

Parent Information – Summer Mexico Mission 2023

FAQ

Where are we going and what will we be doing?

Once again, we will be partnering with Amor Ministries and building a home for a family connected to local pastors in Tijuana, Mexico.

Is this trip safe?

Beginning several months before we go to Mexico each year, our leaders keep a close eye on the State Department Travel advisory site:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/mexico-travel-advisory.html>

In addition to this we stay in contact with the office staff at Amor, based in San Diego. Amor has supervisors and group leaders who are in Baja every day of the year. Our building areas are chosen by Amor. Safety is their main concern. They have an excellent connection with the Mexican Border Patrol as well as the Police all over Tijuana and in the areas where houses are built. In the 35+ years they have worked in these areas and built houses, they have strengthened these relationships and never had a criminal incident in which anyone was harassed or accosted while building an Amor house or staying in an Amor camp.

In the past five to ten years, the real trouble areas in Baja and Tijuana have been isolated to certain downtown or beach areas, mainly at night and around bars or cantinas. These are not areas we ever go into. We are NEVER out around town or in those areas during the day or at night. In fact, while in an Amor camp or on a work site, the real trouble areas in Tijuana are farther from our group than troubled South Central areas of LA are to our students when we are home. Our leaders feel that, working with Amor, we are very safe.

What is the cost for the trip and how is it paid for?

The cost for our trip is set by Amor. **It is usually in the range of \$475-\$500 per person.** Thanks to our generous congregation during the mission fellowship fundraisers we usually have enough funds to attend without personal cost from mission team members. The cost per person we pay Amor includes maintenance and security at the camp site, all construction supplies, and tools for building a house, Amor's participation and project fees, three meals a day (plus an afternoon snack), and transportation to and from Mexico.

What are conditions like in the Amor Camp?

Most of this information is covered below under the question "Where will the group stay?" The camp is pretty primitive. We will provide our own tents. The group will have a designated area for Conejo. Guys and girls will have separate tents and tent areas within our camp space. The rest rooms are a long row of outhouses with no plumbing. Showers are provided by solar shower bags that each person will bring and fill daily. The camp has designated guys and girls shower houses where shower bags can be hung up for showers. The shower rooms do not have running water.

Are Passports Necessary?

YES!! Please start the process as soon as possible if any person in your family planning to go to Mexico does not have a passport. *You can also purchase a passport card. These are cheaper than a traditional passport book and have the ability to be scanned by the border patrol while waiting in line to cross the border. This ultimately cuts down the time it takes the border patrol agent to check everyone before crossing.*

How can you be sure my child will not lose his or her passport in Mexico?

This is an obvious legitimate concern. We only need passports when we are crossing the border into Mexico and when we are going back home. Therefore, we collect all the passports as soon as we get to Mexico and keep them locked up in a safe place so that none can be lost or stolen. On the morning we leave for home, everyone is given their passport to hold onto so they have it in hand when we come to the US border. At that point the border guard asks for them. When we get through the border, all passports are returned to their owner. If your child is to lose his or her passport, the only place it could be is in the vehicle in which he or she rode home. We check and clean out all the vehicles upon return and return any personal items, including passports.

TRAVEL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AMOR MISSION TRIP

Contacting us in Mexico:

Travis will have his cell phone with him – 520.591.8246

- Please only call for emergencies
- Students will not be allowed to make calls during the day while we are working, except in case of emergency.
 - All your calls will be subject to international charges depending upon what cell phone carrier you have and whether or not you have a phone plan with international service.
 - If you need to contact your student, call Travis; as a second resort, the number of another adult who attends will be available to you before we leave.

In case of emergencies you can call the office of Amor in San Diego at 619 662 1200 ext. 8

- They can contact the work crews and groups via radio at any time, then we will get back to you ASAP.

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency for one of our team members, he or she will be evacuated to a hospital in San Diego. The family will be immediately contacted and apprised of the situation and their whereabouts. The closest hospitals in San Diego are listed below:

Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center

751 Medical Center Court
Chula Vista CA 91910
619.482.5800

Scripps Mercy Hospital

435 H Street
Chula Vista CA 91910
619.691.7000

Crossing the Border:

- Groups are not allowed to cross on their own. Amor leads all groups by caravan.
- The Mexican border officials will inspect vehicles and trailers for any illegal items, building materials, firewood and donations. Please be patient and respectfully quiet.
- Amor has a relationship with the border officials and the Mexican Police that spans 35+ years without a single negative incident.
- Over the past 10 years we have been working with Amor, they have taken around 10,000 people per year into Baja California to build houses and never had a single criminal incident or problem with a team or group member who came to build houses. Their reputation is outstanding in Mexico.

Where will the group stay?

- Our Group will be at the “Rancho Camp” east of Tijuana. This is the most established and highly used camp that Amor offers. Temperatures will be moderate to hot during the day and cool in the evening.
- The following guidelines and information come directly from the Amor website:
 - **Authority**
 - Group leaders are responsible for the whereabouts of group members at all times.
 - The Amor Staff will always be present to serve as guides and hosts.
 - The camp caretakers, pastors on the Mexico Ministry Planning Board, are present 24 hours a day to prevent unauthorized entry into and departure from the camps.
 - **The Camp**
 - Groups are expected to stay at the Amor Camps.
 - The camps are established near the communities where Amor builds homes.
 - Camping provides an atmosphere of team building within each group.

- Groups should not bring fireworks, weapons, drugs, alcohol, or animals into the camp.
- Groups should not leave camp without notifying an Amor staff member.
- **Campsites**
 - Several groups will camp in the large Amor campsite area.
 - Each group's campsite is viewed as a 'private' area. We will not enter another groups' campsite without an invitation, nor should they enter ours.
 - No one will leave the Amor camp without being accompanied by an Amor staff member.

When will the group leave?

- We will meet at Conejo on Sunday morning June 25th and pack up during bible class.
 - After packing, prayer, and a group picture, we will leave Conejo by 10am.

When will the group return?

- We will leave Mexico on the morning of Friday, June 30th.
 - We will get up in the morning, pack up all our tents and gear and try to get on the road by 6:30 am. Getting up this early has proved to cut down our wait time at border significantly.
 - We hope to be home around lunchtime or 1pm. We will have everyone call ahead when we are about an hour away from home.