at their bus stop at least 5 minutes before departure. The bus will not wait for late comers. Please look out for an un-marked yellow American school bus.



7. Volunteer Bus Schedule

**Schedule subject to change*

If a volunteer misses the bus, they should report immediately to the Camino Seguro Office in Antigua (Calle del Hermano Pedro #4) and ask whether an office staff member is going into the city and if it is possible to get a ride with them. Please note that it is extremely important to contact your volunteer coordinator if this happens.

Monday to Friday		
Mañana	7.20 am	Bus stop 1: Bus departs from in front of the church on the corner of Calzada de Santa Lucia and Calle del Espiritu Santo (7 th calle)
	7.25 am	Bus stop 2: Bus departs from the corner of San Francisco Church (7th Calle and Calle del Hermano Pedro)
	7.30 am	Bus stop 3: Bus departs from the exit of Antigua at the end of Calle Chipilapa.
	8.15-8:30 am	Bus arrives in Guatemala City in front of the Reinforcement Center.
Tarde	4.45 pm	Bus departs from the Reinforcement Education Center.
	5.40 - 6.00pm	Bus arrives in Antigua. All volunteers who live in the south of Antigua depart the bus at the entrance of Antigua (First drop off). The bus then travels North towards La Candelaria, Calle de Los Animas, towards the market. Inform the bus driver where you need to be dropped off.

**Always be at the bus stop 5 minutes before leaving time.*

**Please always listen out for any changes in bus schedule.*

Paying for the Bus

Volunteers pay for the transportation arranged by Camino Seguro. The bus ride costs Q20 per day, Q100 per week. Volunteers can pay for the bus in the Volunteer Office. As an additional help to long-term volunteers who receive stipends, they are not required to pay for the bus.

Note: No money is paid directly to the bus driver!

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER...

* The following are **rough** daily schedules of the Reinforcement Center and the Escuelita and the roles Volunteers (especially classroom assistants) play throughout the day. Volunteer's schedules differ based on their positions within the project. *Schedule is subject to change.*

Reinforcement Centre Daily Schedule

Mañana	8.30am	<i>Volunteers greet the first group of children (older) in comedor for breakfast.</i>
	8.45 - 9.00 am	<i>Volunteer assist children to classroom. 'Soy Importante' - Teeth are brushed, kids are welcomed for the day etc.</i>
	9 - 9.30 am	<i>English Class (some classes have English between 9:30 and 10am)</i>
	9.30 - 11.20 am	<i>Educational Reinforcement. (Construyendo mi Futuro and Caja de Suenos) Volunteers help children with homework and other school work. ➤ 1 hour per week during this time, children participate in an extracurricular activity (sports, swimming, dance, music, art, reading club etc.)</i>
	11.20am	<i>Lunch for children. Volunteers bring children from classroom to their table in the Comedor (lunch room). Volunteer sit with children.</i>
	11.50pm	<i>Children leave the building and go to public school.</i>
11.50 - 12.50pm <i>Lunch for all volunteers & staff. Bring your own lunch, eat the lunch provided at the project, or eat at the 'Comedor' next door to the project.</i>		
Tarde	12.50 pm	<i>Volunteers greet the second group of children (younger) at the entrance of the project and accompany them to their table in the Comedor for lunch. Same schedule as the morning.</i>
	1.20 pm	<i>Volunteer accompany children back to classroom. Afternoon classes begin.</i>
	1.20 - 2.00 pm	<i>'Soy Importante'</i>
	2.00 - 2.30pm	<i>English Class</i>
	2.30 - 4.30pm	<i>Educational Reinforcement. (Construyendo mi Futuro and Caja de Suenos) Volunteers help children with homework and other school work.</i>
	4.30 pm	<i>Classes end. Volunteers escort children out of the building. Volunteers wait for the bus which leaves around 4:45 pm back to Antigua.</i>

The Escuelita

Mañana	8.30 am	<i>After arriving in front of the Educational Reinforcement Center, Escuelita Volunteers are taken via private van to the Escuelita. Ride takes about 3 minutes.</i>
	8.00 - 8.30 am	<i>Teachers in classrooms setting up</i>
	8.30 - 9.00 am	<i>Breakfast. Children are dropped off at the entrance of the Escuelita and are greeted by program direct, teachers, and volunteers. A quick health check is done, and then they are guided to the 'comedor' where teachers are waiting to help with hand washing and breakfast.</i>
	9.00 - 9.20 am	<i>Introductory circle/Washroom Routine. Children are welcomed and introduced to daily activities and there is a talk about the theme (of the month). Volunteers assist with hand and face washing, and brushing of teeth.</i>
	9.20 - 10.20 am	<i>Free Play at Centers. Children choose activity (choice of ten activity centers).</i>
	10.20 - 10.30 am	<i>Snack time. Hand washing in classrooms. Snack in 'comedor' area.</i>
	10.30 - 11.20 am	<i>Outdoor Play. Mostly self-directed play.</i>
	11:45 - 12.00 pm	<i>Washroom routine starts assisted by volunteers as circle continues.</i>
	12.00 - 12.30 pm	<i>Lunch time. Hand washing in classroom. Supervised by teachers.</i>
	12.00 - 2.00 pm	<i>One hour lunch break for volunteers. 1 hour max. Note: Times may vary per classroom.</i>
Tarde	12.30 - 1.30 pm	<i>Outdoor Free Play. Supervised by teachers.</i>
	1.30 - 3.00 pm	<i>Nap time.</i>
	3.00 - 3.30 pm	<i>Wake up time. Wash face and hands.</i>
	3.30 - 4.00 pm	<i>Snack time</i>
	4.00 pm	<i>Dismissal. Program director and teachers, assisted by volunteers are responsible for managing the departure of the children.</i>
	4.15 pm	<i>Volunteers return to the main building in the Camino Seguro Shuttle</i>
	Note	<i>Each group has 30 minutes of English in the comedor area.</i>

7. Typical Volunteer Challenges

Language

Unless a volunteer comes into the project with a strong command of Spanish, they will often find their first several weeks to be fairly difficult. The inability to understand the children and the Guatemalan staff can lead to feelings of incompetence and frustration. However, over time, most volunteers do gain a greater understanding of the language and come to realize that learning the language simply takes using it and practicing it whenever possible. Don't be afraid to make a fool of yourself! There are a number of Spanish schools schools☺

Communication

Obviously, linguistic barriers make communications difficult at times in the project. While our command of Spanish may be good enough to get the general idea of what is being said, we can often times miss the more subtle aspects of the communication. Conversely, our lack of vocabulary may make it difficult to get across our ideas and understandings as well. Also, many volunteers like to know ahead of time what their duties and responsibilities will be. However, there are times in the project when communications about various activities or expectations are given with very short notice or are incomplete and/or unclear. Our recommendations for volunteers is to paraphrase what you understand to clarify what you have heard and to be prepared to be very flexible in responding to new or ambiguous situations.

Stress and Physical and Emotional Exhaustion

Working with children is an emotionally and physically challenging task. Combine that with a long commute and the other challenges of living in a developing country and you have the ingredients for "burnout." We encourage volunteers to get a good night's sleep whenever possible and to take an occasional "personal day" if you feel that important personal needs require attention or if you are having difficulty working with the children in a positive manner.

Infrastructure

Many of the things we take for granted in our home countries are not as well developed here in Guatemala. These include the availability of water on a regular basis, the ability to travel to places easily and quickly, the ability to purchase needed items, and the generally lower quality of the items available for purchase here in Guatemala. While at first these inconveniences seem minor, over time they can have a negative cumulative effect. Coping with these situations will require acceptance of the reality of living a less predictable lifestyle in a developing country.

Respect/Conduct

In general, the norms for respectful behavior in the project are slightly different from what many North Americans and Europeans are used to in a school situation. In many respects, Guatemalans are much more polite and circumspect in their verbal interactions than Americans or Europeans. However, "Horseplay" is much more accepted in the Guatemala culture and actions that are potentially harmful (i.e. punching, hitting, kicking, tripping, and throwing objects) are often ignored or tolerated. Though the children, especially the younger ones, may want to engage in this sort of physical play, we strongly discourage this. Though it may seem like simple fun and games, this behavior often adds a level of energy that is unproductive for the teacher, volunteer and children. In addition, the children will sometimes "test" a volunteer by ignoring them, or even swearing at them to see what their reaction will be. The Peace Program is meant to develop empathy and respect for others among the students. Volunteers are encouraged to focus on and praise the positive behaviors of the students in order to build their understanding and success in treating other people respectfully.

9. Volunteer Health and Safety

Maintaining your health:

Safe Passage/Camino Seguro wants all volunteers to have a safe and satisfying experience while working in the project. All volunteers should be up-to-date on their vaccinations (Hep A, B, Tetanus, TB etc.). For more information, please review our [Health and Travel Handbook](#) located on our website!

Travel/Medical Insurance

Camino Seguro is not able to offer medical services or insurance to its volunteers. We require that all volunteers have medical insurance prior to their arrival in Guatemala. We also require that your medical insurance contain emergency evacuation in the event that you may become seriously ill or injured while here in Guatemala.

When you do purchase your travel insurance, make sure you:

- Read all the small print before you go away and clarify questions you are unsure of with your provider.
- Check that your insurance does cover you for Guatemala and any other countries that you wish to travel to during your time here.
- Take a copy of your insurance and also keep a record of the policy number and the number to call in your notepad, in case you do lose the originals. *You will be asked to provide proof of insurance on your first day of work in the program.*

Maintaining your physical safety:

Unfortunately, approximately between 20-25% of our volunteers will experience some form of criminal activity while here in Guatemala. For your safety and for the well-being of the project, it is important that you take a proactive role in reducing your risk while here. We strongly encourage this first for your safety but also for the security of our volunteer program. Therefore, we ask all volunteers to adhere to the following safety precautions and procedures:

- When traveling to the project sites, all volunteers are required to take Safe Passage's private yellow school bus. Never walk in Guatemala City alone. Volunteers are not allowed to leave the project sites and walk through the surrounding neighborhoods. If you need to leave the project sites in Guatemala for any reason, contact the Volunteer Coordinator and he/she will help arrange transportation for you.
- Avoid walking after dark in Antigua, even in groups. We **STRONGLY** recommend that after dark, volunteers always travel in a taxi or a tuk-tuk (Never get in a tuk-tuk with more than one driver).
- When on buses (even the bus arranged by Camino Seguro) be aware of your belongings and get off as close as possible to your destination. Never use unauthorized forms of transportation, such as pickup trucks or unmarked taxis.

- Do not carry large amounts of cash and be very discreet when taking money out of your purse or wallet. Do not wear expensive jewelry or watches or carry expensive electronic equipment (iPods, BlackBerrys, etc...)
- In general, we discourage volunteers from bringing expensive items such as laptop computers or iPhones to the project since these are significant temptations for the children. If you do bring such items, please make sure that they are secured in your lockers when they are not being used. In order to stand out as least as possible we ask that volunteers refrain from using listening devices that involve earphones on the volunteer bus.
- Do not carry your passport with you. Keep it in a secure location. Do carry a *copy* of your passport for identification purposes.
- Do not regularly carry your credit or ATM cards with you. Only carry as much money as you will need and divide it up into different places.
- Since late 2010 Guatemalan ATMs (universally) have been identified as the source of bank fraud. Many volunteers have had their ATM cards skimmed and their bank information fraudulently used. We recommend that you withdraw your money from a bank branch rather than an ATM, however if you choose to use an ATM do so at a time of day when there are other people around, and avoid putting your card into ATMs that take your card (only use ones where you can swipe and remove your card.) Be sure to monitor your bank account closely and notify your bank of any suspicious transactions as soon as possible. Banks are busiest around the 15th and end of every month (this is when people are normally paid) and should be avoided around this time if possible.
- If you are approached in a robbery situation, do not resist or attempt to fight back. Instead, turn over whatever money you have. Throw your wallet or bag away from you and run in the opposite direction. If the assailant has a gun, it is recommended to run in a zig-zagging way.
- If you feel that the situation is leading to a rape or abduction, do begin screaming as loudly as you can and run. It has been shown that people respond more to “FIRE” than “HELP.”
- If you are involved in an assault or serious emergency you should call your home embassy. The embassy can provide you with assistance in navigating the police and legal systems as well as refer you to adequate medical facilities. Check if your embassy recommends registering with them. (This is recommended for US citizens and can be done easily at www.travel.state.gov.)

10. What to bring

Here's a checklist of recommended items to help you pack for your time in Guatemala:
Please note that these items are not obligatory and are merely suggestions.

Clothing / Footwear	Wash Kit	Medical
T-shirts / tops /shirts	Shampoo / Conditioner	Medication Taken
Sweater or warm long sleeved top	Toothbrush / Toothpaste	Lip Salve
Trousers / Jeans - Hardwearing for working or trekking, smart for evening/night	Razor / Shaving Gel	Cold/flu pills
Underwear and socks	Mosquito Repellant	Throat Lozenges
Swim-wear	Soap / Shower Gel	Plasters/Blister Plasters
Towel	Sunscreen	Antiseptic Cream
Sandals / Flip Flops	Moisturizer	Motion Sickness Pills
Sneakers	Tampons / Sanitary Towels	First Aid Kit
Waterproof Jacket *	Hand Sanitizer	Pain Killers
Shorts	Nail clippers	Immodium, Pepto Bismol
	Tweezers	Tubigrip

Electronic	Essentials	Paper work / Reading
Camera + Batteries and / or battery charger	Backpack	Certificate of all vaccinations
Alarm Clock	Daypack	Passport + copies
Mp3	Padlock (for locker in the project building)	Extra Passport photos
Flashlight	Hat	Debit / Credit Card
	Sunglasses	Travel / Medical Insurance + copies
	Umbrella *	Novels
	Mini-sewing Kit	Guidebook
	Universal Travel Plug (European Volunteers)	Notebook and pen
	Penknife	
	Money Belt/Wallet	

If you are staying in a homestay, please know that bedding will be provided. You should, however, bring a towel. Sheets and blankets can be purchased in Antigua.

**Rainy Season - May to October*

Visas

To volunteer with Camino Seguro and in Guatemala no work visa is required. As a volunteer you will only require a tourist visa. When you first enter Guatemala, you will automatically be given a 90 day tourist visa. *The visa will be stamped right into your passport. (Always check to ensure the date is clear on the stamp).* Tourist Visas are valid for up to 90 days from your arrival date in Guatemala.

If you are volunteering for more than 3 months in the project, volunteers are given the option to renew their visa at INGUAT in Guatemala City or to take a few days off to renew their visa by traveling outside the country. Please note that Guatemala is part of a free trade alliance with Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua so free travel amongst these countries makes it impossible to renew your visa unless flying back into the country.

Your Volunteer Coordinator will be able to advise you what to do, when the time comes.

Planning your budget

This guide will help you plan your essential monthly spending budget whilst living in Guatemala and working for Safe Passage. Please keep in mind that the following prices are conservative and averages and will vary from person to person.

The budget does not include travel prices or any out-of-project activities.

[See next page . . .](#)

BUDGET PLANNING

	Per week	Comments
Volunteer living in a Homestay		
Accommodation	\$75	rent & food - 6 days per week
Eating out on Sundays	\$20	
TOTAL	\$95	
TOTAL MONTH	\$380	(Price does not include <i>any</i> other expenses)

Volunteer in Independent Housing		
Accommodation	\$150 (monthly)	Rent for an apt or a room can range from \$150 and up. Majority spend between \$200 - \$250 in rent.
Housing Expenses (Gas, Electricity, Water)	\$30 (monthly)	Check whether these are included in the rent
Groceries	\$30 (weekly)	
TOTAL MONTH	\$300	Prices depend on number of roommates, location etc..

Transport		
Transport to Guatemala City	\$12.50	Return trip - 5 days a week \$50 per month

Food and Drink		
Lunch	\$10 week	From a Guatemalan Comedor - 5 days a week 40.00 month Lunch is free at program3
Bottled of Purified Water 1litre	\$1	
Soda	\$1	

Communication		
Internet Access	\$5	\$1 per hour
Phone card	\$6	
Cell phone*	\$20	\$0.13/minute, \$0.20/minute international

**As a safety precaution, we require all volunteers to purchase a cellular telephone while in Guatemala. Occasionally there are loaner phones available for volunteers*

Miscellaneous		
Laundry	\$10 - 15	

The following items are onetime payments:

	Per Item	Comments
Payment		
Volunteer Donation	\$50	One time payment - inc 3x Camino Seguro t-shirts
Extra Uniform		
Camino Seguro T-shirt	\$3.50	
Camino Seguro Sweatshirt	\$12	

12. Reference Information

Below you will find a list of books and movies that we strongly recommend you read and/or watch before your arrival into Guatemala or during your stay here. We hope you find the selection interesting!

If you have any recommendation on reading materials or movie that other volunteers might find helpful, please send us an e-mail to volunteers@safepassage.org.

Books

- **I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala** – Rigoberta Menchú
- **Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala** - Stephen Schlesinger, Stephen Kinzer and John H. Coatsworth
- **The art of political murder: who killed the Bishop?** – Fransisco Goldman
- **Silence on the mountain: Stories of terror, betrayal and forgetting in Guatemala** – Daniel Wilkinson
- **The most beautiful place in the world** – Ann Cameron
- **Guatemala: Never Again!**
- **Guatemala. Snapshot Reading: History** – John Noble
- **The Heart That Bleeds** – Alma Guillermoprieto
- **Repression, Resistance, and Democratic Transition in Central America** –Thomas W Walker
- **Robbed of Humanity: Lives of Guatemalan Street Children** – Nancy Leigh Tierney

Films/Documentaries

- **Hija de la Puma** - Directed by Åsa Faringer, Ulf Hultberg. With Nora Aguirre, Elpidia Carrillo, Ángeles Cruz. A famous Guatemalan film: this is a fairly old film about a girl whose animal spirit is the Puma, which gives great insight into the revolutions that have troubled Central America.
- **From homeless to Harvard** - Directed by Peter Levin. With Thora Birch, Michael Riley, Robert Bockstael. Based on a true story.
- **When The Mountains Tremble** - Starring: [Rigoberta Menchú](#), [Susan Sarandon](#) Director: [Pamela Yates](#), [Newton Thomas Sigel](#)

13. Contact Information

If you have any concerns or questions before your arrival please contact the following:

Volunteer Office Numbers

Volunteer Coordinator Cell (502) 5649-7639

Volunteer Office - Antigua (502) 7832-8428

Volunteer Department e-mail: volunteers@safepassage.org

To make phone calls to Guatemala from an International destination:

*502 = country code

From the United States: 0 11 (502) and the eight digit number.

From anywhere else in the world: 00 (502) and then the 8 digit number.

To make local calls within Guatemala, simply dial the 8-digit number directly.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Policia Nacional Civil (National Police) – Tel: 110 and 120

Bomberos Voluntarios (Volunteer Firefighters) – Tel: 122

Bomberos Municipales (Municipal Firefighters) – Tel: 123

Ambulancias IGSS (Ambulance) – Tel: 128

Cruz Roja (Red Cross) – Tel: 125

CONRED (National Organizer for the Reduction of Natural Disasters) –Tel: 119

Municipal de Transito (Traffic Police) – Tel: 1551

Programa de Prevencion y Eradicacion de Violencia Intrafamiliar (PROPEVI (Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Domestic Violence) – Tel: 1515

Ministerio Publico (Public Ministry/Department) – Tel: 1570

Direccion General de Migracion (Migration Office) – Tel: 2360-8544

All Volunteers must have their Embassy's number in their cell phone: Examples:

U.S. – 2326 4000 and 2331-2354

Canada – 2365-1250

Volunteers may use this address if they wish to receive letters/packages etc*. However, please be sure that only the volunteer's name is on the package, not the name 'Safe Passage or Camino Seguro'. If there is a tax due on the package, Camino Seguro is responsible for it, which might delay your receipt of the package and will also make you responsible for reimbursement of the tax.

Camino Seguro

Mailing Address

Antigua Office:

(Volunteer's Name)
Calle del Hermano Pedro #4,
Antigua, Saquatepequez
Guatemala,
Central America