

BETHESDA EVANGELICAL MISSION

TRIP HANDBOOK

Together, with our friends and partners, we are all living out Christ's calling to help the poor, comfort the ill, and share His good news

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OUR PURPOSE

Create awareness of Christ's presence in third world countries;
Build relationships with the people of Haiti;
Encourage spiritual growth

OUR CRITERIA

SAFETY- Providing basic health and physical needs.
ORGANIZATION- Working together and making a contribution.
ACCOUNTABILITY- Money raised and contributed will go to designated projects.
FELLOWSHIP- Work and worship alongside Haitians and team members.

WHO WE ARE

BEM is a non-profit organization established in 1984, based in Cheshire, Connecticut and Les Cays, Haiti. Our focus is empowering Haitians through education and opportunities to learn life skills. BEM's goal is centered also on the prevention and eradication of disease promoting improved health through medical clinics in some of the most neglected areas of southern Haiti. BEM has a long history and successful record, receiving awards for its humanitarian efforts in Haiti. You can learn more at BEMHaiti.org.

WHAT WE DO

BEM conducts multiple mission trips each year to Haiti, including both construction and medical teams. We also provide education to the Pastors through bi-weekly Pastor education, the annual Pastors Conference and Grand Convention. Currently, we are in the process of building Mercy Hospital, to provide state of the art health care to the people in southern Haiti where health care is so limited.

WHY WE DO IT

We serve Christ by answering the call of the great commission (Matthew 28:19,20) and by being his hands and feet where ever we are needed. Our long-term goal is to replace the Haitian mindset of western dependency and empower and cultivate the resilient Haitians to answer to their own country's needs.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The native Tano Amerindians - who inhabited the island of Hispaniola when it was discovered by Columbus in 1492- were virtually annihilated by Spanish settlers within 25 years. In the early 17th century, the French established a presence on Hispaniola. In 1697, Spain ceded to the French the western third of the island, which later became Haiti.

The French colony, based on forestry and sugar-related industries, became one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean but only through heavy importation of African slaves and considerable environmental degradation. In the late 18th century, Haiti's nearly half a million slaves revolted under Toussaint L'ouverture. After a prolonged struggle, Haiti became the first black republic to declare independence in 1804.

The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. After an armed rebellion led to the forced resignation and exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, an interim government took office to organize new elections under the auspices of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Continued violence and technical delays prompted repeated postponements, but Haiti finally did inaugurate a democratically elected president and parliament in May of 2006.

A massive magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010 with an epicenter about 15km southwest of the capital, Port Au Prince. An estimated 2 million people lived within the zone of heavy to moderate structural damage. The earthquake is assessed as the worst in this region over the last 200 years. On October 4th, 2016 hurricane Matthew struck Haiti. This category 5 hurricane, caused substantial damage to Haiti, and nearly 900 deaths, specifically the city of Les Cayes. Les Cayes is the third largest city in Haiti, 145 miles from Port Au Prince. The drive to Les Cayes takes anywhere from 4-7 hours depending on the traffic conditions.

PLANNING FOR YOUR SERVICE TRIP

I. Cost for the trip

- a. The total cost per person varies on the nature of the trip. Medical and construction trips are approximately \$2500 and covers all expenses including meds and construction supplies.
- b. The average trip length is 1 week
- c. The cost covers flight to and from Haiti, all transportation, room and board and food.

II. Travel Arrangements

- a. All travel arrangements will be made by Pastor Lubin and the team leader, except for travel to domestic airports.
- b. Travel arrangements will accommodate entrance into Haiti and coordinated transportation to and from Les Cayes.
- c. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a negative COVID test is required completed no later than 2 days before departure.

III. Luggage

- a. One personal suitcase (50 lbs.)
- b. One personal bag (backpack or purse)
- c. Carry-on bag- for medical trips will be used to pack meds
- d. One duffel (50 lbs.) for trip supplies or donations

IV. Important Documents

- a. Trip application, and include any important medical information
- b. Valid US passport with a minimum of 6 months prior to expiration

V. Immunizations

- a. Tetanus – within the past 10 years
- b. Hepatitis A- one injection and then again in 6 months (to give lifetime immunity)
- c. Typhoid- tablet form which is protective for 5 years or injection which is protective for 3 years.
- d. MMR- usually completed in childhood but double check. If born before 1960, you most likely had the diseases
- e. It is recommended you make an appointment with your primary care physician or your local Traveler's clinic.

VI. Medications

- a. Malaria prevention- Malarone or Chloroquine
- b. Ciprofloxacin prescription- 500 mg tabs for travelers' diarrhea if needed.
- c. Imodium for diarrhea if needed
- d. Pepto-Bismol- for diarrhea or nausea if needed
- e. Your personal medications- bring enough for the duration of the trip. Keep in your carry-on luggage the counter medications like Tylenol or Ibuprofen, Tums, Benadryl

FINANCES

- a. Your deposit for the trip (1/2 the cost) will be collected shortly after you commit to going. It is used to cover the plane ticket and the earlier reservations are made, the lower the ticket prices are.
- b. You may wish to bring spending money for personal expenses. We recommend between \$100-\$200, depending on the number of gifts or souvenirs you wish to bring home. American money is

fine (in small bills as souvenirs can be purchased from the vendors who will come to Mercy House on our last day to sell their wares.

- c. You will need a small donation for church on Sunday and we collect a tip for those who cook and clean for us during the week and for food at the airport.
- d. NEVER take a wad of cash out at one time. It is recommended that you keep your money and valuables hidden, safe at all times. You can leave your money with PL in his room which is secure at all times. He will give it to you any time you need it.
- e. It is imperative that you do not under any circumstances, give money or gifts to Haitian staff or anyone you meet. Doing so has the potential to create problems with other staff or even worse, a dangerous situation in the community. We ask that you respect and understand this rule. We take very good care of those who work for us, hoping to empower and enable.

PACKING MEETING

- a. We will meet at White Oak Baptist Church in Cheshire for our packing meeting a few days before we leave. We will pack all our items in duffle bags and meds in carry-on bags.
- b. Everyone will receive a team t-shirt to wear on the day of departure. Please specify your shirt size on your application.
- c. You will need to bring:
 - Your passport (PL will make copies and keep until the day we leave)
 - Donations
 - Donated or purchased meds (for medical trips)
 - Medical supplies- BP cuff, stethoscope, pen light or flashlight
 - Plastic bags, like the ones you get at grocery stores, to give out meds, etc. to the people that come to the medical clinics.

DAY OF DEPARTURE

- a. We will meet at White Oak Baptist Church and will travel to the airport together.
- b. If you can get dropped off, that works best. If you drive, please park at the rear of the church.
- c. We will pack the bus with our duffle bags and luggage.
- d. You may want to bring an extra set of light clothing, snacks, meds, sweatshirt for the plane, headphones, chargers, iPhone, book or journal, a pen (for filling out forms), copy of your insurance card, and other small items you might want.
- e. You will need \$10 in cash for entrance fee into Haiti.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Pastor Lubin Beaucejour- 860-316-8057/ Abbi Beaucejour- 203-537-0012

Address in Haiti- 23 Rue Beaucejour, Les Cayes, Haiti

ARRIVING IN HAITI

I. Airport in Port Au Prince/Immigration

- a. Upon arrival at the Port Au Prince airport, you will pass through Immigration and present your International Entry/Departure Card which you will have completed on the airplane. (address for the form is above). Keep the stamped copy in your passport after passing through Immigration. You will need it to leave Haiti.
- b. Once you pass through immigration, we will go to baggage claim. PL will identify porters to assist with getting our luggage. Once your luggage has been identified and we have everything, we will

proceed to customs where the bags may be inspected. PL will oversee this process. We will collect all the baggage claim tickets from everyone.

- c. It is IMPERATIVE that all team members stay together until we board the bus to Les Cayes. DO NOT allow anyone to assist you with your bags. Stay with the team until we arrive at the bus. If you need to use the restroom, please notify the team leader and go with another team member.
- d. DO NOT give money to anyone! PL will take care of the money exchange.

II. Accommodations

- a. We will stay at the Mercy House, or mission house which is the Beaucejour residence and guesthouse. The second floor is for team use with dormitory style bedrooms with bunk beds. There are 2 bathrooms with running water and flushing toilets. Additionally, bed linens, a pillow, and one towel will be provided to you. Feel free to bring an extra towel or your own pillowcase if you wish.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- a. It is recommended that you do not photograph Haitians without their permission. There are many beautiful and compelling scenes you will encounter, but it is important that no one feels exploited. Haitians know very well their living conditions are not like ours are and taking photos of scenes may feel uncomfortable to those you photograph.
- b. The children love to have their photos taken. Take care of your phone/camera. They will want to see all photos and will ask to use your phone/camera. Do not feel obligated to do so.

CLOTHING

- a. Women and men should dress modestly. Your personal appearance reflects your respect for the culture of the people with whom you are working. Light, loose-fitting cotton clothing is recommended. Women are asked to refrain from spaghetti strap tops and short shorts. Men are expected to wear shirts. You can relax as you wish at the mission house.
- b. For church, women are asked to wear dresses or skirts (please not too short) and cover their shoulders. Men are asked to wear slacks, and a button up shirt (short sleeves are fine).
- c. Sneakers or sturdy sandals are recommended.
- d. Construction teams are required to have work gloves and sturdy shoes.
- e. Medical teams should bring scrub pants and t-shirts to wear at the clinics.
- f. Beach wear should also be modest; one piece or tankini style bathing suits only.
- g. It is best to leave jewelry home except for wedding bands, a simple necklace and earrings.

COMMUNICATION

- a. French and Haitian Creole are the official languages of Haiti. We will hire translators to work with the team when we are on the mission field. Pastor Jean Beaucejour is PL's brother and oversees the mission house with his wife, Gardinette. He speaks English.
- b. If you want to communicate with the US, you can use "what's app" which is a free APP. Some carriers will allow you to text. You may want to look into international access.
- c. PL and the team leader will have international access if you need to reach someone in the US urgently.

DISTRIBUTION

- a. It is always tempting for visitors to want to share toys and/or candy with the children, but we do not encourage this. Our concern is for your safety. You may run out of items and this can be upsetting

to people who have so little. Please do not give anything away unless you have spoken to PL first. If we bring things that we cannot distribute, we can leave it with Pastor Jean and Gardinette and they will distribute it appropriately.

CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

- a. It is common to be called “blan” (white) which signifies “foreigner”. As a Haitian, it is not a racial remark.
- b. Senior men and women engender respect from Haitians as elders are revered in their own tradition. They have rich experience and knowledge to share, which can be a source of great gratification.
- c. CULTURE SHOCK can take many forms. Observing life in Haiti can be overwhelming. The classic process is (1) “the honeymoon”, where you will love Haiti and everything about it; (2) “the fall”, when certain aspects of the culture begin to bother you and you cannot reconcile your emotions, (3), “bottom out”, when experiences and observations become upsetting enough to tempt you to leave; and (4), “refractory period”, when you regain perspective and optimism.
- d. You become a visible focus for many Haitians, and lack of privacy can cause unexpected stress. Some ways to handle culture shock are to be forgiving and kind to yourself, and to talk about your daily experiences at team meetings. Keeping a journal of your feelings is also helpful. By visiting foreign countries, we are introduced to ways of life that are far different from what we are used to. It is an experience that can enlighten and thrill and cause us to look at our own lives from a different perspective.
- e. What we want from our teams is an attempt to experience a different culture in a way that is respectful, sensitive, and open to new experiences.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- a. The # 1 priority is to share God’s love and light.
- b. Be flexible, plans will change as circumstances require.
- c. It is NOT about us. We are going to serve God by caring for others in need, and sometime each other.
- d. We are not going to save Haiti. We can’t save Haiti. We can make a difference. Focus on what you CAN do, not what you CAN’T do.
- e. Be sensitive, respectful, and flexible. Enjoy the country but be aware of your surroundings and always stay with the group or in pairs.
- f. Following instructions is critical; for your safety and the safety of the team.
- g. Communication is key. We will debrief daily. Share what is on your heart, let things out instead of keeping emotions bottled up. This will help form connections and create lasting friendships. Your team will be your family for the week!
- h. Haiti is a difficult place, and we know that. Talk about what you see, what you feel, your joys and sorrows, frustrations, ideas and dreams.

IN HAITI

I. Drinking Fluids

- a. Getting dehydrated is easy to do in the hot and humid climate of Haiti. Keeping well hydrated is necessary to feeling well. The water at the mission house is purified and safe to drink. You will be reminded to drink plenty of water.
- b. Bring your own water bottle as well as a spare, with a covered mouthpiece. Do not share your water bottle with any of the Haitians.

- c. Do NOT drink the water from the tap. Used your bottled water to brush your teeth. When showering, avoid getting water in your mouth.
- d. You should bring an extra toothbrush just in case you accidentally put it under the tap water.
- e. It is recommended that you bring rehydration packets to add to your water if needed.

II. Food

- a. Eat ONLY prepared food at the mission house or approved restaurants.
- b. Use hand sanitizer before you eat.
- c. Use utensils whenever possible.
- d. Bring individually wrapped snacks, such as granola bars, dried fruit or nuts, crackers and peanut butter.
- e. The food served at the mission house is great; there is a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables!

III. Working in the mission field

- a. Apply sunscreen before you go out in the field and reapply as needed. Bring a hat/cap and a neck towel to help with sweat.
- b. Always wear sneakers on the field.
- c. If your eyes are sensitive and dry easily, bring eye drops and glasses can be better to wear than contacts as there is a lot of smoke and dust in the air.
- d. Pace yourself. Take breaks, drink often and sit in the shade if needed. Notify the team leader if you are not feeling well!

IV. Other helpful information

- a. The US Embassy is located on Boulevard du 15 Octobre, Port au Prince, Haiti. Telephone number is +509 22 29 8000. Website is <https://ht.usembassy.gov>
- b. For information on safety and security, you can visit the State Department website at <https://travel.state.gov> and you can look at Haiti. The site may have warnings about Haiti, but please be assured that we continuously monitor the situation with our Haitian partners whom we trust and advise us. Many of us have made multiple trips to Haiti and have not encountered situations that we felt were unsafe. We are also very careful about what we do and where we go.
- c. The time in Haiti is Eastern Standard Time (EST), but Haiti does not follow daylight savings time.
- d. The monetary unit in Haiti is the “gourde” (pronounced “goude”), which is based directly on the US dollar.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR TRAVELERS

1. Travel in the spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk to the local people.
2. Be aware of the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be perceived as offensive behavior. Remember this especially with photography.
3. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing rather than merely hearing and seeing.
4. Realize that people in the country you visit often have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own. Not inferior, just different.
5. Discover the richness that comes from seeing another way of life, rather than looking for the “beach paradise” of the tourist posters.
6. Acquaint yourself with the local customs. Respect local customs; people will be happy to help you.
7. Cultivate the habit of asking questions instead of knowing all the answers.
8. Remember, you are one of many visiting tourists. Do not expect special privileges.

9. Spend wisely, shop responsibly. Remember that the bargain you obtain is only possible because of low wages paid to the maker. Ask yourself what is fair.
10. Make no promises to the local people personally without talking to PL.
11. Reflect daily on your experiences; seek to deepen your understanding.

Code of Ethics for Travelers, developed by the Christian Conference of Asia.

PACKING CHECKLIST

For construction trips: sturdy sneakers or work boots, work jeans or shorts, work gloves, hat/bandana or neck scarf	
Extra work gloves if possible for construction team to share with Haitian workers.	
For medical trips: scrub top or t-shirt, scrub pants (preferable) and/or light weight pants or capris, shorts for those who are not providing direct patient care, sneakers, hat/cap.	
Clothes for resting at night: shorts, t-shirts, light sweatshirt, sun dress.	
Church clothes: light slacks and button-down shirt for men, modest dress or skirt for ladies.	
Sleep clothes	
Bug spray/wipes/bug repellent wristband	
Dryer sheets (help to keep mosquitos away from your bed)	
Gold Bond powder to rub on your sheets to also keep mosquitos away.	
Mosquito net (twin bed size)	
Sunscreen/lip balm	
Sunglasses/hat/bandana	
Extra towel	
Sandals/flip flops for shower, sneakers, shoes/sandals for church, work shoes	
Your own prescription and over the counter meds, including your anti-malaria meds, Cipro	
Water bottles (2)	
Snacks (pack in Ziploc bags to keep fresh/clean)	
Electrolyte packets	
Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing or baby wipes	
Camera/batteries (optional)	
Bible if you wish/journal/pen	
Creole dictionary if you wish (can order on Amazon)	
Phone charger	
Ear plugs if you are a light sleeper	
Toiletries: Toothbrushes (2), toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, razor/shaving cream, face wash, face cloth, band -aids, antibacterial ointment (Bacitracin), aloe (in case of sunburn)	
Packing in large Ziploc bags saves space and can use for dirty clothes later	

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR MEDICAL CLINICS

7a-8a: Morning devotion

8a-9a: Breakfast

9a-9:30a: Pack bus

9:30-10: Travel to village (will vary based on distance to village)

10:15a-10:30a: Set up clinic

10:30a-4pm: CLINIC (Lunch will be provided. We take lunch in shifts.)

4pm: take down clinic/pack bus; Travel back to mission house

5pm-6pm: Shower/rest

6pm-7pm: Dinner/Debrief

7pm: prepare for next day's clinic

Church is on Sunday. Church is a beautiful, cultural experience, no matter what your beliefs are. We aim to leave for church by 7am. A light breakfast and coffee will be provided prior to leaving. There will be no morning devotion.

At some point during the week, we will visit the local hospital in Les Cayes. We will bring formula for the babies in the pediatric unit. We will then travel to the construction site of the Mercy Hospital.

Remember, plans can change based on the needs of the people.