



## **Global Citizenship Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **About School the World**

School the World is an international education non-profit organization committed to solving extreme poverty through the power of education. In the past eleven years, we have built 107 schools throughout Guatemala, Honduras and Panama by partnering with the local government and rural community leaders. Aside from building schools, we train teachers, empower parents through bi-monthly meetings and sustainably stock classroom libraries through a matching program. In 2016, we began introducing an initiative around PLAY to our strategy. Play is proven to increase students' mental and physical health, learning skills, gender equality and life skills. We committed to building play spaces to facilitate free play, organized recess games, and eventually an inter- school soccer league and have since built 54 playgrounds at our existing schools.

Our Global Citizenship Program works in both the Western Highlands of Guatemala and Northern Panama, specifically the Ngäbe-Buglé comarca.

### **Who?**

Any incoming or current high school student can apply! Students under the age of 14 are welcome to apply, but require a parent to travel with them as a chaperone.

### **What?**

Students commit to contributing \$3,650 to fund a primary school building and/or a playground in Guatemala or Panama. Funds can be paid in full or students can choose to fundraise in the months leading up to departure date.

### **Where?**

Students complete their service work in the rural, indigenous region of Northern Panama (the Veraguas province) or the Western Highlands of Guatemala (the department of Quiché) and experience the Spanish colonial city of Antigua.

### **When?**

Our student service trips coincide with typical spring and summer school vacation weeks, typically traveling in February, March, April and July. Given the uncertainty of international travel caused by COVID-19, our service trips are on hold. We are tentatively planning to resume trips in the summer of 2021, with the following dates subject to change:

**July 12<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Guatemala)**

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> - July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Guatemala)**

### **What Will Students Do?**

Students raise the funds to build a primary school building and/or a playground for students living in poverty. At the end of the week in the community, everyone (including the entire community and local Mayor) will participate in a Dedication Ceremony to celebrate the completion of the project. Among other things, student travelers can expect to mix cement, install play equipment and paint. Students will also have time within the classrooms to help teach lessons, as well as complete a home visit to understand daily life within the community.

While raising funds in the months leading up to the trip, the students will learn about successful fundraising tactics, as well as attend educational seminars to learn about the region's history and culture. These pre-trip meetings also discuss global literacy and what it means to be a global citizen.

### **Is It Safe?**

Safety is our top priority. We personally investigate and inspect medical facilities, housing and food preparation. We evaluate each building project for any potential safety concerns. We use only known drivers and vehicles, requiring certificates of insurance and maintenance. We carefully vet all of our communities and spend considerable time in them before beginning any build. There also will be at least two STW leaders (one U.S., one local) in addition to adult chaperones with each group. STW's minimum chaperone to student ratio is 1:6.

We purchase insurance for each student to cover medical risks, emergency medical evacuation and cancellations due to death, illness and similar situations. Families have the option to purchase additional "Cancel for any Reason" insurance should they choose to. Reach out to a member of our staff to discuss as needed.

The US State Department uses a ranked system for travel advisories and Panama is a Level 1 (Exercise Normal Precautions) which is the safest rating a country can obtain. We have a strong local team on the ground who are in regular communication with the local government and communities your students will be partnering with.

We have been working in Guatemala since 2009. We have a strong local team of 12 and relationships with prominent business leaders and families in Guatemala. We also work in two of the safest departments in Guatemala: Quiché and Totonicapán.

A safety marker used by other student exchange groups is the presence of the Peace Corps, who are highly present there. The Peace Corps are training new classes for Guatemala and

Panama and have plans to reimplement their corps when cleared to do so, due to the pandemic. We monitor any change in this activity prior to and during all trips.

### **Requirements**

- Complete and submit an application with a 250-word essay
- Submit a deposit of \$750 by the application deadline and raise or contribute (or a combination thereof) an additional \$2,900 at deadlines TBA. (Fundraising training and support is provided to all students).
- Complete and submit all required waivers of liability signed both by the student and a legal guardian to be distributed at later date via SchoolDoc, an online management system.
- Submit an accurate health history and a certification of good health from a physician, including a statement that the student does not have any physical, psychological or medical condition that would inhibit participation in the mission.
- Visit travel clinic with preliminary itinerary to obtain any recommended vaccinations at least three weeks prior to trip.
- Participate in pre-trip seminars to review trip preparation and general history/culture of Guatemala or Panama.
- Complete and send thank you letters to all donors within two weeks of donation/travel and provide STW with spreadsheet of all donors (we will provide templates).
- Mandatory parent/guardian participation in final pre-trip team meeting.
- A passport valid for at least 6 months after trip return date.
- Cooperation with all pre & post-trip student responsibilities, such as community follow up and submitting your photos to our online account.

### **Chaperones**

We accept applications for parent chaperones! The chaperone trip fee of \$2,500 for Guatemala and \$3,000 for Panama covers all travel/room and board expenses. If teachers are interested in forming a group or joining students from their school, please reach out to us for discussion. If a group of 12-15 students is formed from a school, we will sponsor a teacher to travel.

### **How Will Students Raise the Funds?**

STW will provide the students with a “Fundraising Toolkit” and guide the students through letter-writing, online campaigns, a list of suggestions for independent group events and will facilitate at least one group fundraising event, proceeds of which will be split among those who participate. Every student will have the opportunity to create their own individual online fundraising page through our peer-to-peer online platform.

### **What If Students Do Not Meet the Fundraising Deadlines?**

If students do not meet the fundraising deadlines, we require parents to make up the difference between the amounts due and the amount raised. Non-compliance will result in removal from the program. If you would like to discuss special circumstances please contact Sarah Pease at 617-867-9500.

### **Are There Refunds?**

Please see our full refund policy at [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org).

### **Are There Any Other Costs?**

There will be no other required STW costs. If students choose to participate in an extra activity in Panama or Guatemala, there will be an additional cost of \$25-\$45. Students may choose to tip any hospitality vendor, and/or bring additional spending money for souvenirs. Students should bring their own money for meals during travel in airports, as well as for any checked baggage fees.

### **Where does STW general funding come from?**

One of our past funders was USAID, a division of the US State Department. We also receive substantial support from many generous individuals, corporations and foundations, such as The Harbourton Foundation, the General Electric Company, the GE Foundation, Cigna and Dole.

### **Will there be any cultural activities?**

Yes, there will be afternoon cultural activities varying per trip. Listed below are examples of activities groups have done in the past, which is not a guarantee of what every group will do, but will give you an idea!

**Guatemalan examples:** visiting local Mayan ruins, caves where Mayans hid from colonial Spaniards, Chichicastenango market (the largest open air market in Central America)

**Panamanian examples:** visiting the Panama Canal, touring the Miraflores Locks Museum

If traveling to Guatemala, groups will also spend at least one day and evening in Antigua, the Spanish colonial capital of Central America, and have the opportunity to participate in an extra cultural activity (options provided at later date).

For more information about our programs, our leadership and our Board of Directors visit our website: [schooltheworld.org](http://schooltheworld.org)

For any questions, please contact Sarah Pease at [sarah.pease@schooltheworld.org](mailto:sarah.pease@schooltheworld.org) or (617) 867-9500.