**Congratulations! You are about to embark on an unforgettable experience. Our vision: Changing the lives of those we treat and those of us who treat them.**

Welcome to ER Abroad: Mission Possible and our next mission! ER Abroad is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that provides medical treatments, examinations and health education in third world countries. We consist of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, medical technicians and non-medical people interested in serving the indignant rural villagers in third world countries. Even if you don’t have a medical background, there is plenty for you to do!

**ER ABROAD HISTORY**

From kindness and compassionate care by a nurse in an emergency room in central Illinois sprang an idea to reach beyond our borders. Evolving from initial charity care packages, growing to a mission trip by volunteers, to becoming a full-fledged registered, incorporated not-for-profit organization. ER Abroad: Mission Possible has emerged to continue that general idea: use our talents, education, training and resources to help those less fortunate. Now in our 12th year since planning the initial trip, with limited resources but great dreams, we are an ongoing charitable organization that sends healthcare workers out into the world to improve the basic health of those who otherwise would not have access to it. To date, over 100 different people have gone on trips, many of them on more than one occasion. We are treating approximately 1500 people per year and have begun distributing some water filters to different villages and educating the people on the safe practices of obtaining and filtering water. ER Abroad has "adopted" several villages that we will visit at least once a year to monitor their health on a regular basis. All monies donated to ER Abroad go directly to purchasing medications, supplies and beans for the people we serve.

**PREPARING FOR YOUR MISSION**

**APPLICATION PROCESS.** An application, a copy of your passport and $400.00 deposit is needed to secure a spot on the mission trip you are applying for. Some mission trips are limited based on location, so it is important to get the application in as soon as you have committed to the mission! Each mission has an application deadline as well. Applications can be found on the ER Abroad website erabroad.org and can be scanned and emailed back to admin@erabroad.org.

**COST OF TRIP**. The cost of the trip averages between $2000-$2400 (cost varies each trip due to airfare, transportation and hotel costs at the time). This covers hotel, transportation in the country and most meals. You can pay in full or you can make payments of $400.00 a month for 5-6 months. Remaining balance will be totaled and due (if any) 1st of month before date of trip. Payments can be made through our website erabroad.org and the donate/make payment button at the bottom of the page (specify what the money is for), or you can mail a check to our business address: ER Abroad: Mission Possible, PO Box 5616, Navarre, FL 32566.

**PASSPORT**. You will need a valid passport **BEFORE** submitting your application to ER Abroad. Please ensure expiration date on passport is not less than six months from your return date of the trip. No visa required. Make a copy of your passport and carry it separately.

**PLANE TICKET**. ER Abroad will handle all travel arrangements. Once the tickets are purchased, ER Abroad will not refund money a team member has paid. Travel insurance is also required which will be purchased along with the airfare.

**IMMUNIZATIONS.** You can go to your Primary Care Provider or your local Public Health Department. Recommendations include pneumonia, hepatitis, typhoid, influenza and COVID vaccines and anti-malaria pills. Typhoid is good for 5 years, Hepatitis lifetime if full series of vaccines completed. Most likely if you are in the medical profession you have had the Hepatitis series. If you have not had a recent Polio, then a booster is recommended as Guatemala does not vaccinate against Polio.

**PRE-TRIP HOTEL**. If team member(s) fly out of St. Louis, they can drive down the night before the flight and use the Park & Fly program at the St. Louis Airport Marriott Hotel. For one flat fee you get a hotel room and can leave your car in the Marriott’s gated parking until you return. Some people stay at other hotels and use the airport parking. Others drive to the airport the morning of the flight. It is recommended to be at the airport two hours prior to flight departure for baggage check in. Bloomington is usually the other location of departing flights. Plenty of free parking at the airport, or there are numerous hotels close to airport which offer free parking while you are gone, including shuttles to and from the airport. For those flying out of other states, please let us know your closest airport so that we can make the arrangements. We prefer the team to fly into the same destination for the second half of the trip. This way the team can meet and fly into Guatemala together at the same time.

**EXTRA CHECKED BAG.** Supplies are brought with us in extra luggage. You may be asked to check one or two of these as an extra checked bag. The cost is $40. ER Abroad will reimburse you the cost if you choose. Some people use old, beat up bags for the extra bag & then leave it behind in Guatemala to be disposed of.

**RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS TO PACK**

1. MOSQUITO REPELLANT
2. LIP BALM
3. UMBRELLA/RAIN PONCHO
4. STURDY/ANKLE SUPPORT SHOES. Lots of cobblestones, uneven surfaces, rocky hills.
5. HIKING POLE/CANE if you have balance problems.
6. PRESCRIPTION MEDS AND AS NEEDED MEDS. Keep in carry-on bag and in original labeled bottles in case Customs opens your bag. Probably wouldn’t hurt to have a few extra days of meds in case of unforeseen delay in return to the States.
7. SUNSCREEN
8. TOILET PAPER/BABY WIPES/TOILET SEAT COVERS. Take one or more of these when we go out to the clinics/rural areas. You generally won’t find them there.
9. KLEENEX. Not provided in the hotel. Bring your own or get used to using toilet paper!
10. CUSTOMS NOTIFICATION FORM TO PUT IN CHECKED BAGS. Place form (included elsewhere in this packet) in checked luggage in case Customs opens your bag. It will tell them what the contents are meant for.
11. HAND SANITIZER to carry with you.
12. WASHCLOTHS. They typically do not use in Guatemala. You will get hand towel and bath towels in your room but no washcloth, so be sure to pack your own.

**PREVENTING DIARRHEA**

Try as you might, you may still develop diarrhea. The food is delicious, a lot of sauces are used, and you may not be used to so many new foods. The food is safe at the hotel and in restaurants. Here are some tips to keep you healthy.

1. HAND SANITIZER. Use it frequently and liberally.
2. IMMODIUM. Bring Imodium or any other anti-diarrheal that works for you.
3. PEPTO-BISMOL TABLETS. Recommended to take two chewable tablets before each meal. Some do, some don’t.
4. BOTTLED WATER. Only drink water that has been bottled or filtered. Other drinks (coffee, tea, soda) are safe in hotels and restaurants.
5. USE BOTTLED WATER TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH. Awkward but safer. Bring an extra toothbrush in case you forget.
6. DON’T BUY FOOD FROM STREET VENDORS unless it is factory packaged.

**COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS IN GUATEMALA**

*LOVE GUATEMALA-CANADA-*Judy Bergen

Judy and her husband Phillip (RIP-2015) has been taking on teams since 1998. She splits her time in Jocotenango and Abbotsford, BC, Canada. Her projects include student sponsors, construction of houses for poor families, soup kitchens and VBS programs for the children. ER Abroad has been partnering with Love Guatemala since the inception of ER Abroad in 2011. She has been instrumental in helping ER Abroad set up medical clinics in rural villages.

*BUILDING GUATE*-Oscar Palenica

Oscar and his team have been hosting mission teams from church groups to medical teams for many years. ER Abroad partnered with Building Guate in 2008. Building Guate is committed to providing through construction, nutrition education, health and guidance to an extremely impoverished community living around a municipal landfill in Escuintla known as the “Land of Hope”. Through this partnership, ER Abroad has been providing medical care to the people who live at the garbage dump during our clinics twice a year. Through a generous donation given to ER Abroad, the “Land of Hope” now has a medical clinic that was built to provide a place for medical/dental teams and even the Public Health of Escuintla to care for the people at the dump.

**COLLABORATING ORGANIZATION IN EL SALVADOR**

**HOTEL IN GUATEMALA: CASA DE LAS FUENTES**

Primarily ER Abroad uses hotel Casa De Las Fuentes. It is in downtown Antigua. The rooms are set up as singles, doubles, triples, and quadruples. Whenever possible, we share rooms with other ER Abroad members to save on cost. If you have special needs requiring, you to have either a single room or a ground floor room please let the team leader(s) know so they can arrange accommodations for you. If you know someone you want to room with let us know that as well. It has Wi-Fi (although sketchy at times), television in the rooms, as well as private baths. There are NO safes in the rooms but available at the front desk. There is a laundry service. A breakfast buffet and some dinners are included in what you have already paid to the trip. The hotel’s website is: [www.hotelcasadelasfuentes.com](http://www.hotelcasadelasfuentes.com). There might be a clinic that requires us to stay at a different hotel closer to our clinic site. We will let you know ahead of time if this should occur.

**HOTEL IN EL SALVADOR (varies depending on location)**

The hotel or house we stay at in El Salvador are arranged by our host in country. There are usually no added amenities or toiletries. Therefore, it is important to bring sheets, pillow, blanket, toilet paper, towels with you. Whenever possible, we share rooms with other ER Abroad members to save on cost. If you have special needs requiring, you to have either a single room or a ground floor room please let the team leader(s) know so they can arrange accommodations for you. If you know someone you want to room with let us know that as well. There are no TVs in room and often times bathrooms are communal. Breakfast and dinners are included and will be arranged and brought to the hotel by the host. Often, we host clinics in two different areas. Therefore, it is common to change hotels halfway through trip.

**ARRIVING IN COUNTRY**

Upon our arrival, our host will pick us up and transport us out to lunch (at our own cost). After lunch, we will be taken to our hotel to check in, unpack, and unwind. Dinner will be provided at the hotel (meal already included in your cost paid) at designated times. After dinner, we will relax and rest up for our busy week ahead!

**EXCHANGING MONEY**

Guatemalan money is the Quetzal, or q’s. On average the exchange rate is: $1.00 US = 7.30 to 7.50 Q. There are ATM machines associated with banks and your team lead(s) will let you know which ones are safe to use. Also, be aware of using your credit cards at restaurants or stores. We have had incidents where team members have had their credit card compromised. If possible, it is best to use cash or Q’s. You can exchange US dollars for the Guatemalan quetzals at banks. It can take 30 minutes or more for the transaction. You MUST have your original passport (not the copy) and the minimum exchange is $100.00 US. A modest fee is charged. You can also change US dollars at the airport as well. The hosts know the ATM’s that are trustworthy so you can use those to take out money as well if needed. Most places will accept US dollars. El Salvador uses US dollars. It is very important to make sure the US dollars are crisp and do not have tears, writing on the bill or bills larger than $50.00 as it most likely will not be accepted by the vendor. Please notify your personal bank that you will be traveling to Guatemala and provide them with the days that you will be away.

**ADMIN DAY**

The next day is Admin day. We will spend most of the day sorting, counting bagging and labeling meds and preparing the bins for pharmacy. It is also a great way for us all to get to know each other, know what medication we have available for our patients and to learn how the upcoming clinics will be organized. This will make clinic days easier! Time permitting, the rest of the day we will have lunch (our own cost) and relax and explore the area the rest of the day. Dinner will again be at the hotel (cost included) at designated times.

**SHOPPING**

You will have lots of opportunities to shop! There may be vendors who set up at the hotel in the evening. We will be going to the Marcados (Markets) where bargaining/dickering is the expected practice! Coffee, Jade and textile are the consumer goods that you will see being sold mostly in the markets.

**CLINIC DAYS**

The clinic days will be at rural villages (to be determined by our host organizations. Breakfast will be provided each morning at the hotel (cost included), lunch will be provided by the host organization and dinner will be back at hotel at designated time (cost included). On the day of the clinic we will survey the site to determine the best logistical way to set up the clinic before we unload the van. Once we determine the set up, we will unload the vans and set up the clinic. Upon our arrival, intake sheets will be passed out by one of the translators to each man, woman and child with a number on the top of the intake sheet.

*TRIAGE/INTAKE*. There will be 2-3 people assigned to the triage area. One person will be doing vitals and one person will be doing weights/heights. If we have enough providers, it is helpful to have a provider in triage to filter out patients that only have minor complaints or who are just wanting vitamins. A translator will be utilized in triage to assist with communication.

*PROVIDER ROOMS (STATIONS)*. Depending on how many providers on the trip will depend on how many rooms/stations will be needed as well as translators. There is a translator assigned to each provider to aid in communication. If we have a student on this trip, each student will be assigned to a provider for their practicum. Each family unit will proceed to one of the provider rooms/stations led by a floater team member who helps with flow and assuring the families reach their point of destination. The provider will discuss their history and present illness with the help of a translator, perform and exam and evaluate the best treatment options for the patient. The assessment and plan is written on the patient intake form and instructions are given to the patient regarding their treatment plan and medications that will be provided to them. The float team will then escort them to the pharmacy to receive their medication.

*PHARMACY.* There will be 3-4 team members in pharmacy to fill the prescriptions. A translator will be assigned to pharmacy and will give instructions on how to take the medications.

*PROCEDURES.* There will be 1-2 float team members to help with the flow of patients and to perform procedures such as blood glucose check, urine dips, ear irrigations, physical therapy instructions or Nebulizer treatments.

*OPTICAL TEAM*. During certain mission trips there will be four team members who will be trained in performing eye exams and fitting patients into appropriate strength eyeglasses. If a provider feels that a patient needs an eye exam, they will detail the eye problem in their assessment findings and will send patient to the eye team for evaluation before going to pharmacy.

*HEALTH HYGIENE KITS/BEANS/RIC*E. One team member will be assigned in Pharmacy to pass out hygiene kits and/or beans and rice. Usually we utilize our non-medical team members in this assignment. They will also be responsible for collecting the patient intake forms and counting them at the end of the day.

**END OF THE DAY**. After the last patient is seen, all supplies are either placed in a locked room or reloaded onto the vans depending on where the team will be the next clinic day.

**TOUR DAY**

Tour day is used to explore the culture, shop, and often travel to our next destination. The team leaders will work with the host to make all the arrangements. This will be at your cost. There will not be a clinic on tour day.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

1. Sewer systems in Central America cannot handle anything but human waste. Therefore, once toilet paper is used, it is placed in a nearby basket. ***DO NOT FLUSH TOLIET PAPER OR FEMINE PRODUCTS!*** Everywhere—rural, city, airport, toilets and outhouses alike!
2. Bring your ER Abroad contact & family lists with you.
3. Don’t wear the ER Abroad tee shirts to the airports. Too many draws custom’s attention and may cause bags to be searched, taking valuable time.
4. Carry the copy of your passport while in host country, keeping the original in your hotel room. Exception: need original to exchange money at banks.
5. You will be required to fill out customs forms when entering AND leaving host country and when re-entering the US.
6. Same electrical current; you don’t need a converter.
7. Be sure to bring all your device chargers.
8. Same time zone (Central), except no Daylight Savings time.
9. Temperatures: Warm/dry season 3/29 to 5/17; average high above 81F, low 62. Cold/rainy season—10/25 to 1/31; average high below 75F, low 56.
10. Leave your expensive jewelry at home

**ER ABROAD’S WISH LIST FOR DONATIONS**

1. Ketoconozole cream  
2. Oragel  
3. Albendazol  
5. Omeprazole  
6. Famotidine  
7. Lansoprole  
8. Docusate  
11. Flonase  
12. Saline nose spray  
13. Ear drops  
14. Eye drops  
16. Clotrimazole cream  
17. Hydrocortisone cream  
19. Soothing eye drops  
20. Adult Tylenol  
21. Adult Ibuprofen  
22. Children's and infants Tylenol/Motrin  
23. Children's cough/cold med  
24. Claritin  
25. Zyrtec  
26. Mucinex  
27. Cough syrup  
28. Antacids  
29. Lots and lots of children's vitamins (no gummies please) 100,000 + tablets   
30. Antibiotics ointments   
31. Antibiotics creams   
32. Bandages and gauges   
33. Mask of various types   
34. Exam gloves

35. Prenatal vitamins

36. Reading glasses (lower strengths preferred +1.0 to +2.5)

37. Tolietries (toothbrushes, toothpastes, dental floss, shampoo, soap, deodorant, wash cloths and combs

38. Ziplock type plastic bags

**BASIC SPANISH**

Hello hola

Good morning Buenos dias

Good afternoon Buenos tardes

Good night Buenos noches

Goodbye adios

Thank you gracias

You’re welcome de nada

Please por favor

Here aquí

Yes si

No no

Mother madre

Father padre, papa

Beautiful girl Hermosa (or bonita) chica

Beautiful baby Hermosa (or bonito) bebe

Handsome boy muchaco de hadsome

One uno Six seis

Two dos Seven siete

Three tres Eight ocho

Four cuartro Nine nueve

Five cinco Ten diez

**TRIAGE**

check temperature Controlar la temperature

blood pressure su tensión arterial

blood sugar su azucar en la sangre

oxygen su oxigeno

weight su peso

step on Paso de

step off Bajar

Listen to heart & lungs Escucha a tu Corazon y los pulmones

**PHARMACY**

Every 2 hours cada dos horas one uno

4 cada cuartro horas two dos

6 cada seis horas three tres

8 cada ocho horas four cuatro

five cinco

six seis

seven siete

eight ocho

nine nueve

ten diez

Once a day unas veces al día

Twice a day dos veces al día

Three times a day tres veces al dia

Four times a day cuatro veces al dia

One today, one in one week Uno hoy, uno en una semana

All today todos hoy

For 7 days por uno semana

Mild to moderate pain dolor leve a moderado

Severe pain dolor severo

As needed como necesario

Chew mastico

Tablet pastilla, tableta

Vitamin vitamina

Infection infección

Parasites parasite

Amoebas ameba

Skin cream crema para la piel

Vaginal cream crema vaginal

Swab in mouth hisopo en boca

Drops in eye gotas de ojo

Drops in ear gotas en el oído

Left iz queirda

Right derecha