

Your Personal Code: **HS2302-**_____

2022-2023 High School Mission Trip



February 18–25, 2023

Cost: \$1,995

Register from September 18 - October 30, 2022

westridge.com/students

High School Student,

Thank you for wanting to be part of the Nicaragua 2023 Team! Hundreds of students just like you have been part of these teams over the past 10 years, and God has used each of them to impact people with the love of Jesus! This packet is designed to give you all the details you need about the trip and why we want you to be involved! Whether you've been on a mission trip before or not, this trip will pull you out of your comfort zone and put you in situations to minister to people in a Third World Country!

Because of the impact of COVID-19 and the civil unrest a few years ago, the needs in Nicaragua are greater than any other time over the past decade! Your involvement on this team will be an opportunity to provide hope and encouragement to people who desperately need it!

The organization we are working with, Chosen Children Ministries, is top-notch and will take care of us throughout the trip! They have also made many adjustments and precautions since the pandemic that will help keep us as safe and organized as possible.

You can register online at westridge.com/students beginning September 18th at 4pm. The registration deadline is October 30th at 11:59pm (or until all spots are filled up) and \$150 is due when you register.

I am excited about the possibility of serving with you on this trip! Get ready, because it will be a trip that will change your life! I hope and pray that you will join me and other team members for Nicaragua 2023!

Todd Hampton
High School & Family Ministries Pastor
West Ridge Church
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WHY NICARAGUA?

There are many countries with needs, so why did we choose to be involved in the country of Nicaragua? Here are some facts to consider:

- Nicaragua is the 2nd poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.
- Almost 80% of the population lives on less than \$2/day (www.hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NIC). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many people to lose their means of income, making the war on poverty even more difficult!
- Less than 43% of the country is considered Evangelical Christians (<https://joshuaproject.net/countries/NU>). The need for the Gospel is great!
- The two biggest physical needs in the Nicaraguan villages where we visit are food and water. Many of these villages don't have clean drinking water and children can sometimes go days without food.
- The organization we work with is one of the most dedicated, organized, and missional ministries in the entire country. They keep the team safe but also provide us opportunities to make a significant impact on the people.
- Because of our involvement over the last 10 years, we've been part of bringing transformation to villages like The Flags and Rene Nunez, two of the poorest villages in the entire country. We've helped build churches, homes, a school, a feeding station, wells, given financial resources to send over 150 kids to school, and provided resources to help them develop an agricultural system.



COST & TRAININGS

Financial Deadlines

The following amounts need to be turned in by the dates listed:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. AT REGISTRATION | \$150.00 (deposit) |
| 2. DECEMBER 11, 2022 | \$850.00 |
| 3. JANUARY 22, 2023 | \$995.00 |

TOTAL COST - \$1,995.00

**Please note that these are hard deadlines due to purchase of plane tickets and other expenses. If amount is not turned in by date listed, the student's spot on the trip could be forfeited.*

***All Paperwork and Passports due by December 11, 2022**

Mandatory Team Trainings

The following Pre AND Post Trip Trainings are **required** for all members of the team. The Trainings will be in the Multi-Purpose Theater unless communicated otherwise.

Sunday, January 22nd - TEAM TRAINING #1, 12:45-2:45pm

Sunday, January 29th - TEAM TRAINING #2, 12:45-2:45pm

Sunday, February 5th - TEAM TRAINING #3, 12:45-2:45pm

Sunday, February 12th - TEAM TRAINING #4, 12:45-2:45pm

Sunday, March 5th - POST TRIP MEETING, 12:45-2:45pm

RAISING SUPPORT

One reason why many students don't sign up for a Missions Trip is because they don't have the money. The truth is not many families can write a check for the full amount. That's why one of the key aspects of your involvement in these trips is raising funds to help underwrite the cost of the trip. And it is possible!

All gifts are tax deductible (**checks should be made payable to West Ridge Church, noting your assigned code in the memo.**) In accordance with IRS Contribution Code, these funds, though tracked for administrative purposes in association with your personal code, are not funds specifically for you to use or for your own benefit. These funds will be solicited as contributions, and as such, are **non-refundable to either the team member or donor**, unless the team member is unable to attend for COVID-19 reasons. In that case, we will give the team member the option of joining a future missions trip using the available funds. That being said, typically funds are to remain in an account for this trip alone, and are non-transferrable towards other trips. NOTE: West Ridge Church does not organize or put on fundraisers, nor is fundraising allowed during services or events.

Here are some helpful tips about fundraising for this trip:

- Send your support letters out as soon as possible! The longer you wait to do this, the harder it will be to meet the financial deadlines. Deadlines are absolute! Failure to meet deadlines can result in you not being able to participate on the trip. Members with a balance at the time of the trip will be unable to participate.
- You will find a sample letter in this packet. Take the letter, personalize it, copy it, and send it to as many people as you can.
- Also include a self-addressed stamped envelope with every letter your mail out. Put your Code in BIG letters and have it come to the WRC office by using the church's address below. Once you have been approved to be part of the trip, you will be assigned a personal code for accounting purposes. It is important that this code be referenced not only on your outgoing envelopes, but also incoming checks.

West Ridge Church

High School Missions - HS2302 _____ (*Your Code)

3522 Hiram Acworth Hwy

Dallas, GA 30157

- If you have any money to turn in please hand-deliver cash or checks to the WRC Office.
- Keep a record for yourself of all gifts you receive.
- Cash and checks are ok to turn in but you can also make donations online. If someone gives you a check they can receive a tax-deductible receipt from the church. You will also be sent a donation link once you register for the trip that people can use to donate online. Anyone who makes online donations will also receive a tax-deductible receipt.
- Never, under any circumstances, mail cash.
- Send each person who sent you money a 'Thank You' note.

RAISING SUPPORT (cont.)

Raising support for this trip starts with forming a Support Team. Your support team is a group of people who join you in ministry through prayer, encouragement, and financial support. Those who give you money and pray for you are just as important as those who go on the trip.

Question: *Who do I send letters to?*

Answer: *Everyone you can think of!*

- Make a list of possible supporters. Pray about who should be on the list. Ask God for wisdom. Have your family help you with a list of people too. Your list could include relatives, co-workers/parents' co-workers, neighbors, friends, teachers, coaches, etc.
- Pray over each letter that you send out. Your faith will increase through this process as you trust God to provide the needed funds.
- ***If you need help writing Support Letters and forming a team, we will have a Support Raising Meeting on Sunday, November 6th at 12:45pm in the Multi Purpose Theater. During this meeting we will help you develop the heart and practices to effectively raise support for the trip.***

SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Dear _____,

I would like to tell you about an exciting opportunity that I have coming up in February 2023. I am going on a mission trip to Nicaragua! For one week, I will be part of a team from West Ridge Church. I will be visiting and ministering with a church, school, and with community outreaches to help impact this area. I will also participate in sharing the Gospel, construction projects, ministering to children, as well as helping serve those struggling with poverty and other issues. My prayer is that I will be an instrument to be used by God.

This trip is being organized and led by West Ridge Church. The pastors leading this trip have had extensive experience in missions and trips to this area.

I would like to invite you to be part of my Support Team. I consider my Support Team to be just as much a part of the trip as I am. Through prayer, encouragement, and financial provision, you are playing a huge role in helping people experience the love of Jesus!

In order for me to be part of this trip, I have a responsibility to raise funds for the trip. I am responsible for raising \$1,995 to help pay for the cost of the trip. This is a significant amount of money. But with God's help and provision, I know that this will be met. I can't wait to see what God does as a result of my time serving Him there!

Would you please consider joining my Support Team for this trip? Any gift you could send would help make a big difference to underwrite the cost of this trip. Also, every prayer you commit to praying for me daily will make a huge difference in the lives of the people we will be serving. Please pray that God will bless our efforts as we travel to share God's love.

In Christ,

(YOUR NAME)

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions:

- All gifts are tax deductible (Please make checks payable to West Ridge Church).
- 100% of your gift goes towards underwriting the cost of this trip and the team member will be credited for amount raised. These funds are not transferrable towards other trips in the event the participant is unable to go.
- Each team member is responsible to raise their funds (just like missionaries do).
- My first financial deadline of **\$850** is due **December 11th** to secure my airfare. The balance is due by **January 22nd**.
- **Please reference the code # (not the name) listed on your return envelope in the memo portion of your check. (PERSONAL CODE: HS2302 _____). This is very important!**

Passport Information

****Routine service takes 8-11 weeks for the processing of a U.S. Passport and expedited service is taking 5-7 weeks. We strongly recommend that you apply for your Passport once you register for the trip to ensure that you get it back in time.***

For New Applications:

Visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

Because of COVID-19, some of the requirements and processes have changed to apply for a Passport. This website will have up-to-date information on how to apply for a Passport and what locations you can go to in order to apply. As of 9/1/22, the Paulding County Courthouse is not accepting applications, but there are other locations in the area that are.

For Renewal Applications:

Visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/renew.html>

Skills Necessary for All Team Members

- Willingness to grow
- Ability to be flexible and adapt to changes in schedule
- Courage to try something new
- Unity - Focused on building God's Kingdom and nothing else!
- Hard work
- Servant Attitude
- Encouragement
- Selflessness
- Teachable
- Love for People
- Desire to share the Gospel

Commitment for All Team Members

- Attend all Team Meetings and Team Trainings.
- Take on the attitude of a leader in our high school ministry. Lead by example.
- Consistent walk with Christ.
- Regular attendance at Reckless and Small Groups throughout the year.
- Serve/Worship at West Ridge Church on Sunday mornings.

Vaccines

Currently, no routine Vaccines are required for entry into Nicaragua, but several are recommended. The CDC recommends that all people entering the country are up-to-date on their routine vaccines, and there are additional ones (*Hep A, Malaria, Yellow Fever, etc*) that are optional. You can go to <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/nicaragua> to check for up-to-date vaccine information leading up to the trip.

As of September 1, 2022, COVID-19 Vaccines are not required for International travel. In the event that the CDC changes that policy and makes the COVID-19 Vaccine required to travel to Nicaragua, we will follow those guidelines and all Team Members will be required to be fully vaccinated in order to travel with us in February. In the event that a Team Member signs up for the team and chooses not to be fully vaccinated if required, those funds can be donated to the trip, be transferred to a future West Ridge missions trip, as a last resort, be refunded to the donors.

COVID-19 Guidelines

As of September 1, 2022, Nicaragua requires all travelers who are not fully vaccinated to receive proof of a negative COVID PCR test within 3 days from the date of travel to gain entry into the country. This means that anyone on our team not fully vaccinated will need to get a PCR Test no earlier than Wednesday, February 15, 2023. **Fully vaccinated team members do NOT need to get a negative PCR test.*

In order to get on the flight to Nicaragua, each team member will need proof of a negative COVID test or vaccination card in hand. As of now, team members do NOT need to be tested in Nicaragua in order to gain access back into the United States.

On the trip, we are looking at the best ways to keep our team safe as well as those we will be ministering too. Masks and other preventative measures may be required at various times on the trip if we feel it is necessary. These guidelines will be communicated at our Team Trainings in January based on the current situation in Nicaragua.



West Ridge Church
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Dallas, GA 30157
Phone: 770-222-2125
Fax: 770-222-2128
www.westridge.com/students