



Hands Up
for Haiti

Volunteer Information Packet
2011

info@handsupforhaiti.org
www.handsupforhaiti.org

We are pleased to welcome you as a volunteer with Hands Up for Haiti ("HUFH"). HUFH grew out of the work of a few volunteers and we continue to rely on volunteer support. This packet sets forth the terms and conditions of your relationship as a volunteer with HUFH. Enclosed is an application and information on how to prepare for your trip. Additionally, as a volunteer, you must comply with HUFH policies and procedures, including safety protocols for working in Haiti. This packet contains an emergency contact sheet, consent form and legal release. We ask that you review carefully the materials in this packet and sign and return it to the address below. Your willingness to help those in need through HUFH is invaluable and we hope that your expectations of this volunteer opportunity are clear and remind you that you should not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Please enclose the following documents in a letter:

- (1) Application
- (2) Copy of your passport
- (3) Medical license (if applicable)
- (4) Signed Code of Conduct/Safety Plan
- (5) Signature(s)
- (6) Letter of recommendation

Please address completed packet to:

Hands Up for Haiti
PO Box 913
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549

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Hands Up for Haiti's Mission Statement

Hands Up for Haiti is a medical humanitarian organization committed to improving the quality of health care in Haiti. To achieve our goal, Hands Up for Haiti sends medical teams, supplies and equipment to established health care facilities in Northern Haiti. A major component of our mission is to provide education and training programs for members of the Haitian medical community. We strive to offer a rewarding global health experience for students and physicians-in-training abroad. Our teams collaborate with Haitian doctors, nurses and students in providing medical and surgical services to patients in local hospitals and outlying clinics. We believe in providing others with the opportunity to learn together and work towards sustainable health care in Haiti.

What is Hands Up for Haiti?

We are a group of individuals who left for Haiti shortly after the earthquake to do immediate medical relief. While Port au Prince was the epicenter of the relief efforts, this team went to Cap Haitien, on the northern coast. Although this part of Haiti was not affected by the earthquake, we came to realize that the people were in desperate need of proper medical assistance.

It was during this trip that our group had an "ah-ha!" moment ([here's the story](#)) which literally defined us. We became Hands Up for Haiti to provide people with the opportunity to travel to Northern Haiti to work in clinics and hospitals. With our large network of medical organizations in Haiti, Hands Up for Haiti is able to connect medical personnel and other volunteers with doctors, nurses and students in Haiti. Each trip has an experienced team leader who is responsible for the organization and safety of the team.

It is said by many that "You can leave Haiti, but Haiti will never leave you" and for many of us, a piece of that country remains in our hearts after we return home. It is the Haitian people who will open their hearts and welcome you and who you will never forget.

How long are the trips?

Our trips are a week long.

How much will the trip cost?

Each trip costs around \$2,000* per person which will cover airfare, airport and baggage fees in Haiti, room and board and Creole translators and a special breakfast and dinner at the hotel in Cap Haitien. Your team leader will be responsible for all of the costs on the trip. Once your application has been accepted, a deposit of \$1,000 will be due 90 days prior to your trip. This deposit will be used to secure your airfare. The remainder of your payment will be due one week prior to departure of your trip.

*This cost is based on flights leaving out of New York. The cost may vary according to state or country of departure. Costs vary per trip.

What if I have no medical experience?

Hands Up for Haiti welcomes volunteers who have no medical background. A variety of backgrounds, skills and experiences are an asset in the field. Doctors and nurses will always need a helping hand, preparing the patients for their appointment, helping in the pharmacy,

or simply educating patients on preventative health care. You may find yourself working outside of your comfort zone, but you will never be alone because we work as a team.

What kind of clinics will we work in?

Each clinic experience will be different based on the practitioners who attend. HUFH has relationships with many clinics and hospitals in Northern Haiti. Volunteers may travel to clinics located in a coastal fishing village, urban areas in Cap Haitien, and/or farming communities. During a mission, teams may visit a remote clinic for a day where the people are in particular need. Recent trips have included pediatricians on an immunization campaign, another included an ophthalmologist and a cardiologist who did work in the local hospital and another was a group of pediatricians and an OB/GYN treating mothers and children in rural villages.

Accommodations

There are staff houses or dormitories at each site in Haiti that are rented by HUFH. Each house is fully furnished with a bedroom, bathroom (cold water only) kitchen, and lounge. There may or may not be internet available to visitors depending on where your team will stay, although it can be temperamental and does not necessarily function at all times. The majority of our sites are communal living, meaning you will most likely share a room and bathroom with others from your group. There will be meals served each day, but we recommend you bring some snacks. There will also be purified water at each site so you can re-fill your water bottle.

Before you go

Please see: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/haiti.htm> for full information regarding travel to Haiti prior to making your decision to volunteer.

All volunteers: Please make **2 copies** of your passport and any other travel documents. A valid passport is required to enter Haiti. You will keep one for yourself and mail a copy to HUFH.

Medical and other licensed personnel: Please make **2 copies** of your license. You will keep one for yourself and mail a copy with this completed packet.

Hands Up for Haiti will register all travelers, as a group, with the U.S. State Department prior to each trip. Emergency contact information and passport information are required for this process. Please be advised that your information will be kept confidential.

Vaccinations/Preventative Medications:

Please visit a travel clinic well in advance of your departure to allow inoculations to work. Check with the CDC for vaccination recommendations and updates: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/caribbean.htm>. Documentation of vaccinations is not required to enter Haiti, but it is strongly recommended that you are able to get these medications and vaccinations before going:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Chloroquine - *Malaria is present in Haiti so a 6 week course is recommended starting 1 week prior to travel, and continued for 4 weeks after return (6 pills total).*
- Cipro or equivalent medication - *It is recommended you bring a 7 day prescription in case of the onset of GI symptoms.*

What to bring

- 1) Sunblock
- 2) Mosquito netting
- 3) Reusable water bottle (to be taken with you every day)
- 4) Quick energy foods (crackers, nutra-grain bars, etc)
- 5) Sports drink (powdered or concentrated)
- 6) Hand sanitizer
- 7) Towel
- 8) Flashlight and batteries
- 9) Mini-fan (believe us, you will need it)
- 10) Earplugs (same goes for this essential item!)
- 11) Bug spray (30% DEET or greater)
- 12) Personal journal and pen
- 13) Fanny pack
- 14) Rain gear (poncho is sufficient)
- 15) Personal toiletries: 3oz travel size bottles are sufficient and also makes room for other items that may have to be stored in your luggage.
- 16) Appropriate attire:
 - Clinic: Bring 1 set of scrubs for each day of clinic (this will vary by trip). Socks that wick moisture are also recommended.
 - Downtime: You should bring a set of downtime clothing for each day of your trip. In keeping with Haitian culture, articles such as shorts, skirts and tank tops should not be revealing. Otherwise, wear whatever is comfortable. Keep in mind Haiti is a tropical climate.
 - Church: Some missions hold church services. It is considered respectful to attend, even if you are not of that faith. Please bring one outfit appropriate for church.
 - Shoes: Comfortable sneakers for clinic, flip flops for shower and downtime, shoes for church.
- 17) Medications: If you take any prescribed medications or use contact lenses, bring enough for the days you are planned to be in Haiti plus two weeks in case of delayed return. The following items are also useful:
 - Benadryl (oral and topical)
 - Hydrocortisone cream
 - Tums
 - Lubricating tear drops
 - Ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- 18) Money: Groups may be able to visit the market, so bring a little spending cash if you would like to purchase Haitian arts & crafts.
- 19) Most of the missions and clinics provide linen for their sleeping quarters, however not all of them do, a small travel pillow and a flat sheet are suggested. Discuss with trip leader.
- 20) Battery operated fan and batteries

Packing

Checking Baggage: Please pack under **50lbs** of luggage to check. A duffel bag with wheels is ideal and makes for easier transportation once you are on the ground.

Carry-on Baggage: One **10lb** baggage is the weight limit for most US airlines. Any items of value or importance i.e. money, passports, personal medications, cameras and phones should be carried on.

What to expect when you first land

When you land in Haiti, all travelers must be prepared to let a Haitian to carry your luggage from the airport to your car. Be prepared to have multiple encounters with people who will ask you for money when you are in the city. It is strongly recommended that you do not pay - this only encourages them to beg and can create an unsafe situation. This may be hard to do personally, however, keep in mind that your group will bring economic help to Haiti by using local workers for translation and transportation, as well as our room and board. Your team leader will make sure that all workers are compensated.

Phone service in Haiti

Although temperamental, there is cell phone reception in Haiti. Please contact your cell phone provider for global packages and service accessibility while you are in Haiti. To make calls from Haiti to the US dial 001+Number.

Safety

As we all know, Haiti suffers from extreme poverty and continued political unrest. As rewarding an experience missions can be, there is inherent danger you must be aware of. Hands Up for Haiti has a strict code of conduct that we abide by and trusts that all volunteers will accept. Hands Up for Haiti has established plan to provide for the safety of its members and volunteers. We acknowledge that as a developing nation, the political and social climate in Haiti can be unstable and volunteer our services with this in mind.

- 1)** All members will be insured by MedJet Assist which provides travelers with the highest quality service and care in travel assistance and medical evacuation.
- 2)** All members of each trip will be registered with the U.S. State Department prior to departure.
- 3)** A team leader will be designated for each trip and be the contact person for the group. The team leader will carry a profile on each volunteer and contact information for the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian consulate and the U.S. State Department.
- 4)** Hands Up for Haiti will maintain a list of emergency contact information for volunteers on the ground. Once a decision to stay or evacuate has been made, the team leader will attempt to notify the contact team in the States, who will then notify emergency contacts.
- 5)** The volunteer coordinator will monitor conditions in Haiti in the following manner: checking for State Department alerts prior to and during each mission; monitoring weather reports; communication with contacts on the ground in Haiti. This information will be shared with the team leader as it is available and as cell phone service allows.
- 6)** The decision to evacuate is made very carefully because we volunteer with full knowledge of the risks. Circumstances that would warrant evacuation:
 - The U.S. State Department requires all U.S. citizens to evacuate for any reason.
 - A team decision is made to evacuate based on conditions that threaten the safety of the team, including, but not limited to, violence or severe weather.

Application

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Current Employer (if you are a student, please indicate grade and school):

How did you learn about Hands Up for Haiti?

Why do you want to volunteer with HUFH? What are your goals?

Is there a specific capacity in which you'd like to serve? What kind of work would you like to do with HUFH?

Please list any specific skills, talents or areas of interest that may be helpful to you in your work with HUFH (certifications, experience, languages, etc.):

Do you have any experience working in the developing world?: If yes, briefly describe:

Please list any community service or humanitarian work that you have been involved in:

Describe how you anticipate dealing with and adjusting to unfamiliar surroundings, cultural differences, and different health care system?

Please provide Hands Up for Haiti with one reference letter: Work or school related, not peers.

Code of Conduct

As a volunteer for Hands up for Haiti, I am committed to:

1. Recognize that I have a responsibility to adhere to the rules and procedures of Hands Up for Haiti.
2. Not preach to anyone or pressure anyone to accept my political, cultural or religious beliefs.
3. Treat all individuals with a sense of dignity, respect, and worth. Make a personal commitment to be nonjudgmental about cultural differences, living and working conditions and life style of the people in Haiti.
4. When possible, attempts shall be made to avoid creating dependence of the local community on Hands Up for Haiti.
5. When possible, attempts will be made to coordinate efforts with the doctors and nurses in Haiti and when planning and delivering services with the local community.
6. All payments made out during the trip will go through the trip leader. No additional tipping is allowed.
7. There will be no drinking on any faith-based premises such as Open Door. Drinking must be kept under control in Hotels and will not be tolerated during working hours.
8. Dress appropriately to culture/professionalism at all times as a representative while on the trip.
9. Volunteers are never to be separated from their assigned groups.

Please sign below, acknowledging that you have read and understand the terms of this safety plan and have accepted the Code of Conduct.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Legal Release

By signing below, you acknowledge that there are risks involved in your participation as a volunteer in cooperation with Hands Up for Haiti, including the risk of property damage, theft, break-in, threats, personal injury, illness, or death. HUFH insures volunteers with MedJet Assist, which arranges medical transfer to the hospital of the member's choice in the case of a medical emergency. The Volunteer is expected to obtain his or her own health insurance coverage. You have been advised that as a developing nation, the political and social climate in Haiti can be unstable and the United States State Department currently lists Haiti as dangerous for travel by U.S. citizens.

By signing below you acknowledge that you have volunteered your time and services freely, without coercion, and that you release and will not attempt to hold Hands Up for Haiti legally responsible for any injury, illness or other damage incurred during a mission trip.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

CONSENT TO USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO AND YOUR LIKENESS

During our activities in Haiti we may obtain photographs, videos and the like, some of which may contain your likeness (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Images"). By signing this Agreement you give Hands Up for Haiti the unlimited right to use the Images in connection with any of Hands Up for Haiti's activities, including, but not limited to, documenting our activities in Haiti, fundraising, promoting our work and recruiting new volunteers. This use may include, but is not limited to, using the Images in written materials, websites and video documentaries.

Your signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Your contact information

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone #(H) _____ (C) _____

Email _____

Allergies _____

Blood type _____ Weight _____

Medical Conditions _____

Medications that you currently taking _____

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency Contact #1 _____

Address _____

Phone #(H) _____ (C) _____

Email _____

Emergency Contact #2 _____

Address _____

Phone #(H) _____ (C) _____

Email _____