

Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering for the new orphanage project, Hacienda Navojoa, in Sonora, Mexico; we are happy to welcome you. We are located on the campus of Universidad de Navojoa, a small Seventh-day Adventist college. The existing orphanage, Hogar de Refugio Infantil, is located some 40 km away just outside the village of Villa Juarez. We are working to finish the new building so we can move the children over to this campus, which will improve their educational opportunities and give them a positive social climate in which to grow.

Some of you receiving this have been on site before or at the orphanage at Villa Juarez; we are happy to have you back. Whether you are a novice or an old-timer at mission projects we are asking you to please read this letter through, as we have tried to combine all the advice from others who have gone before us with the experience of our time. It is very important that we are all working from the same premise. We wish for you a wonderful experience.

Make a list as you read of those items that particularly apply to you and come prepared. Attached to this letter are 'Guidelines for Volunteer Workers' and a 'Volunteer Information' page that we require filled out and returned to us via email. Please, read everything. This is necessary whether you have been associated with Hogar de Refugio Infantil before or not.

Mexican Money:

We have found the easiest way to exchange Canadian or US dollars into pesos is thru a Bank ATM machine. Look for one as soon as you cross the border around the customs office. All major banks have ATM's and there are many in the larger towns like Navojoa, so there is no need to convert more money than you anticipate spending in the next week or two. We have found the exchange rate to be the most fair with the bank ATM machine. Also, it is good advice to not use your Bank Visa or other credit cards in Mexico, unless you are at large resort facility that caters to tourists. It is just not worth the hassle of trying to sort out misuse of your credit card should erroneous charges get made on your card in a country where you are not fluent in their language.

Getting There:

Driving down from Tucson, via Nogales, on Hwy 15, you will head south through Santa Ana, Hermosillo and Obregon to Navojoa. Navojoa is about 600 km (400 miles) south of the border into the state of Sonora. We would encourage you to carry a map of Mexico with you to avoid confusion. It would also be helpful to print the map posted on our web site: <http://haciendanavojoa.com/Map%20to%20Navojoa.jpg> as well as print off these pages of instructions.

Topes:

Keep a keen eye open for the famous Mexican topes. These speed bumps are usually marked with signs and occur in cities, towns and small villages across the middle of the road. You sure won't want to hit one of them at highway speed.

The Mexico Border Crossings:

There is three, not just one border check point where you will be watching for either a RED light or GREEN light. The first check point is at the actual US Mexico border. Stay to the left and you will almost always get a green light and not have to stop. The left lane is for traffic going to Hermosillo. The right lane is for traffic going into the city of Nogales. Downtown Nogales is very old with narrow, winding streets, so you won't ever want to take an RV downtown.

Proceed south on the divided highway into Mexico and the next stop at the south end of town is the first toll booth. Soon after is the Customs check point. If you have nothing to declare, stay in the left lane and slowly drive thru and pray for a GREEN light. If you get a RED light you will have to pull off to the side and they will ask you questions and want to look thru the vehicle. If you really have nothing that you plan to leave in Mexico you should not have any problem. Customs duty is 15% of the value of the cost of goods. Up to \$1,100, which would cost \$165 duty, the process can be completed in a matter of minutes. If the goods imported are greater than \$1,100 you will be turned back and have a Customs Broker fill out the forms necessary. Knowing this, when importing a vehicle or major equipment, we send the paper work ahead of time to a Broker in Nogales. This usually eliminates any delay. You then go thru a lane to the right where most of the big trucks are also going and be prepared to give them a copy of the paperwork showing that you have paid the duty to the broker already.

The third check point is at km 21 and this is where you will get your vehicle and RV permit. A passport is necessary to prove citizenship and for re-entry to your own country. When driving down you will need registration papers for your vehicle in the name of the driver. There is no cost for your vehicle permit if you are not going further into Mexico than Sonora only. If you are driving no farther south than the state of Sonora you will obtain your papers south of Guaymas and not at "km 21" as you would for any further travel. A 10-year permit is now available if you wish to leave your RV in Mexico to return another year, and it costs no more than a six month one. You will have costs of about \$30 US for your vehicle permit for all Mexico and \$20 US for your personal visa. Be prepared at this stop to spend between 1-2 hours, depending on the amount of traffic. Once you have paperwork in hand, you will then go thru another RED light, GREEN light where you just drive slowly and often do not even need to stop. However they will be looking at your windshield to see that you have your current vehicle sticker which must be put in place before proceeding.

Heading South on Hwy 15

After going through the border crossings it will take you another 8-10 hours to reach Navojoa. Highway 15 is a toll road and the tolls vary depending on the number of axles you have. For a passenger vehicle it is about 260 pesos (\$26 US) and for your RV it can be double that. Have pesos on hand to cover some of these initial costs. The web site map shows the toll booth locations with small blue triangles.

If you are bringing an RV keep a look out for the truck route around downtown Hermosillo. There are signs, but it also helps to just watch the big trucks and follow them when they turn to the left. The old truck route was rough and windy, with many topes (speed bumps). We have seen it get completely rebuilt over the recent years and is really wide and smooth. They were working on the last section (the most northern part) as we came out spring 2006. As you get near the end of the truck route, follow the signs (and the trucks) that will take you to Guaymas and stay with Hwy 15 all the way.

It is another 90 plus km to Guaymas, but you will not need to go thru the town. Watch now for signs that will point you to CD Obregon. At the north end of Obregon is a WallMart store. It is new and one of our favorite places to shop for groceries, bread and pastries. Immediately past the WallMart store you need to be in the left lane, which is the truck bypass route thru Obregon. It will be the first traffic light past WallMart. Stay in the left lane on this four lane bypass, because after about a mile or so you will need to turn left and follow Hwy 15 to Navojoa, which is just under an hour away. Just a few miles before the last toll booth, which is at about km marker 192, there is a little village with a couple mean topes you need to watch out for.

At about 165 km marker you will be approaching the north end of Navojoa. You will pass over a vibrador, which are tiny speed bumps very close together. If you get in the right lane, watch for a large Pemex gas station where trucks stop. Turn right at the Pemex and take the truck route around Navojoa. There are very few traffic signals and especially with an RV this route is easiest. It is about ten km to the intersection where you see another Pemex service station and a sign to Huatabampo where you need to turn right. Almost there now. The University of Navojoa is on the right side of this road approximately 10-11 km from this corner. There is a large University sign near the turnoff and the campus is visible in the middle of flat farm land. To the left side of the campus you can see the adobe orphanage we are building. Take the first entrance into the campus. There is usually a security man on duty at the gate house. Tell him you are coming to work on the orphanatorio. Drive down the main street to the second street where you make a 90 degree right turn and follow it to the orphanage.

Option Two thru Navojoa

If you choose to go thru Navojoa, or you miss the truck route turnoff, watch for a large big box store called Soriana Mecardo on the right side of the road at the south end of town. The second light past this store is the last light in town. There is an electrical transformer station on the right hand corner just before you turn right. This is the other

end of the truck bypass route. About a mile up the truck route is a traffic light. There is a Pemex gas station across the street on the opposite side of the road. At this intersection turn left and in 10-11 km you will see the University of Navojoa sign.

Travel Insurance

If you are traveling into the country with your own vehicle/RV you will need to arrange for Mexican travel insurance before you come into the country. Contact Bob Acosta mexicobob@aol.com or mexicobob2@yahoo.com or go to their website at www.mexican-autoinsurance.com. These are the people we have used for the past two winters. You can also contact the people at Sanborn Company at www.sanborninsurance.com where you can obtain another quote for the same insurance.

Arrange for any supplemental medical insurance while you are still in your country of origin. Make sure you have coverage for any medical expenses while traveling to or from the construction site or while working there.

For those who wish to fly there is an airport in Obregon which is just an hour north of our project. We can arrange for you to be picked up and delivered back prior to your flight out.

There are numerous bus lines that come in from Phoenix or Tucson. The buses are reported by other volunteers to be comfortable and modern. Some volunteers have ridden Greyhound from Canada south to Phoenix or Tucson and then used Mexican bus lines into Mexico.

Please look on our web site and print off the map that shows how to drive from Hwy 15 in Navojoa to the orphanage site at the University of Navojoa. We are 11 km southwest of town on the road to Hautabampo.

Our web site is: www.haciendanavojoa.com

You may also enjoy browsing around the web site to see current and past photos, the builder's journal notes and current news about what is happening next, as well as volunteers arriving.

Accommodations:

We have a small RV park right at the construction site that holds between 6-12 recreational vehicles of various sizes. We have water, sewer and electric hook-ups and concrete patios. We have also built a washhouse which will have a shower, toilet, sink and a laundry room with a washer which we hope to complete before Christmas 2006. There will be a washing machine and clotheslines available for your use.

If you do not have your own accommodations there are rooms to rent in the men's and ladies dorms. The cost is \$100 US per week per person and this includes 3 vegetarian

meals a day at the cafeteria. There are two married quarters, one with an attached bathroom, which are rented on a first-come, first-served basis. These are dormitories that house hundreds of young energetic teenagers.

On campus there are two small stores that have the basic supplies you may need; everything from personal toiletries to some groceries. There are also two snack shops on campus that offer vegetarian fare at very reasonable prices.

There are motels in the nearby city of Navojoa (11 km away) which has a population of about 40,000 people. We buy our groceries there and much of the materials we need for the building.

We have made available to the campus wireless internet equipment to give us internet service at the orphanage and RV park. It has worked sporadically this year but we are hoping, with new antennae, the internet will be available 24/7 to anyone with wireless capability. If you don't have a computer there you can sometimes rent one at the computer lab on campus. If you have your own lap top computer with you there is a lab where you can sometimes connect free of charge. Last winter I found that lab very full most days so it is best if you have your own lap top.

What to bring:

If you choose to live in a dormitory, and are driving your own vehicle, please, as much as possible, bring your own bedding and towels. This is not a hotel. There are pay washers available in the dorms for your convenience. If you are flying in there is a very limited supply of linens. We will need to know when you are coming so we are able to make these linens available.

Please remember your favorite medications for those particular illnesses that come with travel and third world food. You may not need them but it is good to be prepared. Also plan on ways to keep your goods secure, such as a lock for your suitcase. Anything you value should not be left exposed while you are absent from your things.

What to wear:

Safety is our first concern on the job site so wear shoes and clothes that will give you adequate protection. You may find that steel-toed boots come in handy.

Since we are on a campus where the culture is very conservative and where the staff encourages the young people in modest attire, we ask that our crew also respect that. Modesty is important in Mexico; ladies usually wear dresses or skirts and blouses to school and church, with dress pants being acceptable only during the very coldest months. The girls on campus only wear blue jeans on Sundays. Use of excessive jewelry and cosmetics are discouraged on the campus. Men must wear shirts at all times, even when working on the site.

Shorts and bare midriffs are not good construction site attire and we ask that you save those for the beach. Modest tops are required and short sleeves are preferable to tank tops, although modest sleeveless tops are acceptable.

You will also be happy to have some warm gear for cool evenings and early chilly mornings.

During your stay on campus the use of cigarettes, non-prescription drugs and alcohol are not allowed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Weather:

October–March: temperature ranges from 70-105 F daytime and much cooler at night. In fact, nighttime temperatures can go down into the 40's. Our first winter in Navojoa we had a lot of rain and then last year, only a sprinkle. Winter is not their usual time for rain; the rainy season is in July, August and September.

Schedules:

We will be arriving on site near the first of November. The construction site will likely be closed for 2 weeks over Christmas. We hope to be returning to Canada by early in April 2007.

Let us know as soon as possible your arrival and departure dates. We would also like to know if you are planning any vacation travel time while you are here so that we can plan some of our larger projects around our volunteers' schedules.

Expectations:

The following is a list of just some of the work will need to be done this winter:
-make adobe blocks, place them in the walls; -set up and removal of construction supports for ceilings; -sort and stack wood/remove nails from wood; -irrigation and landscaping; -electrical work; -plumbing; -foundations ; -ceramic tile floors and showers; -interior finishing/plaster; -installation of doors/windows; -built-in beds and closets; - exterior stucco

On the home page of our website: www.haciendanavojoa.com will be a list of current projects and goals that is updated month by month. Check it out from time to time.

There are a lot of daily maintenance chores that are necessary just to keep a tidy work site. There is no shortage of jobs available for anyone willing.

We look forward to seeing you soon and working together.

Safe travels and God bless.

Sherwin & Shirley Ann Goerlitz

Guidelines for Volunteer Workers

We want all volunteers to have a good experience.

The orphanage project is being built with a combination of paid local employees, local sub-contractors and unpaid volunteers, many of which travel considerable distances to come and work. We thank you for the contribution you are making and especially want you to receive a good experience. We will do all we can to ensure that you can make a worthwhile contribution and get the most for your time spent helping us.

Matching your talents to the jobs available

The project superintendent will do his utmost to ensure that all the tools and supplies are on the job site so that your time with us is not wasted waiting and wondering. It is also important to know in advance the extent of your anticipated work contribution and capabilities. We will do our best to match your skills to the jobs available at the time of your arrival and will provide some training as required to start you off. Please let us know your preferences of work and any limitations, and fill out our Volunteer Questionnaire to help us assess how best to utilize your talents. If you have been assigned a task that you are not comfortable doing, please let the superintendent know and don't just go and find someone else to do it. Accidents can happen when people do jobs they haven't done before or completely understand. The superintendent or tradesman is best able to start out volunteers on a new task. We will try to put inexperienced volunteers with knowledgeable trades people. For example, we will put a younger person with a plumber or electrician to help cut pipe or pull wire or go for supplies. This is like an apprentice program where willing students can learn about a sub-trade. We also encourage our volunteers to work side by side with our paid Mexican employees rather than to hang together as a group. This will often add to your good experience.

Safety First

We must always keep safety first. We want you to have good memories of your time with us building the orphanage. Accidents happen when you least expect them. The most basic of all safety measures is clean up. When you make a mess, clean it up. A messy job site is not a safe job site. When removing forms always remove nails and screws before stacking the wood. Always put the tools you use back in the proper place in the workshop, not just piled on the shop floor. At the end of every day all the tools and ladders must be in the workshop at lock-up time.

Only those with previous experience should use power and chain saws, and then only with safety glasses. Only those with previous tractor experience will operate the tractor and loader. Never undertake to work from a ladder or scaffold in any capacity where you do not feel totally comfortable with the risk. Ask to be re-assigned to a task where you feel safe. Every volunteer has the right to refuse to do a task they do not feel comfortable or safe doing.

Daily Work Schedule

Our paid employees have set hours for working and lunch break each day. We work Monday thru Friday; open the workshop and start each day at 7 am. We break for lunch at noon and resume again at 1:30 pm, working thru to 6 pm, except on Friday afternoon when we only take an hour for lunch and quit by 4 pm. We sometimes work Sundays to accommodate volunteers and some of the local students, and sometimes just Sunday morning.

We provide bottled water for all employees and encourage you to bring your own drinking bottle to fill and drink from. Our water comes in 5-gallon bottles. Water breaks occur at random throughout the day. You can stop for a drink at any time you need a break.

Volunteers do not have to start and end at the same time as do our paid employees, but what we do ask is that you establish with us the times you wish to start and stop each day and keep to your expected commitment. If for some reason there is an activity that you want to do during the regular work day, such as go to the orphanage at Villa Juarez, etc., then we would like to know about that a day or so in advance. No one is to just take off without letting the superintendent know when you are going and when you will return.

Supervision and Quality Control

We are attempting to deliver the highest quality of workmanship and will be watching to see that corners are not cut. Haphazard or slipshod work will not be accepted and things done wrong will be redone correctly. Even though we do not have regular government building inspections as we are used to in Canada or USA, we are building to the highest codes that exist in the land we are from. If you have any question about the best way to do a task, check with the superintendent first. An attitude that “this is good enough for orphans” will not be tolerated. We are building a home for orphans to the glory of God and expect everyone to always be doing their best possible work, as if it were to be your own home.

Please fill out the Volunteer Information page and email or fax it to Sherwin Goerlitz: sherwin@lincsat.com or 250-539-9839.

Why Are We Building An Orphanage?

We have been given an extraordinary opportunity to build an orphanage in an awesome location where our children will have a stable home on a campus where they can receive education from K-college and walk to school. They will be part of a caring community that has already reached out to help our children. As a volunteer you are helping provide a home where helpless orphans will have an environment where they grow to realize their utmost potential. We want to instill the privilege of service in our children so that when they are mature they will give to others as they have been given unto.

We are a group of Christian believers who want to follow the example of Jesus, who taught His followers to help the widows and the orphans. We give our time, our talents and our resources without pay, knowing that we are doing His will and happy for the blessing that we can do this one good thing at this time. As we have been blessed, so let us also be a blessing to others.

Volunteer Worker Responsibilities

Be Sure. Before coming examine your feelings and be sure that you really want to help other people in this way.

Be Convinced. Don't offer your services unless you believe in the value of what we are doing.

Be Clear. Tell us what you are prepared to do and what you will not do. Make sure we know this before you start to work or, if you have a change of mind, as soon as possible to reduce future misunderstandings.

Accept the Rules. Don't criticize what you don't understand. There may be a good reason. However, feel free any time to ask, "Why?"

Be Loyal. Offer suggestions, but don't "knock." We are all working on the same team, and bad mouthing other team members will not be tolerated.

Be Willing to Learn. Opportunities to grow and acquire a new skill or trade will be given those who have the desire and are willing.

Welcome Supervision. You will do a better job and feel a sense of appreciation if you are doing what is expected.

Speak Up. About things you don't understand. Doubts can fester and turn you into a worker with problems.

Be Dependable. Do what you have agreed to do. Don't make promises you can't keep as it causes problems for everyone.

Be a Team Player. Respect your leaders and your fellow workers. We are all working for the same goal. Encourage each other often. We all need it.

Volunteer Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Send me email updates of the orphanage project YES NO

Date of your Mission Trip from _____ to _____

What hours can you work each day? Start _____ Lunch _____ to _____ Quit _____

How do you plan to travel to and from the orphanage project? ... and stay?

bus plane drive car/van live in dorm bring RV

Other _____

Circle age: under 20 20-30 30-50 50-70 Over 70

Do you have previous construction experience? Yes No

Tell us about your past experience: _____

Tell us if there are some types of work you want to do or would prefer not to do:

Do you have any physical limitations or disabilities? Yes No

If so: _____

I have read the Guidelines for Volunteer Workers and the Welcome Letter and look forward to being of service.

Date

Signature