



CHRIST  
CHURCH

PCA



**2024 Summer Mission Trip  
Reynosa, Mexico  
June 1-7**

**Isaiah 55 Ministries**

**VOLUNTEER MANUAL**



## Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos!

We are thankful for your partnership with us in serving the Deaf and the community in Reynosa, Mexico. We are eager to welcome you to Reynosa.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

**Isaiah 55 Office Telephone:** (210) 568 - 9283

**E-mail:** [info@isaiah55.org](mailto:info@isaiah55.org) OR [kristy@isaiah55.org](mailto:kristy@isaiah55.org)

Thank you, and God bless.

— *Nolton Beale & the I-55 Staff*

## About Isaiah 55 Ministries

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Co-laboring with the Church, Isaiah 55 Ministries works among the Deaf and marginalized to make disciples, encourage the worship of Jesus, and promote justice and reconciliation.

### **ABOUT REYNOSA**

Reynosa is the largest city in the border state of Tamaulipas. More than 1,000,000 people live in the greater Reynosa area. It is a very transient city, depending heavily on foreign-run factories (maquilas) for employment. In recent years, Reynosa has also received thousands of migrants and asylum seekers hoping to cross to the United States. Despite the diverse issues that plague this border city, God continues to transform Reynosa.

### **THE NEEDS OF THE DEAF**

There are many challenges for children growing up in a developing nation. If a child is deaf, those struggles are magnified. A typical deaf child in Mexico has limited access to traditional education or formal language. Without language, very few opportunities exist for the Deaf. The Deaf make up one of the largest unreached people groups in the world.

## **INSTITUTO ISAIÁS 55 School for the Deaf**

Isaiah 55 Ministries began in Reynosa in 2006 at the opening of Instituto Isaiás 55 School for the Deaf. Instituto Isaiás 55 provides a Christian worldview education to school-aged deaf children. We teach both Mexican Sign Language and Spanish, along with traditional academic subjects.

In addition, older deaf students have the opportunity to participate in vocational classes at the Centro de Oficios Serdán.

## **BEYOND THE SCHOOL**

We desire that God's message of reconciliation reaches the students' families as well. The school provides sign language classes to parents and siblings. Our school social worker offers weekly classes to students and families to help facilitate discussion in families. We have seen peace come into many homes as Deaf students are now much better equipped to communicate with their families. We are confident that Christ is using these students to draw entire families to Him.

In addition, we have also offered Mexican Sign Language classes to the greater Reynosa community, local factories, and via an online platform.

## **AQUILES NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRY**

In Aquiles Serdán, our Reynosa neighborhood immediately surrounding the mission, we are working to develop a community centered on the worship of Jesus and equipped to provide for their families with honorable work. Geographically, the neighborhood lies between the prostitution district (locally known as "Boys' Town") and one of the city's largest dumps.

The same vocational classes available to the Deaf are also open to our hearing neighbors. Our Aquiles Serdán community center is a neighborhood gathering point. We offer weekly activities for children, youth, and adults, including tutoring, enrichment classes, Bible studies, fellowship, and special events.

## **WORK TEAMS**

Working alongside our national paid employees, volunteer work teams provided the labor to build the school for the Deaf and improve many of our other facilities. In addition, Isaiah 55 Ministries frequently partners to support other community organizations.

However, work teams are not limited to construction. We have also mobilized volunteers to provide

medical clinics, sports camps, English camps, Vacation Bible Schools, and other activities in our Reynosa community. Does your team bring special talents and skills? Let us know!

## 2024 Work Team Fees (non-CCK)

1 Week Construction Trip: \$870/person

1 Week Medical or Dental Trip: \$760/person

Weekend (Th - Sun.) Medical Trip: \$440/person

1 Week for Children ages 4-12: \$400/child

1 Week for Newborns - Age 3: Free of Charge

Families of 4 or more: 20% total discount

Pastors and Ministers: Free of Charge

## 2024 Fees for CCK Members

Deposit: \$50

Fee for first person: \$200/person

Fee for second and third person: \$150/person

Maximum fee per family: \$500/family

## Application and Payment Deadlines

March 3 - registration open / pick up applications

April 7 - registration closed / deposit and applications due

May 5 - full payment due

## Work Team Goals

As you prepare to come down, keep these three priorities in mind:

### **1) FLEXIBILITY**

This is Mexico, with a different culture, a different language, and probably a different climate than your normal. You will be out of your comfort zone. We encourage you to BE FLEXIBLE. Be curious and take time to examine why you might be uncomfortable. Ask questions when you have doubts. Allow room for prompting from the Holy Spirit.

## **2) QUIET TIME**

*“A life without a quiet place, that is a life without a quiet center, easily becomes destructive.”*  
– Henri Nouwen.

Christ is offering you rest and refreshment in Him. Take advantage of a week away from the mad rush of regular life to sit and be still, to take in Scripture, and to hear His voice. We pray that you will leave spiritually recharged and profoundly changed.

## **3) PRAYER**

Isaiah 55 is a ministry based on the prayers of believers. We encourage you to be prayerful in preparation for your trip. Corporately, we will pray often while you're here and also have many opportunities for private prayer. Plan to continue those habits after you leave us. If only we could fathom the power and privilege of prayer, we would certainly spend more time on our knees.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. WHERE WILL WE STAY?**

Volunteers will stay at our Aquiles Serdán facilities. Isaiah 55 Ministries has dorm and bathroom facilities to sleep approximately 25 men and 25 women.

(Volunteers younger than 13 years old must be accompanied by an adult or supervisor.)

We do have air conditioning in our dormitories at night.

### **2. CAN WE DRINK YOUR WATER?**

We provide reverse-osmosis purified water at our dorms and worksites that is safe to drink.

### **3. WHAT WILL WE EAT?**

We love to feed you well. Three meals will be provided daily: a hot breakfast, a sandwich lunch, and a hot dinner with dessert. Our afternoon “Guac and Coke” is legendary. Our hand-squeezed limeade can't be beat!

*FOOD ALLERGIES* (please let us know on our Volunteer Registration form)-

We can accommodate those with true food allergies. If you have a gluten or dairy allergy, we do have some options built into our menu to help you. We would advise you that these options are for those with true food allergies and intolerances. We are not able to accommodate those who

have needs based on personal preference.

We can provide dairy-free (DF) and/or gluten-free (GF) options at all meals.

At breakfast, we offer oatmeal each morning, as well as eggless options. We can have alternative cheese and gluten-free bread available for breakfast and lunch. We are also able to offer DF and GF options at dinner as needed. Dessert will not always be available for those with allergies.

For those with nut allergies, we can provide alternative nut butter, and no regular meal includes nuts.

In regards to our kitchen- it is not cross-contamination free and we have no way to guarantee that cross-contamination will not occur. We are not able to accommodate those who would like to bring or cook their food, due to a lack of refrigeration, freezer, and general kitchen space.

We desire to serve you as best as we can and allow you to come worry-free. We hope this protocol helps to alleviate any concerns regarding dietary needs. Please ask if you have any questions or need clarification, please contact Kristy at [kristy@Isaiah55.org](mailto:kristy@Isaiah55.org).

#### **4. WHAT SHOULD WE WEAR?**

For the workday, all volunteers need to wear closed-toe shoes, long pants (jeans, khaki, scrubs, not leggings), and shirts with sleeves. Keep in mind that your work clothes will get *dirty!*

Many find that hats and/or bandanas are helpful for the sun.

Shorts, skirts, and sandals can be worn in the evening. Please no cami-style tops or short shorts outside of the dorms.

For Sunday church, please plan to wear pants or skirts, not shorts.

#### **5. WHAT KIND OF WORK WILL WE DO?**

Is it a mission trip to Mexico if you don't work with cement block, steel, concrete, and paint? Whether you are experienced or not, there will be a job for everyone. We do keep in mind the age and skill level of our volunteers— there will be a way for everyone to contribute. We do ask you to fill out the skills assessment with the volunteer registration form before arriving to help us better plan the work you will be doing.

We do try to let teams know the work they will be doing ahead of time. However, we most likely will not be able to tell you your specific job for the week until you arrive. If your team will be participating in a non-construction project (such as VBS-type activities), we will certainly work with your group ahead of time to prepare and help you know what to expect.

Volunteers will also be assigned to work crews to assist in daily chores at the mission, including dishes, trash duty, or water provision.

## **6. ARE THERE HEALTH ISSUES I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

The Center for Disease Control recommends that your *routine vaccinations be up to date* to travel to Mexico. The CDC also recommends receiving the *Hepatitis A & B vaccines*.

Isaiah 55 recommends you have had a *Tetanus booster* in the last ten years.

We make health concerns a priority and care is always taken in food preparation. In addition, we provide purified drinking water.

Please bring your medications and prescription medicines.

## **8. WHAT SHOULD I BRING AND LEAVE BEHIND?**

We provide sheets, blankets, and towels.

Please bring your pillow, pillowcase, and washcloth.

Some volunteers have suggested a flashlight for the dorms after lights out.

*Do not* bring electronic devices, including laptops, iPads, and portable gaming devices. If discovered, they will be taken away and returned when you leave.

Keep electrical appliances such as blow dryers, curling irons, and electric razors to a minimum, which means sharing among the group to avoid blowing a fuse.

*We do not accept responsibility for losses or damage to any personal items.*

## **9. WHAT ABOUT MY CELL PHONE?**

Cell phones are *not allowed* for work team volunteers. Once we cross into Mexico your cell phone will be collected and returned to you at the end of the week. In addition, there will be no internet access. We understand that there are lots of valid reasons to request access to personal devices during the week. However, our policy remains, *no cell phones or internet access*. Enjoy the freedom while you're here and leave your worries in God's hands. God is sovereign.

- *Because you will not have your phone with you, you may want to bring a camera, watch/clock, and flashlight.*

## **10. WHAT ABOUT DEVOTIONS/WORSHIP?**

We will worship together at our local church on Sunday morning.

We ask your group to organize their evening devotion and worship time. If your group is sharing

the week with another, we are happy to connect your leaders to organize that time together. For evening worship times, please bring instruments and song sheets.

*Please do not plan any devotion for your final evening in Reynosa, as we will have our “Share Night,” including a video of photos from the week and time to share closing thoughts and impressions.*

## **11. HOW DO I GET DOWN TO MEXICO?**

Teams may either drive to the Texas/Mexico border or fly to McAllen or Harlingen, Texas. American Airlines and United Airlines serve McAllen. Southwest Airlines serves Harlingen. If your team drives, we will direct you to a location in the McAllen/Mission area to park for the week. If your team flies, the Isaiah 55 staff will meet you at the airport.

*We prefer that your flight would arrive on Saturday afternoon between 12 and 4 and leave on Friday morning before 12.* Regardless of your departure time, we will leave the mission by mid-morning on Friday and drop you off at the airport.

We ask that all of your team members arrive at the same airport at approximately the same time if at all possible.

Once your team is on the ground in south Texas, we will load you up in our mission vans and take you across the border to Reynosa. You will not take personal vehicles into Mexico.

*All volunteers should hold a current US passport or passport card.* Please see the US Customs and Border Patrol website for updated information

<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/your-trip>

If a volunteer is not a US citizen, please let us know and we can advise you ahead of time.

## **12. HOW CAN I BE REACHED IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY BACK HOME?**

In the case of an emergency back home, someone will be able to reach you by calling:

Nono Beale: (956)357-4073

Kristy Holliday: (956)578-1641

Isaiah 55 Office: (210)568-9283

## **13. PACKING LIST**

Passport

Pillow and pillowcase

Washcloth



Soap, shampoo, personal toiletry items

Personal medications

Sunscreen

Long pants

Hat

Insect-repellent

Toothbrush/toothpaste

Flip Flops for shower

Sunglasses

Closed-toe shoes

Work gloves

Water bottle labeled with your name

**Optional:**

Camera (not your cell phone)

Flashlight (not your cell phone)

Watch (not your cell phone)

We always need powdered Gatorade, which we consume in large quantities under the hot sun.

Contact-wearers may want to bring a pair of glasses along (it is very dusty in Reynosa!).

If you are interested in bringing or donating tools, please ask to see what needs we have.

**SCHEDULE (always subject to change)**

**Saturday –** Arrival, welcome, dinner, orientation

**Sunday –** Church worship at Camino de Fe Reynosa,  
souvenir shopping in the neighboring city of Nuevo Progreso,  
build-your-own pizza night, Spanish Night

**Monday – Thursday:**

7 am Corporate Prayer (optional)

8 am Breakfast

9 am Morning meeting and prayer

9:30 am Work at the Job Site

Noon Lunch at the Job Site

12:30-4:30 pm Work at the Job Site

4:30-6 pm Afternoon Coke Break, Showers, Free Time

6 pm Dinner

**EVENING** Worship/Devotions/Neighborhood Ministry activities

**Friday morning** Departure (depending on Team travel schedules)

## Isaiah 55's Child Protection Policy

1. I will not commit abuse upon any child or willingly allow any harm or abuse to occur to a child.
2. I understand I have a responsibility to report any and all suspicions of child abuse or harm.
3. I understand that all one-adult-to-one-child situations are to be avoided whenever possible, and I will strive to avoid such situations with children other than my own. When unavoidable, I will take steps to eliminate isolation and unnecessary risk.
4. I will not participate in activities or ongoing communication with any child without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents.
5. I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate.
6. I will not invite any unaccompanied children into my home without the knowledge and consent of their parents, and the presence of another adult.
7. I will act with caution and discretion when posting photos online that include children, taking into consideration clothing, parental consent, and who has access to the photo.
8. I understand that corporal punishment of any child other than my own is forbidden.
9. I am responsible for my visitors and am aware that if they engage in any ministry they must follow the procedures and policies applicable to volunteers.
10. I understand that if any accusation of child abuse is made against me or a family member, we may be required to cease contact with the alleged victim and or other children until an appropriate assessment is made.
11. I agree to fully cooperate with any child safety assessment by Isaiah 55.
12. I understand that a report may be made to law enforcement and child protection agencies locally in Mexico and the United States, which may result in legal action against me.
13. I will remain open to learning and be instructed as to appropriate ways of complying with this code of conduct.
14. I agree to comply with Isaiah 55's code of conduct as written.

Mexican law is not presented in the same format as American law. While Isaiah 55 Ministries strives to implement protection for children that goes beyond the limits of the law, in terms of Mexican law it is more useful to share what rights children are guaranteed. Children and youth located in Tamaulipas regardless of citizenship are guaranteed the right to life, integrity, and dignity; identity, legal certainty and family; health and nutrition; education, recreation, information and participation; and social programs.

Isaiah 55 Ministries will follow the protocol established in their Child Protection Policy and Procedures.