



Trip Information Packet
Guatemala
American University
May 13-21, 2025





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, this is where the true impact happens.

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

You will be traveling to the community of Chuasiguan, located to the north of the municipality of Momostenango. 100% of the population is indigenous and the language spoken is Kiche as well as Spanish as the second language. The meaning of Chuasiguan comes from the Kiche word chuchi'siwan which means on the edge of the cliff, an apt name considering the mountainous location of the community.

The community has grown from three families with the last name Castro (hence the full community name of Chuasiguan Chicastro) to more than 40 families, each boasting more than 8 members. As a result of this population growth, there was a need to acquire certain projects such as drinking water, electricity and the opening of a main road to create access to neighboring communities rather than walking long distances.

In 2001, the community obtained authorization for a school and began to teach classes in a warehouse, since there was no physical building and classrooms. It was not until 2009 that the school had its own facilities after long and arduous work on the part of members of the community with the help of the government.

The community has a great sense of family, thanks to which there is great leadership and mutual respect, always willing to support its members. They may be shy at first but they have a warm heart once you get to know them. They are dedicated to agriculture and textile work, with corn being the main crop since the tortilla is the staple of the local diet. In addition to corn, other crops include beans, broad beans, squash, apple, peach, avocado, lime, lemon, orange.

Your group will be met at the airport by the Courts for Kids Guatemala Country Director, Peter Rivera Jerez, who is Guatemalan and will work closely with the community to plan all aspects of your visit. We will be staying in a community building sleeping on mattresses on the floor. 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.



Trip Checklist

- 1. Registration:** The application process is facilitated by American University. Once approved, you will register online at www.courtsforkids.org (detailed instructions to be provided later).
- 2. Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that will not expire before **November 13, 2025**. 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:** Submit any payments according to the schedule determined by American.
- 4. Vaccinations:** The recommended vaccinations for travel to Guatemala 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**):
 - Routine (DPT, MMR, Polio, Chickenpox, Flu, Shingles)
 - COVID-19
 - Hepatitis A and B
 - Typhoid
 - Rabies
4. Students must attend a **mandatory Courts for Kids pre-trip training, dates TBD, in the spring.**

Flight Itinerary

American Airlines Flight Itinerary*

(Award points cannot be used)

Date	Fl. #	Airport	Dep.	Airport	Arrival
May 13	401	Reagan (DCA)	6:15am	Miami	9:01am
May 13	2241	Miami	10:05am	Guatemala City	11:15am
May 21	1774	Guatemala City	2:40pm	Miami	7:25pm
May 21	507	Miami	9:11pm	Reagan (DCA)	11:58pm

*Flights and carrier are subject to change

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 do not allow cell phones**; we require all volunteers (except staff/chaperones) to be disconnected for the entirety of the time spent in the community.
- 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.
- 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.

Contact Information

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