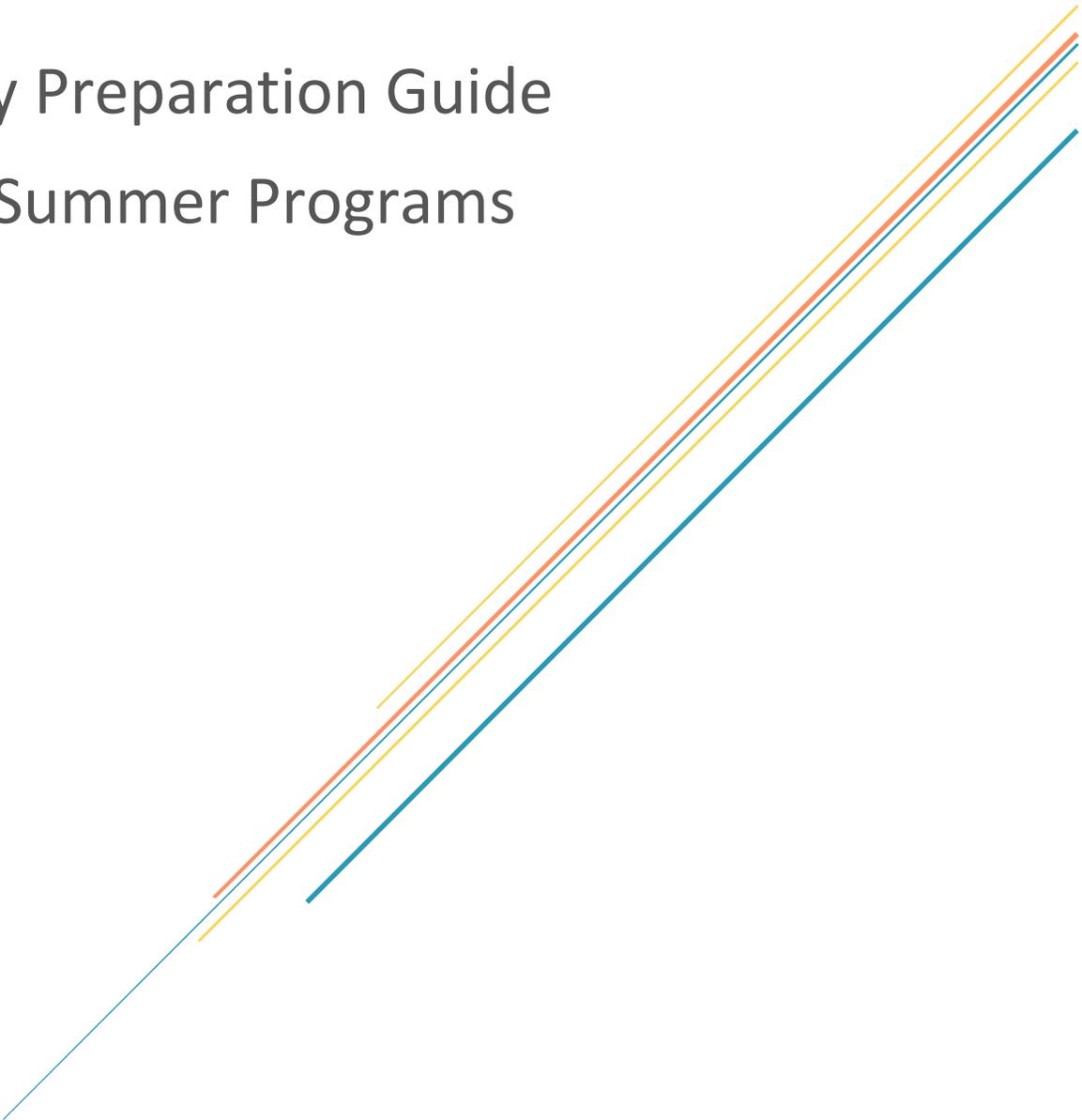


# Family Preparation Guide

## 2022 Summer Programs



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# Letter from Sara Nathan, President & CEO

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well.

For over 57 years, AMIGOS has been an industry leader in international cross-cultural exchange, leadership development, and community service for young people. We believe that youth have the power to be extraordinary leaders and a positive force for change.

In 2021, we returned to travel through group-based programs and offered, for the first time, a US based program. Survey data from our programs was very positive. Overall, 92% of students rated their experience as good or excellent. A 2021 volunteer in Nicaragua shared their thoughts on their experience- "This experience in Nicaragua has changed me so much, it changed how I think and live. It motivated me to do something better and bigger. I don't want to just go home and waste this experience. **I want to change the world and community.**"

In addition to our group-based program, we are excited to offer two other programs that AMIGOS previously operated in Latin America. This summer, we are running the two-week Discover program for middle school aged Volunteers in Panama. Additionally, we are returning to a six-week homestay model, via the Ecuador: Santa Elena program.

The AMIGOS model teaches invaluable skills for young people and allows youth to connect with themselves and to the world at large. For 2-6 weeks, volunteers will be given time to explore their passions and unplug from the day-to-day all while they live, work, and learn together. This will be an opportunity for students to experience the importance of interdependence and human connection. On the Ecuador, Santa Elena program, Volunteers will live with host families and carry out service projects benefiting the local community.

As the family of an AMIGOS volunteer, you will play an important role in preparing your volunteer for this program. This guide is intended to inform and prepare you for this role, answering many of the questions you may have about AMIGOS programs, policies, and procedures.

During this experience, AMIGOS is here for you and your family, so please feel free to reach out at any time with any questions or concerns.

Congratulations on joining AMIGOS and welcome to the family!



Sara Nathan  
*President and CEO*  
*Amigos de Las Américas*

## Meet the Team

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### **Katherine Conway, Managing Director of Programs (she/her/ella)**



Katherine re-joined AMIGOS in 2019 from her position as a Program Manager at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) where she managed a portfolio of democracy, governance, human rights, and youth leadership programs across Latin America. Katherine is a long time Amiga, participating as a volunteer in Paraguay in 2002, Supervisor in Honduras in 2004, and Project Director in Honduras in 2009/2010 and Peru in 2011. Katherine also worked at the AMIGOS headquarters in Houston helping to envision the initial Youth Ambassadors Program, and most recently served as a Training Director for the Washington, DC Chapter from 2016–2018. Additionally, Katherine holds a

BA in International Relations from Tufts University and a Masters in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at the same university. Katherine is a lover of all things rock climbing, cats, and coffee.

### **Vanessa Fiedler, Latin American Programs Director (she/her/ella)**



Vanessa started her adventure with AMIGOS in 2013 as the Program Coordinator for Gap Year in Nicaragua. She now serves as the Director of Latin America Programs. Vanessa attended the University of Oregon Clark Honors College, double majoring in International Studies and Political Science. She is passionate about international development, environmental education, and youth leadership. Before joining the AMIGOS team, Vanessa worked for Global Glimpse, designing and leading group experiential learning trips to Nicaragua for young leaders. Top of her bucket list: Hike through Patagonia and experience the astonishing beauty of the untarnished terrain.

### **Elizabeth Spruell Martinez, Director of Health and Safety (she/her/ella)**



Elizabeth began her AMIGOS experience serving as a volunteer in Intibucá, Honduras in 1999 and then in Dajabon, Dominican Republic in 2000. During the summers of 2001 and 2002 she worked as a full-time staff member of the On-Call System and from 2004–2005 served as the correspondent volunteer administrator. She also worked part-time in the summers of 2003–2019 with the On-Call System. Elizabeth received her Bachelor's of Arts at the University of Mary Washington and for the last 14 years has taught a natural fertility awareness method to more than 900 women and couples and has trained physicians and educators in over 7 countries in a holistic approach to woman's health. She is certified as a Mental Health First Aid Trainer by the National Council of Behavioral Health and Contact Tracer for COVID-19 through John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

In her free time she enjoys hanging out with her three daughters, one an AMIGOS alum, and exploring new trails and cuisine in her hometown of Houston.

### **Nicol Chinchilla, Costa Rica Country Coordinator (she/her/ella)**



Originally from Perez Zeledon, Costa Rica, Nicol considers herself a change-maker, passionate about contributing to the development of rural communities while also helping to preserve their essence of traditional living. In 2016, Nicol received her B.A. in Environmental Studies and Business & Nonprofit Management from Earlham College, with focuses in Environmental Politics and Women’s Empowerment. During her time at Earlham, Nicol had the opportunity to attend Semester at Sea, a 4-month program that travels to 12 countries around the world.

Nicol began with AMIGOS as a Project Supervisor in Chimborazo, Ecuador and in 2017 Nicol was the Project Director for the Matagalpa, Nicaragua Project. In Spring 2021, Nicol led the first pod-based Gap Program in Costa Rica. Prior to re-joining AMIGOS, Nicol worked with indigenous and farming community-based organizations in Central America providing capacity building training. Nicol is also committed to social entrepreneurship and during her free time enjoys working with women entrepreneurs, guiding them towards their own paths of leadership.

### **Pablo Davila, Program Coordinator for Ecuador and Panama (him/her/el)**



Pablo Martín Dávila Jácome is an economist who graduated from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. Prior to joining AMIGOS in 2019, he worked with civil society organizations both in his home country (Ecuador) and internationally. For two consecutive years he held leadership positions with AMIGOS where he has directed community development projects in the Americas (Panama and Dominican Republic). Within these roles Pablo has specialized in the design, implementation, financing, and evaluation of social projects aimed to solve current problems such as gender inequality and environmental degradation. Additionally, Pablo had the opportunity to represent his

country at the United Nations working for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Humanitarian Funds) in Geneva, Switzerland. Within this role, Pablo served as a project officer, evaluating direct assistance initiatives for victims of torture, slavery, sexual and gender-based violence worldwide.

Top of his bucket list: Start his own social entrepreneurship endeavor and travel around the world.

### **Zyro Honty, Training Manager (he/him/el)**



Born and raised in Uruguay, Zyro got to know AMIGOS while working for a partner agency back at home, where he had been managing several programs for youth and children since he was 19. In 2016 he served as Project Supervisor in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, and came back to AMIGOS in 2020 to work with the Community Impact Project. After working as Program Coordinator for a few months, Zyro served as Project Director for the 2021 Monteverde & Costa Atlantica project in Costa Rica. He assumed the role of Training Manager in September 2021.

He has also lived in New Zealand, Paraguay, and Mexico, where he developed different hobbies like snowboarding, scuba diving, salsa dancing, photography, and videography.

### **Jordan Kelsey, Program Manager (he/him/el)**



Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Jordan has spent most of his adult life in education. After graduating from The Ohio State University, he moved to Tlaxcala, Mexico, to teach English at a poly-technical university. This is where he deepened his love for cross-cultural collaboration, international travel, and chilaquiles verdes. Upon his return to the U.S., he moved to St. Louis to teach high school Spanish, and he completed a masters of education program at University of Missouri, St. Louis. He is most proud of his work with The Show Me Costa Rica Project, a program in St. Louis which helps make study-abroad programs more accessible to inner-city youth.

In his free time, he enjoys weightlifting, trivia, dancing, and seeking out new experiences in his quest to live life to its fullest potential.

# Overview of AMIGOS

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## MISSION, VISION, AND HISTORY

### **Vision:**

A world where all people are lifelong leaders sharing responsibility for our global community.

### **Mission:**

Amigos de las Américas inspires leaders through authentic service and immersion experiences.

### **History:**

AMIGOS was founded on the principle that young people can change the world.

In 1965, a 29-year-old from Houston, Texas named Guy Bevil led a team of teens into rural Honduras to fight a growing polio epidemic. Serving communities in remote areas of the country, this group of 181 high school students and 36 adults helped protect thousands of people from the disease and established friendships that crossed borders.

This service had a bold impact on the lives of these young people and, as a result, they returned more mature, culturally aware, and inspired to continue serving communities at home and abroad.

Since then, AMIGOS programs have evolved to be more responsive to the needs of the current climate and our host communities. Today, our projects focus on sustainable service and building skills in youth from both the United States and Latin America. More than 30,000 alumni have carried on the passion and commitment that started more than 55 years ago, showing that young people have the power to rise to any challenge and make meaningful change.

2020 was an historic year for AMIGOS as we had to close all in-person programs due to COVID-19. AMIGOS has continued to innovate and adapt our programs to the needs of our community and many families it serves during this time. While we are unable to return completely to traditional AMIGOS programs with host family stays, in 2021, we launched our new in-person group program. The success of the group living projects on Gap and in our Summer programs, led us to continue this model within Latin America and Colorado. In 2022, AMIGOS is returning to homestay experiences via select Explore programs and the six week Immerse program in Santa Elena, Ecuador.

## PROGRAM PILLARS

### Leadership

Through AMIGOS programs, students learn, grow and discover their leadership potential. They have ample opportunities to practice leadership skills, participate in 1:1 mentoring with AMIGOS staff and will start to establish personal goals and values through introspection and reflection.

Students on AMIGOS programs will meet volunteers from around the U.S. and Latin America who want to be young leaders for themselves, their communities, and the world. Students will practice peer mentorship by providing feedback and support to fellow group members on service project ideas and planning. Exploring different models of leadership and community initiatives will give students an idea of the needs and opportunities.

### Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is a process of both self-reflection about one's own culture as well as learning about other cultures. Through participation in the program, students will examine their own beliefs and cultural identity and gain an understanding of how structural inequities have impacted societies and the roles that communities can take to lead systemic change. AMIGOS is grateful to the partner organizations, communities, and families who welcome us each year and offer our volunteers the opportunity for deep immersion and cultural exchange, providing opportunities for students to practice cultural humility.

Additionally, we value the inclusion and integration of youth from Latin American host countries in our programming. In our Latin American programs, there will be at least two Latin American students from the program country fully integrated into the group (with the exception of the intro to Spanish program in Costa Rica). This is an excellent opportunity for students to spend time with youth from cultures, learn more about the country, and practice Spanish. Language acquisition is another key part of learning about a new culture. As such, all students will take Spanish classes. Our bilingual staff members are ready to practice Spanish with your volunteer and share their culture.

Your volunteer will interact with local staff in our program sites. Many of our activities will be led in both Spanish and English and many of our mealtimes will occur only in Spanish. All excursions planned during the program will be off the beaten path, where students will be able to see local communities and important cultural sites.

On the Ecuador: Santa Elena program, Volunteers will have the incredible experience of living with a host family during the program. They will be immersed in and learn about Ecuadorian culture, and will practice Spanish all day with their host family and during service projects.

## Service

At AMIGOS, we believe youth can make an impact on the world. Service at AMIGOS means deep listening, curiosity, collaboration, respect, and partnership with others seeking to make change in their community. We have selected sites where students can provide service to our partners through hands-on work. AMIGOS creates socially and environmentally conscious partnerships with community organizations. It has been our experience that projects are sustainable only when our partner organizations and host communities own and lead the effort. We seek out youth leaders, local experts, and innovative organizations and identify opportunities for our young people to learn about their priorities and collaborate in developing solutions to social issues. Students learn how to create and participate in ethical service initiatives by working with - not for - a community, engaging local organizations and partners, and evaluating the impact of the work.

## AMIGOS TERMINOLOGY

AMIGOS uses many acronyms and terms that assume unique meaning within the organization. Here is a list of common terms and acronyms:

**Project Director:** Will oversee all aspects of the program from planning to implementation to evaluation. They will serve as a mentor and supervisor for students and staff.

**Project Coordinator:** Serve as a mentor and supervisor for students. They will also support with facilitation of programming and logistics management.

**Health and Wellness Coordinator:** Designated staff member focused on health and wellness. They will be responsible for daily COVID-19 self-monitoring checks and will be the person accompanying volunteers to the doctor and/or clinic, if needed. They will also be a mentor for students and support with program logistics.

**Latin American Youth (LAY):** Volunteers participating from various Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. In this program, the Latin American youth will be from their home country and be fully immersed in the group.

**United States Youth (USY):** Volunteers participating from across the United States.

**Volunteer/Student/Participant:** Individuals enrolled in AMIGOS programs.

**Headquarters:** The AMIGOS headquarters is located in Houston, Texas and is the home of our professional staff and On-Call.

**Local Chapter System:** AMIGOS has 14 chapters throughout the United States. Each individual chapter has a board of directors comprised of both adult and youth volunteers. Chapter activities are coordinated in consultation with the AMIGOS Headquarters in Houston, which provides training, publicity materials, resources and advice about legal and financial matters, as well as standards for the organization. Volunteers involved in AMIGOS chapter train, fundraise and participate in community service projects to prepare for their summer with AMIGOS.

**National Office Volunteer:** Instead of training with a local chapter, National Office Volunteers are supported by professional staff members at the AMIGOS HQ.

**Host Community:** Community in which AMIGOS volunteers live and work for the duration of their project in the Immerse program.

**Partner Agency:** Local or national agency with which AMIGOS collaborates. Examples are Save the Children, Plan International, Ministerio de Salud, and CARE.

**Route (Immerse Program):** A grouping of 3-5 volunteer partnerships/host communities. One project coordinator supports each route.

# Group Program Model for Discover and Explore Programs

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The group program model is committed to building trust, independence, and camaraderie. The program is made up of 12-21 US volunteers and two Latin American volunteers and 3-4 full time staff members. AMIGOS maintains a staffing ratio of at least 1:5 to ensure the safety, health and fun of our volunteers, staff, and programs. The program is staffed by a Project Director, 1-2 Project Coordinators and a Health and Wellness Coordinator.

## PROGRAM CALENDAR FOR DISCOVER AND EXPLORE

The program is divided into several phases to meet the objectives of the program and to ensure the health and safety of the group.

### Phase I

The first 3-5 days will serve as an orientation where volunteers will learn about the specific history, culture, demographics of the project area, and important health and safety topics while the group gets to know each other. During this time, volunteers will practice Spanish, if applicable and participate in fun outdoor activities. Volunteers will live with 1–3 other volunteers in rooms. Interactions with the larger group will follow social distancing protocols, including wearing masks while within six feet of others.

#### A Day in the Life

- Breakfast in small groups
- Mornings - rotating schedule of activities
- Lunch outside
- Afternoon - rotating schedule of activities and free time to explore briefing site
- Dinner in small groups
- After Dinner - free time, fun and social distanced activities, group meeting

After successful completion of this time with negative COVID-19 tests, the group will then move into Phase II.

### Phase II

In phase II, volunteers and project staff will interact freely as a group and will take excursions to learn about and support the efforts of activists, leaders, and communities in safely distant way. COVID-19 testing will be carried out as needed with local labs, and there will be daily screening and monitoring of COVID-19 by the on-site Health and Wellness Coordinator. Contact with persons outside the pod will be supervised, and social distancing and masks will be required.

#### A Day in the Life

- Breakfast
- Morning - service project and agency tour, intercultural and leadership activities

- Lunch
- Afternoon - excursion, speakers, free time, student-led activities
- Dinner
- After Dinner - fun group bonding, group meeting, free time, relax

### **Explore Homestays**

A few Explore programs will have short-term homestays (approximately 1 week in length). Students will be placed with vetted host families in one community with 1-2 other Volunteers. During the homestay portion, staff will be located in the community and easily available to Volunteers.

# IMMERSE Program Model

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In the AMIGOS Immerse program, Volunteers will be placed with 1-2 other volunteers in a host community where they will live with a host family. AMIGOS works in partnership with local organizations and collaborates with their already-existing programs. This framework ensures AMIGOS programs are relevant to the Latin American communities AMIGOS works with, as they amplify the year-round programs of our partner agencies. Our partner agencies provide expert knowledge and program structure while our volunteers support and assist well-developed community-driven projects. Our partner agencies assist AMIGOS in identifying host communities and host families for our projects.

## **Briefing**

When volunteers arrive in Latin America, they participate in a 4-6 day long in-country briefing or orientation conducted by Project Staff. Briefing is where volunteers meet all of the Project Staff and complete project-specific training. At briefing, Volunteer are taken to their communities by a member of Project Staff or a trusted community member comes to the briefing site to pick them up.

## **Debriefing**

The last 3-4 days in-country are spent at debriefing, which is a period of closure and evaluation for the entire group. Activities include reflection on the project, suggestions for the following year, volunteer and Project Staff evaluations and preparation for their return home. Time for relaxation and recreation is also included.

## **Host Community and Family Selection**

Host communities and families are selected with the support of the Partner Agency. Host communities are located within one hour of travel time from the Project Staff headquarter city with access to public and private transportation. Communities must have accessible communication with reasonable timeframe (within a 30-minute walk from their host family home). The majority of host families have access to a telephone. Some communities may be very rural and communication infrastructure varies in reliability, though most communities have various readily accessible cell phones available.

AMIGOS provides a small stipend to cover the cost of feeding and housing a Volunteer. Host families are required to agree to the “AMIGOS Host Family Contract\*,” which Project Supervisors review with the head(s) of household. This contract stipulates the following requirements to host Volunteers:

- Host family members demonstrate a real interest in hosting Volunteers
- The home has gender-specific space for sleeping at night
- If the family is not at home during the day, there is a way to contact them in case of emergency
- The family agrees to support the Volunteers in abiding by the standards of conduct
- The home is within 20 minutes walking distance from the home of their partner’s host family OR 30- minute walking distance from partner’s host family, if a buddy system for walking home at night has been established
- There are no signs of potential problems, such as excessive use of alcohol or domestic violence
- No household members have criminal records

- Female Volunteers should be placed in a home where other females are present (a host sister or mother)
- The host family does not plan to leave the community for extended periods during the program
- A head of household has agreed to the “Host Family Contract”

\*The above contract is reviewed verbally with host families during the community survey process and not signed, as some heads of household may not be literate.

If at any time during the program the host family is not abiding by the points in this contract, Volunteers should immediately contact a member of the Project Staff.

### **Meals and Diet**

Many Volunteers will eat primarily with their host family. Please keep in mind that host families are often feeding Volunteers the food they typically eat. It is the Volunteer’s duty to accept and eat it graciously; even if the food is not part of their normal diet or is a dish they do not like. Being a grateful guest is part of the leadership role for the summer. This does not mean Volunteers should consume things that may jeopardize their health and safety. They need to be sure all fresh produce has been properly cleaned, cooked, or peeled. They cannot drink the water, ice, or juice unless their Project Staff tells them that it is okay in their host community. Volunteers will NOT become immune to the microbes during their summer, so they MUST NOT start consuming these items at any time. If they do, they could be at a high risk of infection, be it worms, parasites, bacteria or viruses.

Every summer a few Volunteers decide that the AMIGOS experience is the perfect diet experience. This is not the case and can actually be quite dangerous! Our Volunteers are living in conditions often more physically and mentally demanding than they have ever experienced. They are also exposed to all kinds of things that their immune system has never dealt with. It is imperative that our Volunteers are consuming sufficient calories to maintain their health throughout the summer.

### **Partnership Selection and Placements**

- **The Interview Process:** During briefing, each Volunteer is interviewed by at least one Project Staff member to assess their Spanish ability and experience level. Based on this interview and information in the Volunteer application, they are placed in partnerships of 2 or 3. Oftentimes, communities request Volunteers with specific skills and host families request specific genders based on housing arrangements.
- **Role of Gender in Placements:** Same gender partnerships are most appropriate in terms of promoting the highest degree of cultural sensitivity, given that mixed-gender friendships can easily be misinterpreted. In some cases, due to the nature of the program or community logistics, mixed-gender partnerships may be the most feasible option. Project Leadership may not place one female Volunteer in a partnership with one male Volunteer. Instead, one male may be placed with two female Volunteers. Volunteers in mixed gender partnerships must have separate sleeping quarters. Whenever possible, female Volunteers should share sleeping quarters with another female, either a family member or another AMIGOS Volunteer. Female and male Volunteers may not sleep in the same room with individuals of the opposite gender – be they AMIGOS Volunteers, host family members or guests.

- **Sleeping arrangements:** Volunteers may sleep on a bed, a cot or a hammock; due to the host family housing arrangements, a choice of one or the other may not be possible. Volunteers may be asked to share a bed with a host family member or AMIGOS partner of the same age group and gender.
- **Housing:** AMIGOS partners do not necessarily live in the same house. Not all host families can accommodate multiple Volunteers.
- **Solo Placements:** No Volunteer may be placed in a community alone without another AMIGOS Volunteer. If a Volunteer departs prior to the conclusion of the project, authorization from AMIGOS management and parents of minor Volunteers is needed for the partner to remain alone in their community.
- **Non-Family Housing:** Volunteers should be placed with a host family. If family housing is not available, non-family housing will be approved by AMIGOS Headquarters in some cases. In this case, all Volunteers in the community will stay in the same place. Non-family housing must be located within more densely populated areas rather than on the edge of town and locks must be on all doors and windows. Volunteers must always be able to quickly contact designated community members for assistance should the need arise.

# Shared Elements Across Programs

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## **Involvement of Latin American Youth**

Volunteers on Explore and Immerse programs in Latin America will collaborate with youth from the host country. For Explore and Immerse, the group will include Latin American participants (except the Intro to Spanish program). For the Immerse program, Volunteers will work with local youth in their assigned host community or potentially be partnered with a Latin American Volunteer from Ecuador.

## **Volunteer Performance Evaluations**

Halfway through the program and again at the end, Volunteers go through an evaluation with their Project Staff. The purpose of the Volunteer performance evaluation is to give Volunteers the opportunity to reflect on the experience and expose them to feedback as they develop their leadership capacity. The feedback and evaluation process is intended to promote ongoing, open, honest dialogue between staff and the Volunteer regarding performance and personal growth during the summer experience. It is a way to challenge Volunteers to continuously reflect, learn and grow.

## **AMIGOS Service at Home**

While engaging Volunteers in service in Latin America, AMIGOS encourages Volunteers to think about and plan service projects upon their return to their home community. Volunteers will participate in reflection and planning activities to map out how to bring skills developed through AMIGOS training and service abroad back to their home communities. **Program alumni will be invited to participate in the AMIGOS Social Impact Accelerator, a cost-free mentor program where Volunteers design and carry out service projects in their home community. For more information, please visit the AMIGOS website at: [www.amigosinternational.org/social-impact-accelerator/](http://www.amigosinternational.org/social-impact-accelerator/).**

# Accommodations, Transportation, and Food

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## Lodging

### *Discover and Explore Programs*

Volunteers and Project Staff will stay in group living sites with gender separated dorms and rooms. During the first 3-5 days of the project, before the first in-country COVID-19 tests, students will be in rooms with a maximum of 2-3 other students. Once staff have negative COVID tests for all the volunteers, sleeping arrangement will switch so as to introduce students to other members of the group. Staff will be onsite and available 24/7 to assist volunteers. When selecting accommodations, AMIGOS ensures that sites are secure with good safety record, have adequate ventilation, identified exits in the event of a fire or natural disaster and are aligned with AMIGOS values. In most cases, AMIGOS follows the recommendations and guidance of our local partnering agencies when selecting accommodations. Project staff will be lodged onsite and have all meals with the volunteers.

### *Immerse Program*

Volunteers and Project Staff will stay in group living sites with gender separated dorms and rooms for the first 5-6 days of the program and the final 3-4 days. During the first 3-5 days of the project, before the first in-country COVID-19 tests, students will be in rooms with a maximum of 2-3 other students. Once staff have negative COVID tests for all the volunteers, sleeping arrangement will switch so as to introduce students to other members of the group. For the middle 4.5 weeks of the program, Volunteers will live in a host family located within 1 hour of the host city (where staff live). Volunteers will be placed in communities with 1-2 other Volunteers.

## Transportation

All private transportation is pre-selected and vetted to ensure they meet our safety standards. AMIGOS contracts with private transportation companies and will never use public transportation unless in emergencies. Prior to transporting volunteers, Project Staff will ensure that the vehicle or bus is in proper order and the driver is in good condition to operate the vehicle. Additionally, transportation is limited to daytime hours and with good road conditions, unless it is an emergency. Immerse program Volunteers may use public transportation to move from the staff city to their host community. Public transportation will only be taken with their partner and/or a staff member. On occasion, volunteers will use boats as modes of transportation. Life jackets are required to be worn at all times and volunteers must follow all safety guidelines set forth by the operator.

## Experiencing a New Diet

Volunteers will be experimenting with new flavors and foods and are expected to be flexible and open-minded when approaching mealtimes. When Volunteers are together as a group, AMIGOS will provide three full meals and snacks to volunteers each day. In the event, a volunteer does not feel satisfied with the amount of food being served, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Project Staff. For the immerse program, Volunteers will eat three meals a day with their host family. **Special dietary requests and allergies are evaluated during the health screening process and Project Staff are made known of any foods to be avoided for those volunteers.**

# Standards of Conduct

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The AMIGOS Standards of Conduct are an integral part of building and growing leadership skills. Their primary purpose is to keep volunteers and program staff safe. The volunteer's adherence to the Standards of Conduct is the primary way AMIGOS ensures their health and well-being during the program. The Standards of Conduct come from many years of volunteer experiences and recommendations. In addition to the Standards of Conduct, the group will develop their own, internal set of guiding principles for community living with the completion of group norms.

## Upholding the Standards of Conduct is crucial for:

### ***Development of Leadership***

A primary focus of the AMIGOS mission statement is the development of youth leadership. As an AMIGOS student, they should lead with positive examples, be the first to uphold the Standards of Conduct, and be stronger than any pressure to act otherwise. We expect our volunteers to take initiative, be responsible, be amazing, and to do great things.

### ***Accountability to all AMIGOS Stakeholders***

As an AMIGOS volunteer, they are the face of AMIGOS – the leaders of our vast organization. This makes them accountable to all the AMIGOS stakeholders and their actions will impact all the stakeholders and individuals who make their participation in AMIGOS programs possible.

### ***Preserving the Legacy of Both AMIGOS Outreach and Your Involvement***

They are now a part of the AMIGOS legacy. It is up to them how their actions will be remembered and connected with our organizations. They are ambassadors of the organization here and abroad.

### ***Personal Health & Safety***

AMIGOS has been conducting programs in Latin America since 1965. The Standards of Conduct help ensure the health and safety of AMIGOS volunteers. AMIGOS takes a restorative approach when volunteers exhibit discouraging behaviors or when they have violated one of our standards. We recognize that adolescence is an important time for self-reflection and growth and we believe in empowering youth to self-reflect on their behavior.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

*The AMIGOS volunteer will:*

1. Be thoughtful and self-reflective when interacting with others. Be self-accountable for their decisions, behaviors, and actions and communicate their needs in a healthy manner. Take ownership for their health and safety and will avoid activities and/or behaviors that may be detrimental to themselves, others, or to the program. This includes but is not limited to abiding by the laws of the country in which the volunteer is located, avoiding touching all animals, and adhering to COVID-19 protocols such as wearing face masks, complying with mandatory isolation, or quarantine, if applicable, or adhering to social distancing when outside the group.
2. Follow the laws of the host country and/or country of residence of the volunteer and in line with these laws will not use or possess any drugs that are illegal in the host country, your country of residence, or the United States.
3. Be conscientious of their surroundings and assigned work area. They will only leave their assigned work area and/or group pod once they have been granted prior permission from AMIGOS project staff.
4. Only be a passenger in a motorized vehicle (excluding motorcycles, ATVs, electric scooters, electric bikes, and the like) and will not operate any motorized vehicle, including but not limited to cars, trucks, motorcycles, ATVs, electric scooters, and electric bikes.
5. Recognize the dangers of firearms, fireworks, or explosives and avoid any contact with such thing.
6. Be respectful, courteous, and kind. Avoid any acts of harassment, aggression, or bullying, as defined by AMIGOS.
7. Not consume alcohol during the duration of the program.
8. Avoid the use or possession of all tobacco or marijuana products including, vaping, e-cigarettes, cigarettes, edibles, or anything containing nicotine or marijuana.
9. Maintain platonic friendships and avoid any intimate or amorous relationships. This includes, but is not limited to, a relationship with any of the following: community member, project staff, or another student.

## POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

We understand that adolescence is an extraordinary period of growth and development and that mistakes often provide the best opportunities for growth and development. As a youth organization, we do NOT expect perfection from our volunteers rather perseverance and positivity when tackling new challenges and situations. AMIGOS follows a restorative justice approach balanced with protecting the health and safety of volunteers when handling behavior. The following disciplinary actions are guidelines for what happens when there is an infraction against one of our standards. If a volunteer violates the standard of conduct, the project staff and AMIGOS work directly with the individual to understand, discuss and work to change the behavior. The Standards of Conduct are in place to protect all our volunteers and constituents. In certain situations when the health and safety of a volunteer and or group is compromised, AMIGOS reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer at any point during the AMIGOS experience.

As an organization, these standards are taken very seriously, and all volunteers are required to sign an agreement as a part of their application process to uphold these standards prior to acceptance into our programs. AMIGOS Standards of Conduct apply during all phases of AMIGOS participation, including training and travel to and from the project.

- Standards Violation Warning – This will be administered for minor, first-time violations that do not represent a threat to the health and safety of the individual, their partner(s), fellow pod members or the reputation of the partner agency/AMIGOS organization. Standards violation warnings are typically given for inadvertent violations or minor incidents in which there was no premeditated intent or in which there were extenuating circumstances. In the event the volunteer has been given several verbal warnings and there has been no change to correct behavior, an official warning will be given and parents will be notified.
  - *Examples of offenses:* isolated incident of culturally insensitive behavior, or unknowingly being disruptive to group dynamics after several verbal warnings have been given by staff.
- Standards Violation Incident – These are given for more serious and/or intentional violations that could be potentially damaging to the individual, their fellow pod members, community, partner agency, or the organization. If a volunteer is issued an incident and wishes to return as a volunteer to project staff in subsequent years, their application will be subject to additional review.
  - *Examples of offenses:* intentionally leaving the assigned area without prior permission, taking medications without prior approval, failure to comply with COVID-19 protocols such as refusal to wear a mask or social distance, or repeatedly rude and/or culturally insensitive behavior despite a warning given from staff.
- Standards Violation Dismissal from the Program - Volunteers will most likely be dismissed from the program in situations of repeated or severe violations that are potentially dangerous or harmful to the individual, their partner(s), or the organization. Individuals who are sent home

will also be charged for actual costs of flight changes in addition to a \$250 administrative fee to AMIGOS to cover the cost of additional in-country expenses for travel, food, and lodging to accommodate an early return. The total cost for an early return can sometimes be well over \$1,000.

- *Examples of offenses:* violations involving illegal drugs, excessive or intentional consumption of alcohol, amorous or intimate sexual relationships, driving motorized vehicles, repeated leaving of project area without prior approval from the project staff, repeatedly failing to follow COVID-19 protocols such as refusal to social distance and/or wear a face mask, or handling firearms.
- Individuals can also be dismissed for non-disclosure related to medical or mental health issues. See *Letter of Health Disclosure and General Health Criteria* for more information on health-related issues.

### **After Care**

At the end of the project, volunteers and families will be emailed a copy of their standard of conduct violations for incidents or dismissals which includes a reflection statement written by the volunteer and the final recommendation from AMIGOS.

If a volunteer has been given a Standard of Violation dismissal there will be after care and follow up with the family and/or volunteer to provide the opportunity to reflect, process and discuss the situation. After care will occur as a phone conversation 1-2 weeks after the volunteer has returned home. We value the partnership with our families in this process and believe that by working together we can provide more opportunities for growth and self-reflection through this process and learn as an organization how we can continue to better support and assist our many constituents.

Please note that at any given time, the Health and Safety Director and/or Managing Director of Programs is available to discuss the Standard of Conduct process and/or any violations incurred by the family's volunteer. If a volunteer is over the age of 18, it will be left to the discretion of the Managing Director of Programs and CEO as far as what information can be shared.

# Technology Policy- Disconnect to Reconnect

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AMIGOS believes in the extraordinary power of human connection to build communities. As humans, we are wired for connection and social interaction. Through our relationships and interactions, we discover more about ourselves. Part of the AMIGOS experience is developing powerful personal coping skills, making lifelong friendships, and learning the skills to become better communicators and facilitators. Youth will greatly benefit from the opportunity to be fully present to engage more deeply with themselves and their surroundings. We believe that the use of a screen, whether it be a cellphone or laptop or any other digital device, can be a barrier to a transformative AMIGOS experience.

Over the years we have seen that volunteers who made the decision to seal up their phones and do a complete digital detox, report overall higher satisfaction rates and deeper connections with their communities and peers. Additionally, volunteers reported less instances of being homesick and fewer challenges with mental health. Coupled with emerging research on technology, and our anecdotal experience, AMIGOS has developed the following technology policy:

## **Technology Policy for Explore and Discover**

- Volunteers are not permitted to bring Wi-Fi enabled devices to the program, except for a cell phone\* to be used *only* during approved travel days. This includes laptops, iPods, iPads, apple watches, tablets, kindles, and any other electronic device. If it can connect to the internet, please leave it at home.
- We will allow and encourage volunteers to use their personal cell phones during days of arrival and departure from the program for travel purposes only. All other devices are NOT permitted.
- Volunteers who chose to bring their personal cell phones will be required to keep their devices in a Yondr pouch once they have arrived to the project. The pouch will lock the device and volunteers will maintain possession of their devices in the locked pouch. The Yondr pouch will be unlocked by our Project Staff at the end of the project for travel home.
- Volunteers will not have access to their phones or any other electronic device during their project. Expect no communication from your child unless it is an emergency. No news is good news.
- Volunteers will have the opportunity to use the program laptop and camera at designated times to take videos and make blog posts which will enable our families and friends to follow their adventure back at home.

Volunteers will not be permitted to use their phones to listen to music. A music player and speaker will be provided for volunteers to play their favorite tunes with others. Volunteers will not be permitted to use their smart phones as cameras, and as such are encouraged to bring their own camera, if desired.

We ask volunteers to please bring two of their favorite books, a board game, a deck of cards, and list of top 10 favorite songs to share with the group. During the program, there will be a lively book swap, lots of opportunities to learn new games, read new books, and listen to a diverse collection of music.

We understand this technology policy may be a challenge, but we believe that volunteers chose AMIGOS because of their drive, desire to connect and ability to dive deep and succeed! AMIGOS is confident that by disconnecting, volunteers will connect with others and themselves in meaningful ways!

#### **Technology Policy for Immerse Programs**

- Immerse: Volunteers are permitted to bring a cell phone and/or iPod to the program. Volunteers should not bring laptops, iPads, tablets, kindles, etc.
- Volunteers on the Immerse program will be invited to participate in “challenge by choice,” where they elect not to use their cell phone during the program. If Volunteers plan to participate in “challenge by choice,” AMIGOS recommends bringing a separate camera.
- Volunteers on the Immerse program may not have access to wifi or internet in their host community.

\*NOTE: Volunteers assume sole responsibility for any device they choose to bring with them in-country and AMIGOS is not responsible for replacement or reimbursement of any lost, stolen or damaged items.

# Health and Safety at AMIGOS

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## A NOTE FROM THE AMIGOS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Dear AMIGOS Parent/Guardian:

On behalf of the AMIGOS Board of Directors, we would like to congratulate you on your volunteer's decision to participate in AMIGOS. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an overview of the organization's commitment to health and safety and to briefly outline the various mechanisms, processes, and personnel in place pursuant to that goal.

As the AMIGOS Medical Director, I work closely with the Director of Health and Safety and key AMIGOS constituents to ensure that AMIGOS is upholding the highest level of health and safety, to the extent possible, in the following areas:

- Disease prevention and health maintenance
- COVID-19 policies and procedures
- Safety protocols in program area
- Approval of volunteer medical treatments during the Program, when necessary

Volunteers will receive training on issues of health and safety during their initial days on the program. In addition, prior to the volunteer's departure, you will be invited to attend a health and safety parent training which accompanies this AMIGOS Family Preparation Guide. The training and guide cover information about general health practices, protocols for communication during the program, and specific information on disease prevention. It is important to understand that without exception, the overwhelming majority of AMIGOS volunteers have no major health issues during their time with AMIGOS. However, because of our commitment to health and safety from a preventive perspective, we provide substantive information on these issues in order to better prepare and train the volunteer to approach their personal health matters proactively.

When traveling, especially in an environment where conditions are different than what one is used to, it is common to experience some environmental challenges. It is important that your volunteer understand how to be proactive in taking personal responsibility for their own health. This can be done by reviewing and making good use of the information and practices outlined in AMIGOS health-related materials. Encouraging your volunteer to take all the health and safety information to heart will make the overall AMIGOS experience much more enriching, enjoyable, and rewarding.

As mentioned previously, AMIGOS places the highest possible priority on issues of health and safety. We believe our 57-year track record speaks for itself. We wish you and your volunteer the best of luck as you prepare for what will be an enriching and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Laura Grubb, MPH, MD  
*AMIGOS Medical Director*

## GENERAL HEALTH CRITERIA

AMIGOS places the highest priority on keeping our volunteers safe and healthy while involved in our programs. Program policy and guidelines on health and safety are rigorously enforced.

In order to best support our volunteers, it is essential that volunteers be candid in disclosing health history and any current conditions for which they may have been treated within the last two years in their health forms.

- Disclosure of chronic medical or psychological diagnoses does not automatically disqualify applicants but will necessitate careful screening to assess whether the applicant can be adequately supported in AMIGOS programs.
- The intentional non-disclosure or minimization of important health history (physical or psychological) is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, even if the volunteer is already on the project. Volunteers and/or their families will be responsible for fees associated with a re-issued plane ticket home plus an additional \$500 administrative fee.
- If an AMIGOS volunteer under age 18 needs to return home from the program due to a mental health issue, AMIGOS reserves the right to determine that the volunteer is not safe traveling alone and may request that a parent/legal guardian accompany the volunteer on their travel home. Further screening will be performed when a new issue or change in physical or mental health status arises.

Any questions about how the confidential health screening process works can be addressed directly to the AMIGOS Director of Health and Safety at [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org)

During the application process your volunteer was screened to meet the following health criteria:

### Physical Health Criteria

In order to participate safely in the AMIGOS program, a volunteer must be able to perform the following “major life activities” as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:

- Caring for one’s self
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Breathing
- Speaking
- Learning
- Working

All volunteers must have received all AMIGOS required immunizations and prophylaxes for their respective project prior to departure. Given that our volunteers are working and living in more remote areas where they may face increased exposure to certain diseases and illnesses, we cannot take any risks with volunteer health and safety. We do not make exceptions to this rule. This includes being fully

vaccinated against COVID-19. A person is fully vaccinated once 14 days has passed since receiving their second dose. AMIGOS requires that all volunteers receive whatever booster(s) are available as soon as eligible to provide extra immunity and protection against COVID-19.

In addition, the following variables will be given serious consideration when determining the eligibility of an applicant to the AMIGOS program.

- Successful completion of the pre-departure COVID-19 training.
- The ability to be independently mobile, such as but not limited to, walking on uneven terrain for distances of multiple miles and maneuvering elevations unaided. The extent and availability of necessary medical treatment, monitoring, or physician follow-up in-country for the disclosed conditions or illnesses.

#### *Mental Health Criteria*

- No acute psychiatric diagnosis or episode or psychiatric hospitalization within the past year prior to the current application to AMIGOS.
- No new psychotropic medication(s)\* within six months of departure for country assignment.
- No major changes of existing psychotropic medication(s), including sudden stoppage, within three months of departure.
- Relative stability (verified by the treating clinician) over the last year if a history of chronic depression, anxiety, or other psychological or behavioral diagnoses exists. Some diagnostic categories will be ruled out depending on AMIGOS assessment as to whether these volunteers constitute more risk for health and safety than the project staff can manage.
- Willingness by the volunteer to sign a Self-Care Agreement which holds them accountable for administering their own prescribed medication(s) (antidepressant, stimulant, anti-anxiety agent, etc.) and monitoring their mental health, reporting immediately any new or unfamiliar symptoms.

If an AMIGOS volunteer under age 18 needs to return home from the program due to a mental health issue, AMIGOS reserves the right to determine that the volunteer is not safe traveling alone and may request that a parent/legal guardian accompany the volunteer on their travel home. Further screening will be performed when a new issue or change in physical or mental health status arises.

#### *Self Care Agreements (SCAs)*

During the screening process, volunteer's health forms are thoroughly reviewed and assessed in order to meet our health criteria. On occasion, the AMIGOS medical director and/or mental health consultant will determine that a Self-Care Agreement is necessary for participation. The Self-Care Agreement is an additional tool to monitor the physical and mental health of our volunteers.

SCAs are normally required when volunteers take certain prescription medications, have a history of asthma, severe allergies or other diseases which may put them at greater risk if they were to get sick during the program. For volunteers who have a history of asthma and/or anaphylaxis, they will be

required to complete the asthma action plan and/or anaphylaxis plan in addition to the self-care agreement. These forms must be completed and signed by the volunteer's treating physician.

Additionally, volunteers who have a mental health diagnosis and take prescribed anti-psychotropic medications for ADHD, depression, anxiety, and the like will also be asked to complete a Self-Care Agreement. The SCA emphasizes the volunteer's obligation to monitor their own physical and/or mental health and serves as a commitment that they will take their medications as prescribed, if necessary and alert the Project Staff of any worsening symptoms.

If a Self-Care Agreement is required, a member of the health screening team will contact a parent/guardian and/or volunteer directly to complete the steps necessary to have a working SCA.

The Self-Care Agreement is completed and signed by the volunteer, their parents if under 18 and is kept in their private, confidential health record accessible only to the Project Director and Health and Wellness Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the Health and Wellness Coordinator and the volunteer to jointly monitor compliance with the SCA during the weekly supervisory meetings or as needed.

The Health and Wellness Coordinator must bring any infractions of the agreement to the volunteer's attention to work out a solution in the form of an action plan. An AMIGOS Mental Health Consultant is available to provide guidance and support to the Health and Wellness Coordinator to ensure the success of the SCA process for mental health issues.

In the event an action plan is not adhered to, or is otherwise not successful, more serious measures will need to be taken to ensure the health and safety of the volunteer. The action plan may include the need for an early return if enough progress is not made.

#### Updating Health Information

It is imperative that AMIGOS has the most up-to-date health information for all. If your volunteer's health information has changed (e.g. new medication and/or diagnosis) since submission of the Health Update, Headquarters should be notified immediately. Please send an email to [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org). The subject line of the email should read: Initial of volunteer's last name, first initial and "Change in health information". In the body of the email, include date of birth and description of change in health information (include name of medication, its indication, dosage, and frequency if applicable). If you prefer to call this information to the Director of Health and Safety, you may do so by calling 713-782-5290 x115

\*Psychotropic medication: Any medication capable of affecting the mind, emotions, and behavior such as antidepressant/anti-anxiety agents, antipsychotic drugs, mood stabilizers, anticonvulsant medication, stimulants for the treatment of ADHD, etc.

## MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

All volunteers are required to have comprehensive primary health insurance that provides coverage while traveling outside of the U.S. for the duration of their involvement with AMIGOS. If the volunteer's existing medical health insurance does not include enough coverage beyond U.S. borders, AMIGOS advises volunteers and/or their parents/guardians to contact an insurance agent and purchase the appropriate short-term supplemental policy. Please contact the Health and Safety department at [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org) with questions.

### *AMIGOS Short-Term Emergency Volunteer Supplemental Health Insurance*

AMIGOS also provides short-term, out-of-country health insurance for all volunteers and project staff members. The primary purpose of this short-term health insurance is to supplement existing health insurance coverage when a volunteer is out of the United States in emergency situations. This policy covers volunteers while they are in Latin America, subject to the conditions and stipulations set forth by the policy.

Generally, the policy covers medical evacuations, extensive surgical procedures, and medical emergencies that are not related to pre-existing medical conditions or COVID-19. (If your volunteer is not a U.S. citizen/resident, the coverage differs, please ask if you have any questions). In the event of a surgery or major medical situation, the volunteer's primary insurance will be billed first. It is the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or their parent/guardian to pay for any remaining medical expenses or outstanding balances that are not covered by their primary insurance or the AMIGOS supplemental plan.

#### **When Claims Are Made:**

- If an injury or illness is serious enough to anticipate extended hospitalization or specialized treatment, parents/guardians should first contact their volunteer's primary insurance provider to determine what is covered.
- Then, they should authorize AMIGOS (in writing) to be able to communicate with the primary insurance carrier.
- Once AMIGOS has been recognized by the volunteer's primary insurance provider, AMIGOS will submit a claim on the patient's behalf and be reimbursed directly.
- Volunteers and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) have the responsibility to endorse any and all benefits received from a primary insurance carrier to the supplemental insurance carrier if the supplemental carrier has paid for or managed the care of the volunteer.
- If AMIGOS project staff pays for a volunteer's medical care in Latin America, parents/guardians should be prepared to reimburse AMIGOS Headquarters for the payment and contact their primary insurance carrier who will then directly reimburse parents/guardians.

**The Coverage Period:**

Individual coverage is effective upon the volunteer's departure from the United States and terminates upon return to the United States. Coverage may be extended after returning to the United States based on the diagnosed health problem and whether or not it originated while in Latin America.

**What is Not Covered?**

- Pre-existing conditions
- Services, supplies, or treatment not approved and certified by a physician
- Declared or undeclared war
- Injury sustained while participating in professional athletics
- Sickness resulting from pregnancy, childbirth, or miscarriage
- Routine physicals
- Cosmetic or plastic surgery, except as resulting from an accident
- Elective surgery which can be postponed until U.S. return
- Dental care, except as resulting from an accident and affecting one's own natural teeth
- Motorcycle driving, mountain climbing, or skiing
- Anything that occurs while breaking local or U.S. laws

**Medical Fund:**

Each volunteer is allocated \$300 per project to cover any associated medical costs including, but not limited to clinic visits, lab tests and medications. In the event costs incurred exceed \$300, parents will be notified for additional payment and options to file a claim with their insurance company. It is the responsibility of the family to complete any necessary forms or claims for insurance reimbursement. The Health and Safety Team will provide any and all necessary documents reasonable to assist with the claim process but holds no liability for reimbursements or denials from the volunteer's individual insurance plan.

## AMIGOS APPROACH TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 recommendations and policies for AMIGOS are developed by our Medical Director and with a review of policies by the CDC, WHO, and various health departments. The Health and Safety team at AMIGOS continues to diligently monitor the situation in each program site while adapting programs and policies as necessary.

We recognize the concerns and potential risks with operating an in-person program during a global pandemic. The health and safety team has done their due diligence to plan, prepare and mitigate risk to all extents possible, but cannot guarantee that exposure to COVID-19 will not occur. Despite the risks, AMIGOS believes that more than ever, there is a need to provide in-person, international programs for students. AMIGOS has made key adaptations to our programs to keep volunteers, program staff and host communities safe.

A key adaptation made for the 2021 program year is the co-living or group structure in a remote location with the freedom to explore on site. The group structure and the robust COVID-19 policies will limit exposure to COVID-19. This model proved effective in 2021, and thus, we are continuing with this model into 2022 as well as returning to the immerse program in Ecuador.

Volunteers will be expected to maintain social distancing and wear masks anytime they are outside of the AMIGOS group and during the initial quarantine. All excursions and outings have been planned for locations where there are low COVID-19 cases and in places with limited tourists. The Health and Wellness Coordinator will monitor volunteers and program staff daily for signs and symptoms and report any concerns to the Health and Safety Manager. Volunteers on the immerse program will follow protocols based on guidance from local authorities and the CDC at the time of the program.

In the event COVID-19 is suspected, AMIGOS has access to local testing. Staff will follow the direction and guidance of local physicians and of our medical director, who has invaluable experience treating COVID-19 patients. AMIGOS has developed the following chart of COVID-19 policies and procedures and all volunteers and program staff will be expected to follow them closely. While these measures will reduce the overall risk of exposure, AMIGOS cannot guarantee a risk of zero. AMIGOS has developed a thorough response plan in the event of a positive case and will work tirelessly to minimize the spread and ensure access to health care, if needed.

As the pandemic continues to evolve and change, AMIGOS COVID-19 policies are subject to change and restrictions on masks and social distancing will follow the guidelines of the CDC, medical director, and country requirements where our programs operate. Any changes to our policies will be communicated directly to our families.

**AMIGOS Health and Safety COVID-19 Prevention and Response**

### Pre-Departure

- Physical and mental health screening
- Online COVID-19 training with required passing of >85%
- Fully vaccinated against COVID-19
- Submit proof of vaccination card no later than 30 days prior to program departure to Health and Safety Manager
- Required COVID-19 nasal PCR test within 72 hours of flight departure or program start
- Proof of negative COVID-19 test emailed to Health and Safety Manager within 48 hours of program start date

### Arrival - Phase 1

- Volunteers and project staff follow all social distancing guidelines and wear face masks
- Project staff and volunteers undergo initial quarantine 3–5 days at lodging site
  - Maximum of 3 volunteers in a room
  - Access to daily outdoor activities
- On day 3, all volunteers and project staff retested for COVID-19 and continue quarantine
  - Volunteers and project staff with negative results will begin Phase II
  - Volunteers and project staff with a positive test will begin isolation protocol at current location
    - They may not join the group and begin Phase II until there is clearance from the Medical Director

### Program - Phase 2

- Volunteers and project staff are not required to social distance or wear masks around fellow volunteers and staff
- Volunteers and project staff follow all social distancing and face mask guidelines anytime outside the AMIGOS group or when interacting with anyone outside the group
- All surfaces to be disinfected multiple times a day
- Private transportation secured for the duration of the program
- Health and Wellness Coordinator will monitor and report COVID-19 signs to Health and Safety Manager daily
  - In the event of a suspected COVID-19 case or positive test, the person will begin an immediate isolation process
  - Those in close contact will be retested and follow additional measures

*\*\*Days and policies differ slightly for the Immerse Program.*

## PRE-DEPARTURE COVID-19 TRAINING

Prior to departure, all volunteers and program staff will be required to take and successfully pass a COVID-19 Pre-Departure Training module. Volunteers will receive an email instructing them to use the Learning Management System, Canvas, to access the pre-departure training. This module will address the following topics:

- 1) What is COVID-19?
- 2) What are the signs and symptoms?
- 3) Testing and treatment
- 4) How to prevent the spread
- 5) Managing one’s mental health

# IMMUNIZATIONS & PROPHYLAXIS

## Immunizations & Medications Required for Summer Programs 2022

<b>Chicken Pox</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	All volunteers are required to have proof of immunization against chickenpox, or documentation of immunity to chickenpox (Varicella IgG positive status). For persons without evidence of immunity, administer 2 doses of varicella vaccine if not previously vaccinated or the second dose if only 1 dose has been administered. The minimum interval between doses is 28 days.
<b>COVID-19</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	All volunteers are <u>required</u> to receive a vaccination for COVID-19 in advance of participating in an in-person AMIGOS program. AMIGOS also requires that all volunteers receive whatever COVID-19 booster(s) are available to them.
<b>Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	All volunteers must have had the DTaP series. All volunteers must also have a booster Tdap (Adacel) within 10 years before travel. Please see the following link for more information: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/tetanus/">http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/tetanus/</a>
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	The Hep A vaccine should be given at least two weeks before departure to the field. A booster shot of Hep A should be given 6-12 months following the initial injection (this may be administered after the summer program).
<b>Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers are required to have had 2 doses of the measles vaccine. This may be either the initial MMR and 1 measles vaccination or 2 MMR vaccinations.
<b>Mosquito Netting</b>	<u>Required</u> for all volunteers assigned to La Costa Ecuador, Nicaragua, all Costa Rica projects and Panama.  Mosquito netting is NOT required for La Sierra, Ecuador or Colorado.	Volunteers must take adequate steps for protection against insects, especially to prevent against malaria and dengue. Three required prevention measures include: use of recommended repellent, wearing appropriate clothing, and mosquito nets. For more information, visit: <a href="http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2014/chapter-2-the-pre-travel-consultation/protection-against-mosquitoes-ticks-and-other-insects-and-arthropods">http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2014/chapter-2-the-pre-travel-consultation/protection-against-mosquitoes-ticks-and-other-insects-and-arthropods</a>  Mosquito nets: Recommended nets for all projects include: (1) Circular Full Net - <i>(one point hanging net)</i> <a href="http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Circular/productinfo/MN825T/">http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Circular/productinfo/MN825T/</a> (2) Mombasa Outdoor Travel Net - <i>six point hanging net</i> <a href="http://www.rei.com/product/729006">http://www.rei.com/product/729006</a> (3) Gadabout Treated Rectangular Net- <a href="http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Rectangular-Single/productinfo/MN800T/">http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Rectangular-Single/productinfo/MN800T/</a> (4) Sea to Summit Pyramid Shelter- <a href="https://www.rei.com/product/849594/sea-to-summit-nano-mosquito-pyramid-insect-shield-net-shelter">https://www.rei.com/product/849594/sea-to-summit-nano-mosquito-pyramid-insect-shield-net-shelter</a>  Mosquito nets should have between 120-200 holes per square inch. Nets with 200+ holes per square inch are safe but may be warmer to sleep under. Per CDC recommendation, pre-treat your mosquito net with permethrin, if it was not pre-treated by the manufacturer, according to the manufacturer's instructions. [due to possible adverse reactions, do not use other pyrethroid chemicals] This includes pre-washing your net, if recommended. Bring sufficient supplies to hang your mosquito

		net in a variety of locations. This includes duct tape, lots of string/dental floss and anything else your particular model of mosquito net will need to work effectively.
<b>Insect Repellent</b>	<u>Required</u> for all volunteers	AMIGOS recommends repellent with 30-50% DEET, such as Ultrathon cream or Sawyer Ultra 30 Long Acting. Formulations with picardin are an alternative for those with skin sensitivity to DEET. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-bug-repellent/">https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-bug-repellent/</a>  Clothing: To avoid exposure to insects, AMIGOS also recommends the use of clothing with long sleeves, long pants and dresses. Socks are especially important. Before you leave, for added protection consider spraying some of your outer layers of clothes with permethrin according to package directions. You can also purchase long-lasting treated clothing or send your own clothes to the factory for treatment: <a href="https://www.insectshield.com/PDF/IS%20Your%20Own%20Clothes%20-%20U.S.%20form.pdf">https://www.insectshield.com/PDF/IS%20Your%20Own%20Clothes%20-%20U.S.%20form.pdf</a>
<b>Influenza (Flu shot)</b>	<u>Required</u> for all volunteers	Vaccination must be valid for current 2021-2022 flu season. Please see the following link for more information: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/flushot.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/flushot.htm</a>
<b>Polio</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers	Volunteers are required to have completed a full series of polio vaccination. Normally, a full series is completed by entry into kindergarten/1st grade. If records of vaccination cannot be found, a booster shot of IPV is sufficient.
<b>Tuberculosis (TB) skin test</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers in Latin America	Volunteers should inform their physician(s) that they will be living in a rural area in Latin America and should have a TB skin test BEFORE and <u>an IGRA blood test 2 months</u> AFTER participating in the field program. Please report a positive TB test (along with chest x-ray results) to oncall@amigosinternational.org. Negative results do not need to be reported to AMIGOS.
<b>Typhoid Fever</b>	<u>Required</u> for all Volunteers assigned to Latin American projects	Volunteers can receive either an oral vaccine (4 capsules taken over 8 days) or an injection (to be received at least three weeks before departure). It is each volunteer's decision which method of administration to receive.
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	Recommended for Volunteers	The American Academy of Pediatrics and Academy of Family Practice recommend that all adolescents be vaccinated for Hepatitis B. Volunteers should discuss the Hepatitis B vaccine with their physician.
<b>Meningitis (Menactra)</b>	Recommended for all volunteers	Please see the following link for more information: <a href="http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm176044.htm">http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm176044.htm</a>

<p><b>Rabies</b></p>	<p>Recommended for all volunteers assigned to Latin American projects.</p>	<p><i>Pre-Exposure:</i> There are three vaccinations available: Human Diploid Cell Vaccine (HDVC), Rabies Vaccine Adsorbed (RVA), and Purified Chick Embryo Cell Vaccine (PCEC). Please, consider the time necessary to complete vaccination and plan accordingly. <i>Three injections are administered over a series of days (0, 7, and 21 or 28)</i> as an intramuscular injection. HDVC may be administered an intradermal injection as well.</p> <p><i>Post-Exposure:</i> If volunteers have been potentially exposed to rabies and did not receive the vaccinations pre-exposure, they will need to have human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) administered promptly in addition to the vaccinations administered over a series of days (Days 0, 3, 7, and 14).</p> <p>Post-exposure prevention of rabies for those who have received pre-exposure vaccines will not require use of HRIG but does require vaccinations over a shortened series of days (Days 0 and 3 only).</p> <p><i>*Human Rabies Immune globulin (HRIG) and the vaccines may be difficult to obtain in the field and if the prophylaxis are not available the volunteer will be flown home or to Houston to receive them.</i></p> <p><i>*For these reasons, rabies pre-exposure immunization is recommended for all volunteers.</i></p> <p>Volunteers should discuss this vaccine with their physician and check with their health insurance providers about coverage of the pre-exposure shots.</p>
<p><b>Yellow Fever</b></p>	<p>Recommended for all volunteers in Ecuador</p>	<p>Yellow Fever is especially endemic in these countries. One injection provides protection for 10 years. For further information see this link: <a href="https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever">https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever</a></p> <p>Note: Yellow fever vaccine availability in the United States is currently limited.</p>

[Passport Health](#) offers typhoid, rabies, yellow fever and other immunizations not always readily found. They have locations throughout the country.

## FIRST AID KIT

We require volunteers bring the following items in their first aid. Please keep in mind that we do not want volunteers self-diagnosing illnesses when they should be seeking professional medical care. Try looking at your local sporting goods store for some of these items or purchase a pre-packed first aid kit.

- Band-aids
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Antibiotic cream
- 1% Hydrocortisone cream
- Decongestant (ex. Sudafed)
- Antihistamine (ex. Benadryl)
- Digital Thermometer
- Sunscreen (SPF 35 or greater)
- Immodium (loperamide)
- Antacid (ex. Mylanta, Maalox, etc.)
- Cream-based insect repellent with 30-50% DEET (Recommended: Ultrathon cream 33% DEET – made by 3M and designed for the U.S. Military)
- Several small bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Face masks (3-4 reusable and 20-25 disposable ones)
- Binax Now COVID-19 test kit (2 COVID

tests included in the pack)

- Oral rehydration salt

*For the full packing list, please see the Project-specific Information Packet distributed to volunteers.*

*\*\*When selecting a reusable face mask, please ensure that there are at least 2 layers of cloth for added protection.*

Please note that this first aid kit will likely cost about \$100 when buying full size packages of these medications and supplies. We encourage you to plan for purchasing these important items.

### **Prescription Medications**

Volunteers may not take prescription medications with them unless the medication is for a pre-existing condition that has been declared in the health forms during the application process or it is the one-course antibiotic regimen and volunteers follow the protocol exactly. This is to ensure AMIGOS volunteers will avoid harmful drug interactions with medications that may be prescribed during the project. Volunteers should alert the Health and Wellness Coordinator when they are ill even if they feel they have the medication necessary to deal with the situation. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their medication in safe and secure place away from others. Staff are prohibited from administering medications to volunteers.

Volunteers should carry a copy of all prescriptions that includes the medications' generic names.

- Make sure to write down a translation in Spanish of the prescription's name, its indication, and dosage (if on a project in Latin America).
- It is the volunteer's responsibility to know how to explain their condition and medication regimen in Spanish.
- If you have allergies to food or medications, be sure to write down the explanation of food/medication allergies in Spanish as well.
- Carry a physician's note on official letterhead for all controlled substances and injectable medications.
- Confirm the use of medication with AMIGOS Health and Wellness Coordinator upon arrival to the project area.

## KEEPING YOUR VOLUNTEER SAFE

The health and safety of our volunteers is our number one priority. For over 57 years, AMIGOS has operated from the lens of risk management, taking a proactive and multilayered approach to managing health and safety.

All Project Staff have been thoroughly vetted and will complete 60+ hours of training to serve in a leadership capacity. All volunteers and Project Staff over the age of 18 will complete a comprehensive background check prior to acceptance. In addition, to rigorous training, our Project Staff are certified in First Aid/CPR and trained in knowing how to recognize anaphylaxis and how to properly use an EpiPen in the event it becomes necessary.

In addition to our robust pre-departure screening and education process, AMIGOS maintains strong partnerships in efforts to monitor, mitigate and respond to any health, safety or risk concern(s). AMIGOS utilizes recognized organizations and groups to monitor health and safety in each designated project locations which include but are not limited to OSAC, local NGOs, Peace Corps and other key contacts. Whenever possible, AMIGOS follows the guidance of the Ministry of Health and U.S. State Department in project areas and consider information from the CDC, WHO and U.S. Embassy for program design and implementation. Volunteers will be registered with the US Embassy upon arrival through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Much of the success of AMIGOS' health and safety efforts are the relationships built and maintained over time in our project areas. AMIGOS projects are by invitation only and are developed and executed in partnership with local partnering agencies. These local organizations are our eyes, ears and feet on the ground who support our health and safety policies and design. This alliance equips our projects to have the best access to private clinics, doctors and infrastructure related to local political, environmental, health and safety risks.

Throughout the year, the Health and Safety Team at AMIGOS monitors the political, security, environmental and health climate and state of each project area, identifying areas for risk and developing appropriate response plans to mitigate and assuage concerns. In the event of any health, safety or risk concerns, parents will be notified immediately via On-Call with detailed information and next steps, if applicable. AMIGOS believes in the spirit of transparency and being proactive when situations arise.

AMIGOS believes that the best preventive mechanism to ensure health and safety lies in self-awareness and self-advocacy. Volunteers are empowered to take ownership and be accountable for their own mental and physical health and well-being. Upon arrival, volunteers will be matched with a member of the Project Staff who will serve as a mentor during the duration of the project. Each week, the volunteer will complete a Weekly Self-Assessment, a self-monitoring tool that assess their health, emotional wellbeing, project goals, group dynamics and more. This tool serves as a springboard to facilitate dialogue between the volunteer and their assigned mentor and provides a safe space to field concerns, applaud their successes and provide feedback. The self-assessments are submitted to the Health and Safety Team and are reviewed weekly flagging any concerns which may need additional follow-up. Volunteers will also complete a Health Log recording any over the counter medications or prescriptions which will then be reviewed by their mentor during their weekly self-assessment and shared with the Health and Safety Team for review.

In the event that a volunteer becomes ill or is struggling with their mental health or for any health, safety or risk concern, AMIGOS operates a 24-hour system- On-Call (detailed later in this resource), ready to respond and support.

## PREVENTING ILLNESSES

There is a lot our volunteers can do to prevent different illnesses or exposure to potential harms. Self-awareness and accountability are crucial. Dehydration, diarrhea, constipation, mosquito bites and gastrointestinal infections are some of the more common ailments experienced and many of them are preventable.

### Water Purification

All volunteers with the exception of those assigned to Costa Rica and Colorado, are required to use a personal water purification method. AMIGOS recommends the [LifeStraw](#) bottle, chlorine drops or chloride dioxide. We do NOT recommend the use of UV light decontaminators or portable water pump filtration systems. The LifeStraw bottle is the preference due to its ease and is generally more culturally appropriate.

Volunteers who chose to use chlorine to purify water will provided with chlorine, dropper bottles and proper instruction. We recommended that they bring 2 Nalgene water bottles so that while one bottle of water is purifying, they readily have another bottle of water to drink.

### One-Course Antibiotic Protocol

On occasion, volunteers may experience diarrhea, or “Traveler’s diarrhea” and stomach upset as they adjust to a new diet. In anticipation for the potential experience of traveler’s diarrhea, volunteers who are traveling for programs in Latin America can bring a prescription medication from their doctor to take should they meet the following guidelines:

- Four or more unformed stools in 24 hours *plus* a symptom such as abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, or chills. Diarrhea alone does not meet criteria.
- Volunteers must notify the Health and Wellness Coordinator or a member of the project staff within 24 hours of deciding to start the course of antibiotics. Additionally, volunteers must indicate that they have taken the medication in their Health Log.
- Treatment should consist of one course of one of the following antibiotics: ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, or azithromycin. Please note: a single course of these medications may consist of taking several pills over several days or it may be a single pill in for one dose. Follow the instructions exactly as provided to you by your physician.
  - Volunteers may also take loperamide (Imodium) in conjunction with the aforementioned antibiotics to relieve diarrhea symptoms. However, volunteers may only take *one* tablet of Imodium prior to consulting Project Staff.
- If the symptoms worsen or do not improve, the volunteer will be taken to a local physician for consultation and further evaluation.

### Prevention of Insect Borne-Illnesses and other Animal Encounters

Mosquitos and other insects can be of concern in our project areas as they have the potential to transmit serious diseases. Volunteers must take adequate steps for protection against insects and bats, especially to prevent against mosquito borne illnesses and other diseases. Three required prevention measures include the use of a mosquito net, using recommended repellent and wearing appropriate clothing. For more information, visit: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2020/noninfectious-health-risks/mosquitoes-ticks-and-other-arthropods>

## Mosquito Nets

Mosquito nets should have between 120-200 holes per square inch. Nets with 200+ holes per square inch are safe but may be warmer to sleep under. Per CDC recommendation, volunteers may pre-treat your mosquito net with permethrin, if it was not pre-treated by the manufacturer, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Please note that due to possible adverse reactions, do not use other pyrethroid chemicals. This includes pre-washing your net, if recommended. Volunteers will need to bring sufficient supplies to hang their mosquito net in a variety of locations. This includes duct tape, lots of string/dental floss and anything else the model of mosquito net will need to work effectively.

The following are recommended mosquito nets:

- (1) Circular Full Net - (*one point hanging net*) <http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Circular/productinfo/MN825T/>
- (2) Mombasa Outdoor Travel Net - (*six point hanging net*) <http://www.rei.com/product/729006>
- (3) Gadabout Treated Rectangular Net- <http://www.scs-mall.com/Gadabout-Treated-Mosquito-Net-Rectangular-Single/productinfo/MN800T/>
- (4) Sea to Summit Pyramid Shelter- <https://www.rei.com/product/849594/sea-to-summit-nano-mosquito-pyramid-insect-shield-net-shelter>

## Insect Repellent

We encourage volunteers to use cream-based insect repellent with a 30-50% concentration of DEET. A brand that works well is Ultrathon cream made by 3M and designed for the US military. Volunteers who have skin sensitivity or an allergy to DEET can also use any of the following per CDC recommendations:

- Picaridin
- IR3535
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Para-menthan-diol (PMD)
- 2-undecanone

When using an insect repellent, it is important to follow the directions on the label and to reapply if they are getting bitten and after sweating, bathing or swimming. Volunteers will want to apply mosquito repellent *after* sunscreen.

In addition to sleeping under mosquito nets and using insect repellent, volunteers are strongly encouraged to wear long pants and long sleeves whenever they are outside during peak times of mosquito and insect activity (dawn and dusk).

## Animal Encounters and Rabies Prevention

AMIGOS has a strict policy that prohibits volunteer from touching animals. This includes dogs, cats, monkeys and bats. In the event a volunteer comes in contact with an animal and is bitten, scratched or licked, the animal must immediately be quarantined and monitored for 10 days. If the animal is unable to be located, such as a bat, the volunteer must begin post-exposure shots. Bats present the biggest risk for rabies in our project areas, and another reason why mosquito netting is required.

Rabies pre-exposure immunization is recommended as many of our project sites are located in heavily forested areas or remote sites with bat encounters.

In addition to animal encounters, volunteers will be given a list of poisonous flora, fauna, arthropods in their project areas during their first days of in country training. They will be given the proper instruction on how to avoid interactions with poisonous plants, insects, arthropods whenever outside hiking or in nature.

## POTENTIAL HEALTH CONCERNS

It is important to note that most volunteers will complete an AMIGOS experience with no illnesses or major situations. On occasion, volunteers will become ill and require medical attention. The most commonly reported illness is GI upset and the common cold. In 2021, only 24 out of 282 volunteers and project staff were taken to the clinic to be evaluated. Most illnesses require over the counter medication, rest and extra fluids. Volunteers who present with more serious symptoms and who meet our predetermine criteria for clinic visits will be taken to the clinic and accompanied by a member of the Project staff for further evaluation.

Some of the more common health concerns volunteers face during an AMIGOS project are:

- GI upset and/or traveler's diarrhea
- COVID-19 exposure
- Mosquito borne illness
- Common cold/ upper respiratory infections
- Dehydration
- Sunburns
- Orthopedic injury
- Exposure to rabies

## SAFEGUARDING MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to the above-mentioned physical health concerns your volunteer may encounter, AMIGOS recognizes that some of our volunteer will struggle with their mental health. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 teenagers between the ages of 13-18 has a diagnosed mental health condition. Moreover, it is estimated that 60-80% of teens who suffer from anxiety and depression do not have a diagnosis. Mental health issues are common occurrences and should be given the time and attention they deserve.

The most common mental health concern that presents during our projects is cultural adjustment and/or homesickness. For some volunteers, this will be their first time away from their family, friends and social support networks. For 3-8 weeks, depending on their assigned project, volunteers will learn how to live, negotiate, and work with different personalities, temperaments, and work styles all in a different culture, language and country. These adjustments can cause some stress and make a volunteer miss their family and friends. This is all normal and part of the adjustment period.

Volunteers are encouraged to become self-advocates and to learn how to identify when they are feeling overwhelmed and/or struggling with their mental health. At briefing, volunteers will undergo an exercise where they complete a personal coping inventory as part of their training on safeguarding mental health. The personal coping inventory explores different mechanism that can be helpful and beneficial when facing a difficult or stressful situation. Some of these coping mechanisms may include talking to a fellow volunteer, journaling, taking a walk, listening to music, or resting.

During the project, volunteers will spend time throughout the week in self-reflection, journaling, practicing brain healthy activities like mindfulness, affirmation circles, yoga and others to help support their overall mental and emotional wellbeing. Volunteers will meet one-on-one with their assigned mentor each week to review how their mental health is and how the staff can better support, if needed.

In our group-based programs with Discover and Explore, each week volunteer will be part of a group process meeting whereby the entire group comes together to share their experiences, difficulties and problem solves any situations that may have come up during the week. AMIGOS takes a human centered approach to managing and resolving conflict and we encourage volunteers to engage in thoughtful reflection, The group process meeting teaches volunteers essential skills in leadership, on giving and receiving feedback, effective communication and more. Every voice and opinion is recognized so as to create a group culture of respect, inclusivity and value for diverse opinions and experiences. Project Staff take an active role in ensuring that the volunteers communicate their concerns and needs effectively and empathetically.

Project Staff receive pre-project training on how to recognize and respond to mental health challenges. When mental health challenges arise, AMIGOS offers consultant with a trained mental health consultant 24 hours a day to the staff. In a more urgent or severe mental health situation, parents will be notified and often three-way calls between the volunteer and their parent will be facilitated as an additional support mechanism. On occasion, when there is a serious mental health crisis that cannot be properly addressed in country, a volunteer will need to return home. The Health and Safety Team in consultation with the Mental Health Consultant will determine if the volunteer can travel alone or if they need to be accompanied by another adult or guardian.

## THE AMIGOS ADJUSTMENT CHALLENGE FOR IMMERSE

When Volunteers first arrive in Latin America, it is often their first time being away from home and in a truly independent setting. This means that they are separated from their family, friends, and usual support networks. They are eating new foods, in a new place, speaking a new language, with new people. This experience can be challenging for many Volunteers and may cause symptoms of cultural adjustment (please see the Volunteer Health, Safety & Travel Guidelines for a detailed description of cultural adjustment symptoms). Overcoming this challenge is part of what makes the AMIGOS experience so rewarding. We often see Volunteers call home in the first one to two weeks of their experience, asking their parents to let them come home. While this can be an alarming experience as a parent, these symptoms are completely normal, even if you have never previously seen symptoms like this from your Volunteer. In most cases, Volunteers who are encouraged to stay past the two-week mark have successful, positive experiences for the rest of the summer.

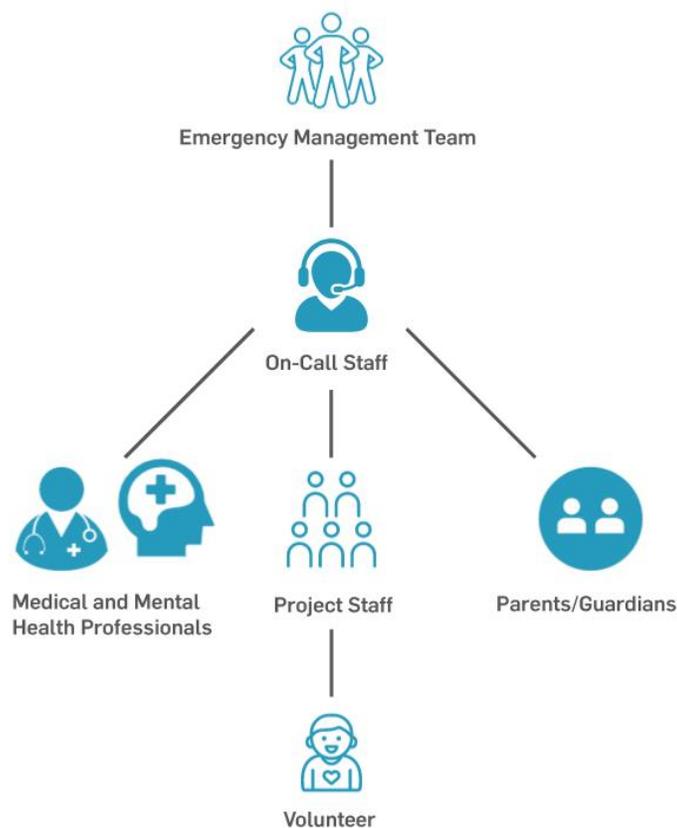
If your Volunteer reaches out to you and is upset, we strongly suggest you do the following:

- **Ask your Volunteer if they have activated their CALM plan and discussed their feelings with their Project Leadership.** Project Leadership are generally AMIGOS alumni and always have international travel experience and are thus well acquainted with the unique challenges of being an AMIGOS Volunteer.
- **Contact the On-Call Parent Phone Line.** You will be connected to AMIGOS On-Call staff, who can arrange a free three-way phone call with your Volunteer. Additionally, On-Call staff are trained to help you respond in these scenarios and can walk you through the best strategies for talking to your Volunteer.
- **If your Volunteer is crying, distraught, or convinced they need to come home: encourage them to make it just one more week.** On-Call will help you set up a call time to check-in one week later. One week can sound much more manageable to a young person than 3 weeks or 6 weeks. Most Volunteers will never need the second check-in call, as their cultural adjustment symptoms disappear as they become more comfortable speaking Spanish and begin to build relationships with their host families.
- **Try using strategies such as:**
  - Remind your Volunteer that you believe in them. You know how strong, capable, and amazing they are, and you know they can do this.
  - Remind your Volunteer that the best way to feel better is to get out into the community and start interacting with local youth and their partner(s). AMIGOS Project Leadership can help your Volunteer identify opportunities to get involved in the local community. Some great ideas are; cook a meal with their host mom, play soccer with their host siblings, or ask local youth to show them around the community. AMIGOS is committed to supporting Volunteers in every step of this adjustment challenge. If you are concerned about your volunteer, please do not hesitate to reach out.

# On-Call System: Supporting our Volunteers and Connecting our Families

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The On-Call System is AMIGOS preparation and response system and infrastructure to respond to any health and or safety issue which may arise during an AMIGOS program. It is the chain of command and communication channels which connect volunteers and program staff to AMIGOS HQ, families, and medical and mental health professionals.



AMIGOS On-Call Safety System or “On-Call” is operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during project operation and is managed by AMIGOS Headquarters.

- This system is designed to support our project staff in dealing with emergent and crisis situations that arise during our programs.
- On-Call also communicates with families/parents on a limited basis to keep them informed of emergencies in the field.

NOTE: More routine cases are not individually reported to families as we focus our On-Call staffing structure on supporting the in-country staff.

AMIGOS understands that communication regarding emergency issues may be particularly stressful and worrisome. The AMIGOS On-Call staff team is committed to contacting all appropriate parties during an emergency as outlined in this policy and to passing along information in as timely a manner as possible.

Please note that many families will never hear from On-Call during their AMIGOS experience and that means that everything is going well. No news is good news. Most medical situations and ailments that arise each summer are easily treated, and few require extensive medical follow-up. Parents/guardians will be notified anytime there is exposure to COVID-19 and or their child has a positive result or is suspected to have COVID-19.

For families with volunteers under the age of 18, communication will occur within 24 hours in the following situations:

- A volunteer must spend the night in a medical facility.
- A volunteer is released from an inpatient setting.
- A volunteer requires extensive medical procedures or care.
  - Examples include surgery, post-exposure rabies prophylaxis, etc.
- A volunteer is being sent home due to a severe Standards of Conduct violation.
- A volunteer is choosing to go home due to homesickness, health concerns, or other reasons.
- A volunteer has been assaulted.
  - Any incident is handled with the utmost confidentiality. Parents/guardians of volunteers under 18 years of age will be notified directly. Volunteers over 18 will have control over who is notified but will be actively urged to seek the support and guidance of their parents/guardians.

On-Call phone lines may appear as “blocked” or “private caller” on caller-I.D. During your volunteer’s time abroad, we encourage you to answer these phone calls, as it may be an AMIGOS representative trying to contact you.

For our students who are over the age of 18, information regarding their medical and/or mental health will be shared with parents or guardians in extreme situations or by a case-by-case basis as determined by the AMIGOS Health and Safety Team.

The best place to follow their experience through the lens of the project is on the country Instagram page and through the project blog- Field Notes. The Instagram page and field notes will highlight excursions, activities and host photos of your volunteer and the group. Due to the nature of our programs, AMIGOS is not able to provide individual volunteer reports/updates/photos or facilitate check-in calls unless for emergent or urgent situations. Please see *Addendums* for more details regarding management of routine communications from AMIGOS.

## ON-CALL SAFETY TEAM

On-Call is staffed by the Health and Safety Manager and On-Call Specialists who manage calls during normal, weekday business hours (8:30am–5:00pm Central Time). During non-business hours, AMIGOS has a team of select staff trained to manage emergency call situations that take shifts throughout the time of program operation. On-Call is overseen by a team of managers at headquarters including the Managing Director of Programs and Health & Safety Manager.

### On-Call Operations on AMIGOS Programs

Project staff manage On-Call communications and responsibilities while programs are ongoing and maintain regular communication with headquarters staff. All project staff members training covering AMIGOS protocols and procedures and learn how to troubleshoot during On-Call situations. It is important to note that the communication infrastructure in Latin America is subject to outages, which is why we have multiple means of contacting volunteers.

### On-Call Health Professional Role

On-Call is supported by a team of health professionals led by the organization’s Medical Director. These professionals serve in an on-call support capacity to provide advice and oversight on complicated medical and mental health cases. They also are active throughout the year, overseeing the development of procedures and policies for health and safety management in all programs. This team oversees the:

- Immunization and prophylaxis requirements
- List of preferred medications to be used in treating all program volunteers
- Weekly review of On-Call reports of all cases in AMIGOS database
- Management of any major health related case
- Disease or illness specific support.

### On-Call Volunteer Role

AMIGOS believes in developing leadership skills and empowering young people to take an active role in their health and well-being. Volunteers are expected to be their best advocate and take ownership and responsibility for their health.

It is each volunteer’s role and responsibility to:

- Proactively maintain their own health,
- Know and follow the AMIGOS health protocol
- Communicate their needs to the Health and Wellness Coordinator or member of project staff AND whenever they need support.

NOTE: Volunteers should not contact you, their parent(s) or guardian, before notifying a staff member. If your volunteer calls you, please kindly ask them if they have first notified the Health and Wellness Coordinator of their concern.

## On-Call Reporting Procedures for Volunteers

While on the program, Volunteers will be given a CALM plan, which will provide information on who to contact in the case of an urgent medical or safety situation. They must activate the CALM plan if:

- They experience any one of the symptoms of more severe health issues
- If they are unsure about a health or safety situation and would like additional support in determining the next best step.

Volunteers should NOT simply wait for someone on the project staff to notice their ailment or concern. It is their role and responsibility to request additional support. Volunteers should follow all instructions given by project staff members and/or treating medical or mental health professionals regarding next steps in managing their care.

**On-Call Project Staff Role:** The project staff, specifically the Health and Wellness Coordinator, manage on-call duties. The Health and Wellness Coordinator will submit project management reports on a weekly basis to the AMIGOS On-Call database system.

## On-Site Health & Wellness Coordinator

Each project has a designated Health and Wellness Coordinator whose primary job is to be a liaison with the On-Call System, AMIGOS volunteers, and project staff. This person will be responsible for handling health and safety related incidents which may arise and play a key role in COVID-19 protocols and policies. Each day, your volunteer will be required to report to the Health and Wellness Coordinator any sign and/or symptom of COVID-19. In addition, the Health and Safety Manager will have weekly check in calls with the Health and Wellness Coordinator to review volunteer health logs, COVID-19 daily self-monitoring checks, and any other health and safety situation which may have arisen.

The project staff are always required to have at least one member of staff available to answer the phones. Any incoming calls or messages must be returned within one hour. In addition, the project staff is required to notify On-Call anytime there is a medical, mental health, travel, or safety situation. Project staff is guided and aided in their decisions and management of situations by the full time, professional AMIGOS On-Call staff.

Examples of such situations include:

### Travel

- Volunteer's departing flight time changes
- Departing flight for an early return volunteer

### Medical

- Volunteer has been exposed to allergen and are at risk of severe allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock

### Mental Health

- Volunteer exhibits highly unusual or suicidal behavior

### Miscellaneous

- The project staff learns of any significant national/local event (natural disasters, political unrest, strikes, etc.)

- The project staff learns of any significant criminal activity in the project area.
- The project staff receives an unexpected phone call from the U.S.-based AMIGOS constituency
- Whenever a volunteer cannot be located
- There is an allegation of sexual, physical, or criminal assault
- Serious standards violations

#### On-Call Family/Parent Role

The vast majority of AMIGOS volunteers complete their experience with no major emergency situation arising and most parents will not hear from On-Call. You will be notified in the event there is exposure to COVID-19 or when COVID-19 is suspected. In the case of a major emergency or safety threat, you will be notified immediately.

Please refrain from contacting the project staff teams. (This includes “friending” staff on Facebook, sending messages on Instagram, calling staff, and emailing staff. Our project staff must be focused on running a quality program and ensuring the health and safety of the volunteers.

For volunteers over 18 years of age, information will be shared in extreme situations or by a case-by-case basis. For general questions or concerns during the project, please email the On-Call team at [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org). For urgent or immediate requests, please contact the Parent line at 713-782-5290 x150. The parent line will go straight to voicemail. Please leave a message with the name of your volunteer, the name of their project/country, your name and best number to reach you. Calls will be returned within 30 minutes of being received.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS ON AMIGOS PROGRAMS

AMIGOS volunteers are trained on basic health and safety protocols before departure for their project. Upon arrival in the field, they are given specific health and safety information for their work area. Prevention and self-care are key components to a healthy, safe, and positive experience. Volunteers are provided with all the tools and information to stay healthy. However, it is the volunteer's responsibility to understand and utilize the information provided and report any incident and/or question.

### Project-Specific Health and Safety Training

Upon arrival, volunteers receive project-specific training called briefing. During this briefing, they will receive health and safety training which includes topics on safeguarding mental health, conflict resolution skills, group dynamics and living, and more.

### Project Staff Support and Supervision

Volunteers will meet once every two weeks for a 1:1 mentoring and coaching session with a member of the project staff, during which time they will review the Weekly Self-Assessment with each of their volunteers. This form provides volunteers with the opportunity to check in on important issues such as their mental and physical health and group dynamics. These forms are collected weekly and reviewed by the Health and Safety Team.

On the Discover and Explore programs, each week, the group will meet all together in a dynamic setting where they will have a check in to see how things are going, decide on issues that may need to be addressed, assign new tasks and roles, and more. Self-guided reflections and journaling will be utilized to help safeguard volunteer mental health and to help strengthen the pod. Every night there will be student led group meetings which is also a time for the group to check-in in a more formal space.

### Medical Consultation Procedure

If an AMIGOS volunteer requires medical attention and consultation, they will be accompanied by the Health and Wellness Coordinator or member of the project staff. Staff members and volunteers are trained on how to respond to a wide variety of health and safety issues. Once at a medical facility, the project staff member will work with local doctors and On-Call to ensure volunteers receive the best care possible.

### Medical Examination

All volunteers and project staff members undergoing a physical medical examination should be accompanied by a same-sex companion (e.g. fellow pod member or staff member). A volunteer may refuse the assistance of a companion, except in cases where physical examination of the anal, genital, and/or breast area is involved. In these cases, every attempt will be made to honor patient confidentiality and privacy. Under no circumstances will emergency medical care for life-threatening situations be delayed if an appropriate companion is not readily available.

### Major Medical Incidents/Overnights in Medical Facilities

In major medical cases, the response depends on the situation and seriousness of the problem. AMIGOS may transport volunteers from their program location immediately by private car, ambulance, or even helicopter to a major hospital. In cases of extreme emergency when adequate treatment may not be available in the volunteer's assigned country, the short-term medical insurance carrier will help AMIGOS facilitate medical evacuation to an appropriate medical facility and/or air transport the volunteer to their home city as specified by the insurance company (please see the Short-Term Supplemental Health Insurance section on Preparing Your Volunteer for a Healthy Experience for more details).

### Parents/Guardians and Families

The priority of project staff is to provide a safe and healthy summer experience for your volunteer. To maximize their time and make sure that correct emergency channels are always utilized, project staff have been instructed not to reply to communication from parents or guardians directly. Remember that no news really is good news.

In the event of any missed plane or emergency, you would be notified directly. Please treat the blog updates as fun snapshots into the experience. We will keep you in the loop about anything more important.

## What to Pack

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Volunteers should always pack light to adhere to airline baggage weight specifications. A project-specific packing list will be distributed approximately one month prior to project departure in the Project Information Packet. Please read over the packing list carefully and prepare your volunteer to pack accordingly. It is imperative that your volunteer bring a fully equipped first aid kit and mosquito netting, following the item guidelines laid out previously.

## Travel Instructions

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### Passport Instructions (for volunteers travelling internationally)

AMIGOS requires that all volunteers upload a clear, unmarred copy of the first page of their passport with their application. This copy will be needed in the event of a lost or stolen passport. AMIGOS recommends that volunteers scan and email a copy of their passport to themselves and their parents as well.

- **REMINDER:** Volunteers' passports should be valid at least six months after their return date. For example, a volunteer whose project ends on August 1st, 2022, must have a passport valid through February 1st, 2023.

### Traveling with a Non-U.S. Passport

Volunteers with non-U.S. passports may require a visa to travel to the assigned project area. These volunteers should indicate that they do not have a U.S. passport on their application. They are required to research their own visa requirements for entry into host countries and reentry to their home country.

- If a volunteer is planning to reenter the U.S. on a non-U.S. passport, they must have a valid re-entry permit, such as a green card. Volunteers should remember to pack their green cards with them to re-enter the U.S.

#### Lost or Forgotten Passports

All volunteers are responsible for traveling with their passport. If they lose or forget their passport, the volunteer will be held responsible for any expenses related to either helping them get to Latin America or to return home.

#### Airline Ticket Instructions

AMIGOS Headquarters arranges all domestic and international airfare for volunteers. Volunteers should list the closest major airport to them that they would like to fly out of and back into on their passport information form.

Airline tickets will not be issued until all paperwork has been submitted and cleared and the COVID-19 pre-departure training has been successfully passed with 85%. This is especially important for health information paperwork. The delay in paperwork submission can result in the price of airline tickets being higher at the time of purchase than the provided estimates. If we cannot purchase a volunteer's airfare due to late paperwork submission, you will be charged a \$500 administrative fee.

#### Parent Permission to Travel and Medical Power of Attorney Forms

The *Parent Permission to Travel Form* must be completed for any volunteer who is under the age of 18, and the original document must accompany the volunteer while traveling.\* This document must be signed and notarized. A copy must be submitted to headquarters by the deadline.

The *Medical Power of Attorney Form* is used if there is a medical emergency that requires immediate treatment and 1) there is insufficient time to get written or verbal authorization from a parent/guardian or 2) AMIGOS staff cannot reach a parent/guardian for authorization. This form will allow AMIGOS staff, working in conjunction with our consulting physicians, to authorize medical treatment. This Medical Power of Attorney does not change the fact that AMIGOS staff will make all reasonable efforts to notify parents or guardians about the medical emergency as soon as possible.

*\*NOTE: These forms must be notarized and signed by either the **custodial parents or legal guardians** if the volunteer is under 18 years of age. If one parent is unable to sign the document, it must be accompanied by a Single Parent Affidavit, along with a copy of a death certificate, divorce decree, or other legal document that verifies that the signing parent is the sole custodial parent. Guardianship papers should be attached when applicable. If both custodial parents are unable to sign the same form, each parent can submit a separate signed and notarized form.*

## PROJECT DEPARTURE TRAVEL PROCEDURES

Most AMIGOS volunteers flying to Latin America pass through Miami or Houston, referred to as a gateway city. Upon arrival at the gateway city airport, volunteers should continue to their next departure flight's gate.

Travel through airports can pose a risk of exposure to COVID-19. It is imperative that your volunteer maintain six feet of social distancing at all times whenever possible and must always wear their mask unless when consuming food or beverages.

**For any travel issues, please have your volunteer contact the travel team at 1-888-AMIGOSL.**

Travel Instructions/Travel Memo Instructions

- This document is extremely important! Volunteers should review it thoroughly and bring a copy with them during all travels. It contains essential information such as the Travel Coordinator phone number and hotel information (if applicable).
- Travel Instructions will be distributed by the AMIGOS Travel Team to all volunteers by email along with their airline tickets at a minimum of two weeks prior to the departure date.

Baggage Fees

Most airlines have significant surcharges for luggage. Airlines will collect these fees during the check-in process for both out-bound and in-bound flights. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to inquire with each airline they will be traveling with as to what these charges are and to have the necessary funds to pay these charges. Volunteers may pay the baggage fees for their in-bound flights during their out-bound flight check-in. If this is done, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their receipt to present at check-in for their in-bound flight to avoid additional charges.

Lost Luggage Protocol

If your volunteer's luggage is lost in transit to Latin America, project staff will follow-up with the airline directly. If the luggage is lost for more than 5 days, parents/guardians will be notified. AMIGOS cannot assume responsibility for any luggage lost by airlines. Volunteers have the sole responsibility of ensuring luggage is checked through to their destination, including picking up luggage and re-checking it for a connecting flight when necessary.

**NOTE: *Volunteers must remember to keep their luggage claim ticket until after they retrieve their luggage and clear customs and immigration in case the luggage is lost or there is a question of ownership.***

Early Returns

Volunteers may return home early due to standards violations, medical conditions, personal reasons, etc. If your volunteer needs to return from their project for unforeseen reasons, please contact headquarters.

Volunteers who return early of their own volition or who return due to a violation of the AMIGOS Standards of Conduct will be responsible for paying all fees associated with changing their ticket as well as a \$250 service fee to cover all expenses (transportation, lodging, food, etc.). If they return due to a standards violation and would like to participate in AMIGOS again, their application will be subject to additional review. In both cases, headquarters staff will consult with the project staff team for the relevant project before the final acceptance decision is made.

#### Change of Ticket Fees

In all circumstances, the costs of changing the return flights of a volunteer's domestic and international tickets are the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or their parent/guardian. The AMIGOS On-Call staff members will arrange all flights for volunteers and either pass the payment to the family to be made or collect credit card information for the family to make the purchase.

#### Accompaniment Services

Under special circumstances, there may be a need for an AMIGOS volunteer returning from Latin America to be met at the Miami or Houston airport by a professional accompaniment service. When hired, professional accompaniment services will be at the arrival gate to help transfer the volunteer to their domestic flight back home. The cost is the sole responsibility of the volunteer and/or the volunteer's family. It typically costs upwards of \$100 and must be pre-paid prior to confirmation of the service.

## Post-Program

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AMIGOS will reach out to you and your volunteer after completion of the program. You will receive a certificate signed by the CEO and President of AMIGOS recognizing the year and location of service and a letter on cultural readjustment. The latter provides parents/guardians with guidance on how best to support volunteers with these changes.

**Networking Opportunities:** Follow AMIGOS on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and connect to the AMIGOS professional network on LinkedIn!

**Young Alumni Council:** The Young Alumni Council is a group of recent alumni committed to representing AMIGOS by speaking with prospective applicants, spearheading creative outreach activities, and providing feedback to help shape the future of AMIGOS. It is a competitive application process in which 10-15 students are selected to serve as youth advisors to AMIGOS and outreach ambassadors to their community. AMIGOS provides additional mentorship, professional development support, branded swag, and the opportunity to connect directly with other alumni and staff members.

**Social Impact Accelerator:** Program alumni can join the Social Impact Accelerator a virtual, bilingual program. Through this action-focused accelerator, Volunteers will bring ideas to reality by implementing a service project in their community. They will reflect on challenges facing their own community, brainstorm solutions, engage with stakeholders, and implement an impactful service project. Through the process, they will draw on lessons from their AMIGOS experience and the experiences of young people throughout the region tackling difficult social challenges.

The Social Impact Accelerator is underwritten by the generous support of [Capital Plus Financial](#). As a community development financial institution (CDFI), Capital Plus Financial provides capital to markets identified as underserved by the community. Capital Plus Financial focuses on homeownership in these underserved markets which will result in positive economic and social impact to the community. This partnership between AMIGOS and Capital Plus Financial is an exciting step for both organizations to further their commitment to communities in Texas, across the United States, and the region of the Americas.

The Social Impact Accelerator is donor-supported, which means **it is free to join!** Volunteers are also eligible for a baseline of 30 service hours.

## POST-PROGRAM HEALTH STEPS

**Health Summary Email:** Each volunteer will be sent a “Volunteer Health Summary Information” email within two weeks of their return home. This form will include a list of all medical conditions treated by a doctor as well as any medications prescribed during the program. A health summary email will also be sent for any mental health situations that required the consultant of the mental health consultant. This information can be given to the volunteer’s treating physician(s) upon return home if needed. For volunteers under the age of 18, it will also be sent to their parent/guardian(s).

**Medical Check-Up:** All volunteers are strongly encouraged to see their primary care physician upon return home. This is particularly important if they have experienced any illnesses during the program and/or continue to experience symptoms of an illness contracted prior to returning home.

**COVID-19 Test:** We encourage your volunteer to consider getting a COVID-19 PCR test once they return home as there is a risk of exposure while travelling through airports back home. Please report any positive tests to the Health and Safety Manager to [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org)

## FAQs

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### HEALTH AND SAFETY

#### How is AMIGOS able to operate during a global pandemic?

The health and safety of each AMIGOS volunteer and staff member is our top priority. For 56 years, AMIGOS has welcomed more than 30,000 volunteers throughout Latin America with an exceptional track record in health and safety. AMIGOS operates a [Health, Safety, and Risk Management system](#) comprised of a dedicated team who consult regularly with our Medical Director and Mental Health Consultant. The evolving COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges when considering in-person interaction or travel. However, we believe that students benefit tremendously from participation in programs like AMIGOS which include engagement with peers, connection with new cultures, and the chance to develop leadership skills. In-person AMIGOS programs during the COVID-19 pandemic will take into consideration the guidance of organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Peace Corps, U.S. Embassy, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in addition to local health authorities.

We have developed predeparture COVID-19 education and training for volunteers and program staff. All volunteers and program staff will also undergo a rigorous physical and mental health screening process with the Health and Safety Manager, Medical Director, and Mental Health Consultant to confirm that our program is a good and safe fit. AMIGOS closely monitors the number of active cases in our project work areas and follows the direction of the host country government and ministry of health when applicable. Each program has an onsite Health and Wellness Coordinator who will monitor volunteers and staff for signs and symptoms as well as oversee preventive safety protocols and testing regimens.

#### What COVID-19 preventive measures will AMIGOS follow?

AMIGOS believes that education is core component of prevention. All volunteers and staff will be required to undergo a COVID-19 predeparture training and pass a test with at least 85%. In addition, we will follow CDC guidelines which include social distancing, regular and frequent handwashing, face coverings when outside of the pod, and isolation anytime someone is showing symptoms. We will disinfect surfaces multiple times a day and volunteers will be required to monitor and report their signs and symptoms daily. As the pandemic evolves and changes, AMIGOS will continue to monitor the CDC's recommendation as well as follow country requirements as we adjust and adapt our COVID-19 policies.

#### What if my child tests positive for COVID-19 prior to departure?

All students on our in-person programs must send AMIGOS a negative COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to departure. **If a student tests positive for COVID-19 within 72 hours of departure, they cannot participate in the program.** Instead, they can elect to transfer their participation to an AMIGOS program with a later start date, if space is available. The student will need to produce a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of any AMIGOS program start date. If they are still unable to produce a negative test or

prefer not to attend another AMIGOS program, they can receive a partial refund. No late starts on programs are permitted.

**What happens if my volunteer gets sick? How is this dealt with?**

Project staff members utilize protocol set by the AMIGOS Medical, Health, and Safety team comprised of health professionals to assess the seriousness of the issue at hand and determine what the appropriate steps are for managing it. In emergency cases, a Project Staff member, specifically the Health and Wellness Coordinator will accompany a volunteer to a healthcare facility.

**What happens if my child tests positive for COVID-19?**

If any volunteer produces a positive COVID-19 test, whether or not they are exhibiting symptoms, we will activate our monitoring and quarantine response protocol. Any volunteer with a positive test will be immediately isolated, a detailed record of their symptoms will begin to be recorded, and the AMIGOS Medical Director will be notified. At this time, all other volunteers and staff members will also receive a COVID-19 test if they have not already. We will be in close communication with the AMIGOS Medical Director to determine the best course of treatment and clinical environment for each volunteer. COVID-19-positive volunteers will be required to complete an individual isolation according to best practices from health officials and the AMIGOS Medical Director at the time of the program. In the case of known exposure, families will be notified immediately and be kept up to date with any developments or changes. In the event the symptoms become severe or require medical treatment, the volunteer will be taken to a private hospital and/or clinic for treatment.

**Will I hear from AMIGOS if my volunteer gets sick?**

Minor episodes of diarrhea, colds, etc. will not be relayed routinely to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be contacted in the instance of COVID-19, medical emergencies, and severe medical cases or if the volunteer requests contact (see the *On-Call Administrative Policy* and the *On-Call Administrative Procedures* for specifics). A volunteer will be allowed to call home once they have received necessary treatment following an incident of illness if they request. Note that some volunteers choose to call home, while others refrain from talking to their family until they return from AMIGOS, as it can worsen any homesickness.

**My volunteer was/is sick while on an AMIGOS program. Can I have a list of the medications they were prescribed?**

All volunteers who receive health care treatment will receive a “Health Information Summary” email within two weeks of returning home. This will include a list of all major and minor medical conditions treated by a health professional as well as any medications prescribed during the program. For minors, this email will also be sent to their parent/guardians at the email addresses listed on the volunteer’s application. For more information about the Post-Program Medical Check-up, please refer to the *Post-Program Health Steps* section.

**My volunteer’s health information has changed (e.g. new medication) since I submitted their Health Update in April. How do I notify AMIGOS of this change?**

Send an email to [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org). The subject line of the email should read: Volunteer's Initial of last name– Change in Health Information. In the body of the email, include the volunteer's date of birth and a thorough description of change in any health information. Please include name of medication, indication, dosage, date the medication was first taken, and frequency if applicable.

## COMMUNICATION

### **When can I expect to hear from AMIGOS about my volunteer's project?**

You will receive emails directly from our on-call team when volunteers arrive in country and when they depart. Additionally, each project area will post occasional updates on the AMIGOS Field Notes blog and project Instagram. The AMIGOS Field Notes can be found at [amigosinternational.org/field-notes](https://amigosinternational.org/field-notes).

\*NOTE: Access, speed, and use of the internet varies greatly depending on location.

### **When will I hear from my volunteer?**

Volunteers assigned to our Discover and Explore programs are not allowed to use their phones during the duration of the program. The exception is for days of travel when volunteers are departing to and returning from their projects. Once volunteers arrive in country, their phones will be placed in a Yondr pouch for the remainder of the program.

Volunteers assigned to our Immerse program will have the option to use their phone, if they elected to bring them to country. Some volunteers may choose to not use their phones and this is all dependent on each individual volunteer and their individual choice.

For our volunteers who may be struggling with a more serious mental health situation or more serious medical situation, the On-Call Team will connect these volunteers with their families in a three-way call. For the vast majority of our families, please do not expect to hear from your volunteer or from On-Call unless it is a more serious situation.

### **My volunteer contacted me from Latin America and told me that they are sick, homesick, etc. What can I do and who do I contact?**

Please instruct your volunteer to get in touch with their project staff team immediately. It is imperative that volunteers inform our project staff first of illnesses or other issues as they are physically present and available to support, whereas parents/guardians in the U.S. will not be able to provide direct assistance. If you remain concerned and wish to report the incident, contact the Director of Health and Safety at AMIGOS Headquarters.

### **There has been a family emergency, and I need to get in touch with my volunteer. What do I do?**

Please call AMIGOS Headquarters and ask to speak to the Director of Health and Safety. You may also leave a message on our parent line, x150. An On-Call staff member will be able to get information to your volunteer and/or coordinate a phone call between you and your volunteer.

## TRAVEL & LOGISTICS

### **What should my volunteer pack?**

Prior to the program, your volunteer will receive project-specific information, which will include a packing list.

### **My volunteer's flight is delayed, my volunteer's flight was cancelled, or my volunteer is having travel issues. What do I do?**

Instruct your volunteer to contact our Travel Coordinators at 1-888-AMIGOSL (1-888-264-4675). The AMIGOS Travel Coordinator phone line is available when AMIGOS volunteers are traveling to and from Latin America.

### **How can I get money to my volunteer?**

It is too time-consuming and difficult for our project staff in Latin America to accommodate money wiring or transfers. We do not suggest that you mail cash to your volunteer as mailing time is typically lengthy and the money may be stolen while in transit. In addition to the recommended amount of traveling cash (see the project-specific packets for more info), you may choose to send a debit card with your volunteer so that they can access funds as needed while traveling. They will likely only be given the opportunity to use their card during briefing, excursions, debriefing, and during international travel days. Please consult with your bank to determine international transaction fees if applicable and activate the card for international use.

### **What are community assignments? What does all that information on that document mean?**

For volunteers assigned to our Immerse program, the community assignments document outlines which community volunteers are assigned to, along with the names of volunteer's parents, Project Coordinator, and region/municipality in which the community is located. Community assignments are typically sent out about one week after volunteer arrival in country.

### **Where is my volunteer's community? I cannot find it on a map.**

For those trying to find a volunteer's community on Google Earth, please keep in mind that there are many communities with the same or similar name. It is also difficult to obtain exact locations of communities as they are most often very small and rural. AMIGOS Headquarters will not provide maps with community locations. AMIGOS encourages volunteers to share exact location of their community with family and friends up their return to the states.

**In the event of an emergency and you need to reach AMIGOS On-Call, please call 713-782-5290 x150 and leave a message with your name, volunteer's name, project name and best number to reach you.**

**For non-urgent matters, please email [oncall@amigosinternational.org](mailto:oncall@amigosinternational.org)**