Who is our Neighbor?
(¿Quién es Nuestro Prójimo?)



Carpenters for Christ
(Carpinteros para Cristo)

Background



Who is our Neighbor? and Carpenters for Christ are ministries led by Jonathan and Heidy Rivas, Honduran nationals who serve the Lord and their country every day. The specific ministries include encouraging local pastors and congregations, distributing food to needy families, building homes for those in dire conditions, building and expanding churches, supporting education through schools and for individuals and many more efforts. They are bilingual and very experienced in hosting and guiding North American mission teams. They also own and manage a mission/ conference property near the town of Zambrano.



The property is a living, breathing family environment. It is the home of the Rivas family (Jonathan, Heidy, Giselle, Rebecca, Victoria, Jonathan), and there are always other youth of various circumstances resident there. Many of them are bilingual.

The Mission Property

The property is in a beautiful rural setting near the town of Zambrano. It is located near the new Palmerola International Airport (XPL) and between the city of Comayagua and the capitol city of Tegucigalpa. (Loc 14°17'34.7"N 87°22'41.2"W). https://goo.gl/maps/brcaDCHVLHGhMMD48. The property is at an altitude of about 4900 feet.

The property currently consists residences cabins for mission teams and a large gathering and conference hall with a commercial kitchen. The personal home of the Rivas family is also on-site. The mission hall is a great place for your team to gather for meetings, activities, devotionals, prayer, fellowship and meals.







Lodging

Currently, the property can sleep 30 persons in five residence cabins. The cabins are self-contained and include a bedroom with bunk beds and a bathroom with a vanity, shower and toilet. Pillows, sheets, blankets and towels are provided. The vanity area includes a mirror and a sink with running water (cold only). The shower has hot water. The water from the tap isn't recommended for drinking or brushing teeth. There is a large drinking water dispenser provided in each cabin. Toilet systems in the cabins, as well as in Honduras in general, aren't suitable for flushing toilet paper or other hygiene products. Paper waste must be placed in the lidded container next to the toilet.









The cabins aren't air conditioned because temperatures around the property are usually mild, and with an elevation of about 4900 feet, the evenings and early mornings can be cool. The cabins have windows with screens that may be opened and there is a room fan if desired.

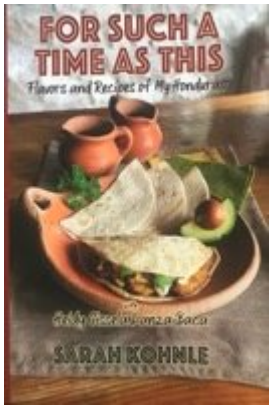
Electricity is the same as the USA - 120V. The cabins have multiple standard three-prong outlets in the bedroom and bathroom. There is a multi-outlet surge protector in each cabin for laptops, etc. There are fire extinguishers and basic first aid kits in each cabin.

There is a laundry facility on the property that may be available to use at an additional fee. Please remember that water is a limited resource and has to be purchased for use on the property.

Currently, WIFI for guests is provided in and near the mission hall / kitchen. WIFI may extend to some cabins but that isn't guaranteed. Jonathan and Heidy can assist you with access if needed.

Food

Meals are typically Honduran dishes served family style. Team meals are served in the mission hall. Meal costs are determined by how your team fee is arranged (see section on Mission Property). Meals outside the property are at your expense unless pre-arranged (for example sandwiches, drinks, snacks for a remote project site lunch).



Heidy oversees meal preparation and local ladies assist her. It is a great opportunity to meet and talk with local people. To raise funds for the ministry, Heidy and North American friend Sarah Kohnle published a bilingual cookbook of Heidy's delicious dishes that will give you an idea of what to expect. The book is available on Amazon.



Fees

Fees for your team's stay at the property vary depending on the size of the team and the nature of your missional activities. Fees can be arranged as a total for the entire group, a flat fee per person or on a daily bed and breakfast basis plus transportation costs, translator fees and other costs as needed. Project costs are separate (see section on Team Activities). Jonathan will work with your team leader in advance to understand your airport arrival and departure flights as well as transportation needs while your team is in Honduras. **Contact Jonathan well in advance to work all this out**.

Airport Arrivals

Flights from the USA arrive into the new Palmerola International Airport (XPL). When you arrive, you will clear through immigration control, collect your baggage and then pass through customs. Some airport agents speak English but many do not. They are used to dealing with non-Spanish speaking travelers and are professional. Be patient.



Below is a description of the current process but things change so be flexible:

Currently, the government of Honduras has no COVID related requirements for entry.

Honduran immigration entry requirements, like those of most countries, vary depending on your nationality as indicated by your passport. Currently, US citizens only require a valid passport to enter. Some other nationalities may require a visa in addition to a valid passport. Any required visas must be obtained in advance of your travel. You are responsible for determining if a visa is required and for obtaining it. You will not be allowed entry into Honduras without a valid visa if one is required.

Immigration lines can be long depending on the arrival timing of international flights. At immigration control you will present your passport / visa and may be asked to scan your fingerprints. A digital photo may be taken. After clearing immigration control, you will have to scan your carry-on luggage, backpacks, etc. After scanning, proceed toward baggage claim.



Prior to being allowed into the baggage claim area, you will have to show an agent that you have successfully completed an on-line customs form. The form can be accessed in advance of arrival (not more than 72 hours) by using the QR code on this page or at this website: https://sisglobal.aduanas.gob.hn/Pech/#/plataforma/otra_gestiones/formularioDJRV. Alternatively, you can access the site while in the immigration line at the airport via a QR code located on pillars in the immigration hall (see photo on the left). There are also signs providing information about WiFi.



The code will bring up the customs website (see photo on the right). At the top of the site is a toggle button for English. Once the form is completed successfully, the site will produce a personal QR code on your device. If you completed the form prior to arrival, be sure to save your personal QR code on your phon where you can access it later, or you can print a form with the code. You will need to show that QR code to an agent before you will be allowed into the baggage hall. They will scan it and send you on your way unless there are questions. Please note that only one form per family is required. There will be agents there to help you with any problems.

Here is guidance on how to respond to some of the questions on the form:

Arrival or Departure Customs	XPL, Palmerola
Reason for Travel	Tourism
Foreseen Address	Zambrano, Francisco Morazan

After your customs QR code is scanned, proceed to the baggage carousels to collect any checked baggage you have. Please know that you will be required to show your baggage claim check for checked bags before departing the baggage area. There are baggage carts available for free near the carousels. There will be people in the area that want to help you with your bags but it is best to decline politely unless you need assistance.

After you get your bags, proceed through the customs inspection area. It is common for mission team bags to be selected for physical examination. If so, you will be directed to a table where an agent will search your bag. Follow their lead and answer their questions.

After clearing customs, proceed through the doors into the arrival hall. Jonathan will be in the arrival hall to meet you and guide you to your transportation (see In-country Transportation section below).

You will be able to exchange your currency for Honduran Lempiras either inside the baggage claim area or in the arrival hall if you want local currency for bottled water, soft drinks, snacks, coffee, church donations, etc. Jonathan can advise you.

There are good places to eat at the airport or you can stop nearby. The drive to the mission property takes about 45 minutes from Palmerola Airport. It is a beautiful drive.

Airport Departure

Jonathan will deliver your team to the airport. When you get there, proceed to your airline's check-in desk for boarding passes, checking bags, etc. Due to the relatively low number of international departures, airline check-in counters generally close one hour before the scheduled departure of the flight so don't cut your arrival time too close. They will not reopen for late arrivers. It is essential to know if there are any Covid related entry requirements for your home country before you check in.

The current exit process requires you to complete the same form you completed upon entry. The form may be obtained by scanning the QR code near your airline's check-in area. You need to complete this form and receive your personal QR code before entering the exit immigration area.

Upon entering the immigration area, you will show an agent your personal QR code then proceed to an immigration agent to show them your passport and complete the finger scan and possibly a digital photo. After immigration, proceed through security for carry-on scanning and then proceed to your gate. Boarding typically starts about an hour before flight departure. Sometimes there is a random physical search process at the gate before boarding.

Before the immigration area, there are nice shops and restaurants. After clearing security and entering the gate area, you'll find a few smaller shops and restaurants. If you want to shop or eat and have time, it is best to do it before entering the immigration area.

In-country Transportation

The type of transportation your team needs for airport transfers and in-country projects depends on the size of your team, how much baggage you have and the type of missional activities you will perform. The mission property has two vehicles that are suitable for many activities of smaller teams. If your activity involves construction, you will almost certainly need the services of the work truck to haul equipment and materials. Jonathan can rent a larger vehicle for you if you have a larger team or special missional needs. The fees for use of the mission and/or rental vehicles and for fuel will vary depending on your requirements. Please work all this out with Jonathan well in advance of your trip.





Team Activities and Projects

There are many possible activities to engage in depending on the missional needs and objectives of your team. These include house building, church construction and improvement, Bible studies, evangelism, training, conferences, etc. It is essential that all these activities are discussed and decided well in advance of your trip. All activities require advance communication and coordination with local organizations and people to be accomplished successfully and meet your missional intent. Unless your team has fluent Spanish speakers, you will need one or more translators so you can interact with local people. English isn't widely spoken in rural Honduras. Jonathan will work with you to determine the translators you need.

As just one example, if you desire to connect with a pastor and a community by building a simple house for a needy family:

- The family needs to be selected and notified
- The family will have to move out all their possessions, find alternate accommodation and demolish their existing structure. They may be out of their home for weeks.
- Materials must be estimated, purchased and delivered
- Foundation footers must be dug and a concrete slab laid (all this is done by hand).
- All this must be done well before your team arrives as this process can easily take a month and likely more.

Some activities, such as house building, require advance funding with funds sent to Honduras well before your teams arrival. Jonathan can advise on costs and how to send funds.

It is advisable to confirm your desired trip dates well in advance as the mission property is frequently used by North American mission teams as well as local church groups.

Medical Matters: It is highly advisable for you to purchase short-term medical insurance for your trip. Trip insurance is available at a reasonable cost from a number of vendors (for example http://www.missiontripinsurance.com/). This insurance usually includes emergency evacuation and repatriation if needed. Your team leader may be able to enroll the whole team at one time.

The companies selling this insurance sometimes have developed a list of recommended local medical facilities and clinics. Depending on the nature of your need, it may be advisable to use private versus government clinics. Be aware that EMS may take some time to arrive in remote locations or not be available at all.

Bring enough prescription medication for your entire visit as you can't count on local refills. Pack medicine and personal medical equipment in your carry-on bag. Prescription medicine should be packaged in original containers if possible. High altitude may impact some medical conditions so check with your physician about any adjustments in medicine, etc. that might be necessary. Please check with your physician or local travel clinic months prior to travel to see if you need any specific immunizations or medications for Honduras. A current tetanus shot is strongly recommended.

Practical Thoughts on Mission Work

People: Your greatest reward from your trip is likely to be found through the people you meet. Hondurans are generally warm and open but may initially appear hesitant to engage when suddenly surrounded by a bus load of North Americans. Smile, look them in the eye, greet them, shake hands, ask for and try to remember names. A little knowledge of Spanish helps. Experienced translators are a must if your team isn't fluent to a degree. Jonathan can arrange for translators for a reasonable fee. The translators become part of your team and have their own interesting stories so get to know them.

Photographs: Most people don't mind having their photo taken but it is best to ask permission (permiso?). This is especially true when taking photos of their home and children. If they allow a photo, show it to them. The children especially enjoy this. You may also share photos of your family. It's best not to take photos of police and military personnel or installations.

Candy, Toys and Other Gifts: Please do not plan to just hand out items such as candy, balloons, pencils, crayons, toys and money to children or anyone. This creates the wrong expectation of why North Americans are on mission, it can encourage begging and may also create animosity between those who receive and those who don't. Ask Jonathan or Heidy if you have questions especially if your mission involves group activities with local people.

Different, Not Better or Worse: You are doing God's work so if you come with a flexible attitude and an open mind and heart, God will show you many things. Try to be open-minded and not assume that your way of doing things is superior to another way, especially on a short-term mission trip. Learn from the people you work with. The long-term benefit of your trip will not be in the tasks you do, but in the relationships you make.

Conduct: Your host organizations Who is our Neighbor? and Carpenters for Christ are Christian organizations. They, like Jonathan and Heidy, are well known in the communities where you will serve. Your conduct while in Honduras reflects on them personally and affects their ministry longnafter you leave. Please refrain from drinking alcohol and smoking during your time in Honduras. See Jonathan and Heidy if you have any questions.

Mission Trip Packing Ideas

Paperwork & Essentials

√	**Item**	**Notes**
	Passport	Current and valid for at least SIX months.
	Visa	If your passport is other than a US passport, verify if a visa is required
	Covid test or vax original document	If needed: check for current requirements before traveling
	Health insurance card	Provided by travel insurance company
	Photocopy of passport/visa, Covid document and insurance	Leave copies with your U.S. contact; carry the original and one copy with you
	Bible	Devotions, reading, evangelism
	Journal and pen	Record what God reveals to you
	Cash	For incidentals, souvenirs, airport. USD may be exchanged upon airport entry/exit.
	Credit cards	You may use credit cards in some larger businesses, restaurants, shops or fuel stations. Check with the vendor in advance. **BE SURE** to alert your US bank of your travel plans.

Clothes

√	**Item**	**Notes**
	Jeans/work pants/long shorts	Suitable for work or casual wear depending on your activities. Shorts should be knee-length.
	T-shirts, short or long sleeve shirts	Slogans/imprints must be wholesome; no tank tops
	Sweatshirt, sweater or jacket	Mornings / evenings can be chilly
	Tennis shoes, hikers or sandals	For everyday wear, closed toe for construction, etc.
	Flip-flops	Around the property, room/bathroom/shower
	Undergarments, socks	Enough for the number of days you will be away
	Sleepwear	Men and women will be in separate cabins
	Leisure/church day clothes	Casual but clean shoes, light jacket/sweater. Collared shirts for men with khaki pants or clean jeans; modest dresses or skirts/tops for women

Personal Care

√	**Item**	**Notes**
	Hair care	Brush/comb, shampoo, conditioner, dryer, etc.
	Dental care	Toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss, toothpicks
	Bathing	Razor/shaver, soap, deodorant
	Hand sanitizer	Carry with you to combat germs
	Makeup remover wipes	Hard to wash makeup out of linens
	Lotion/Chapstick	
	Wash cloth	Typically not provided
	Sunscreen	Essential if outside for any duration
	Earplugs	In case of noisy roommates, roosters, dogs
	Masks	Check requirements before arriving.
	Small Ziploc bag with flattened toilet tissue (bring your own) & individual hand wipes (often found in picnic section at grocery). One bag is fine for week.	Handy to have in your pocket or pack at churches or in community. Toilet tissue not always available. NEVER flush it – place in waste can near toilet.

Medical

√	**Item**	**Notes**
	Prescription medications	Pack in carry-on, not checked luggage
	OTC pain relievers	Aspirin, Tylenol, Aleve
	Cold and allergy medicine	
	PeptoBismol/Immodium AD/Cipro (prescription)	In case of mild intestinal discomfort
	Dramamine	In case of motion sickness
	First-aid Kit	Bandaids, gauze, tape, ace wrap, Neosporin, alcohol swabs, etc. One kit per team.
	Repellent	Non-aerosol for packing
	Melatonin	If desired as a sleep aid

Miscellaneous/Optional

√	**Item**	**Notes**
	Phone	If you plan to use it as a phone or text or data, ensure you have a reasonable international plan with your carrier. Roaming charges can be expensive without a plan. There is limited WIFI at the mission property. Remember your chargers!
	Backpack or fanny pack	For stashing keys, camera, snacks, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, etc.
	Water bottle	For room & work site, or just reuse a bottle from bottled water you purchased.
	Small flashlight, batteries	For reading and getting around at night
	Work gloves, safety glasses, tools	If you are doing construction work/special projects
	Hat, sunglasses	Especially if you will be working outside
	Inexpensive photo album (think Dollar Store)	To share photos of family, pets, weather, etc., so you're not always using your phone. Be mindful of backgrounds – simple & humble is best.
	Spanish/English dictionary / App	For reference and practice
	Mini-locks	To secure luggage if desired
	Ziploc bags, small garbage bags	Handy for many things
	Snacks	For during the day onsite or in your cabin – SEAL in Ziploc bag after opening so bugs don't eat your treats.
	Rain jacket/poncho	Might need it… might not