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# BAJA

JULY 15-21, 2018



Project Hope Int'l

## Information Packet

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Poverty:  
2.5 billion people  
(40% of the  
world's  
population)  
live on less  
than \$2 per day



THE  
CRISIS

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For many environmental and social reasons, including crowded living and working conditions, inadequate sanitation, and disproportionate occupation as sex workers, the poor are more likely to be exposed to infectious diseases.

About 1.1 billion people are living in inadequate housing conditions in urban areas alone

In cities of the developing world, one in four households lives in poverty, rural areas have a much higher poverty rate.



Mixtecan, Trique and other indigenous peoples in Baja work 60 to 80 hours a week for as little as \$1 per hour. These fieldworkers provide most of the produce for the western US during the winter. These people live without running water and sanitation and their diet consists mostly of beans and rice.

On our annual trip into rural Baja California we work with indigenous fieldworkers living in abject poverty. This year, we will be building a house for a needy family, building a school classroom, and will again be providing medical care for the community. We will also deliver clothing and food.

One recent home recipient was a young mother with two small children. When asked what would make her happy in life she answered, "Nothing. I now have everything I need!" As we participated in the home dedication many collapsed under their own emotion. Several said "today is the greatest day of my life". It was a pretty great day for all of us.



# Baja 2018

## What You Can Do

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Give – In rural Baja, Project Hope can build a furnished home for a family of six OR a one room school house for only \$6,000.

Go – Spend one week changing the lives of an entire family. It's Extreme Home Makeover meets the Amazing Race as we do medical screenings, food distribution and home building in one of the poorest spots in the northern hemisphere. You'll never forget the looks on the faces of the people you help

From the Napa Valley, the journey begins. Teams board vans and say goodbye to the comfortable world you know for 7 days. Crossing the border into Mexico, we travel 70 miles along scenic Mexico Highway 1 to beautiful Ensenada to be greeted by the largest Mexican Flag in the country. Here the journey really begins. For the next 3-4 hours, the route follows parallel to the Baja 1000 course through rugged terrain to the San Quintin Valley communities in the heart of rural Baja.



Remote beaches, dormant volcanoes and the beautiful waters of the Pacific greet you – here you will spend the next week helping the poorest of the poor distributing food, cleaning up communities and changing the lives of one family forever, building them a home.

# TRIP DETAILS

**Trip Leaders:** Justin Meyer and Rich Stein (Project Hope) from St. Helena with American Jeff Devoll as the trip guide. Please contact Justin with any questions or concerns... 707-200-1016.

**Service:** Participants will get an equal mix of hard work, enrichment and fun during this expedition. Baja will involve building houses for needy families and school classrooms for people who are among the poorest of the poor, community clean-up and working with orphanages in the area. Through out the week we will also have leadership lessons and team building. During our free time, activities will include going to the beach, hiking and trips to the best taco stands on the planet!

**Location:** Vicente Guerarro, Baja California Norte, Mexico (Near San Quintin, approximately 200 miles south of the U.S. border on Mexico Highway 1.

**Accommodations:** Dorm style enclosed cabins or modest Motel accommodations. Hot showers (usually), flush toilets (a luxury in Rural Baja) and filtered water on site and included. In this setting, Participants will be able to challenge their perceptions and perceive their potential while changing the lives of the needy. This will be Extreme Home Makeover meets leadership experience meets summer camp. The final night will be spent at a resort hotel in Rosarita.

**Activities:** Beach, surfing, boogie boarding, fishing, hiking, and trips to the best taco stands on the planet!. Please feel free to bring the items needed to engage in these activities.

**Trip Length:** 7 days including travel in and out of Baja.

**Travel:** Travel by rental van from St. Helena, CA is included in the trip price. If you would prefer to fly to San Diego, we are happy to pick you up at the airport, but any air travel will be your individual responsibility.

**Currency:** American dollars are accepted everywhere and only small bills can be used, nothing larger than a \$20 will be accepted at most places. One's and Five's are much better. All change will be received in pesos. Please be conservative about the amount of money brought on the trip. Tacos cost \$1.25, soft drinks are \$1 and Mexican ponchos cost about \$10 just as a point of reference.

**Climate:** The climate is very Mediterranean with warm days and cool nights. Summer temperatures average 85/50, winter is 60/40. It's frequently cool on the beach and the pacific ocean is about 60.

**Item's needed for the trip:** Sunscreen! beach towel, sandals, a hammer, work shoes (boots or hardy sport shoes), gloves, a modest swim suit, sunglasses, work clothes, light shorts/t-shirt to sleep in, more sunscreen, a hat (something with a wide brim is recommended) toilet paper (for times away from the base), a backpack, a water bottle (you will refill with purified water), toiletries (toothpaste, shampoo, etc) a package of wet wipes and hand sanitizer for the job site. You can bring some snacks if you want.

**Items not to bring:** Any illegal substance. non-prescribed pharmaceuticals, illegal drugs, or firearms of any kind. These are illegal in Mexico and are punishable by Mexican law which provides for serious consequences. Alcohol, fireworks and other potentially dangerous items are not allowed on the expedition.

**Travel Documents:** All participants must possess a valid US Passport or Passport card. The Mexican government may require each participant to purchase a tourist visa at the border for \$25 (this has never happened to our groups, but it is a law on the books).

In addition to a passport, all minors must carry a notarized letter of parental permission:

“Mexican law requires that any non-Mexican citizen under the age of 18 departing Mexico must carry notarized written permission from any parent or guardian not traveling with the child to or from Mexico. This permission must include the name of the parent, the name of the child, the name of anyone traveling with the child, and the notarized signature(s) of the absent parent(s). The State Department recommends that the permission should include travel dates, destinations, airlines and a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding the travel. The child must be carrying the original letter – not a facsimile or scanned copy – as well as proof of the parent/child relationship (usually a birth certificate or court document) – and an original custody decree, if applicable.

The form included in the document for minors will suffice as the parent/guardian permission form.

Project Hope will keep all documents in safe keeping for minor travelers. Check the U.S. State department travel site for up-to-date information on travel in Mexico at the U.S. Dept. of State website: <http://travel.state.gov>

### **Is it safe to visit Mexico? [A note from trip guide, Jeff Devoll]**

The media has been working overtime in recent months spreading exaggerated reports of violence and criminal activity in Mexico, thereby engendering great fear in North Americans about traveling into Mexico. Based on this type of misinformation, many people, both tourists and short-term missionaries are avoiding Mexico.

This is a very sad situation on many levels. The financial impact trickles down through the Mexican economy, hurting an already-struggling economy. But, even more devastating is the loss of assistance which mission's teams bring to the poorest people of this state.

We would like to set the record straight: life in Vicente Guerrero where your group will be going, and on the Baja peninsula is normal, safe and calm. People are going about their normal business, going to work and school, shopping and playing. We have brought teams many, many times and are in contact with people who bring teams. There has never been any problem with any team. People who visit the area laugh that they feel safer in rural Baja than in their home town. We do not go into Tijuana at all....we stay on the patrolled toll way. We travel directly through Ensenada...where four cruise ships a week allow 1000's of people to disembark and stroll around the city, with no problems at all.

We have never, ever witnessed even a hint of violent activity in all of our travels. Nor have any of our teams reported ever hearing or seeing anything of that nature.

The spate of crime that the news media is so quick to inflate and report is, for the most part, between drug cartels and between the cartels and police/military. Mexican President Felipe Calderon has pledged to fight the drug cartels which means, if anything, we are seeing increased police and military presence, which we feel is a good sign. It makes us feel safer. The major areas of violence are Juarez Mexico near El Paso Texas, the State of Guerrero which is almost 2,000 miles away from where we minister, and the Mexico City area, which is also close to 2,000 miles from where we minister.

The Baja California area and in particular the town that we minister in (Vicente Guerrero) is in the green (safe) area on the U.S. State Department violence maps.

The U.S. State Department site also notes that “millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year (including thousands who cross the U.S. land border every day for study, tourism or business).”

If you have any questions regarding safety, please do not hesitate to ask.

**Emergency procedures:** All expedition participants should check their health insurance plan for coverage during foreign travel. Many health plans do cover travel in Mexico. In addition to your normal health insurance, it is highly recommended that you buy travel insurance. We recommend purchasing coverage through Patriot Travel Medical Insurance: <https://purchase.imglobal.com/Quote/patriot>.

In the case of emergency or illness, participants will be evaluated by any medical professionals (Doctors, nurses, EMT's, etc) traveling with Project Hope and, if recommended, will be referred to the local regional hospital (about 15 minutes from the base) which is staffed by Mexican Government appointed doctors or to the local free clinic which is staffed by international doctors on humanitarian assignment. Parents/guardians (in the case of minors) and emergency contacts (in the case of adults) will be notified at the earliest possible time to make medical decisions or just for informational purposes.

### **Participant Work Options:**

Participants will be part of either the house/school building team OR the medical aid team.

Construction Team: The construction team will build multiple houses or school rooms over a four day period. Everyone gets involved in tasks like framing (hammer and nails), painting, roofing, installing windows, etc. Even if you've never held a hammer, you are important!

Medical/Dental Team: The medical team will work with a local orphanage clinic and also do medical outreaches to outlying villages to people who cannot commute to the clinic. Past teams have included medical personnel such as medical doctors, dentists, RN's, PA's, pharmacists, respiratory therapists.

# TRIP COST: \$825\*

Breakdown:

- \$620: Participation Cost (see what's included below)
- \$205: Building Materials Cost per Person for the Houses

**What's included in the price of the trip:** Your trip cost includes ground transportation from St. Helena, CA, all meals at base camp, purified water, tools for house build, and recreational activities. Individuals are encouraged to bring spending money for extra meals, shopping, etc. in small denominations (\$1's and \$5's). If you would prefer to fly to San Diego, we are happy to pick you up at the airport, but any air travel will be your individual responsibility.

\* If you are interested in participating in a fundraiser to defray your share of the building materials cost, please indicate in the check boxes located on the application.

## **Application Process:**

All applications and trip payments must be submitted via our website: [www.ProjectHope.me](http://www.ProjectHope.me). If you have any difficulty with this process, please give us a call (707-200-1016 ) or send us an email ([justin@ProjectHope.me](mailto:justin@ProjectHope.me)).

## Paperwork and Payment Deadlines

In order to confirm your trip, the following must be submitted to Project Hope Int'l: A \$100 non-refundable deposit, and a completed and signed application form. (Notarized required for minors who are not traveling with their parents.)

This deposit is due no later than 2 months before the trip (May 15) and needs to include total payments according to the timeline below on the date the application is handed in. No refunds will be given after May 1.

### **Specific Deadline Dates after the \$100 non-refundable deposit:**

1. May 1: Non-refundable deposit (\$100.00)
2. June 1: First payment of \$255.00
3. June 15: Second payment of \$255.00
4. July 1: The Building Materials Cost of \$205 is due. (Either a check from the participant or participation in fundraiser)

*(Fees for late or missing paperwork are assessed per individual.)*

# CODE OF CONDUCT

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- 1. Keep a positive attitude throughout the trip, and come with an openness to meet new people.** *If you have great attitude you will have a great trip . . . trust us.*
- 2. Listen and follow the instructions of the team leader.** *You don't have to love every decision the leader makes, but they know things you might not. Its just a week of listening, you can do it.*
- 3. Refrain from using tobacco, alcoholic beverages, pornography or illegal drugs at any time during the trip.** *We promise this will be one of the greatest experiences of your life, that other stuff isn't what we are there for.*
- 4. Come home the same way you left.** *This includes body piercing, tattoos, etc. The people back home do not need any surprises when you get back.*
- 5. Abstain from making derogatory comments or getting involved in arguments regarding people, politics, religion, race, or traditions.** *Be cool. You can argue when you get home.*
- 6. Attend all team meetings, both prior to departure and during the trip.** *We have a lot of stuff you need to know and we need to get it to you.*
- 7. Refrain from meddling, complaining, and using obscene or insensitive humor.** *Keep it clean people.*
- 8. Adhere to the dress guidelines established for your trip.** *The Mexican people are very modest. These simple guidelines apply to both genders and will keep you from becoming a spectacle. (Trust us, we've done this before.)*

*Shorts should be at least mid-thigh - Tank tops should be modest (t-shirts should be worn on the work site to protect your shoulders from burning) - Undergarments should be worn at all times - Swimsuits should be modest (or you can wear a t-shirt over your suit if you want) - Sturdy shoes should be worn off the boat.*
- 9. Make sure the group leaders know where you are at all times.** *Make sure you are always in groups of three. A little communication will keep you safe and make sure everything is running smoothly.*
- 10. Understand that this trip can be difficult, and promise to adopt a flexible attitude, as plans may need to be changed.** *The less flexible you are the harder the trip will be for you, inflexible people break.*
- 11. Interact with all members of your team, not just those members that you knew before your trip.** *We are trying to create and experience with new life long friends.*
- 12. Please no romantic involvement for the duration of the trip. For this trip, enjoy the single life, no public displays of affection, this includes cuddling, kissing, hand holding, etc.** *\*Get those digits and make a call when you get home – who knows – maybe it's true love.*

*\*This, of course, doesn't apply to married couples, but keep in mind that you might not be able to share a room, depending on the situation. Call us to find out about the accommodations for families.*
- 13. Speak with team leader before giving any gifts to the locals. Do not give any money to beggars.** *It may seem like you're being helpful but you have no idea what the consequences may be. If you want to give, we have healthy ways of doing it.*
- 14. Respect the curfew and quiet times that are in place and please make sure you get an adequate amount of sleep every night.** *We don't want you falling asleep on the job.*
- 15. Do not enter the rooms of the opposite sex.** *Certain things should remain a mystery.*
- 16. Refrain from any other behavior or activity that would hinder what we are trying to accomplish while helping the poor.** *Keep the finish line in mind the whole time.*
- 17. Commit to coming on the trip to work hard and have a lot of fun.** *We will have a lot of opportunities work and play. You will only get out of this trip what you put in.*