

Student Rotation Information

Rotation Site: Guatemala – DOCARE/ASSADE Continuity of Care Clinic
Date Issued: June, 2014
Website: <http://www.docareintl.org/>

General Information:

This rotation site is located at DOCARE's Continuity of Care Clinic in San Andres, Itzapa, Guatemala. The following criteria apply:

- 4th year DO students
- Functional in Spanish
- 4 week rotational block for credit (three students per 4-week block)

Students will be responsible for their own expenses, (air fare, shots, passport, transportation, lodging), in addition to a one-time fee to purchase medications for the clinic. Students can stay at an apartment called Canadas de Belen for around \$350 each per month – this includes a kitchen and two bedrooms usually with bathroom with hot water. Bottled water may be purchased for a cheap price through Christina the land lady. Laundry service is done by the land lady for about \$3.00 US. The apartment is enclosed by two different security guards and is only a 15 minute walk from the central park in Antigua. Raul, one of the businessmen in the office of ASSADE may be able to pick you up each day and drive you to the clinic. At the end of the clinic day you can either take the chicken bus back to Antigua for 50 centers or wait until the clinic day is over for the rest of the staff members and ride back with them. The convent charges \$30 per day including 3 meals, hot water, bedroom, and cleaning. The convent was within walking distance of the clinic, about 20 minutes. If students want other options, AirBNB is an app that provides homestays for around the same price per month as Christina's Canadas de Belen.

Students interested in volunteering should email their request to DOCAREOMC@osteopathic.org. If you have any questions, contact Verna Bronersky, Clinic Rotations Coordinator at: vbronersky@osteopathic.org or 312-202-8191.

ESTIMATED Cost: While we try to update this information frequently with the latest information, there may be additional costs added at any time that DMU global health dept. may not be aware of:

- **Airfare:** \$700 - \$750
- **Administrative fees:** \$150
- **Housing:** (See information above)

- **Transportation fees:** approx. \$100 for round trip - airport and return; travel to Antigua approx. \$50 for round trips
- **Food:** Three meals a day provided at the convent for \$30 per day US; Weekend eating out – approx. \$8 – 15
- **Miscellaneous:** extra \$\$ for souvenirs and extra activities, Volcano hikes, overnight volcano hikers will want to bring warm gloves/hats and warm hiking clothes

Approximate TOTAL: Approximately \$1,500

DOCARE INTERNATIONAL

DOCARE International is a not for profit, tax-exempt organization whose all-volunteer membership represents a wide range of medical disciplines. Our members include physicians, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists, optometrists, podiatrists, physician assistants, CRNA, PT, and clinical psych, university faculty, paramedical, students, and interested lay people who contribute special skills and services.

DOCARE members represent a variety of disciplines, interests and geographic regions, but we are bound together by one common thread: concern for the unmet health needs of populations.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The professional relationship that develops between DOCARE and the Guatemalan professionals is an added positive experience for all concerned. We are guests of Guatemala and strive to build a strong bond with their citizens and medical personnel. We are there to assist not replace them. We also work with the government/military as their approval both formally and informally enable us to perform our missions. We do understand that many of our volunteers have political beliefs that may contradict that of the government/people. We ask however, that those concerns be discussed with team leaders and if changes need to be made they are done so as a team.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING

Participants are asked to pay DOCARE membership dues and all of their own expenses for the trip. Any donations collected will go directly into paying for the mission of caring for the patients seen.

SPECIFIC MISSION COSTS:

1. Clinic application fee \$150 (used to defray costs of operating the clinic) *Must be paid 30 days prior to rotation.

2. Airline costs \$500-900, changes yearly
3. Transport from the Guatemala City airport to San Andres, Itzapa ~ approximately \$30 each way
4. Daily transportation costs \$2-3
5. The convent daily rate is \$30/day which includes three meals; must be paid in cash weekly.
6. Food \$25 - \$35/day, there are plenty of places near the clinic to purchase lunch, or you can ask the cook at the convent to make you a lunch or make a lunch at your apt. and bring it.
7. Exit tax to Airport in Guatemala City \$30 (this may be included in your flight price. Look at your flight ticket carefully.

LODGING:

Convento Carmelo de Nazareth
Canton San Cristobal
San Andres Itzapa
Chimaltenango, Guatemala
[011-502-7849-4869](tel:011-502-7849-4869)
[011-502-7849-5161](tel:011-502-7849-5161)

CLINIC ADDRESS:

ASSADE/DOCARE Clinic
02 Calle 04-30
Canton San Pedro y San Pablo
Zona 3
San Andres, Itzapa, Chimaltenango
GUATEMALA

DOCARE/ASSADE CLINIC STAFF:

Dr. Ivette Vasquez, Physician
Maria Elena, Nurse (and Founder)
Carmen Letona, Clinic Advisor
Raul Barrera, Clinic Manager
Julio Chavez, Member of the Board of Directors
assadequate@gmail.com



DAILY ROUTINE

(Tuk Tuk)

Clinic hours are from 8:00 am-3:00 pm (or until all patients have been seen for the day). You will either take a tuk tuk (small 3 wheeled covered vehicle) or walk to the clinic. Speak to Dr. Ivette about her expectations and whether or not you will break for a snack. Remember your day finishes at 3pm...so please do not take a long time to each your snack. You will work **Monday through Friday**, this allows you to enjoy parts of Guatemala, in case you'd like to travel to Antigua or do other sightseeing. Please book your adventuring starting late Friday of each week. Once again, take into consideration you are traveling in a Central American country.

TRANSPORTATION

TO/FROM Airport/Other locations: There are many taxis at the airport that will transport you to your location. Remember to have them quote you an amount prior to getting into the taxi. Return to the airport may be arranged through our drivers once in the country. This will only cost you about \$7.00 if you book a shuttle through a travel agency. Raul or his friend may be able to bring you.

You may email Julio Quinonez prior to arrival: He has worked with DOCARE for years and is very trust worthy...his team can also be used for in country excursions...again negotiate the rate. He is honest and thus if he quotes you a price don't low ball him.

Julio: from the USA (011) 502-4654-6018, in Guatemala 00502 7832-2071 Home: 502 7872 9244

Email: autenticparaisomaya@yahoo.com

To the Clinic: On your first day, you will be picked up by clinic staff, please be ready to go at 7:45 am.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

STUDENTS

Remember that continuity care is relatively new to Central America. Preventative medicine does not exist in most of the areas where you will see patients. This means that you will be teaching as well as learning. Please help educate not only the patients

but the clinic staff. You will also participate in outreach activities to be scheduled by Dr. Ivette Vasquez, Maria Elena or Julio Letona.

OVERALL

In 2011, the patient's most common presentations included: infectious disease problems, mostly gastrointestinal in nature; dermatological; OB/Gyn; pediatric; vision checks/ocular diseases; environmental pollution; and musculoskeletal complaints. A few lucky volunteers/medical students/interns/residents were able to perform home health visits with one of the local volunteer physicians.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala is the most northern of the five Central American countries. It is bounded on the north and west by Mexico, on the southeast by Honduras and on the east by Belize and the Caribbean. Guatemalan coastlines cover about 200 miles on the Pacific Ocean and 70 miles on the Caribbean Sea. The country is roughly divided into four geographic regions: the central-western highlands, a low northern plateau section that is largely jungle, the southern volcanic regions of the Sierra Madre, and the tropical coastal lowlands.

Guatemala's rainy season is May through October and its dry season is November to May. Temperatures are generally moderate during both seasons, ranging from an average low of 53 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 60 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit in April. Frost and snow do not occur normally except in the higher elevations. Rainfall is heaviest from June through October. During the dry season, days are clear and usually the sun is hot at midday, with chilly to cold mornings and evenings.

The country, the weather, the smiles of the people and certainly the prolific flowers all generate their own beauty. The people are primarily Catholic in their religious faith and profuse in their gratitude toward our teams of volunteers. In spite of the extreme poverty and the harsh and brutal political history of the country, Guatemala is a beautiful land to visit.

ANTIGUA, THE CITY

Antigua, the capital of Guatemala from 1543 until 1773, was founded in 1541 and is an attractive city of about 30,000 people. It is located approximately 30 miles southwest of Guatemala City in a valley at an altitude of 5,000 feet and is surrounded to the south and west by three volcanoes: Agua, Fuego and Acatenango. Antigua is beautifully preserved with a large central plaza and cobblestone streets. Its



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colonial

City in a

churches have lost much of their Baroque splendor due to the many earthquakes and restorations but many remain impressive, in particular, *La Merced*, *the Iglesia de San Francisco* and the *Convento de less Capucinas* (now a museum). *Casa K' ojom* is a fascinating museum of Mayan music and ceremonies and related artifacts. A visit to the local cemetery also provides insight into ancient Mayan beliefs. The city has some of the most well known language schools in Latin America and is a popular destination for tourists and students.

Walking around Antigua and exploring its colonial architecture and native markets is an enjoyable experience. Guided walking tours of the city are available for minimal costs and are recommended. Other local tourist attractions include: Chichicastenango, a village that offers one of the largest and most well know Mayan markets in Guatemala; Lake Atitlan, a beautiful volcanic lake nestled in the countryside northwest of Antigua; and Tikal, the magnificent Mayan ruins in northern Guatemala.

During Antigua's rainy season (mid-May through early October), the skies are clear in the morning with the afternoon bringing showers that can last a few hours. It is a good idea to bring along lightweight rain gear at that time of the year. The dry season boasts temperatures ranging from 75 to 80 degrees Farhenheit. March and April's temperatures average a little above that. Evenings can be chilly, especially during December and January, so sweaters or light jackets would be appropriate at night.

GETTING THERE

Delta, American, Continental/United, and Taca are the well-known airlines flying to and from Guatemala. Direct flights from Los Angeles, Orlando and Houston are available daily or one may use any carrier that is convenient. Airfares change all the time especially often in January and you may want to start checking weekly for the best bargains. Travel cancellation insurance is not a bad idea.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS

A passport is required to enter/exit the county. If you do not have a current passport you may go online at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1129.html#entry_requirements and receive help. No visa or tourist card is currently being required of U.S. citizens unless travelers plan to stay three months or longer. A VISA may be required for those volunteers with passports from a country other than the United States. If you are not an American Citizen and do not have a U.S. Passport, it is your responsibility to contact a government official concerning specific requirements for entering and exiting the country.

The Guatemalan government requires all U.S. citizens to have a valid passport in order to depart Guatemala and makes no exceptions. U.S. citizens whose passports

are lost or stolen in Guatemala must obtain a new passport and present it together with a police report of the loss or theft to the main immigration office in Guatemala City to obtain permission to depart Guatemala. This office is not open on the weekends. **Loss of passport should immediately be reported to your team leader.**

We recommend that you email yourself a copy of your passport. If the need arises you can always print it out.

CURRENCY

You might like to change some (\$50) of your travel money into the local currency, quetzals, named for the national bird, before leaving the United States. Since some flights arrive in Guatemala City in the late evening the banks are closed and most hotels do not offer this service. Exchange may be done at your local bank or at U.S. airports, although airport exchange services do not always have Guatemalan currency on hand. You may also obtain Guatemalan currency by calling your local bank and ordering it. Most banks require several days to provide this service and charge a fee. There are convenient locations in Antigua, Monday through Saturday, where U.S. dollars may be exchanged. However, there are often long lines waiting for services and waiting forty-five minutes is not uncommon. The **best** rate of exchange is provided by ATM machines that can be found in Antigua.

As of October 10, 2011

<http://finance.yahoo.com/currency/convert?amt=1&from=USD&to=GTQ&submit=Convert> (for updated exchange rates)

Symbol	U.S. Dollar	Quetzal
<u>USDGTQ=X</u>	1	
		1 USD = 7.7192 GTQ

Hotels, restaurants and shops in Guatemala City and most of the tourism areas accept most major credit cards. There are two banks at the Guatemala Airport that will exchange money. Travelers' checks can be exchanged at most banks and are accepted in the larger establishments. VISA is the easiest travelers' check to cash and along with Master Card the most commonly accepted credit card. Some places accept American Express travelers' checks, but rarely the credit card. If you have an ATM, use it rather than the cumbersome travelers' checks. However, keeping a couple travelers' checks in a different location from your ATM card is not a bad idea.

ELECTRIC CURRENT

The electric current is 110 V 60 cycles, which means the hair dryers you use at home will work in the hotels in Antigua. Do not plug two hair dryers, or other appliances in at the same time in a room or condo. The outlets in some hotels accept American plugs. However, smaller hotels require adaptors, not transformers, in order to plug in.

TIME ZONE

Guatemala is in the Central Standard Time zone and does not observe daylight-savings time.

RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH ADVICE

The following immunization and travel advice is taken from The Baylor Travel Medicine Service (713-790-3321) and the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov). We urge all volunteers to consult with their personal physicians for specific, individual advice regarding medical precautions and to check with the CDC website. Ultimate decisions concerning health care precautions are the responsibility of the volunteer.

HEPATITIS A (Immune Globulin IG):

Hepatitis A immunization is strongly recommended. The importance of being protected against Hepatitis A increases as the length of stay increases. It is particularly important for persons to have this immunization who will be visiting rural areas, or who will have close contact with local persons in settings with poor sanitary conditions.

HEPATITIS B:

Hepatitis B immunization is required for health care professionals. Vaccination is always advised for health care workers, persons anticipating direct contact with blood or patients with any history of health problems, which might necessitate a hospital stay. If you are a volunteer and not a health care provider and do not have this series of 3, it may not be practical to acquire them. This means that you need to stay clear of contact with patient blood or blood products.

MALARIA:

Malaria prophylaxis is not generally recommended for volunteers traveling only to the highland area of Antigua. Risk exists throughout the year in rural lowland areas. Therefore, if you plan to travel outside Antigua to any of the

lowland areas (check your map), ask your doctor about taking *CHLOROQUINE*. There is high risk in the departments (states) of Alta Verapaz, Escuintla, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Peten and Quiche. There is moderate risk in the departments of Baja Verapaz, Jutipa, Retalhuleu, San Marcos, Suchitepequez and Zacapa. Malaria prophylaxis medication must be started several days before entering Guatemala in order to be effective. You can use a combination of primaquin and chloroquine in Guatemala (which can be purchased at pharmacies in endemic areas of the country). Best thing is to use a DEET insect repellent and avoid night flying mosquitoes.

TETANUS:

As a general rule, all routine vaccines (such as TB, polio, DTP or Td, Hib, MMR, varicella, influenza and pneumococcal) should be kept up to date as a matter of good health practice unrelated to travel.

CHOLERA:

Immunization is not deemed necessary at this time. However, vaccination may be appropriate for travelers with impaired gastric defenses who are planning an extended visit or being exposed to unsanitary conditions. Vaccinations are not advised for pregnant women or persons with a history of severe reaction to the vaccine.

DENGUE FEVER:

There is no immunization. It is transmitted by mosquitoes. Care should be taken to cover exposed skin in the evening and repellent is recommended especially in the lowlands or during the rainy season.

STAYING HEALTHY

HINTS: YOU MAY EXPERIENCE HEADACHES OR INSOMNIA FOR THE FIRST NIGHT OR TWO. BECAUSE ANTIGUA IS AT A 5,000 FOOT ELEVATION, YOU MAY ALSO EXPERIENCE SOME SHORTNESS OF BREATH AND FATIGUE THE FIRST COUPLE OF DAYS. DRINK PLENTY OF WATER – FIVE TO EIGHT GLASSES PER DAY, OF BOTTLED WATER. OFTEN ILLNESSES FOR VOLUNTEERS IS CAUSED BY DEHYDRATION. SOFT DRINKS DO NOT COUNT!

The standard precautions that apply to travel in any developing country apply to Guatemala. Carry appropriate health and accident insurance documents as well as copies of any important medical records with you. DOCARE or Midwestern University does not provide health or accident insurance. Bring an adequate supply of all prescription medications, any necessary personal hygiene items, and a spare pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Many hotels provide safe bottled water, we recommend you do not drink or brush your teeth with the hotel tap water. Always ask if the water served at recommended restaurants is safe to drink, ask if it is agua pura (originates from bottled water). Do not use ice cubes at other restaurants or eat raw seafood, rare meat or unpasteurized products. Eat well-cooked foods while they are still hot and fruits that can be peeled without contamination. Avoid roadside stands and street vendors. Food prepared in recommended restaurants is usually safe.

TO STAY HEALTHY, DO:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, or an antibacterial soap. (It's a good idea to always have some in your fanny pack.)
- Other than the major hotels, drink and brush teeth only with bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks and ice cubes outside the major hotels.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked foods. Fruits and vegetables should be carefully washed or peeled. Remember: BOIL IT, COOK IT, PEEL IT, OR FORGET IT.
- If you will be visiting an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during and after your travel, as directed. Antigua is not considered a malaria risk because of its altitude. (See your doctor for a prescription. See www.cdc.gov)
- Protect yourself from insects by using repellents (applied sparingly at four-hour intervals) and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn, especially if in an area of malaria risk.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry and do not go barefoot.

ACTING PRUDENTLY

Guatemala has celebrated the end of a 36-year period of internal conflict that has paralyzed the country since the 1960's. The government of Guatemala and RUNG guerillas signed a final peace accord on December 29, 1996. The struggle to make the transition from an autocratic regime to democracy takes time and can create local crime problems. Recent reports of incidences of theft and assault in Guatemala, though few and scattered, create a climate of concern for groups such as ours. Therefore, we warn all volunteers to use common sense while in Guatemala (as we would advise in traveling anywhere), observe the rules of safe conduct and err on the side of caution.

Periodically, unfounded rumors that foreigners are involved in the theft of children for the purpose of using their organs in transplants or to sell them on the black market have led to threats in various parts of the country. While this is not currently considered an immediate concern, travelers should be aware that in areas outside of the major tourist business destinations there exists greater likelihood, albeit small, of an incident occurring. As a matter of respect for Guatemalan people, and to eliminate any fear they might have, it is a good idea to avoid contact with children and ASK FOR

THE PRIVILEGE OF TAKING PICTURES. When we go into villages to do medical and dental work, our visits have been cleared and are welcomed by local residents. There is little cause for concern when traveling with village clinic teams.

Unfortunately, since 1997, incidents of assault and robbery involving American citizens have increased. Crime victims have complained in the past of inadequate assistance from the police; however, a special tourist police force has recently been deployed in the Antigua area. American citizen visitors who suffer criminal assaults are encouraged to contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy at 502-331-1541, or after hours at 502-331-8904.

No area in Guatemala can be definitively characterized as “always safe.” In the past, travel during daylight hours and travel in groups generally afforded some measure of personal security; however, the most recent incidents reported to the U.S. Embassy (primarily robberies) have, for the most part, occurred during daylight hours and, in many cases, have affected entire groups of tourists. Accounts prove that persons who offer no resistance when confronted by thieves are more likely not to be hurt. Pickpockets and purse-snatchers are prevalent in major cities and tourist areas such as Antigua. So, be careful, especially in crowded markets or on deserted streets. Do not carry large sums of money with you. Leave your passport at the hotel and take a copy with you unless you plan on cashing travelers checks. Make sure you have the numbers of your credit cards recorded somewhere safe so that they can be cancelled quickly, if needed.

It is our policy to make every effort to keep volunteers fully informed as to the risks to health and safety while traveling in Guatemala. We firmly believe it is prudent to follow practical precautions such as walking only in groups and never late at night, making sure any travel outside the city is accompanied by a trusted security escort/guide and that others in the group know where you plan to go and when you plan to return. Ask locals which areas are unsafe at the time of the mission.

CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

While on clinic duty, many of the volunteers wear scrub tops, and a few even wear the scrub bottoms, otherwise skirts and slacks are the recommended working attire. Walking shorts should be saved for hiking, shopping, travel to Tikal, or other tourist locations. Women should dress modestly, as bare skin sometimes gives the wrong impression to Guatemalan men and is offensive many indigenous people, especially in the more remote communities. Short-shorts or skirts are absolutely forbidden.

Most places you go will be very casual, and you will feel comfortable in jeans, or in clothing you would wear to a neighborhood restaurant. Spring or summer-weight clothing is best most of the year. The evenings are cool, so a jacket or sweater is nice to have. The rainy season is usually May and June, but you may want to bring a poncho or waterproof jacket.

COMFORTABLE SHOES (ESPECIALLY RUBBER SOLED ONES) ARE A MUST since the streets are cobblestone and walking is the primary means of transportation. Wearing sandals or flip flops could result in foot injury. Note: If you have health problems or a disability that prevents you from walking, you may arrange for taxi service (about \$5.00 U.S.)

DO NOT BRING EXPENSIVE JEWELRY OR WATCHES. Don't even think about bringing the "family jewels!" Although there are many affluent people in Guatemala, the people we see are not. Demonstrating our wealth to them is insulting and potentially dangerous as it is in any city worldwide.

PACKING SUGGESTIONS

CLOTHING

You may wear scrubs in clinic but with your white coat
Jeans or other lightweight pants and T-shirts
Skirts and blouses for women
Slacks and shirts for men
Sweater, sweatshirt or light jacket
Underwear
Socks
Bathing suit (some hotels have a pool)
Tennis shoes
Hat with visor or broad brim
Water repellent jacket, poncho or umbrella (Rainy season is May-June)

BASIC TOILETRIES AND PERSONAL MEDICATIONS

- Personal toiletries, deodorant, shaving gear, cosmetics, soap, shampoo, toothpaste and hand/body lotion
- Personal medications, headache, allergy medication, cold or sore throat remedies
- Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate or other diarrhea medicine
(If you tend to get traveler's diarrhea, you may want to ask your doctor for other medications-though the CDC does not recommend prophylaxis)
- Lip balm
- Insect repellent for skin or to spray in the room
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- First aid items such as Band-Aids or antibiotic ointment
- Hand sanitizer

Most toiletries can be purchased in Guatemala if you forget to bring a particular item.

- Notebook, paper, pen
- Spanish/English dictionary or electronic Spanish dictionary (e.g. Franklin)
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight
- Kleenex (some clinic bathrooms have no toilet paper)
- Film, camera and camera batteries (children and parents love Polaroid pictures given back to them)
- Digital camera pictures are also enjoyed by children and can be printed at many internet or photo shops
- Blank CD's for photo image transfers
- Swiss Army Knife (do not place in your carry-on luggage)

LAUNDRY SERVICE

There are several laundries that will do laundry with a one-day turnaround. You can get your week's worth of clothes washed, ironed, folded and packed for about \$10-20.00 U.S. Most of the larger hotels also have laundry services.

CELL PHONES

U.S. cell phones can be adapted for Guatemala, also you can purchase cell within the country.

WHERE TO STAY

When on rotation you will be staying in the convent: On the weekends where you choose to stay is up to you:

Personal preference and choice plays a large part of your hotel selection. There are many beautiful hotels in Antigua at a very reasonable price. I have included a website for a local travel agent who has been very reliable, trustworthy and accurate. Please understand we get no kick back from this organization and where you choose to stay is up to you. We ask that you do reside within Antigua as we will be leaving from the town daily. You may book on your own or with Ken. Please tell him you are with DOCARE and a part of the group with Drs. Schalscha and Burdick. He has promised to give you a 5% reduction in costs.

We will be organizing hotels for the students but ask that all non-Midwestern personnel arrange their own hotel.

Email Ken at:

Tropical Discovery
Central America Inbound Tour Specialists
 USA: + 1 305 593-8687 - Toll free: 888-575-1639

Guatemala: +502 4211-0297 & 7832-4134
http://www.tropicaldiscovery.com/hotels/ac_guate/vacations.php

CULTURAL REMINDERS FOR TRAVELING IN GUATEMALA

CAMERAS

NEVER TAKE A PICTURE OF GUATEMALAN MILITARY. Please be considerate when taking pictures of people. It is respectful of their feelings to ask permission before taking a picture of an individual. They may agree or they may ask for payment (1Q is customary) in exchange for their picture. Families at the clinic are usually more willing to have you take their pictures than people on the street. Remember, they love it when you give them a Polaroid picture back.

Often mission team members have picture parties after they return in order to exchange pictures. It is not uncommon for team members to end up with duplicate shots, so you may want to consider having members of your group share cameras to save film. Having fewer cameras makes your group look less conspicuous (less like tourists). Try to imagine how you would feel if you were the object of a wealthy foreigner's curiosity.

If you take a picture of a Guatemalan and you tell them you will send them a copy of the picture, please do so. They take you at your word and will be eagerly waiting for it. Since they have no way of getting pictures of themselves, the few pictures they do have are very precious. Again, for this reason, a Polaroid camera is wonderful to bring since it produces instant picture gifts.

HANDING OUT CANDY AND TOYS

It is not advisable to hand out items such as candy, balloons, marbles, crayons and money to Guatemalan children. Candy can create a problem since children cannot brush their teeth on a regular basis. Handing out toys or money also sets a difficult precedent in that Guatemalans begin to see North Americans as people with unlimited wealth who come simply to offer gifts. They are more prone to ask for things from North Americans in the future and from other team members. You are invited, however, to bring items for the convent or orphanage to distribute in appropriate ways. Pens are valuable since children are required to bring their own writing instruments to school.

GREETING GUATEMALANS

Guatemalans are very friendly, but very formal. They are accustomed to greeting each other frequently and will greet you as well. It is much appreciated if you can respond in the appropriate way. Please look at the list of basic Spanish words and phrases included in this packet. Knowing basic Spanish phrases is always appreciated. Keep on mind that some Mayan Indian people do not speak Spanish, instead they speak a Mayan dialect.

MAYANS ARE QUIET PEOPLE

The Mayan Indian people are very gentle and quiet when compared to most North Americans who have the reputation of being loud and boisterous. When your team is walking down the street or is at a restaurant, bear in mind you might be talking louder and making more noise than anyone else around you. This is often offensive to those observing you and is something to keep in mind. Loud, boisterous U.S. tourists are considered the classic “Ugly Americans” and this image is not the one we want to portray.

WE ARE GUESTS

As an invited guest, it is not our responsibility to analyze or critique established methods put into place by our host. Arguing or second-guessing clinic policy or procedure is not permitted. If you have an issue, please take it to the team leader. Remember not to criticize our Guatemalan friends as they are very sensitive and often understand everything you say, even if they don't speak English.

YOU ARE REPRESENTATIVES

In going on this trip, you will be representing DOCARE, Midwestern University and the United States. We have a very strong and positive reputation in Guatemala. Help us to maintain it by being as caring, respectful and polite as you can be. We are guests and should treat our hosts with the utmost courtesy.

FLEXIBILITY AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS

One of the most important things to remember is to go with a flexible attitude and open mind and heart. The pace in Guatemala is different and more relaxed than our rushed, time-conscious lifestyle. Guatemalans do not judge themselves according to the speed with which tasks are done. This can be a very enlightening and enjoyable difference.

Thank you,

Dr. Alan Schalscha, Clinic Manager
Mrs. Verna Bronersky, Clinic Coordinator

If you have any questions please email:

vbronersky@osteopathic.org, or
Aschal@midwestern.edu