



Trip Information Packet
Bellarmino students to the
Dominican Republic
July 26th– August 4th, 2022





Welcome to Courts for Kids. Most likely, this is your first trip with our organization and we are confident that this trip will impact you in ways you cannot even imagine. We work closely with our in-country partner to make sure your basic needs are met, so we can all focus on the task at hand, creating a multi-purpose sports court with the initiative, help and support of the community.

A sports court is a great project because it requires the help of many community members, provides plenty of work for everyone, and becomes an asset that provides not only safe places for children to play, but also various other benefits. The hard work of our team will be a great bridge between us and the community and we will develop a mutual respect that will help provide inroads into a rich cross-cultural experience and first-hand insight into a developing world community.

We are looking for great cultural ambassadors, so please only sign up for this trip if you are willing to step outside of your comfort zone. You will need to work hard, you will be eating different foods, sleeping and bathing in less comfortable environments. But, as they say, if you want to live like you're in America, why leave?

Most importantly, we ask that you enter into this with a great sense of humility. We want you to be eager to learn and grow in this process as we are entering into a different culture with different values and norms. We want you be quick to listen and slow to speak.

We will not be giving you a detailed itinerary as things are very prone to change with this sort of construction project. But your time will be spent working on the court, taking part in various cultural activities and, most importantly, connecting with the locals.

Please look through this informational packet and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

If you choose to go, I can almost guarantee you will look back on this trip as a life-changing experience. You will grow so much in a week it will make you wish you could stay longer. In fact, you will probably say this was the best week of your year.

Hope you can come!

Derek Nesland
President
Courts for Kids

Community Information

Santa Cruz Fe y Alegría Polytechnic is a school run by Jesuits that was established in 2007 and is very excited to partner with another Jesuit school to provide a multi-use athletic court for their student population. The mission of Fe y Alegría is a “Popular Education Movement for the poor and, in coherence with it, chooses the sectors most in need to carry out its educational and social promotion action. From there, it articulates liberating socio-educational practices and directs society in general to its constant claim in search of a more human world.” In this regard, the Santa Cruz Fe y Alegría Polytechnic, with a student population around 600, provides quality education by establishing strategic alliances with national and international institutions, thus fostering cooperative relations with the Ministry of Education, companies, associations, foundations, fathers, mothers, community organizations, and churches with the sole purpose of providing quality education mainly to the most impoverished sectors of the population. The Polytechnic

Santa Cruz de el Seibano, as an institution linked to the International Association of Fe y Alegría Dominicana, is an institution that wants to develop a quality education for young people from marginalized and excluded environments, with the intention of offering them the possibility that, through education, can prepare, train and acquire the tools to improve their quality of life, those of their families and the community of the Seibana province in general.



In this community where the school is located there is a large percentage of the houses that are built of blocks mainly in the center of the city (middle class), although in the marginal sectors many houses of wood and zinc persist. Most of the people here making a living by motorcycle taxi, agriculture, livestock and other informal jobs. There is a lot of social inequality as there is a very small group of the city that concentrates the greatest wealth, while a very considerable number of the people in this city have no jobs and depend mostly on the government's social assistance.

The student population is threatened, according to a survey of families and other people in the community, for: domestic violence, misuse of the internet, television, poor use of free time, difficult economic situation (for 70% of the population the family income is below poverty level), physical and verbal abuse, drugs, alcoholism, sexual freedom, and prostitution.

The school is seeking guidance so that students can be resilient, and a multi-use athletic court to be used for free time and to play organized sports will help.

Our group will be met at the airport by the Courts for Kids Dominican Republic Country Director who lives in the Dominican Republic and has been working closely with the school to plan all aspects of your visit. We will be staying in the school sleeping on mattresses on the floor. The court will also be built at the Jesuit school and will be used by the entire community. Many times it will be a place where the community will gather to dance and hold celebrations and ceremonies. We will work side-by-side with the locals and although it will be challenging there are jobs for everyone of every physical capacity. During the whole trip we will be fully immersed in the local culture eating authentic food, learning local traditions, customs, and way of life. It is important to note that this court will be built with the community not for the community. The community members are very motivated to make their court a reality and from the beginning, they have been the driving factor planning this project to see it come to fruition.

*More specific lodging, packing, and trip logistics will be provided as the departure date gets closer.

**Please note, the destination community is subject to change at the discretion of Courts for Kids in order to best meet the needs and safety of the volunteer group as well as the needs of the host community.



Inicio de 4ta Semana Escolar

Community of Seibana

Trip Safety

Courts for Kids makes your safety our number one priority. Being in a safe, tight knit community with strong awareness and ownership of the project will provide local people who will be personally invested in the safety of the team. Courts for Kids also has safety protocols in place that include, but are not limited to:

- A **Courts for Kids representative will lead the group** while in the destination country.
- We always contract **private transportation** to pick up and return the group to the in-country airport.
- We have a **strict behavior and conduct policy** for all trip participants which promotes the safety and security of the group. All participants are required to attend a **mandatory training**.
- We have **secure transportation** available to medical facilities in the case of any injuries.
- We will have a **first aid kit** with the group at all times.
- We only drink **clean, potable water**.
- We work with community cooks to adhere to our **Safe Cooking Practices**.
- We monitor the **US State Department** travel warnings and make travel adjustments as deemed necessary.
- We require all volunteers to be disconnected for the entirety of the trip.
- **Insurance coverage** for all trip participants that includes evacuation with a medical escort in a worst case situation. Policy details can be provided upon request.
- **A Child Protection Policy** which includes background checks for all adults traveling in a group where minors are present.
- Courts for Kids may conduct a **behavioral background check** through a student's school and reserves the right to refuse a participant based on the information we receive.

Safety is a team effort and every trip participant is responsible for their behavior, must use common sense while traveling, and comply with Courts for Kids representatives and trip leaders at all times.

2022 COVID Policies

- All participants must be fully vaccinated with an authorized and/or recommended COVID-19 vaccine by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson), including required boosters and must submit documentation of the vaccine to Courts for Kids at least one month prior to departure date. Failure to provide proof of vaccination by the deadline results in forfeiting your spot with no refund.
- Currently the State Department (at time of publication– October, 2021) requires a negative COVID test to return to the US. If this policy is still in place one month prior to departure you will be charged an additional \$125 to cover testing and an additional insurance policy that will cover all expenses if your son/daughter/yourself were to test positive and need to quarantine.
- If a student were to test positive and need to quarantine in host country with a Quarantine Chaperone will stay with the student until they produce a negative test and can return to the US. The additional insurance taken out will cover all expenses if this were to occur.
- Each volunteer will abide by the rules and recommendations of the host country with regards to COVID-19 safety (e.g., in regard to mask wearing, social distancing, etc.), in addition to the latest recommendations for vaccinated international travelers issued by the Center for Disease Control.
- CFK will consider travel to countries identified as "Level 4" by the U.S. Department of State, provided that such level is the result of possible COVID-19 concerns. CFK will not travel to countries identified as "Level 4" due to "crime or violent activity".

Further questions or concerns regarding this policy? To learn more a short 25 minute video, including FAQ's, expanding on the above was made. Please click here to view:

share.vidyard.com/watch/412ipVK67p13QdmjEBf43T

Funding Responsibilities

Everyone in your group will contribute to the total project costs.
Each participant will be required to fundraise/donate this amount:

\$2,250

(An additional \$125 may be applied if COVID testing and insurance will be required, this will be collected separately– one month before the trip)

100% of all donations are fully tax deductible

All funds raised are applied to court construction costs and the following group expenses:

- Round trip airfare (award points cannot be used)
- In-country costs (food, water, lodging, and transportation)
- Entrance/exit fees
- Emergency medical insurance
- Special activities
- Court construction costs (in addition to your giving, the host community also contributes making this court a reality).

Does not include: passport, immunizations, travel to and from the US airport, food or incidental costs on layovers and delays, or spending money for souvenirs.

**All donations are non-refundable (unless the entire project is canceled by Courts for Kids, funds will be refunded less non-recoverable costs). If you raise/donate more than the above amount, you can choose to apply the excess to passport or immunization costs (must submit receipts), the court construction costs, sports equipment, toward the balance of another trip participant or towards Courts for Kids in general. You will not be eligible for any other refunds or reimbursements due to IRS regulations.*

Scholarship Opportunities

Courts for Kids is committed to providing opportunities for every student, regardless of income. If you are facing financial hardship and/or qualify for free/reduced lunch in the school district in which you live (regardless of what school you go to), we encourage you to apply to our program.

If awarded a Courts for Kids scholarship half of your trip costs will be covered and you will be expected to fundraise the other half.

Information and Applications for Scholarships can be found on our website at:

<https://www.courtsforkids.org/scholarships/>

The participant must apply for a scholarship BEFORE registering for the trip or within the first month of registering for the trip.

A special thank you to all the Courts for Kids donors who have made this scholarship fund possible.

Refund/Cancellation Policy

The US State Department rates each country on a scale of 1-4 for traveler's safety. CFK will postpone, cancel, or re-route a project if a country's rating is changed to a level 4 due to instability, safety concerns or violence. In this instance, if the trip is unable to be rescheduled, CFK can provide a refund for the amount paid minus the non-refundable deposit and expenses already accrued (such as purchase of building materials and community investments).

If a country's rating is changed to a level 4 due to COVID reasons only, CFK's policy is to proceed with the trip; however, Bellarmine's policy states that students may not travel to a level 4 country due to any reason, including COVID. Therefore, if this country's rating changes to a level 4 prior to travel, Bellarmine will need to cancel the trip and CFK will not be able to issue refunds to participants. If the country raises to a Level 4 at some point but then is downgraded to a level 3 or lower prior to the travel date, Bellarmine would still be able to travel.

Because of this difference in policies between CFK and Bellarmine, CFK has restructured the payment schedule where the bulk of the funding responsibilities are as late as possible in order to mitigate, as much as possible, the financial risk to Bellarmine families. Any recoverable funds would remain with CFK for the project to be continued with the community at the discretion of CFK and the community. All donations would remain tax-deductible. If Bellarmine needs to cancel, the participants may have the option to transfer to one of CFK Open Trips, depending on availability and timing.

The Dominican Republic is currently (as of November 2021) rated a level 3 country and was last rated a level 4 in June of 2021

Trip Checklist

1. **Registration:** Students will submit completed applications to Mary Rink, the Ignatian Formation Director. The first round of applications are due **Wednesday, December 8th**. After all applications have been reviewed, a minimum of 16 students and a maximum of 23 will be selected to attend the trip. Upon acceptance to the program (students will be notified by **Friday, December 10th**) a \$250 deposit is due by **Thursday, December 16th** to secure your place on the trip. If there are still spots available, a second round of applications will be accepted up to **Friday, January 21st**. For additional information or questions, please contact Mary Rink at rinkm@bellarmineprep.org or 253-752-7701 x519.

2. **Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that will not expire before **February 4th, 2023**. If you need a passport, go to the nearest post office for assistance. **In order to avoid the headache and stress, make sure you get your passport on time, do it ASAP.**

3. **Fundraising deadlines:**

- Deposit of \$250 when registering (no later than December 16th, 2021)

- 1st amount of \$800 by February 25th, 2022

- 2nd amount of \$1,200 by June 24th, 2022

** All donations are non-refundable unless the entire project is canceled by Courts for Kids, in which case funds will be refunded minus unrecoverable costs.*

3. **Vaccinations:** The recommended vaccinations for travel to **Dominican Republic** according to the Center for Disease Control are the following (**keep in mind these are recommended, not required. Check with your local doctor and make the decision best for you**):

a. Routine (DPT, MMR, Polio)—all travelers

b. Hepatitis A and Typhoid—most travelers

c. Hepatitis B, rabies, cholera, and malaria—some travelers

d. COVID-19 Vaccine—REQUIRED for participation

4. Attend **mandatory** Courts for Kids pre-trip training on **Sunday, May 15th from 12-4 p.m** at the Campus Center. A parent/guardian will be required to attend the last hour of the training.

Flight Itinerary

United Flight Itinerary*

(Award points cannot be used)

| Date | Fl. # | Airport | Dep. | Airport | Arrival |
|----------|-------|---------------|----------|---------------|---------|
| July 26 | 591 | Seattle | 12:08 pm | Newark | 8:51 pm |
| July 26 | 1471 | Newark | 9:56 pm | Santo Domingo | 1:55 am |
| August 4 | 2489 | Santo Domingo | 12:57 pm | Newark | 5:01 pm |
| August 4 | 1461 | Newark | 6:40 pm | Seattle | 9:30 pm |

You are eligible for frequent flier miles on United. To enroll go to www.united.com

*Flights and carrier are subject to change

Fundraising Help

Online Appeal

• **Personal Fundraising Page:** Upon registration, you will receive a personal fundraising page and an email with instructions on how to customize it. Come up with a list of friends and family members to send it to. Once somebody donates, it will show up immediately in your registration page.

•Facebook/Instagram Fundraisers:

- Anyone can create a fundraiser on Facebook or Instagram, including your family members; however, fundraisers must follow the rules outlined below. When fundraisers are created correctly, Courts for Kids will directly receive the funds you raise and we will credit 100% of the donations towards your trip fundraising responsibilities.

Rules for Fundraising on Facebook and Instagram

Fundraiser 'titles' (on Facebook) and the text of 'donation stickers' (on Instagram) **MUST** include the trip participant's first and last name or donations received through this fundraiser will **NOT** be able to be credited to your trip costs.

Examples:

•**ACCEPTABLE:** *'John Smith's summer Xavier HS trip to Nicaragua fundraiser'* - Created by John Grandmother

•**NOT ACCEPTABLE:** *'Fundraiser for my summer Xavier trip to Nicaragua'* - created by John Smith

Fundraisers must be created for Courts for Kids, not for yourself. When creating a fundraiser, choose Courts for Kids under the 'Nonprofit' section, do not choose the option to raise money for 'Yourself' or 'For a Friend.'

Support Letters

- Come up with a list of friends and family members who might support you on this trip. Don't rule people out too quickly. You will be very surprised at who will support you. Get their addresses.
- Type up a support letter for people to make a tax-deductible donation on your behalf (use the sample on the next page for an idea).
- Send the letter, pledge card and a return-addressed envelope (to your house) to everyone on your list.
IMPORTANT- Get this letter out ASAP to make sure you get your support raised in time.
- Make sure people give you checks made out to Courts for Kids. When you receive a check, make sure and send them a thank you card. Next send the check **and the response card** to Courts for Kids.

Other ideas

- If applicable, see if your home church, service club, or other organization will sponsor you.
- Do a game night, movie night, adult prom, Zumba-thon, Bunco party or another fun event and sell tickets.
- Solicit donations you can sell in a garage sale, silent auction, online auction, or raffle.
- Make a craft, shirt, or food item that you can sell.
- Some companies have donation matching programs and will match donations employees make to nonprofits such as Courts for Kids. You can check if a company has a donation matching program here:
<http://www.matchinggifts.com/search/rit>
- Be creative, go online— there are many fundraising ideas out there!

(IT IS BEST TO REWRITE THIS LETTER ADDING YOUR OWN WORDS TO GIVE IT A PERSONAL TOUCH. USE THE FOLLOWING AS A GUIDE)

Today's Date

Dear *(personalize it by adding their name here),*

I am excited to share with you about an upcoming service project in *{insert country}* this upcoming *{month of trip}* through Courts for Kids. I need to raise *{amount needed to raise}* in order to participate so I am asking friends and family members to consider helping out with a tax-deductible contribution.

We will travel to *{insert country}* and make our way to *{insert a couple sentences of community information from the site details page of the packet}*. This community applied to Courts for Kids for assistance in building a multi-use athletic court, which is where I come in. I want to help make this vision a reality for the community but need some help. I am raising money not only for travel costs but also for construction materials, as well.

Our primary project will be to build this court, but we will also take part in other service and cultural learning activities as well. Our primary purpose for going is to serve the local community, but also to grow and learn as we get out of our comfort zone. We will be staying in relatively primitive conditions within the community and will be eating the local food the entire time. This is definitely not a touristy trip, but I am excited for the change I am sure will happen in my life and the impact we can have.

{If you have the space, enter a personal story of why this trip is significant for you}

Would you consider supporting me as well as the local community in this project? I need to raise *{amount needed to raise}* for this trip to be possible. If you are interested, please make a check out to **Courts for Kids** and return it in the enclosed envelope. Could you please return this envelope as soon as possible in order to make sure I hand everything in with enough time to spare? Your donation is **tax-deductible** and **100%** of what you give will go directly to this trip.

Sincerely,

{Your signature and name}

- o Yes, I would like to support _____ on the Bellarmine project to the Dominican Republic in the amount of:
- _____ \$500
 _____ \$200
 _____ \$100
 _____ \$50
 _____ \$25
 _____ other amount

- o Please write your email to the right if you want your donation receipt e-mailed to you to help us save costs and resources.

Please make your **tax-deductible** contribution out to **Courts for Kids**, and return using the return-addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Name _____
 Address _____

 City _____ State _____
 Zip Code _____
 Phone Number _____
 Email _____



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Questions?

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selene@courtsforkids.org