



**Trip Information Packet**  
**Dominican Republic**  
**Miami Football**  
**May 4-12, 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



Existing hoop on busy road

You will be traveling to Cabezu, a small community of about 150 families in Magua, in the eastern Dominican Republic. There exists a middle school with 82 students, and two churches.

There isn't anywhere to practice any kind of sports in Cabezu/ Magua. They don't have a basketball court, only a hoop on the street where kids from there and from Cabezu play. If they want to play in a real court, they have to go to Las Cañitas, which is about 3 miles away.

Cabezu, Magua, and Cañitas, are three neighboring communities that share many things. They have been joined as a larger political entity to receive more benefits from the government. From these

three sister communities, Cañitas keeps most of the benefits.

The community of Cabezu is very excited and motivated for this project have almost all the prep work done. They started the project themselves over a year and a half ago, with community labor and city hall funds. They had to stop the construction because of Hurricane Fiona in 2022, after which any spare funds were used to aid the people that were affected. The town hasn't been the same ever since. The agriculture, which is mostly based on Cacao, has gone down significantly.

Your group will be met at the airport by the Courts for Kids DR Country Director, Marlennis Diaz, who has been working closely with the community to plan all aspects of your visit. You will be staying at a public space 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.



Community Meeting for Project



Future Court Site

\*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 (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.

# Flight Itinerary

## American Flight Itinerary\*

(Award points cannot be used)

Date	Fl. #	Airport	Dep.	Airport	Arrival
May 4	987	Miami	10:05am	Santo Domingo	12:26pm
May 12	1026	Santo Domingo	8:02am	Miami	10:25am

You are eligible for frequent flier miles on American. To enroll go to [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com)

\*Flights and carrier are subject to change

# Trip Checklist

1. **Registration:** The application process is facilitated by UM football. Once approved, you will register online at [www.courtsforkids.org](http://www.courtsforkids.org) (detailed instructions to be provided later).
2. **Passport:** Make sure you have a passport that will not expire before **November 4, 2024**. 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 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**):
  - a. Routine (DPT, MMR, Polio, Chickenpox, Flu, Shingles)
  - b. COVID-19
  - c. Hepatitis A and B
  - d. Typhoid
4. Attend a **mandatory Courts for Kids pre-trip training, dates TBD, in the spring**. At this meeting, you will go through the Courts for Kids training, receive a packing list and detail packet with more specific information.

Questions?

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