

## Message from Maggie

### *Do we feel safe in Honduras?*

We have been escorting humanitarian teams to Honduras for 14 years. In all, we have organized and escorted hundreds of volunteers. When I ask the volunteers the question about their safety I am always met with an answer similar to “the most terrifying thing was that cow on the road.” We are not ignorant or blind to the troubles in the third world, but safety is our top priority. Therefore, we take precautions and avoid harms way at all times, just as we do in the USA. Safety and security are always at the forefront and our number one priority from the moment a participant arrives in Honduras, to the moment he or she boards the aircraft to return home.

Precautions include:

- Private trained security personnel & bi-lingual Honduras escorts with us at all times
- International Travel advisories are carefully monitored
- Copies of all passports, medical and travel insurance, emergency contact information, dietary and medical requirements are required to be submitted well in advance
- International phone service is available for emergencies
- A comprehensive first aid kit with us at all times
- Access to filtered or bottled water
- Local medical clinics & hospitals with high medical standards are aware of Summit in Honduras travel groups and prepared to handle any medical situation
- All transportation is manned by Summit in Honduras staff and partners
- We only travel as a group, by day, and with private security

### *Why do we return time and time again?*

Please, read, think, act and remember.

Our humanitarian work is a two-way story and absolute proof that “**in giving, we receive.**” Indeed, it is that impossible to put into words all that we receive during our trips to Honduras. Each day our lives are infused with a sense of profound meaning while humble and forgotten people show us the significance and value of things far more important than the “stuff” of our lives back home...things that money and power simply cannot provide. Why do we, along with many volunteers, return time and time again? Because in this poor and humble country we learn that:

- **Respect is more important than power**
- **Being courteous is far more important than being in control**
- **Patience truly is a virtue**
- **Trust is something you earn through courtesy, integrity and respect**
- **Inspiration surrounds us – we need to become aware and open our eyes, ears and hearts**
- **We are masters of our character...nothing else**
- **Above all else, the spirit of a loving heart can change your life**

### *Are we truly making a sustainable difference?*

With the support of many we have impacted the lives of countless children and their families. Our work in impoverished villages of southwestern Honduras has focused on education and health. Indeed, together we are making an enormous impact.



## Welcome to Honduras

Honduras is a country situated in Central America. It is the second largest Central American Republic with over 43,432 square miles.

**Capital:** Tegucigalpa

**Language:** Spanish

**Government:** Democratic Constitutional Republic

**Current President:** Juan Orlando Hernandez

**Agricultural Products:** bananas, coffee, citrus, corn, timber, shrimp, tilapia, and lobster

**Industries:** sugar, coffee, woven apparel, wood products, cigars

## A brief history:

Artifacts have been found dating 6000 years ago. The Mayan culture stretched from Mexico through Honduras at its peak from 200-800 BCE. IN 1502 Christopher Columbus first stepped on the mainland of the New World in the northern town of Trujillo. He named the land of Honduras (Spanish for depths) after the deep coastal waters. Years of Spanish conquest endured until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Honduras can trace their ancestry to Spanish colonist, indigenous Americans, and African slaves brought to work colonial mines. Independent from Spain was declared in 1821 and since then there have been struggles between liberals on conservatives, fixed elections, military coups, and meddling by foreign governments and companies. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century political and labor scandals associated with the banana companies (United Fruit- now Chiquita and the Standard Fruit- now Dole) marred the history of Honduras in their support of military rulers. In the 1980s the U.S trained and funded Nicaraguan and Salvadoran counter-revolutionary Contras in Honduras. Honduras was further set back by the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1998. The storm killed over 5,600 people and caused \$2 billion in damages. Today Honduras remains the poorest country in Latin America.

## Cultural Considerations:

**Technology:** We ask that all tablets, computers, ipods, and phones be used only on the plane trips and at night in your room. It is not recommended that you share your camera with the children. If you elect to do so, you must accept full responsibility for damage or loss.

**Giving Gifts or Money:** It is normal to be moved by what you witness on the trop. Hondurans will often approach us asking for help, gifts of money, to send them a bike, computer etc. While you might believe that this small gesture would have an enormous impact, we have found that is usually creates several problems. To begin, those Honduras who approach you have probably surmised that North Americans are an 'easy touch'. In addition, their story may be just that, a story. And finally, it creates a culture of competition and resentment among the community members. The greatest need is not always with the people who approach foreigners. Even in a case of genuine need, giving money to one person is helping one person in a limited way. Summit in Honduras strives to work on ways that help greater numbers of people in a sustainable manner.

**Making Promises:** Never encourage anyone to visit the States. Also, it is tempting to want to connect with Hondurans in a more sustained way. This leads many to give out their contact information. Imagine the surprise one person had when they got a call from their Honduran contact saying, "I'm at the border, can you pick me up?" Often people make promises to write, send money, gifts or photos. Though they mean it at the time, many forget to follow on their promise.

Do NOT make promises that you will not keep.

Be honest with yourself and be fair with the Hondurans.



### Trip Pledge

I agree while traveling with Summit in Honduras that I will do the following to the utmost of my ability:

I will be a humanitarian.

I will respect the culture and the beliefs of my teammates and the people of Honduras.

I will be flexible, sincere and honest.

I will act as an outstanding representative of the U.S and Summit in Honduras.

I will have fun while working hard to help others.

I will be a team player.

I will enjoy the beauty of Honduras and will not do anything that would be considered offensive to the people of their Country.

- Insect repellent- 30% deet
- Shower needs- Shampoo/Conditioner/Razor
- Brush/Comb
- Chapstick/ lipbalm
- Toothbrush/tooth paste
- Water bottle
- Small roll of toilet paper
- Granola bars/ candy/ ect. (only to be eaten in your room at night)

#### Clothing: light weight/ quick absorbing

- Underwear and socks
- 5-7 t-shirts
- 3-5 pairs of long shorts/ capris/ pants/ long dresses/skirts
- 1 long sleeve shirt
- Rain jacket
- Closed toed tennis shoes
- Flip flops for shower
- Sweater/light jacket
- Swimsuit
- 1 nice outfit (casual)
- hat

Forms to return to Summit in Honduras **BEFORE** departure:

- Copy of passport
- Liability release
- Copy of Insurance
- Medical History

#### Checklist:

- Current passport physical, 2 copies, and 1 scanned copy sent to an email you can access easily (must not expire within 6 months of return date)
- Send itinerary, passport and insurance information to family or friends
- 4 Immunizations (Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid & Tetanus within the last 5 years)
- Flights
- Spending money (in small bills) suggested - \$150 (1 USD=23.13 Honduran Lempira)

#### Packing List:

Personal Care

- Medications/ Pepto Bismol, ect.
- Personal vitamins
- Copies of Prescriptions
- Towel/Washcloth
- Sunscreen UVA/UVB 30+
- Sunglasses/glasses/contacts

#### Supplies/ Equipment:

- Camera
- Headlamp
- Day backpack- small (smaller than carry-on)
- Small notebook journal
- Pencil/ pen

## TRAVEL DOCUMENT

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Maggie at [mducayet@hotmail.com](mailto:mducayet@hotmail.com).