

## San Juan Bosco Mission Handbook

One facet of St. Michael's Orphan, Adoption and Foster Care ministry (O AFC) is to provide support to Hogarcito San Juan Bosco, which is an orphanage for abandoned, abused and neglected children in La Fortuna, Costa Rica [www.lafortunaorphanage.com](http://www.lafortunaorphanage.com). This is a family focused/family centered mission with groups of no more than 4-6 people per trip. Our goal is to provide Love, God's blessings, facility improvement, needed services and supplies such as, food, clothing, diapers, books.

This handbook is a reference to guide you to having a successful trip. It is based on recommendations and experiences from volunteers who have traveled to Costa Rica before you. This handbook is a work in progress and not meant to be all encompassing. Upon your return, please feel free to share your thoughts and experiences so this manual may continue to improve.

### **Overview of expectations and procedures:**

Complete St. Michael/Hogarcito San Juan Bosco Mission application and submit for approval to volunteer

Upon receiving approval, Please inform O AFC administrator, Janet Kazmer of your requested travel dates so that the dates can be confirmed with the orphanage director. She can be reached at 919-602-6935 or [adoption@stmmary.org](mailto:adoption@stmmary.org). Please plan to work for 3 days, but the exact number of days will be arranged by an O AFC administrator and the orphanage director prior to your departure. You will be responsible for booking your own flights, rental car, hotel and any other travel related expenses.

You will be asked to bring a duffle bag of supplies that are being donated by parishioners and people in the community. O AFC will reimburse you up to \$35 for expense of 1 way checked luggage. Please roll up duffle bag and place in your suitcase so there is no return luggage fee. Pending the amount of funding available, O AFC will offer up to \$200 per team to purchase needed food and supplies in country for the orphanage. You will be asked to provide receipts to an O AFC administrator for reimbursement of these expenses upon your return. If you are able, feel free to purchase any other supplies or food to donate above and beyond the \$200 O AFC is able to reimburse.

Upon arriving at the orphanage, please introduce yourselves as volunteers from St. Michael the Archangel O AFC Ministry. The caregivers should be expecting you, but you should request to speak with Diana. She will give you instructions for the day. Plan to do a variety of things ranging from playing with the children, assisting with meal preparation, serving meals, cleaning the kitchen, going to the grocery store, painting, general repairs pending your skill set. It is best to be a "self starter." For example, If you know that they need painting, but you are not sure where to purchase paint, ask staff and someone will give directions or go with you.

\*\*\***No Photographs** of the children please - If you would like to take any photographs, please ask the staff for permission. They do not want photos of the children put on the internet. This is for the protection of the children and we ask that you honor this.

### **Travel tips:**

- Dry season/summer runs from November to April
- Passports are required to travel to Costa Rica and the expiration date must be at least 6 months post travel dates.
- Currency - credit cards are accepted most places but suggest bringing some cash in the local currency.
- Driving - The roads in Costa Rica range from very good to poor. Many roads are narrow and windy and do not have reflective markings, shoulders or guard rails. It is recommended that you plan to drive during daylight hours.

### **Flights:**

- There are 2 international airports to fly into. Liberia (LIR, 2.5hr drive) or San Jose (SHO, 3 hr drive). We have only flown into/out of LIR. It is a small airport, car rentals are available. Southwest airlines does fly there, and they do not charge a fee for baggage.

### **Recommended hotels:**

- ***The Springs Resort and Spa***. it's about 10 - 15 min drive to the orphanage. Off season prices are reasonable but double during holidays.
- ***Tabacon Resort***

\*\* There are a number of 4\* resorts with good ratings on Expedia (search either La Fortuna or Arenal). 2 families have gone on the trip and the above hotels are where they have stayed. We hope to add to this list in the future.

### **Recommended restaurants:**

Don't be afraid of the shabby looking restaurants in La Fortuna. There are some diamonds in the ruff.

German Bakery

Red Frog Coffee Roaster - Excellent service, coffee and burritos.

**Spanish language:**

It is not essential that you speak fluent spanish, but some basic knowledge and ability to communicate is preferred. It is highly recommended that you download Google translate or a related spanish/english translation app to your smart phone for quick translation reference. Some of the staff understand a little English.