

## Choosing a Service Trip that's right for you...

**So, you really want to travel and you have decided that a service trip would be a great way to combine traveling and helping others. But, where do you begin? The following are a list of questions you can ask yourself to help you choose a service project. At the end of the day, you will have to use your own judgment, but these questions are designed to help you make the most informed decision. Have fun!**

### Country & Location

- Is there a country you have always wanted to visit?
- Have you ever traveled abroad before?
- Is there a particular culture that you want to learn about?
- Do you speak a foreign language? Do you want to practice speaking a foreign language?
- Do you want to learn a foreign language?
- What type of climate do you want to be in?
- Have you ever considered living in another country? This could be an opportunity to see what it is like.
- Is there a city or country that has a special connection to your family or any of your friends? This could be an opportunity to learn more about your heritage or that of your friends.
- Is there a city/country that is well known for anything in which you are interested; i.e., business, technology, sports, healthcare, music, etc.?

### Type of Project

- What interests you? (education, healthcare, sports, environmental conservation, construction, etc.)
- What are your career goals? This could be an opportunity to serve, as well as gain some field experience.
- Is there a particular area of life that you have always wanted to explore?
- Is there a new skill that you would like to obtain?
- Has a particular issue affected you or someone close to you?
- How long is the project? Are you going to get your money's worth? Is it enough time to truly immerse yourself in the culture?

### The Organization

- Have any friends or family members engaged in service work before? What organization did they work with? How did they choose that organization?
- In what countries does the organization work?
- What opportunities does the organization provide? (individual programs, group programs, gap years, programs, courses, extracurricular and cultural activities, etc.)
- How long has the organization been around?
- What have past volunteers said about their experiences?

- Is it easy to get in contact with a staff member? Ask as many questions of them as you need.
- What does the website look like? Is it professional and well organized?
- Do they provide information on grants/scholarships/fundraising techniques? Do they offer any scholarships?
- How often do they have trips?
- How much do their programs cost? Do you know anyone that would help fund your trip?
- What living arrangements do they provide? (homestay vs. volunteer housing)
- How do they serve? Do they partner with local people and community organizations? Do they truly address the needs of the people?
- Are they non-sectarian or religiously affiliated?
- Do they offer opportunities for reflection? Do they provide volunteers with any materials for reflection; i.e., journals, handbooks, articles, etc.?
- Do they partner with a travel agent? (Some organizations do so, and they can usually find discounted flights.)
- Evaluate their application process. Do they have medical and liability forms? Do they provide you with information on vaccinations and obtaining a Visa?

Enjoy your trip!