

October 12, 2006

To the Youth of Leaside United Church

There is an opportunity for the youth of Leaside United Church to participate in a work team that will be travelling to Honduras to work at one of the El Hogar Ministries projects located near Tegucigalpa, Honduras. We will also need a smaller number of adult members.

A mix of adults and teens will be assembled to live and work together in Honduras for one week. The group will take on a work project and will live and work at one of three locations in Honduras – an orphanage, a technical institute, and a agricultural school/farm. The work project will likely involve a small building project, painting, or cleaning up at one of the three locations.

The trip will also involve a chance to get to know the boys and to show them that people from Canada care about them and their future.

The trip has been set for March 10 to 17, 2007. The group will travel together and live in modest facilities located in the orphanage. The trip will provide a unique opportunity to learn firsthand what a difference that El Hogar makes to the boys and will also show how serving others in need can be meaningful and fulfilling in today's world.

On the following pages there are more details about the trip, what the objectives are and the expectations for team members.

Should you have any questions please contact Bill Meeker at beamerone@sympatico.ca or (416) 423-3444, or Ralph Taylor at ralph.taylor@bellnet.ca or (416) 425-1253

El Hogar Ministries – Work Team Information Bulletin September 18, 2006

Leaside United Church has had a relationship with El Hogar Ministries in Honduras for many years. Members of the congregation have previously taken a group of church students to participate on a work team at El Hogar. It has been 12 years since that first work team visited El Hogar. Plans are now underway for a second group to travel to Honduras on a similar trip.

Trip Summary:

The trip will involve up to 15 members of the congregation. The expectation is to have a mix of teens and adults at a ratio of about 2 teens for each adult.

The trip will be to one of three facilities that are operated by El Hogar Ministries. The facilities include an orphanage for boys from 5 to 4 (El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza); a technical school for teaching trade skills to young men (Instituto Tecnico Santa Maria); and an agricultural school and farm (La Escuela Agricola – Talanga).

The trip will be the week of March 10 to March 17, 2007 and will be focused on one or more projects that require support at one of the three facilities. We will not learn the specific project until only a short time before we travel.

Objectives:

The trip will focus on three main objectives:

1. Provide all participants with a chance to learn about the local culture and experiences of rural, impoverished boys and young men living in Honduras
2. Understand the impact that projects like El Hogar Ministries can make in communities faced with the challenges of a developing country – poverty, lack of education and housing, food, and basic services such as water and electricity
3. All participants will have an opportunity to make a difference to the residents of the project and to show them that people from Canada care about them as people and about their future

Living Conditions:

Most work teams stay at the orphanage. It has limited facilities relative to what we take for granted here in Toronto. The rooms hold between 4 and 8 bunk beds. There is a small living area and kitchenette. There are four bathrooms that have a sink, toilet and shower. There are often water shortages and the work team must take short showers to conserve water.

The tap water is not safe for drinking and the work team will rely on bottled water provided at El Hogar.

Most meals will be at El Hogar. Breakfast is self serve before the boys come in. Lunch and dinner is taken with the boys at tables for visitors. The food is basic, but not spicy.

Snacks should be brought with the team, but kept to the guest housing and not eaten in front of the boys. There will be no alcohol, or drugs brought to El Hogar. Preference will be for members of the work team not to smoke.

Members of the work team are not to leave the facility without permission of the team leader. The trip will not be without risks given the poor living conditions of the country. Both medical and security issues exist. We expect that these can be substantially managed through proper preparation, planning and precautions and behaviour while on the trip.

There will be opportunities to go out for dinner, to take some of the boys out for lunch or to bring in pizza. The work team will discuss these opportunities in advance and agree on what special treats they would like to offer to the boys. We can also consider taking supplies over and above the project needs. This too will be discussed as a team and agreed on before leaving and may be a fund raising activity.

Cost:

The cost per person prior to any fund raising or sponsorship money will be approximately \$1,600. The amount that each participant will need to contribute will be a function of the fundraising we complete and the level of support received from the Church and other donations.

What to do if you are interested:

Members of the congregation who are interested in participating or who have teens (15 and older) that are interested in participating should contact the Church Secretary, Mary Ann Sherk, at (416) 425-1253 before October 15, 2006 so that we can determine the level of interest. Once your name is on the list, you will be given an application form that will provide personal details, plus give you an opportunity to indicate why you would like to participate on the work team and what you think you can bring to the team. The forms should be completed and submitted to the Church office by November 1, 2006. The target will be to confirm the work team by November 10 and to purchase air tickets by November 17. There will be several team meetings between November and February, as well as fund raising activities that will require full participation.

Visit the El Hogar website <http://www.elhogar.org/wkteams.htm>