



Trip Information Packet
Dominican Republic
University of Washington Athletics
June 9-18, 2023





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

Bartolomé is a small village in southern Dominican Republic, about 30 minutes from the Haitian Border. This small community belongs to the municipality of La Descubierta. Bartolomé is a couple hundred meters from Enriquillo Lake National Park. It is on the international road and about 6 hours from Santo Domingo.

The community's first name was "Colombie", due to the fact that the land was owned by "Monsieur Colombier", a prosperous and influential producer and French merchant who engaged in agricultural production for export purposes to Europe via Haiti. But by 1760, when the Spanish were evicted from the country, Colombier lost all his lands, and was forced to leave for Haiti, all his properties being divided into small plots like the ones we see today in Bartolomé .



After this, many families began to arrive and settle into the community. It continued to grow under the name Colombié until July 24, 1943 when it was renamed "Bartolomé" in honor of the patron saint of Neyba. In 1976, the community underwent a major development leap with the construction of 40 houses that form the "Barrio" that we observe today.

There is a primary school, but students must walk about 2 km to La Descubierta to attend High School.

This community was seriously affected when the lake overflowed the agricultural lands, even some houses were affected. This created a big economic crisis, since they live off the land, mostly on raising cows and agriculture. Today, they are still recovering from this crisis.

There is no safe place for sports of any kind, sometimes kids play on

the main street, but this is not safe. It is for this reason that the community applied to Courts for Kids for a multi-use athletic court.

Your group will be met at the airport by Marlennis Diaz, the Courts for Kids Dominican Republic Country Director, who lives in the Dominican Republic and has been working closely with the community members to plan all aspects of your visit.

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 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 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.

2023 COVID Policies

- Groups and participants agree to comply with any COVID-19 vaccine or testing requirements imposed by the destination country as well as the US State Department. This may require participants to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test if mandated by either the destination country or the US State Department. Courts for Kids will not impose any testing or vaccine requirements beyond those of the applicable governing authorities.
- As of June 2022, the US State Department no longer requires a negative COVID-19 test for reentry to the United States. In the event that this requirement is re-imposed in the future, Courts for Kids will be required to introduce additional measures to ensure trip participant safety and compliance with the testing requirement. These may include the necessity for COVID-19 trip insurance and a quarantine chaperone for each trip. Groups and participants acknowledge that this may require them to incur additional costs.
- 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".
- Each participant will abide by the rules and recommendations of the destination country with regards to COVID-19 safety (e.g., in regard to mask wearing, social distancing, etc.), and community-specific measures. Participants will also abide by the latest recommendations for international travel issued by the Centers for Disease Control.

Funding Responsibilities

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

\$600

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.*

Trip Checklist

- Registration:** The application process is facilitated by University of Washington. Once approved, you will register online at www.courtsforkids.org (detailed instructions to be provided later).
- Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that will not expire before **December 18, 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.**
- Fundraising deadlines:**
\$600 by April 10, 2023.
- Vaccinations:** The recommended vaccinations for travel to the 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**):
 - Routine (DPT, MMR, Polio, Chickenpox, Flu, Shingles)
 - COVID-19
 - Hepatitis A and B
 - Typhoid
 - Cholera
 - Rabies
- Attend **mandatory** Courts for Kids pre-trip training, dates to be announced.

Flight Itinerary

JetBlue Flight Itinerary*

(Award points cannot be used)

Date	Fl. #	Airport	Dep.	Airport	Arrival
June 9	264	SEA	11:57pm	JFK	8:19am
June 10	9	JFK	9:05am	Santo Domingo	12:54pm
June 18	2110	SDQ	11:00am	JFK	2:49pm
June 18	263	JFK	7:00pm	SEA	10:22pm

*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.
- Send the letter 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!

Questions?

Courts for Kids
PO Box 873786
Vancouver, WA 98687

Derek Nesland
(360) 521-0592
derek@courtsforkids.org