Clínica Esperanza

STUDENT & VOLUNTEER GUIDE





Welcome to the Clinica Esperanza Student and Volunteer Guide. Inside, you will find essential details about volunteer roles, housing accommodations, program expectations, and key team members who will support you during your stay. Please refer to the table of contents on the next page to help navigate this guide.

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Welcome Message



Peggy Stranges RN,
Founder

"Thank you for your interest in Clinica Esperanza. We would like to warmly welcome you as you are considering joining us as a student, instructor, or professional volunteer. We believe that our clinic will provide you with a life-changing experience, and we can't wait to embark on this adventure with you!"

About Clinca Esperanza

Clinica Esperanza is a Christian-oriented, non-denominational, non-profit organization that operates under the Honduran NGO, Asociacion de Salud Comunitaria, and is dedicated to the premise that healthcare is a basic human right. It is our commitment to create an environment where the best possible healthcare can be provided, with educational opportunities for both the people we serve and the local healthcare providers.

We are also committed to assisting healthcare professionals, medical students and others who wish to donate their resources, expertise, medications, and other supplies to improve the healthcare available to the people of the Bay Islands of Honduras.



Our Clinic

Clinica Esperanza, founded in 2000 from Peggy Stranges' kitchen table, is now a full-service medical clinic operating Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., serving over 100 patients per day.



Our clinic offers general medicine, pediatrics, women's health, obstetrics and gynecology, a diabetes program, dentistry, pharmacy, lab and a community health program. We are committed to serving the population who needs us the most. No one is ever turned away for the inability to pay. We strive to meet the long term needs of people with chronic conditions as well as being a light in the community for all.









Volunteer Opportunties

Are you looking for an experience as a volunteer in Honduras? Maybe you've dreamed of a medical mission trip in Roatan? Clinica Esperanza offers **volunteering opportunities** as well as an **International Medical Spanish Immersion Elective for students.**

Our clinic's operation depends on the time, talents, and donations of our volunteers and students who work alongside our employees during their service in the clinic. Depending on the education and skill level, medical volunteers will be allowed to take an active role in patient assessment and care.

We provide volunteer and student opportunities in the following areas:

- **Licensed Medical Professionals**
- **Residents and Students**
- **Non medical volunteers**

Read more on pages 4, 5, and 6 to learn about each opportunity





Licensed Medical Professionals

(i.e MD, OD, DO, DDS, RN, NP)

Licensed medical professional volunteers join our staff in caring for our patients, in providing education, and assisting our staff in other ways in which they are qualified. We are especially in need of medical specialists as those services are very limited on the island.

Licensed professionals are encouraged to take advantage of our housing facility for safety and convenience. Pricing includes airport transfers and daily transportation. to and fromt he clinic.
*see pages 10-12 for more housing details

Licensed professionals are vital assets to our team and are exempt from the program donation. Additionally, instructors accompanying students are not required to pay the volunteer program donation.

Supervision: Licensed professionals work directly under our medical director, so local licensure procedures are not required.
You must submit a copy of your active license and passport during the online application process.





Residents and Students

(i.e. PA, MD, nursing, pharmacy, dental, pre-med students)

Resident doctors and various students are provided with a foreign rotation and assist our doctors and other staff in caring for our patients. They receive opportunities to increase their knowledge of their field or speciality as well as to fulfill hours required by their various programs of study. Visiting students will have the opportunity to get experience in multiple areas of our clinic, including our community health program, a student favorite.

To support ongoing clinic operations, all residents and students are required to make a program donation of $750 per month or $400 for stays less than 14 days.

We request that students are present in the clinic Monday through Friday from 8am-4pm unless otherwise cleared with the accompanying instructor or our nurse manager.





Non medical volunteers

(i.e. Maintenance, IT, Public Health)

Non medical volunteers allow us to focus on tasks that help our organization run more efficiently. Running a clinic requires more than just medical personnel. If you have skills you would like to offer please contact us at info@clinicaesperanza.org to see if a placement can be made.

Visitors are always welcome! If you are in Roatán on vacation, we invite you to stop by for a tour and meet our team.



International Medical Spanish Immersion Elective

Student volunteers fall under our International Medical Spanish Immersion Elective.

Our elective provides a broad learning experience, combining great opportunities to learn from:

- **Clinical Instruction** : Students will be allowed to take an active role in patient assessment and care. Participants are actively involved in evaluating and managing the care of our patients. Depending on the education level there will be opportunities for students to work independently with our staff oversight. Sometimes universities travel in groups and will also provide an instructor.

- **Spanish Language Immersion Opportunity** : Our employees speak Spanish and most are bilingual. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to let the staff know their desire to be spoken to in Spanish in order to increase their proficiency in the language. Approximately 80% of our patients are Spanish speaking only. We suggest that our volunteers speak only in Spanish as much as possible. There are also additional immersion opportunities throughout the island. It is expected that one has an elementary understanding of Spanish and can converse some with others.

- **Culture Immersion:** Learning about a new culture and how health care extends beyond the exam room by participation in our Community Health Program.





To assist in your prepartion for your time with us we recommend the book “Manual for Relatively Painless Medical Spanish” (about $20 on Amazon). This self-study program allows the volunteer to increase their knowledge of the Spanish language including their medical Spanish vocabulary.

While in Roatan if you complete 6-10 pages per day outside clinic hours you will feel more confident in conversing in Spanish. Our staff can assist with interpretation and questions. Please note that all is dependent on your assertiveness in learning and usage.

An immersion stay with a local family is not offered. Accommodations consist of shared housing with fellow volunteers and are billed separately from the program donation. Please refer to pages 10–12 for more housing details.



How to Apply



1. Please register through our Galaxy Digital **website portal**. Follow the prompts and click “yes” to receiving emails (required for the application process).

2. Upload the required documents (prerequisites).

3. Email copies of your flight itinerary.

4. Check your email for your invoice and submit payment to confirm your volunteer placement.



Meet our Housing Directors



The Vanzee Family

"We are Nic and Adrien VanZee and along with our six children will be hosting your stay at the volunteer apartments, The Refuge. We look forward to meeting you and helping you along your journey. From getting to know you when you arrive, to fun activities and spending time together, we look forward to sharing our family and our beautiful island."

The Vanzee family live on site and are excellent resources during your stay on Roatan.

If you are staying at the Refuge please email **nicvanzee@yahoo.com** to confirm your accomodations.



Housing



Our housing facility, known as **'The Refuge'** is located in the neighborhood of Mangrove Bight, about one mile from the clinic.

We require volunteers to stay in our shared apartment housing to ensure everyone's safety, simplify daily logistics, and create meaningful connections with fellow volunteers.

Pricing

Individuals and groups of six or less

Housing rate = $750 monthly or $200 weekly for a shared apartment
Donation rate = $750 monthly or $400 for stays less than 14 days
=> Includes airport transfers and daily clinic transportation.
=> You are responsible for your meals.

Groups of six or more

Housing rate = $80 daily for a shared apartment
Donation rate = $750 monthly or $400 for stays less than 14 days
=> Includes airport transfers and daily clinic transportation.
=> Includes 3 meals per day.

*Program donation is waived for licensed professionals and instructors accompanying students.



What will you find at The Refuge?





- The accommodations are apartment style with multiple rooms per space. There is a chance you will be in shared space with other volunteers of the same sex. Males and females are not placed together unless married. Students and instructors are also not placed together. Amenities include a kitchen in each apartment, a community pool, air conditioning, WIFI and outdoor space.

- The kitchen includes a gas stove, microwave, fridge/freezer and coffee maker. Additionally, each unit has: drinking water, dish soap, trash bags and a limited supply of cleaning products under the sink. There is a dining room table and chairs, and a living room with a combination of sofa and/or chairs. The bedrooms contain single beds with linens, pillow and blanket for each bed. There is also a side table and shelving or dresser for storage. The bathroom includes bath towels, hand towels and toilet paper. Each unit has a balcony with seating and security doors for safety.

- Laundry isn't provided onsite but it can be sent out for a reasonable price and supports locals who provide this service.

- The Refuge has onsite manager and additional security, and is in located in a residential area. We do our best to ensure the safety of our volunteers.

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL



1 SEND YOUR ITINERARY

Once you have booked your travel arrangements, **please upload a picture of your itinerary under the 'my files' section of the volunteer portal**. Be sure the airline, flight number, date, and arrival/departure times are clear.

We provide airport transportation for our volunteers and students to The Refuge. You will not receive transportation if you do not submit your itinerary.

2 Passport

The U.S. requires that your passport be **valid at least 6 months** beyond your U.S. departure date. The airlines will not allow you to board an international flight if your passport dates do not comply. You do NOT need a pre-arranged visa if coming from the U.S., it is provided at no cost upon arrival. If traveling from another country, please confirm your travel arrangements with the Honduran Consulate.



4 TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is strongly recommended that all volunteers purchase travel insurance that provides for emergency air evacuation.
Some options are listed below:

- Travel Guard International www.travelguard.com
- CSA Travel Protection www.travelsecure.com
- Divers Alert network (DAN) www.diversalertnetwork.org
- Access America Travel Insurance www.allianztravelinsurance.com
- Travel Safe Insurance www.travelsafe.com
- Travelex insurance Services www.travelexinsurance.com
- Seven Corners Travel Insurance www.sevencorners.com



WHAT TO PACK

- **Clothing:** Roatan is a tropical island and dress is casual. To maintain our high level of professionalism and to respect the local culture, we ask that you do not wear short shorts or sleeveless tops in the clinic or while participating in community outreach. Most volunteers wear scrubs in the clinic but they are not required. Don't forget your rain jacket.

- **Beach Towel:** We do not provide beach towels. Please bring one with you.

- **Snorkel gear:** (mask, snorkel & fins) – You are coming to one of the world's greatest reef systems.

- **Bathing suit:** We suggest bringing more than one so you'll always have a dry one ready to go.

- **Sun-screen:** You're coming to the land of sun! Sunscreen is available on the island but the selection is limited and it is expensive.

- **Insect repellent:** We suggest 25-40% DEET. This is available at the grocery store but is expensive. The mosquitos and sand fleas are quite bothersome. It is very important to protect yourself from mosquito borne illnesses.

- **Small flashlight and extra batteries:** These are important to take with you, especially if you will be out after dark. They will also be useful in case of power outage.

- **Gloves:** If possible, It would be helpful to bring a box or 2 of clinic exam gloves In your size.

Important tip: Roatan has a ban on plastic grocery bags so you will not be given bags at the grocery store. If possible, bring a few small reusable shopping bags. Most stores sell reusable bags for less than a dollar if you forget to bring some. It Is a good Idea to make them easily accessible for your trip to the grocery store when you arrive.

ARRIVAL IN HONDURAS



1 IMMIGRATION

IUpon arrival, Immigration will stamp your passport, which serves as your visa and indicates your mandatory departure date. Please check this date carefully. Exceeding your authorized stay without renewing your visa at the immigration office will result in a substantial fine. If you plan to remain in the country for more than two weeks, our Volunteer Coordinator will provide an official invitation letter for you to present to Immigration upon entry to ensure you receive sufficient time.

2 Arrival

Transportation: Upon arrival to the airport, look for a person holding a Clinica Esperanza sign that Indicates your name or group name. Your driver will take you to The Refuge.

Grocery Stop: En route to your accommodation, you will have the opportunity to stop at a full-service supermarket for supplies. While smaller markets are walkable from the clinic and The Refuge, this stop provides the best selection for your stay.

Local Orientation: During the drive, your driver will point out key neighborhood landmarks and helpful local spots.



GOOD TO KNOW INFO

MONEY US dollars (USD) and Honduran Lempira (Lemps) are both widely accepted on the island a. If you choose to use US dollars, bills that are torn, taped, written on or damaged in any way are not accepted here. It is best to bring denominations of $10 or less. $20 bills are the most counterfeited and some places of business will not accept them. The larger grocery stores usually accept larger bills.

CREDIT CARD You will need a photo ID to use a credit card. We suggest making a copy of your driver's license and passport and keeping your original documents in a safe and secure location.
Some stores and restaurants don't accept credit cards, so check before you order. We recommend you use credit cards or an ATM ONLY card. Debit cards can put you at risk for fraudulent withdrawals.

WATER Stick to bottled or filtered water during your stay. Most Island restaurants use purified water for both beverages and ice. To support Roatán's initiatives to reduce plastic waste, please bring a reusable water bottle, as single-use plastic bottles are becoming increasingly restricted.



GOOD TO KNOW INFO

MAIL

Postal service in Honduras is not comparable to the United States Postal Service. Please do not expect to receive packages or letters while on Roatan.

SAFETY

Honduras is a developing nation, and Roatán is a popular tourist destination. While local residents are exceptionally welcoming, visitors can sometimes be targeted for petty theft. Please consult clinic staff for advice before heading out independently, and keep valuables such as wallets, electronics, and passports secure at all times. Always travel in groups of two or more, avoid taking taxis alone after dark, and practice good situational awareness by keeping money and mobile devices out of sight in public spaces.

GETTING AROUND

Always negotiate and confirm your fare before boarding. Local taxi rides usually cost between 40 Lps and 60 Lps per person (exchange rate: ~26 Lps to $1 USD). Standard water taxis cost $5 USD (~130 Lps) per person each way. Taxis from The Refuge to West Bay are considerably more expensive, so factor transportation costs into your plans.



EXPECTATIONS



CONDUCT

You are a representative of the clinic while on the island. Our clinic is widely known and local residents that see any questionable behaviors won't hesitate to share with us. We take our standard of behavior very seriously and reserve the right to ask you to leave the program, without refund, if you do not adhere to our guidelines. You should not become intoxicated at any time during your stay on the Island. The legal drinking age is 21. You do not want to find yourself in a jail in Honduras. HIV and STD's are widespread and we suggest you avoid sexual relations during your time on the island.

COMMUNICATION

Your safety and well-being are our top priorities. If you experience an illness, require a schedule adjustment, or have any safety concerns, please inform a responsible staff member as soon as possible.





WAYS TO PREPARE

We suggest that you read the following books in order to prepare to serve in a different culture:

1.When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor .and Yourself Paperback – by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

2.When Healthcare Hurts: An Evidence Based Guide for Best Practices in Global Health Initiatives by Greg Seager

3.Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World by Tracy Kidder

4.The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures by Anne Fadiman

Download WhatsApp

All of the clinic staff, housing directors, and recurring volunteers, as well as many establishments, in Honduras use WhatsApp. It is our primary mode of communication. Please download the app so you can easily communicate with us.



Q&A

How can I spend my free time on the weekends? The clinic is only open Monday-Friday so the weekend will be yours to enjoy and explore Roatan. We do not provide transportation for extra curricular actives unless agreed upon with someone on our team. There are snorkeling and beach opportunties with our staff at times. Nic and Adrien are excellent resources in guiding your choices of activities.

Will I learn Spanish on my trip? Our program provides a full clinical immersion experience, so volunteers should arrive in Roatán with basic Spanish comprehension. With guidance from our bilingual staff, practice with local patients, and the study workbook "Manual for Relatively Painless Medical Spanish," you can expect your clinical and conversational language skills to improve greatly during if you invest the effort during your stay.

Are the outlets the same as the US? Yes, no need for any adapters.

Will my cell service work there? That depends on your carrier. Some carriers such as AT&T have full coverage in Honduras but if your carrier does not you can easily and inexpensively purchase a mobile chip. You will have access to wifi at the Refuge and many other places on the island.

Is the Refuge walking distance to the clinic? No. We do not recommend walking to and from the clinic. It is approximately five minutes by car on a busy highway with poor shoulder space. We will transport you to and from the clinic if you are staying at the Refuge. Your safety is very important to us.

What is the dress code at the clinic? Upon arrival you will receive a volunteer t-shirt. If you are a visiting medical professional or student we recommend bringing a set of scrubs. All volunteers should wear long, professional pants that are suitable for a clinic environment. Closed toed shoes are also required while working in the clinic.



Contact Information

+(504) 9776-2120

volunteer@clinicaesperanza.org

info@clinicaesperanza.org

www.clinicaesperanza.org

