MISSION TRIPS WITH THE YUCATAN PENINSULA MISSION (YPM)

Transform Lives Through Service: Group Informational Packet

For More Information:	Contact:
Website: https://www.ypmusa.org	**Email Address:** info@ypmusa.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/yucatanpeninsulamission	**Mailing Address:** 10720 N Knoxville Ave. Peoria, IL 61615

Overview of YPM

MISSION

Supporting positive change through service projects in the Yucatan Peninsula

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

YPM is committed to serving the needs of the Mayan/Mexican people in the Zona Maya region of the Yucatan Peninsula. Incorporated as a not-for-profit in both the US and Mexico, YPM provides opportunities for positive change to children, adults, families, and communities in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico -- through service projects, education, health care, cultural exchange and spiritual support.

YPM has been promoting positive change in the Yucatan since the 1960's, when Cancun was a small fishing village of about 200 people. We began with building churches there, and as the population of Cancun increased, YPM began to focus on the Zona Maya, the villages of the interior of the peninsula, strengthening and building churches in that region. In 2004, YPM established a base for our mission work in the Zona Maya, in the village of Leona Vicario. Some property and a small house were purchased, and the house has now grown and expanded into welcoming and comfortable accommodations for our mission teams.

YPM supports various projects in the Zona Maya: educational projects, public health projects, and much more!

iYPM: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

iYPM is an educational institution with the goal of providing high quality learning opportunities. We form excellent professionals with the knowledge, skills and values to positively transform themselves and their communities. Our vision is to be an international Christian institution and a leader in human development, through practicing the values of peace and social cohesion, enabling a modern education system at all levels and providing equal opportunities that contribute to the transformation of the self and the global community. iYPM offers programs at both the high school and university level, with degrees in business administration, law, teaching and school administration, information systems, theology, marketing, accounting, and social work.

Ch'e'en Ja: SAFE WATER INITIATIVES

Ch'e'en Ja (well water in Maya) is a safe water plant built in partnership with Living Waters for the World (a US 501(c)(3). Water from the well is pumped through multiple filters, chlorinated, and softened. After softening, the water is pumped through a reverse osmosis unit. Before the sanitized bottles are filled, the clean water passes through an ultraviolet light filter.

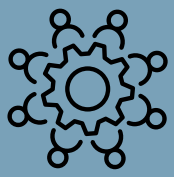
The primary purpose of Ch'e'en Ja is to improve the health of Maya communities by providing clean and affordable water. Beyond its impact on health, Ch'e'en Ja is also committed to social development:

- Providing job opportunities for iYPM students.
- Offering older adults the opportunity to distribute product, allowing them to generate a dignified income - especially at a stage of life when work opportunities are often denied to them.
- Supporting entrepreneurs by supplying products as a foundation for their new businesses, helping them strengthen their income and promote local development.

Ch'e'en Ja is more than clean water: it is health, hope, and opportunity for the community.

Types of Trips

A mission trip with YPM isn't just about doing a job; it's about making an impact in a way that matters to you. See how your mission trip can impact each of our Project Focus Areas. Have an idea for a project that isn't in this list? Just let us know when you inquire about a trip and we can dream together!

	**Education: Support the iYPM High School, iYPM College, and iYPM Theological Seminary** Sample Tasks: Campus construction/clean up/repairs, curriculum development, workshop teaching
	**Health: Support the Water Plant and Medical Clinics** Sample Tasks: Water plant construction/ education, public vaccinations/ primary care clinics
	**Social Services and Community Development: Support the Community with Acts of Service** Sample Tasks: Topical public workshops, construction for other organizations or individual families, summer camps for local children

Trip Costs

Costs are per person for a standard trip length of 7 days and include lodging, food, and transportation in Mexico, as well as materials for projects. Airfare and any leisure activities are your responsibility.

Please Note: Under US IRS law, mission fees are not considered charitable donations.

Groups of 10 or More	**$800 USD**
Groups of Under 10	**$850 USD**

What You Can Expect

REGISTRATION FEE INCLUSIONS: Private transportation to and from the Cancun airport, safe and comfortable lodging, all meals except at the airport and on the free day (if applicable), hand-woven hammock, YPM t-shirt, and tools, materials, and equipment for service projects. Travel from your home to Cancun is not included in your fees, and it is your responsibility to coordinate your travel plans.

SAFETY: Mission trip participants are met by our hosts, Wilian and Erly, at the Cancun airport and transported by private vans to the YPM Base in Leona Vicario (a 45 minute drive from the airport). The YPM Base is in an enclosed and gated area, and there have been no safety issues to date. We still recommend checking with the U.S. State Department for any travel advisories and the most up to date information about immunizations.

LANGUAGE: You do not need to speak Spanish. Our hosts, Wilian and Erly, speak and understand English. If you do speak Spanish, however, this is a great opportunity to practice conversation.

WORK: There is something for everyone, depending on the type of trip. Construction Trip tasks include shoveling and hauling gravel, sand, water; mixing concrete; painting; garden work; moving cinder blocks; and installing roof tiles. We work with local master craftsmen who supervise and direct the activities. Medical Trip tasks range from assisting licensed doctors and nurses with moving patients, triage, admissions, running prescriptions to the pharmacy and translating. Most trips of any kind include activities for the local children in the form of crafts, games, songs and free play.

WATER: Safe water is available but not all water is safe. The YPM Base has bottled water from Ch'e'en Ja for cooking, drinking and brushing teeth. Otherwise the local tap water is not safe for North Americans to drink. And as YPM host, Erly, will remind you, that includes the shower, so don't sing in the shower!

LODGING: The YPM Base has several large dormitory type air-conditioned rooms that can accommodate a combination of twin beds and hammocks. Males and females sleep in separate quarters, typically 4-6 people to a room. Hammocks are included in the cost of the trip, so if you've ever thought you'd like to try sleeping in a hammock, now's your chance! Separate male and female showers and toilets are down the hall (2 of each for men and women).

FOOD: The cooks at the YPM Base make delicious, nutritious local dishes (but nothing too spicy). There are also alternative options for most meals to accommodate special diets with advance notice. The food is clean and cooks are very conscious about safe food handling. Before cooking or eating, all group members and staff wash their hands with soapy water, then a solution of Clorox and water, and finally a clean bottled water rinse. The group members take turns washing the dishes after each meal, so each person will have the duty once or twice during the trip.

CONNECTIVITY: There is cell service as well as wifi available at the YPM Base, but we encourage participants to take this chance to disconnect and not use their phones unless necessary.

PRAYER: YPM is founded on Christian principles, and much of our support comes from churches and their members across the US. Our mission is not evangelistic, but a mission of service toward our Mexican brothers and sisters. Our leader in Mexico is a Presbyterian pastor and we pray before meals and at the beginning of each work day. We welcome all faith traditions to work alongside us and participate in any way they choose.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT: If your group is at the base on Sunday, you can plan to attend worship with your host. Time is available and should be planned into your trip for reflection and observation of faith. Your group should include a spiritual leader who can develop something appropriate.

LEISURE TIME: Many of the groups will add a day for leisure into their schedule. The coastal communities (Cozumel, Playa Del Carmen, Isla Mujeres and Holbox, to list a few) offer opportunities for beaches, shopping and play. There are also opportunities for cultural exploration (Chichen Itza, Edzna and Campeche). Your host can provide assistance with organizing transportation to and from those locations. Your group will need to plan for this in advance and coordinate it with your other travel plans. You are responsible for the cost of your leisure time.

WEATHER: Winter runs from November to February, and temperatures at this time can hover around 82/86°F. March to May is actually the hottest season of the year, tipping the thermometer as high as 104°F. Summer is a rainy season, from June to October, and can be hot and muggy, with many hours of sunshine. Construction trips will want to schedule their work periods early in the day to avoid the hot conditions. The amount of sunshine in the Yucatan is good all year round, but especially from March to May. Shorts and t-shirts are standard attire. Groups can go to local pools for a refreshing swim, or venture to a cenote or even the Caribbean for something more fun.

What To Bring: 1 Carry On Bag + 1 Checked Suitcase

	**Clothing:** Jeans or heavy pants for worksite, Clean shirt for each work day, Extra clothes/shoes for evenings/leisure days/travel days (lightweight, casual), Light jacket, Pajamas, Plenty of underwear and socks, Swimsuit and beach shoes, Church attire (Men: dress pants and shirt; Women: skirt or dress). If you wish to donate your clothes rather than bring them home, please let your hosts know!
	**Work Equipment:** Bandana/sweatband, Safety work glasses, Substantial work shoes, Sunglasses, Sunscreen with high SPF, Leather work gloves, Sun hat, Water bottle, Small bag for worksite
	**Toiletries:** Personal medications in original containers, Shower shoes, Personal toiletries, Towels (one hand towel, one bath towel for the shower and one towel for the beach), High DEET Insect repellent
	**Other Useful Items:** All identification and travel documents (in carry on only), Plastic bags (for laundry), Bible and journal, Ear plugs, Flashlight, Camera and film or Smart-phone (Note: It may be very expensive to use your phone unless you have an international plan.)
	**Spending Money:** Room and board are covered by your trip fees, so you will not need any money at the base. However, if you want to sample local treats, it is a good idea to come with some Mexican pesos. Local (safe) taxis are available for a small charge. Also, you will need to cover the cost of your meals and incidentals in transit, as well as any additional costs related to your leisure day.
	**First Aid Kit (One Per Group):** Acetaminophen, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Antidiarrheal medication, Oral rehydration solution packets, Mild laxative, Antacid, Antihistamine, Decongestant, Cough suppressant/expectorant, Throat lozenges, Anti-motion sickness medication, Disposable gloves, Adhesive bandages, Gauze, Adhesive tape, Elastic bandage wrap, Antiseptic, Cotton swabs, Tweezers, Scissors, Anti-fungal and antibacterial creams, Hydrocortisone cream, Anti-itch gel, Aloe gel, Moleskin, Digital thermometer, Saline eye drops, Insect repellent, Sunscreen, Antibacterial hand wipes

Travel and House Rules

TRIP PAYMENT: Groups will be invoiced directly by YPM and it is the group leader's responsibility to collect money from each participant in pay the invoice from YPM. In the case that an individual is not affiliated with a group, trip payments should be made directly to YPM: Visit the Give page on the YPM website (https://www.ypmusa.org/give), and make sure to designate in the notes that your payment is for a particular trip. Many groups have fundraisers and donation events to support the cost of the trip for members.

TRIP FINANCIAL PREPARATION: Before you travel to Mexico, we recommend that you check what international care your health insurance covers, alert your credit card companies about your upcoming approved change in location so that you are prepared for any potential large emergency transactions, and consider investing in travel insurance.

MEXICAN CUSTOMS: A valid passport is required for travel in Mexico. While going through customs, the immigration officer may ask about the reason for the visit to Mexico, or what the group is doing there. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO STATE "VACATION" AS THE REASON FOR YOUR VISIT. Also, some bags will be searched as you enter the country. We recommend checking with the Mexican State Department for the most up to date information about customs, immigration, and tourism related taxes.

DO NOT PACK PASSPORTS IN CHECKED LUGGAGE. Make sure to check the expiration date on your passport. Mexico may refuse entry to individuals with passports that expire within 6 months.

TEAM LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT: We have found that teams work best when each person is given a responsibility that fits their gifts and skills. This is a list of suggested leadership roles that contribute to a successful YPM mission trip:

- *Team Leader:* Motivation of the team, management of documentation and correspondence, creation of schedule, and general oversight.
- *Spiritual Leader:* Responsible for guiding daily prayer and devotional time, and coordinating music and worship.
- *Treasurer/Finance Officer:* Collection, control, and currency exchange of all money for group expenses, oversight of income, expenses, and budgeting.
- *Travel Agent:* Coordination of travel arrangements, itineraries, and reservations for leisure time.
- *Work Coordinator:* Organization of all workers and materials at the work site, including goal setting.
- *First Aid:* Responsible for safety and medical care by stocking and ensuring availability of first aid kit.
- *Photographer:* Gather all photos taken and create a group video or collage.

HOUSE RULES FOR THE YPM BASE:

- All group members must stay with the group at all times, participate in all activities together, and eat all meals together as a group. Tell someone if you leave the Base.
- Keep all of your belongings picked up (in your suitcase or in a neat pile out of the way).
- If using a hammock, take your hammock down during the day, moving it to one hook against the wall, to preserve space in the room.
- Electricity is an extremely precious and expensive commodity in Mexico, so please be frugal.
- When you leave your room in the morning, shut off all lights, fans, and air conditioning. Close the windows in case of rain showers.
- Water is also both precious and finite. Please use only the water that you need.
- While in the Yucatan, used toilet paper and feminine hygiene products are placed in waste baskets and NOT in the toilet. The sewer systems in Mexico are inadequate to deal with these, so please do not risk damaging the system.
- Once a day, one member of your group (rotating the duty each day) should collect all bathroom trash bags and put new bags in the baskets. The bags can be placed in the garbage can under the back outdoor stairs. Extra bags are available in the kitchen.
- Water from the tap or the shower is not safe to drink or brush your teeth with. Only drink the bottled, sanitized water provided to you at the Base. To help break habits, don't even turn the tap water on while brushing your teeth until you are done and have rinsed your brush.
- Food at the Base has been properly cleaned and prepared. However, when not at the Base, avoid raw leafy vegetables, raw meat, raw fish or shellfish, fruit without a peel, milk, milk by-products, and all street vendor food.
- Before each meal, wash your hands with the provided soapy water, then a solution of Clorox and water, and finally a clean bottled water rinse.
- Prayers will be shared before each meal in Spanish and English and sometimes Maya. Please be on time and consider take a turn.
- Three group members take turns washing the dishes after each meal: Wash, Rinse and Dry. Please take a turn but let all serve each other.
- Use plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent. Reapply often.
- Drink plenty of liquids when working in the sun and heat.
- Wear shoes and check your shoes before putting them on for snakes, spiders and scorpions.
- Don't give money to the locals, especially the children.
- If you feel ill let someone know. Your hosts will have remedies for common illnesses. Bring the First Aid Kit to all work sites.
- Your leader will designate a time for group devotion and reflection. Please be there and participate.

Mission Trip Code of Ethics

As a member of your team, you accept the following Code of Ethics:

1. I will **abide by local laws**, including those concerning drugs or alcohol. Breaking these laws or rules may be grounds for being sent home early from the trip. Additional travel expenses due to behavior or medical reasons are my responsibility.
2. I understand that this is a work project/cultural exchange and not an evangelism crusade. I will share Jesus with others **respectfully**, not forcefully.
3. I will adopt a **flexible and positive attitude**. Encountering unfamiliar situations and cultures is often difficult and exhausting. I will be informed of what to expect on a daily basis. Everything, however, is subject to change.
4. I will adopt a posture of **humility and a servant attitude** as I interact with my team members and those I will meet on this trip. I will develop a habit of clarification and deference instead of thinking I know all the answers and the best way to do things.
5. I will adopt the posture of a **learner**, seeking to understand the host culture with curiosity. I will abstain from making derogatory comments regarding people, politics, sports, religion, race, or traditions with our team members or those we visit.
6. I will be aware of and **respect the feelings and customs** of other people, preventing what might be offensive behavior. I will ask questions if I am unsure of appropriate behavior.
7. I will respect people's dignity and **privacy when taking pictures** of the people I meet on my trip. It is always better to ask before I snap.
8. I will be aware that different countries often have **different time concepts** and thought patterns. Schedules may feel much more relaxed and less strict.
9. I will give and **spend wisely** and thoughtfully.
10. I will **attend all team meetings**, both before departure, during the trip, and upon return.

The Yucatan Peninsula is known for its resorts, beaches and scenic beauty. Although this is the picture postcard presented, there is a world of need that the tourism industry does not expose. Our mission is one of service, not a vacation, but a **vacation with a purpose**.

Your team will live and work alongside the people you go to serve. You will have an opportunity to see and experience the way God is in the lives of these people, as well as your own.

"I am a different person because of YPM. I have left some of me here in Leona Vicario and I will take some of Leona Vicario home with me."

— Haley, Trip Participant