



Trip Information Packet
Oaxaca, Mexico
Iowa State University Athletics
August 2-10, 2024





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



You will be traveling to the small town of La Angostura, 3 1/2 hours drive west from the city of Oaxaca, Mexico. The State of Oaxaca contains primarily indigenous communities who have strong social cohesion and a beautifully rich culture of food, arts and crafts.

45 years ago, the land that contains the current town of La Angostura had only one owner who grew corn. After dividing the land, many other families moved in to create a community of approximately 40 families. Although these families have lived in this town for many years, the town was officially recognized by the government as 'La Angostura Rural Nucleus,' recently, on April 11, 2021.

In 2016, the idea arose from a few neighbors to form a small committee, to address the needs that exist in the neighborhood. In 2017, with the cooperation of the neighbors, a drinking water well was made that would benefit the people of La Angostura. This same committee has also expanded some of the main streets and very significantly, provided electricity to all of the inhabitants. This work was not done by the government, but by the committee of residents, through a process called 'tequio,' whereby all members volunteer their labor to work together on projects.

Now the community has identified a safe space for their kids to play sports as a very pressing issue they want to address. The children who wish to play sports need to travel to a nearby town. They are excited to work together to you to make their dream a reality.



Your group will be met at the airport by the Courts for Kids Mexico Country Director, Juan Carlos Herrera, who has been working closely with the community to plan all aspects of your visit. The court will be built in a public area 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.

Trip Checklist

- 1. Registration:** The application process is facilitated by Iowa State 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 **February 14, 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. Vaccinations:** The recommended vaccinations for travel to Mexico 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
4. Attend **mandatory** Courts for Kids pre-trip training, dates to be announced.

Flight Itinerary

American Airlines Flight Itinerary*

(Award points cannot be used)

Date	Fl. #	Airport	Dep.	Airport	Arrival
August 2	1664	Des Moines	4:10pm	Dallas	6:10pm
August 2	483	Dallas	8:35pm	Oaxaca	10:28pm
August 10	482	Oaxaca	7:00am	Dallas	11:00am
August 10	2229	Dallas	4:35pm	Des Moines	6:29pm

*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 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.

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.

Questions?

Courts for Kids
PO Box 873786
Vancouver, WA 98687

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