

 homes
from the heart



Volunteer Handbook: El Salvador

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“The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.”

-Confucius



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¡Hola y bienvenidos!

Welcome to the Homes from the Heart family of volunteers! We appreciate your partnership, and we're excited to have you join our team, building homes in El Salvador. You've signed up for an unforgettable experience, both for families who will gain a home of their own, and for yourself.

Homes from the Heart is committed to active partnership, empowering the people to build self-sustaining communities that they have worked for and are proud of, rather than offering handouts. During your trip, you'll volunteer alongside the locals you're helping, be introduced to a vibrant culture and people, and help make a lasting difference in the lives of a family.



In the pages that follow, you'll learn more about Homes from the Heart and El Salvador. You'll find what to expect, how to prepare, and gain useful tools for your trip. We encourage you to read the contents of this handbook carefully, and even suggest taking it with you while you travel. Thank you for opening your heart to the beautiful nation and people of El Salvador. We hope you'll be truly blessed by your time with us.

Best Regards,

The Homes from the Heart Team



Our Story

El Salvador

In 2001, El Salvador was hit by a massive, 7.7 earthquake, followed by over 2,500 aftershocks and another earthquake exactly one month later. The damage was widespread. At least 1,159 lives were lost, and over 108,200 homes were destroyed. Landslides also caused severe damage to the country's infrastructure, including roads and water systems. After the earthquakes, many families lived in temporary camps set up by the Salvadoran army.



Landslide damage in El Salvador

Homes from the Heart was founded by a group of Kansas City businessmen in response to the difficult living situations. They made it their mission to serve in faithful partnership with the poor, building homes and communities that would adequately address the diverse needs of families—including access to clean water, healthcare, and education—in order to build sustainable, independent communities and promote economic opportunity.

In the years that have followed, we've built over 400 homes in El Salvador with the help of our volunteer teams, financial partners, and many others. Through programs such as Many Miracles and Greater Blessings, we've looked at the needs of families beyond having a home of their own. Whether we're planting trees, improving access to education, teaching a trade to local women, or removing sand from a town after a flood, Homes from the Heart is there for the long haul, listening to the diverse needs of the people and responding in kind.



Haiti

In 2010, we expanded our efforts to include Haiti, following the 7.0 magnitude earthquake there. It is estimated that 316,000 people were killed and approximately 1.3 million Haitians left without a home.

Michael and Zuze Bonderer

Michael and Zuze Bonderer have been working with Homes from the Heart for over a decade, since the devastating earthquakes in 2001. Michael, our Executive Director, is a veteran of United States Marine Corps and a former



Michael Bonderer

entrepreneur from Kansas City, Missouri. Besides being in the construction business for over 25 years, Michael owned various restaurants and an elevator maintenance company. In 2000, Michael was in need of redemption. So, he ventured to Guatemala with a truckload of tools and his dog Jake, where he began working with neglected children on the streets.

Soon after arriving in Central America, Michael met his wife Zuze, a native of Nicaragua, and her two daughters, Marlayna and Wanda. The family soon traveled to El Salvador, the most densely populated country in the Americas, to begin building houses in a new land.

Zuze is now our In-Country Director. Together, they have learned how to accomplish the impossible. They have built over 400 houses around the country, including a 149-house community in an area of San Salvador plagued with violence and characterized by the separation of wealth.



Zuze Bonderer



Volunteer Team Trips

Homes from the Heart volunteer teams are at the core of our operations. They keep us in motion, building homes alongside local families and laborers to help us give the poor a home of their own. The funds they raise contribute directly toward building costs and in country transportation and accommodations, with a small percentage going toward our operations. We keep our costs as low as possible so that we can have as large an impact as possible in the countries we serve.

There are a few, key people involved in coordinating a successful trip:



1. **The Homes from the Heart coordinator in the U.S.** This person serves as a resource for team leaders and is available for administrative support, financial services, training, and questions that may arise. In addition, the coordinator serves as a liaison between the host country coordinator and the team leader and is available 24/7 while the team is traveling, in case of any emergency.
2. **The coordinator in the host country.** This person directs the team while they are abroad, coordinating work, accommodations, recreational activities, transportation, and meals for the trip. The host coordinator will be the team leader's main point of contact while the team is abroad.
3. **The team leader.** Team leaders are recruited, interviewed, and trained by the U.S. Homes from the Heart coordinator to ensure that they are equipped and prepared for the responsibility of leading a trip abroad. Team leaders are the point of contact for team members, and they serve as leader, mentor, confidant, crisis manager, and guide, before, during, and after the trip. If you're interested in becoming a team leader or already have a team assembled, simply fill out our trip proposal form to get the process started!



Our Work in El Salvador

Since 2001, Homes from the Heart has been partnering with the poor in El Salvador to build permanent housing. Our work has primarily been in Soyapango, San Luis Talpa, Santa Cruz, and Chiltiupan. In addition to building over 400 homes so far, one of our primary goals has been to support sustainable communities. Toward that end, we've also built a school, playground, churches, planted trees, and promoted economic growth through teaching a trade to local residents. While the majority of our work centers around building homes for families in need, our Greater Blessings projects also provide help to families who already have a home but need help with repairs.



The homes we build in El Salvador are made with cement forms, with either one or two bedrooms. They also have a kitchen, bath area, and porches. In addition, we install gutters on each home, encouraging a community program of water harvesting.

These homes are a huge improvement from the previous living conditions of families, who often reside in haphazard structures made of tires, garbage bags, wood scraps, and rusted tin. These structures leak, have muddy floors, poor ventilation, and offer little shelter from the storms that can easily destroy them.



Worksite Safety

Homes from the Heart strives to keep volunteer worksites as safe as possible. It is important that volunteers make safety their first priority at the worksite, in order to help prevent accidents and injuries both to themselves and others. Please carefully read the following safety standards.

Thoughtfulness and Communication:

- Before you begin a task, ask yourself if you are familiar with proper operation of the tools and method to safely perform the task. If the answer is no or you are unsure, ask.
- As much as possible, avoid distractions on the worksite, and concentrate on the current task.
- Inspect all tools, ladders, and scaffolding before you use them.
- If any tool or equipment is unsafe for use, notify the team leader immediately.
- Do you know where the first aid kit is and where to go if there's an emergency? If not, ask before you begin working.



What to Wear:

- Wear clothing and gloves appropriate for the work and weather. Do not wear loose-fitting clothing near power saws.
- Wear work boots or shoes with a thick, non-slip sole at all times on the work site. Sandals are not acceptable attire.
- Use protective glasses if there is any possibility of eye injury.
- If using a power tool for an extended period of time, wear ear plugs.

**Take Care of Yourself:**

- Lift using the proper technique, with bent legs and a straight back. Do not lift items that are too heavy for you to safely handle.
- Take breaks and rest. Avoid trying to compete or keep up with other team members, and be mindful not to overexert yourself.
- Wear sunscreen, and reapply as necessary. A broad brimmed hat is also encouraged. If you notice sunburn, cover the exposed area with clothing.
- Working in the heat can easily lead to dehydration, so make sure to drink plenty of the safe to drink, bottled water provided on site.

Cleanliness:

- A crucial part of having a safe worksite is keeping it clean. Restack unused building materials and scraps, and put trash in the designated trash area. Sweep regularly. Put tools away when not in use.

Tools:

- Make sure you know the proper way to use a tool before you begin working with it.
- Use the right tool for the task, and only carry those needed.
 - If you are done with a tool, put it away in its proper place.
 - Do not operate a power tool if you are under 18 or do not know the appropriate technique.
 - Never use a defective tool, and report any defective tools to your team leader immediately.
 - Do not use a power nail gun unless there are no volunteers in the





immediate work area AND you are proficient in its use. Nail guns can be highly dangerous to yourself and others.

- When using cutting tools: secure the material being cut. Use both hands to hold the saw, and avoid using your fingers or hand as a guide when making a cut. Make sure you have solid footing and that electrical cords are out of the way of the saw. Avoid “binding” the blade, as it will cause the blade to kick back toward the user. When cutting large pieces of material, ask for help. When using utility knives, keep hands out of the path of the blade, and retract the blade when it’s not in use.



Heights:

- Do not work at a height from which you are not comfortable.
- If you are under 18, do not work on a roof or scaffold.
- Inspect ladders and scaffolding before use.
- Move ladders with your work to avoid overreaching.
- If using an extension ladder, it should extend three feet above the step-off point.
- When positioning a ladder, use the 4 to 1 rule. For every 4 feet of height, the ladder should be one foot further from the wall.
- Place ladders on flat, stable ground, and do not set them on blocks or other objects.
- Do not set tools on scaffolding, roofs, or other high or sloped surfaces where they could fall. Keep tools in your tool belt when not in use.
- When on a roof, secure all building materials to prevent them from sliding.



- Sweep debris and sawdust off of the roof frequently.
- Do not sweep or throw materials off of the roof until you have warned any workers below you and have made sure the area is clear of people.
- Materials should be cut while on the ground, not while on the roof.
- Only work on a roof if it is dry.

Health Care:

- We suggest consulting with your doctor before your trip to make sure you are healthy enough to work in a hot climate.
- Bring all necessary medication, including medication needed in special circumstances, since it may not be easily obtained in El Salvador.
- Make sure you are up to date on your tetanus shot prior to traveling to El Salvador.
- Please visit the CDC website for current vaccination and health recommendations: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/el-salvador.
- If you are injured or become ill, contact your team leader immediately. There is a first aid kit on site for any worker who becomes ill or injured. If there is a serious illness or injury, arrangements will be made for transportation to the local hospital.





Rest and Relaxation

Optional R&R activities are not included in the trip fee, so participants would pay the vendor directly.



The Beach: FREE! There are many beaches in El Salvador, including the one by our beach house. This can be a great, free way to relax!

La Puerta del Diablo: Free, unless items are purchased. La Puerta del Diablo, just 45 minutes from the beach house, is a historical site. After a short hike, you can see 360° of the beautiful, El Salvadoran landscape. On a clear day, you can see the Pacific Ocean, volcanoes, and possibly even the Northern and Southern borders of El Salvador. There are several artisanal and local food vendors at the starting point, as well as police patrolling the area.

National Artisan's Market: FREE, unless items are purchased. This is a place where local artisans sell ceramics, hammocks, crafts, and more.

Parque Nacional El Boquerón: \$1/person and \$1/vehicle. El Boquerón National Park is about a 45 minute drive from San Salvador. After a short hike to the outlook point, participants can view a volcanic crater three miles wide and 1/3 mile deep.

Surfing Lessons: \$15/person. El Zonte is a 45-60 minute drive from the beach house. Once there, experienced instructors teach participants to surf. Even beginners can usually stand and ride waves within an hour. If you'd like to surf, please let us know ahead of time for scheduling.

Canopy Tour: \$25/person. This 1 ½ mile canopy tour is near Parque Nacional El Boquerón. Participants get to zip line through the jungle along cables up to 1,100 feet long. Canopy tours are open to both children and adults. Make sure to wear sunscreen and to wear light clothing and tennis shoes.



El Salvador Facts

Nationality: Salvadoran

Capital: San Salvador

Population: 6,108,590 (July 2013 est.)

Population below poverty line: 36.5%

Currency: U.S. Dollar

Exchange Rate: \$1 USD = \$1 USD
(Be sure to bring small bills, preferably nothing larger than a \$10 bill, as change is not always available)

Languages: Spanish (official),
Nahua (among some Amerindians)

Religions: Roman Catholic (57.1%),
Protestant (21.2%), Jehovah's
Witnesses (1.9%), Mormon (0.7%),
other religions (2.3%), none (16.8%)

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo (86.3%),
White (12.7%), Amerindian (1%)

Exports: coffee, sugar, textiles and
apparel, gold, ethanol, chemicals,
electricity, iron and steel, offshore
assembly exports.

Government Type: Republic

Time Zone: UTC-06:00

National Holiday: Independence
Day, 15 September (1821)

Traditional Food:

Pupusas: Thick corn tortillas filled
with cheese, meat, squash, etc.

Empanadas: Flour pastries filled with
meat, potatoes and/or cheese. In El
Salvador, this can also refer to a
dessert of fried plantains stuffed with
sweet cream.

Tamales: boiled pockets of corn
dough stuffed with meat or sweet
corn and served in banana leaves

Tres Leches Cake: A cake soaked in
evaporated milk, sweetened
condensed milk, and cream.

Climate: Hot and Tropical

Average High: 87-93° F

Average Low: 61-67° F

Rainy Season: May-October



Important Contact Information

Local Emergency Numbers:

Fire/Police/Ambulance: 911

Phones:

To call cell phones within El Salvador, dial: xxxx-xxxx

To call El Salvador from the U.S:

Landline: 011-503-2xxx-xxxx

Cell: 011-503-7xxx-xxxx

To call the U.S. from El Salvador:

Dial: 00-1-(xxx)xxx-xxxx

U.S. Embassy in El Salvador:

American Citizen Services
Consular Section
Final Boulevard Santa Elena
Antiguo Cuscatlán, La Libertad

Non-Emergency: 503.2501.2999

Emergency: 503.2501.2253

Homes from the Heart Contacts:

**Please tell your family and friends that these numbers are for emergency use only! Thank you.*

U.S. Coordinator:

Meghan Sullivan
Executive Assistant
U.S. Cell: 315.771.6652
Office: 816.308.4554

Meghan@homesfromtheheart.org

El Salvador Coordinator:

Michael Bonderer
International Director
Cell: 503.7974.0065
Home: 503.2266.2941

To call from the U.S:
1.816.286.1380
1.661.374.0875

Michael@homesfromtheheart.org

Volunteer Housing:

Calle Principal Tikuiziapa
Pasaje #5 Casa #222
Playa San Diego, La Libertad



Trip Logistics

Volunteer Housing:

Volunteers stay at a beach house located 30 minutes from the build site. In addition to beach access, the house has a private pool, a small side yard, and a perfect view for watching the sunset. The first floor has two smaller rooms with double beds for couples, along with a dining room and kitchen. Groups have access to the refrigerator, coffee pot, and microwave. The second floor has three large rooms with bunk beds as well as two bathrooms. For large groups, it is recommended that you bring sheets and pillows, as there are a limited number available.

Transportation:

Volunteers should coordinate travel with their team leader. All team members should arrive within 90 minutes of each other, preferably all on the same flight. Arrival time should be on or before noon to avoid being on the road at night in El Salvador. The airport you will fly into is San Salvador (SAL). When you arrive, exit the building and turn left toward the street. Homes from the Heart staff will be waiting for you and have either a sign or a t-shirt.

Security:

Homes from the Heart staff members pick up volunteers at the airport. We also staff volunteer housing facilities with a security guard at night. There is no need for a security guard during the day.

Meals:

Three meals a day are included in the cost of your trip. Breakfast and Dinner are prepared and served at the volunteer housing. Lunch will be prepared by a local restaurant and brought to the building site. All food is prepared to U.S. standards and will be safe to eat. We strongly encourage that for food safety reasons all meals should come from country hosts and not purchased from street vendors.

Drinking Water:

El Salvador water is not clean and should not be consumed by foreigners. Homes from the Heart will provide drinking water at the building site and housing facilities. When traveling, make sure not to drink anything with ice, since ice is usually made with unclean water.

**Bathroom Facilities:**

Public restrooms do not always have toiletries, so please consider bringing a couple of small packages of tissues with you. There will be basic facilities provided at the build site and at volunteer housing. Showers do not have a water heater, but water is warmed by the sun. We also suggest bringing flip flops for use in the shower.

Electronics:

El Salvador and the U.S. have the same voltage, so electronics will work. However, you will want to make sure you have a two-pronged plug, since most outlets are two-pronged in El Salvador instead of three-pronged like in the U.S.

Insurance:

Travel insurance is included in the cost of your trip and will be purchased by Homes from the Heart for all volunteers.

Visa:

Persons with a U.S. passport are required to purchase a tourist Visa at the El Salvador airport. Please make sure you have exactly \$10 to pay for it when you go through customs.

Foreigner's registration at their embassies:

We register all American volunteers working with Homes from the Heart with the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador. This helps the Embassy provide important services to citizens traveling abroad, including: replacing a passport, locating individuals in case of family emergencies, relaying travel and safety information about the region, and other services related to personal documentation.

Embassy of the United States:

Embajada de Los Estados Unidos
Sección Consular
Final Boulevard Santa Elena
Antiguo Cuscatlán
Telephone: 503.2501.2999
Fax: 503.2278.5522
Website: step.state.gov



Code of Conduct

- Team members are expected to respect the ethics and morals of the area that they visit and to show respect to the partner families, community, Homes from the Heart staff and each other.
- Use of illegal drugs by team members is strictly forbidden at all times.
- Consumption of alcohol at work sites and official Homes from the Heart meetings is prohibited and should be moderate all other times.
- Use of tobacco may be offensive to others. Please respect the values of the host community and your fellow team members.
- Clothing should be appropriate for the work site or after-work event. Team members should dress comfortably, yet modestly. Don't wear expensive looking jewelry, watches, or other signs of wealth, and make sure to wear recommended attire and protective gear at the worksite.
- Be aware of the feelings of others in order to help prevent what might be offensive behavior on your part. This is especially applicable when taking photographs. Photographing local people and what might be considered sacred, cultural places should be done with reservation. It is respectful to ask permission before pointing the camera at such subjects.
- Realize that often the people in the community you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
- Acquaint yourself with local customs—people will be happy to help you.
- Remember that you are only one of many visitors. Do not expect special privileges.



Language Guide

Greetings, Pleasantries, and Questions:

Good morning	Buenos días	Who?	¿Quién?
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes	What?	¿Qué?
Good evening	Buenas noches	When?	¿Cuándo?
How are you?	¿Cómo está?	Where?	¿Dónde?
Good	Bueno	Why?	¿Por qué?
Yes	Sí	How?	¿Cómo?
No	No	Which?	¿Cuál?
Thank you	Gracias	How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
No, thank you	No, gracias	Do you speak English?	¿Habla Inglés?
Please	Por favor	Do you understand?	¿Lo entiende?
You're welcome	De nada	How do you say that in Spanish?	¿Cómo se dice en Español?
No problem	No hay problema	How old are you?	¿Cuántos años tiene?
I'm sorry	Lo siento	Where is the restroom?	¿Dónde está el baño?
Excuse me	Disculpa	What is your name?	¿Cómo se llama usted?
Goodbye	Adios	My name is...	Me llamo...
See you later	Hasta luego	Nice to meet you	Mucho gusto

**Time****Tools**

Yesterday	Ayer	Hammer	Martillo
Today	Hoy	Bucket	Cubo or balde
Tomorrow	Mañana	Ladder	Escalera
This morning	Esta mañana	Nail	Clavo
This afternoon	Esta tarde	Brick	Ladrillo
This evening	Esta noche	Measuring tape	Cinta de medir
Monday	Lunes	Bolt	Perno
Tuesday	Martes	Cement	Cemento
Wednesday	Miercoles	Drill bit	Taladro or hoja
Thursday	Jueves	Drill (tool)	Taladro
Friday	Viernes	Mortar	Mortero
Saturday	Sábado	Paintbrush	Brocha
Sunday	Domingo	Paint	Pintura

Numbers**Problems**

One	Uno	Are you sick?	¿Está enfermo/a?
Two	Dos	Are you hurt?	¿Está herido/a?
Three	Tres	I'm not well	No estoy bien
Four	Cuatro	I'm sick	Estoy enfermo/a
Five	Cinco	Where does it hurt?	¿Dónde le duele?
Six	Seis	I'm dizzy	Tengo mareo
Seven	Siete	I'm hungry	Tengo hambre
Eight	Ocho	I'm thirsty	Tengo sed
Nine	Nueve	Help	Ayudar
Ten	Diez	Be careful	Cuidado
Twenty	Veinte	Stop	Para
Thirty	Treinta	Hurry	Rápido



Packing List

Documents	Toiletries:	Group Gear:	Group Food:
Passport Cash (\$10 bills or smaller) Driver's License Emergency Contacts Return plane reservations	Prescriptions Deodorant Shampoo and Soap Toothbrush Toothpaste Towel	Hand sanitizer Bug spray Sunscreen Wet wipes Hand lotion	Snacks Peanut Butter Jelly Powdered Gatorade (or other electrolyte replacement powder)

Clothing:	Gear:	Optional:	Leave Behind:
T-shirts Shorts Underwear Socks Pants Closed-toe shoes Sleepwear Light shoes Hat & bandana Swimsuit Nice outfit Sandals Long-sleeved shirt	Flashlight Hand sanitizer Luggage lock Sunglasses Camera Work gloves Journal Small day bag Book Water bottle Sheets/blanket Pillow	Tape measure Wire cutters Utility knife and blades Tool belts Concrete gloves Hammer Chalk line Tin snips Carpenter pencils Duct tape Tool bag Mosquito net Earplugs	Expensive looking watches Jewelry Signs of Wealth