



Trip Information Packet

to

Costa Rica

Bellarmino College Preparatory

June 12-21, 2026





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 Marta de Limoncito is a close-knit rural community in Coto Brus, located in the province of Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Sitting at around 2,720 feet above sea level, this community is roughly 7 hours south from the country's capital, San José.

Santa Marta de Limoncito is a humble village, home to 168 people. Although the population is few, a deep sense of unity is felt as most people here are family, extended family or long-time neighbors. There is a small portion of the population that belong to the Ngäbe indigenous ethnicity. Here you can find two churches, one Catholic and one Christian, an elementary school, a roofed communal space, a small store and a spectacular view of the lush surrounding mountains and valley.



Nature is an ever-present companion in Santa Marta de Limoncito. Thanks to the gorgeous surroundings of the Cordillera de Talamanca, with its rolling green hills, fertile soils, and flowing streams, the area offers a landscape perfectly suited for farming—with coffee and rice serving as the cornerstone for this community's economy. Families in the area also grow beans, corn, bananas and plantains, sugarcane and other vegetables on small plots, often combining subsistence farming with cash crops. Livestock such as cattle, pigs, and chickens also provide both food and income.

Daily life is shaped by the rhythms of the land: in the rainy months, fields burst with growth and rivers swell, while the drier season allows for easier harvests and community gatherings. Families often spend time outdoors, tending to crops, caring for animals, or meeting in the town's social spaces, of which this new court will be a great new addition.

Aside from the economical benefit of this region, the nature here also greatly supports the wildlife. The forests and pastures host a wide variety of birds, small mammals, and useful plants. Residents often recognize and make use of native species, whether as food, medicine, or simply part of the daily scenery. Brightly colored birds such as tanagers, toucans, and hummingbirds are common sights in the mornings, while evenings are marked by cooler mountain breezes and the chorus of frogs and insects.

Your group will be met at the airport by the Courts for Kids Costa Rica Country Director who has been working closely with the community to plan all aspects of your visit. You will be staying in a community building sleeping on mattresses on the floor. The court will also be built nearby and will be used by the entire community. You 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 you 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.



Funding Responsibilities

All funds will be raised or paid directly through Bellarmine College Preparatory.

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 fund-raise 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 **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.

Trip Checklist

1. Students will register online through Courts for Kids. Link to be provided.
2. **Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that will not expire before **December 21, 2026**. 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. **Vaccinations:** The recommended vaccinations for travel to Costa Rica 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)
 - b. COVID-19
 - c. Hepatitis A
 - d. Hepatitis B
 - e. Typhoid
 - c. Rabies, yellow fever and chikungunya—only for certain travelers
4. Students and at least one parent must attend **mandatory Courts for Kids pre-trip training on a date TBD in the spring, 2026.**

Flight Itinerary

Alaska Airline Flight Itinerary*

(Award points cannot be used)

Date	Fl. #	Airport	Dep.	Airport	Arrival
June 12	174	San Francisco	2:00 pm	Los Angeles	3:34 pm
June 12	1352	Los Angeles	4:26 pm	San Jose, CR	11:33 pm
June 21	1351	San Jose, CR	12:50 am	Los Angeles	6:05 am
June 21	2058	Los Angeles	11:00 am	San Francisco, CA	12:27 pm

You are eligible for frequent flier miles on Alaska Airlines. *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 require all volunteers to be disconnected for the entirety of the trip. No cell phones will be allowed once in country.
- **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.

Contact Information

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