

## HTI TRIP POLICIES & DISCLAIMER

We are honored that you are interested in spreading God's love through medical evangelism with Health Talents International. Health Talents began its global medical evangelism ministry in 1973. Today the ministry is centered in Guatemala and Nicaragua. The ministries in both countries are staffed entirely by nationals who operate primary care clinics in conjunction with area Churches of Christ.

We intend for our work together to be a spiritual experience for everyone, including the North American team, our patients and our Central American workers. ***A Board of Directors oversees the activities of Health Talents, which is a ministry of the Churches of Christ.*** Every team member should have a spiritual view of life and must agree to personal conduct that honors the Christ-centered nature of our work. It is not a requirement that participants be members of the Church of Christ. Respect and tolerance for different faith traditions among team members is presumed.

When in Guatemala or Nicaragua, it is not unusual for team members to see situations of poverty and great need. This often prompts a desire to contribute money in response. If you encounter a situation in which you feel drawn to respond, please discuss it with the North American team leader so that the need can be evaluated. You should not discuss your desire to be helpful economically with any Guatemalans, including HTI staff members. You should speak only with the team leader. If appropriate, the support can be channeled through HTI to minimize the negative effects of jealousy and inequity that gifts of money often create. In this manner, the relationships of the national staff, the people we serve, and Health Talents are respected and preserved. The HTI Board does not permit soliciting of monetary gifts by nationals...and none are expected from team members. We ask each team participant to abide by this policy. If you feel you cannot do this, please discuss it with Rick Harper or the trip leader before plans for your inclusion on the team are finalized.

Since we are working in Central America in association with local Christian congregations, our teams must remain culturally sensitive and act in ways that are not offensive in light of local Christian practices. Actions accepted in the United States by some Christian people may be offensive or not acceptable in Central America. Smoking is an example. In Central America, Christians perceive smoking as a habit of a non-believer.

Team participants are expected to follow the policies outlined below:

1. For the duration of our time outside the United States, abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and improper sexual conduct, whether at clinic sites or on side trips for shopping and sightseeing.
2. Attend all devotional sessions and the worship service on Sunday.
3. Cooperate with the team leader's decisions at all times. The trip leader has been assigned responsibility for the group and his/her decision regarding any changes in arrangements due to unforeseen developments will be final. The team leader will make decisions based on input from our emergency contact in the United States, US Embassy, our Board of Directors and team members.

Because of our experience in September, 2001, when an HTI surgical team was in Guatemala during the World Trade Center attack, we recognize the importance of team solidarity in crisis situations. Although that team was not in imminent danger, the team leader had to make decisions regarding housing and changes in transportation. Since it may be important for the group to stay together for security reasons, it is critical that the team members comply with the group leader's instructions.

Should an unforeseen change in circumstances occur in the future, the HTI policy is that the team leader and the State side HTI staff members will attempt to re-arrange travel as efficiently as possible. The group may need to split up in order to return. The team leader will take your input regarding travel plans but ultimately the safety of the ***whole*** team will take priority over any individual travel requests. Anyone

who does not follow the group leader's advice and decides to make independent travel arrangements, must accept full responsibility physically and financially for the decision.

It is your responsibility to ensure that HTI has correct emergency notification numbers (preferably an e-mail address) of your contact, so we can keep family members informed of any changes.

## **Disclaimer**

*Guatemala and Nicaragua are developing countries and often experience instability. Team members should understand that while HTI will take reasonable steps to ensure the personal safety of team members, there are risks inherent in living, traveling, and working in such situations. Each team member assumes a certain amount of risk when he commits to participate in medical evangelism.*

*Health Talents has sponsored medical evangelism trips for many years and has had very few problems. We want your trip to be a positive life-changing experience, so we request that you comply with the conditions of this statement.*

*That being said, when registering for a trip by clicking the box stating that you have read and agree to the HTI policies and disclaimer you are also consenting to the following Assumption of Risk and Release Document below as further evidence of your understanding of the unique risks associated with travel to Guatemala or Nicaragua.*

### ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE-Guatemala/Nicaragua

In consideration of being permitted to participate in the Health Talents International (HTI) Medical/Surgical Mission Trip (Mission Trip) to Guatemala or Nicaragua as the case may be, the Trip Participant checking the box to submit my reservation form is hereby acknowledging consent to this document, in full recognition and appreciation of the dangers and hazards inherent in the HTI Mission Trip for which The Participant is registering and the planned activities and the hazards inherent in transportation to and from destinations on the trip during my participation in the Mission Trip, does hereby agree to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding participation in the HTI Mission Trip or any independent activities undertaken as an adjunct thereto; and further, I do for myself, my heirs and personal representative(s) hereby defend, hold harmless, indemnify and release and forever discharge Health Talents International, Inc., and all its officers, agents and employees from and against any and all claims, demands and actions, or causes of action, on account of damage to personal property, or personal injury, or death which may result from my participation, and which result from causes beyond the control of , and without the fault or negligence of Health Talents International, Inc., its officers, agents or employees, during the period of my participation as aforesaid.

Furthermore, I hereby designate and appoint the assigned Health Talents International Team Leader be it one of the following:

Rick Harper, US Missions Director

Kemmel Dunham, Central American Missions Director

Bode Teague, Director of Development and Philanthropy

Sheri Kretzschmar, Mission Trips and Events Manager

Dave Mellor, Mission Trips and Church Relations Coordinator of HTI

Susan Mellor, Public Relations Coordinator of HTI

Marie Agee, Board Member of HTI

As my true and lawful attorney or agent, to take whatever reasonable action or procedure, including the execution of any documents or instruments which may be required or necessary by

emergency circumstances, to obtain medical or hospital care, treatment or surgical procedures for and on my behalf which may arise on the HTI Mission Trip to Guatemala or Nicaragua. I further accept the financial responsibility for all medical attention.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have caused this Release of Power of Attorney to be executed on the day of my registration for Mission Trip upon the submission of my reservation form.

### **GUIDELINES FOR CLOTHING DONATIONS**

The HTI Board of Directors respectfully requests that you refrain from bringing clothing and shoes to distribute to the villagers. We are grateful for all efforts to help in this ministry, but the reality is that donations of clothing and shoes are tricky. We've been working in Guatemala since 1978, and we have learned that such donations don't help the work of HTI or the churches. In fact, they have an adverse effect. They cause chaos, jealousy and strife among the people and create a system of "beggars" overall.

The tension that exists in a medical ministry is to help people without causing harm. The aim is to help them physically in the name of the Lord so as to help them make the connection to spiritual health that comes only from Jesus. Glitz and glamour and giveaway programs don't do this nearly as well as helping people when they *know* they need help... and doing it in a way that exudes love and caring.

We appreciate so much and understand why people want to help in this way, and it sounds really uncaring to say that we don't want anyone to do it. However, it makes the Guatemalans see *us* as Santa Claus, and in so doing, takes the focus *off* our Lord. If you want to help, support a child in our ABC or scholarship programs, take part in a medical/ dental or surgical trip, or donate funds with which to buy medicines and Bibles. These are the things that help keep the focus of the ministry where it belongs.

In conclusion, we've all seen here at home what harm welfare can do to an individual's motivation and expectations. It is critical for us to avoid that in Guatemala if we have any hope of raising up a generation of people who truly believe that their hope is in the Lord Jesus.