

PROJECT FIAT INTERNATIONAL

A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITY WITH THE HANDMAIDS OF THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS

WHO ARE THE HANDMAIDS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS?

An International Catholic religious congregation of women founded by Saint Rafaela Maria, in Madrid, Spain. As Eucharistic women, the Handmaids work with Christ to bring healing to people's hearts and peace to their relationships with God, with one another and with creation. *"Our deepest desire is for all people to know and love God."* (St Rafaela Maria)

FIAT, THE PROJECT

Project FIAT, **Faith In Action Together**, began many years ago with Handmaids volunteering some summer free time for service projects to reach out to needy communities. We were able to extend this service abroad, thanks to our sisters and friends, by building a volunteer house in San Salvador, El Salvador. **Casa Voluntariado Santa Rafaela Maria** was inaugurated in March of 2004. Participants share knowledge of English and Spanish, of homemaking, sports, arts and crafts, music, drama and more. Our volunteers help build houses and roads with the local communities; they aid in the nurturing of malnourished children; they help to distribute food to those in need at a soup kitchen; they help to run a summer camp for children; and they share their hearts in a home for abandoned children.

During **Project Fiat International (PFI)**, young and older **men and women** leave the comfort, efficiency, and competitiveness of their culture, to enter to some extent into the experiences, and limiting circumstances with which billions of the world's people live. *PFI is open to receive volunteers from any religious affiliation: anyone who desires to collaborate in making our world more genuinely human for everyone is welcome to participate.*

The sisters reserve the right to cancel any trip having less than 10 people. This will be done one month prior to the scheduled dates and all money will be returned.

HOW PFI MISSIONARIES LIVE

Participants live in Casa Voluntariado Santa Rafaela Maria in a safe part of the capital city, San Salvador. It has running water, plumbing and electricity. There are 4 large rooms that contain 10 bunk beds. The men and women have separate sleeping quarters as well as bathrooms. We drink only bottled water and all our fruits and vegetables are

washed with a safe solution of iodine and bottled water. Our PFI volunteers pack a lunch every morning and fill up water bottles to take on the jobs. No food is eaten or bought off the street. Safety is our number one priority for all of our participants.

Vans are rented to take our volunteers back and forth to their destinations. No one is allowed to travel alone or use public transportation. The US dollar is the monetary unit of El Salvador.

FIAT, A REFLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

PFI is not a tourist experience.

PFI is a missionary experience which involves giving up some of the comforts of home and coming out of ourselves to help build community.

While Catholic in inspiration, *Project Fiat International* is open to receive volunteers from any religious affiliation: anyone who desires to collaborate in making our world more genuinely human for everyone is welcome to participate. Important components of our program are reflection on our experience and openness to analyzing the social reality.

DRESS CODE

It will be hot. Jeans, lightweight pants or sweats, split skirts, Capri's, and short sleeve tops with athletic shoes are the order of the day. (Dress pants or skirt for Sunday church; no dress shoes are needed) Wear your ordinary wristwatch.

NO SHORTS ALLOWED AT ANYTIME! Culturally, this is not accepted. We are on Holy Ground and we need to respect others ways of being. The idea is also to avoid calling attention to ourselves. No halter tops, tank tops, elaborately made-up nails, or jewelry, except simple earrings for pierced ears.

VACCINATIONS AND UPDATED PASSPORT

The requirements change from year to year, based on the health situation of the country. The Center for Disease Control has a web site with updated outbreaks and **vaccination** suggestions. www.ncdc.gov.

Mosquitoes carry several diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Mosquito netting is connected to every bunk bed and we suggest that our volunteers bring mosquito repellent. The more skin that is protected with both clothes and insect repellent the better. Prevention is the best protection.

Each participant needs to have health insurance which covers travel overseas. If present coverage does not extend to outside the country from which they are coming, participants must purchase health insurance for the time spent in El Salvador. A web site for missionary **health insurance** is <http://www.ciainsagency.com/missionary.htm>.

***Bring sufficient personal medications, if needed, for your time abroad.

Everyone needs an updated passport.

- ❖ Volunteers do not eat any food from street vendors.
- ❖ Volunteers drink only boxed milk that is pasteurized.
- ❖ Volunteers drink only bottled water because the water is not considered to be potable. We take bottled water with us to all of our mission sites.
- ❖ Freezing water does not make it safe. Ice cubes should be avoided unless bottled water is used.
- ❖ When we work out in the field, our food is subjected to the heat of the day. If you are not able to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or hardboiled eggs then please bring an alternative that will not spoil.

The cooks at Santa Rafaela Maria Volunteer House are aware of the proper measures to avoid gastro-intestinal illnesses, and will sterilize, clean and cook all food accordingly.

Volunteer House

- ❖ The house is surrounded by an iron gate and has a gate keeper 24 hours a day.
- ❖ Volunteers **do not use any public transportation**. Vans are rented for our daily needs.
- ❖ Volunteers travel everywhere together. NO ONE is allowed to go outside the property alone.
- ❖ Electricity in El Salvador is 115 volts at 60 Hertz. If your device does not accept this voltage you will need a converter.
- ❖ All volunteers are inside the property by 7:00p.m. Doors are locked by 9:00p.m.
- ❖ All beds have mosquito netting from top to bottom to protect all our volunteers.
- ❖ Phone is available for \$1/call.

Address

Comunidad de Fe Santa Rafaela Maria Casa del Voluntariado

Bld. Héctor Silva Romero 121 y 125

Colonia Médica

San Salvador, El Salvador C.A.

Phone: 011-503-2-226-7610 or (7615)