

NAME: _____

(Note: please keep these Guidelines with your journal for Jamaica)

JAMAICAN SELF-HELP AWARENESS TRIP GUIDELINE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Jamaican Self-Help (JSH) is a Peterborough-based registered international development organization founded in 1980 to assist projects in impoverished communities in Jamaica and to undertake global education activities among Canadians.

The Mission Statement says: *"Jamaican Self-Help is an organization of Canadians working in solidarity with Jamaicans to foster the development of healthy Jamaican communities through partnership based on mutual respect, understanding and a shared vision of self-determination. Its second goal is to foster an understanding of global forces, North and South, and their interconnectedness."*

JSH Awareness Trips further this second goal. They began in 1986 and have included more than 650 Canadian youth and adults since then on short-term immersion visits. Experienced volunteers lead them. They are non-profit.

Every year, one or two trips are arranged. All trips include learning and service. Schools and community centres in Kingston are the sites for voluntary service by the visiting Canadians.

All travel to Jamaica and costs of the program are borne by the participants. The application, interview, selection and preparation take place beginning about six months before the actual Awareness Trip. Group meetings include team building, goal setting, guest speakers, and the study of development issues. While in Jamaica there are also group meetings with discussions, speakers, readings and reflections to enhance the first-hand experience. Upon return to Canada, there are debriefing sessions for the group.

Jamaican Self-Help is volunteer-driven, with a Board of Directors and three part-time staff. Many people have shaped it, North and South, who have come forward to work together for a better world. It has an active justice orientation and a gender perspective. It is anti-racist and inclusive.

JSH helps to support seven projects in Jamaica including primary education, skill-training centres, youth programmes and community-building projects. Its development budget is approximately \$370,000 a year, money raised from donors across Canada and from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Because of this development work, Jamaican Self-Help can offer Awareness Trip participants unique opportunities for interaction with local communities and leaders, and for an experience of Jamaican culture and environment.

A. OBJECTIVES FOR THE AWARENESS TRIP PROGRAMME

For the Participants

- To meet the people of a Caribbean country with whom Jamaican Self-Help has projects for development
- To make connections with people from both North and South working for social justice
- To increase understanding of the nature, causes and effects of inequalities
- To work alongside other staff and volunteers for a few days at projects
- To experience some of the culture of Jamaica
- To meet the individual's goals and objectives

For Jamaican Self-Help

- To offer realistic and relevant global education to Canadians
- To foster the growth of a group of Canadians committed to Jamaica and JSH in the future
- To increase Canadians' understanding of, hope for, and commitment to international solidarity

For the Jamaican Partners

- To meet Canadians who are in solidarity with their vision and work
- To share their culture and work with interested visitors
- To be involved in cross- cultural learning

For The Canadian community

- To increase the level of public engagement in issues of global justice

B. DATES

Tentative dates: March 7-21, 2012 and July 4-18, 2012 (exact dates to be confirmed)

C. COST

The cost of the trip is \$2,500.00 for a two-week trip. It covers airfare, food, ground transportation taxes, accommodation, administration and guest speaker fees. Youth are encouraged to get sponsors from friends, family, service clubs, church groups, Student Council, etc. Fundraising will be discussed at the interview.

D. ACCOMMODATION

In Kingston: The Prestige Hotel, a small, basic hotel in Kingston that has been used by other voluntary groups such as the American Peace Corps. The accommodations include basic necessities, such as shared bedrooms, showers, a dining room, and meeting rooms as well as a small swimming pool.

E. INSURANCE

Health and cancellation insurance for cancellation is included in the travel arrangements made by Jamaican Self-Help.

F. LEADERSHIP

The Trip Co-ordinators are experienced volunteers from Jamaican Self-Help. For school trips, the

Trip Leaders include staff or faculty members of the participating school or university. The policies of the participating school for field trips are in effect.

G. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

While each trip has a unique programme schedule, the main components remain the same. During the daytime on weekdays, participants volunteer at placements in local elementary schools, or a children's home. In the evenings, there are usually guest speakers or discussion sessions on current issues in Jamaica or on issues arising from the day's activities. On weekends, the group participates in recreational activities such as hiking in the Blue Mountains, a trip to the craft market in Ocho Rios, church service or other cultural events.

H. HEALTH MATTERS

Except for your updated vaccinations, no other vaccines are required for Jamaica. The health of participants has been excellent in the past. Water is almost always safe to drink. Food is plentiful. There is a mosquito-borne fever called Dengue, which we try to prevent by using fans and repellent. In the fall of 2006, there was an isolated malaria outbreak in Kingston and travelers were advised to take anti-malarial medication. Malaria is not currently a concern for visitors. The sun in this tropical region deserves great respect.

I. SECURITY

Much attention is given to the necessary routines and precautions; to securing items, to locking premises, to street demeanor, to travel in groups, to overall vigilance. No serious problems have been encountered to date. The leaders will coach the participants extensively on security. There is a level of restriction of movement not common in Canada.

J. LOCAL TRAVEL

Group members travel in a hired bus or walk in groups to destinations close to the hotel. Students are dropped off directly at their placements or destination with their group leader.

K. DRESS

Much attention is given to appropriate dress, considering we are guests in another country, not tourists. We try not to draw undue attention to ourselves, but dress as Kingstonians do. For volunteer placements, participants are expected to wear "work" clothes (eg. skirts or slacks); for recreational time, participants may wear more casual clothing (eg. shorts & t-shirts). For a 2-week trip, 4-6 outfits are needed.

For women, we recommend:

-100% cotton, loose clothing, mostly skirts, T-shirts or blouses with sleeves, one evening outfit, flat shoes (eg. sandals); shorts are not acceptable on the street.

For men, we recommend:

-lightweight slacks, khakis, shirts with sleeves, shorts are not worn on city streets

A complete list will be provided during the orientation & briefing session.

L. PRINCIPLES OF SIMPLICITY

Most of us have applied for this program eager to leave behind for a while North American trappings and consumerism. It is good to simplify, leaving behind such things as MP3 players,

junk food, heavy cosmetics, cell phones, and so on. We want to walk in the shoes of our co-workers as much as possible, even imaginatively. We try to be mindful of the relative cost of items we take for granted. For example, the light bulbs in our hotel are dim because of the huge cost of electricity. Inflation in Jamaica runs at 30% per year. Service industry jobs may pay about \$85 Jamaican per hour. That is \$1.25 Canadian. But toothpaste and soap and rice and pop are the same as Canadian prices. A chocolate bar or can of pop costs the equivalent of an hour's wages.

M. SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

There are many group outings, to concerts, places of interest, to the beach, to a church service, etc. Participants must be willing to accept many restrictions of movement and privacy, and be able to enjoy group involvement during this experience. Pairing off is discouraged; alcohol is not purchased by any participant under the age of 19, and is not consumed by any participant in our residence. Non-medical use of drugs is prohibited. Participants usually bring approximately \$100 for spending money for fourteen days.

N. CHALLENGES AND ATTITUDE

The experience is not exactly a holiday, although very enjoyable. For some people, it alters their life choices in the future. It is a chance to be with Jamaicans and to learn. There is heat, fatigue and delay. You may have to follow instructions that make little sense to you at the time. If you go with firm expectations of what you will experience or what you will "accomplish," you will be disappointed. But if you go primarily as a learner, you are bound to succeed. Stamina is also needed. The heat and poverty in the areas where we work can be wearing, psychologically and physically. If you find things in general to complain about, this probably isn't for you! On the other hand, there is free time and pleasant outings.

Here are the qualities which the Canadian High Commission in Jamaica has outlined as useful for overseas living: tolerance for ambiguity, low task-orientation, open-mindedness, a sense of humour, warmth in relationships, ease with meeting people, flexibility, especially with changes in schedule, curiosity, self-reliance, perceptiveness and ability to fail.

O. TO BRING

A list of necessary items will be provided well in advance of the trip. Some of your baggage allowance may be requested by JSH to take supplies with us for the projects (like school supplies).

P. SUBSTANCE USE

Our hosts appreciate it if we do not smoke tobacco. Marijuana production, possession and use are illegal in Jamaica and penalties apply. For youth groups, the use of alcohol is governed by Canadian laws and Canadian Customs regulations. Further restrictions may apply depending on accommodation restrictions and specific trip criteria.

Q. INDEMNITY

The leaders are experienced in Jamaica, and endeavour to exert all due care and concern for the participant. No significant problems have been encountered in 30 years. The leaders and the organization of Jamaican Self-Help are not in a position to accept formal legal responsibility for participants. Participants assume all such responsibility as may exist. In the case of the person under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian assumes all responsibility. After being selected,

participants must complete indemnity forms and a consent form for medical treatment.

Please read these guidelines MORE THAN ONCE. If you cannot agree fully and cheerfully with all its contents, this is not the program for you.

Thank you for your interest in international development.

PLEASE NOTE:

“Schedule A” – Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Guidelines – must be completed, initialed, signed and witnessed, and submitted to Jamaican Self-Help with your application.

For accepted participants, you must keep these Guidelines with you during the two-week Jamaican trip.