

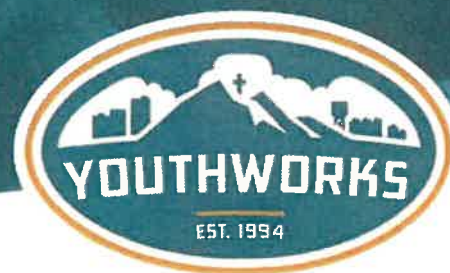
# PUERTO RICO MISSION TRIP INFORMATION PACKET





# Our Purpose

We exist to connect middle and high school students to God, each other and communities through meaningful Christ-centered mission trips.



## OUR VISION

Providing Christ-centered mission trips is our way of serving God's multid denominational Church. We want to help empower every teenager to know God and be like Jesus in the ways they love and serve others, and our desire is the same for churches families, staff and communities. We aim to create experiences that broaden perspectives, ignite passions, expose possibilities and inspire pursuits.

## OUR VALUES

As we live out our purpose and vision, we strive for these six priorities to shape the way we work and those we work alongside. These core values hinge on our aspiration to love teenagers, work alongside communities and serve God's Church:



### YOUTH

Middle and high school students are a vibrant part of the Church. We laugh, play, serve and engage with them as they learn to love and be loved by Christ. We believe these years are both formative for their future and vital for God's work now.



### RESPECTFUL SERVICE

God is already at work in individuals, churches and communities, and we use Jesus' example of servant-leadership to join the work. Throughout our partnership with a community, we listen closely, speak carefully and serve humbly. Respectful service may feel less efficient, but we believe it is more effective and life-giving.



### DIVERSITY

We value different styles of worship, stories of faith, stages of life, sets of resources, tones of skin and expressions of culture, and invite others to do the same. By leaving comfort zones to listen and learn from each other, we can more deeply include, interact with and express the diverse beauty of God's Kingdom.



### COMMUNITIES

Communities are partners, friends and the places we serve. We continually pursue ways to better listen to, respond to and love them. Entering, working with and learning from these communities should be viewed as an honor and privilege.



### RELATIONSHIPS

We pursue intentional interactions, restored relationships and ongoing friendships. Using the ministry of Jesus as our example, we prioritize loving and serving people over programs, projects and plans. The experiences we create encourage authentic connections with others and with God.



### DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to pushing out of our comfort zones and exploring new opportunities. We humbly continue to seek growth as we listen and learn from those around us, deepen our understanding and determine direction.



youthworks.com



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800-968-8504



# Welcome to Arecibo, Puerto Rico

The Tropical "Island of Enchantment"

## ABOUT THE AREA

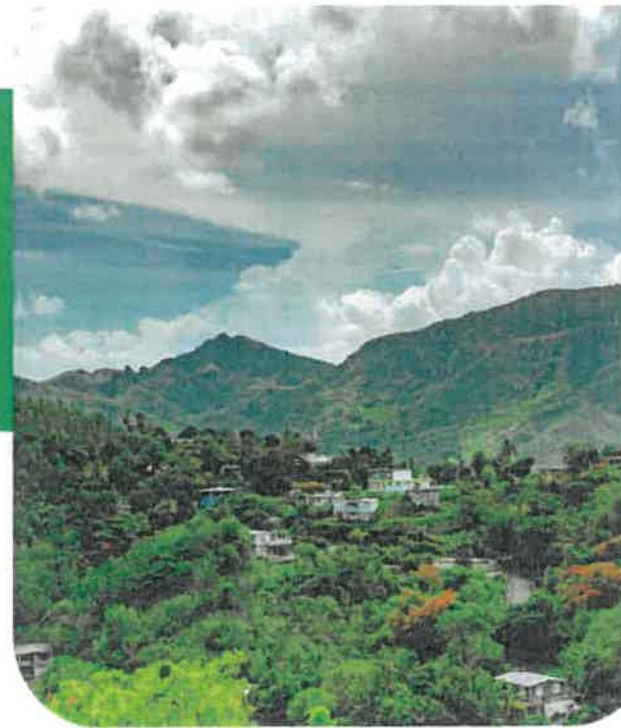
Puerto Rico is a small island located in the Caribbean. It is often called "La Isla del Encanto", which in Spanish- the primary language spoken on the island- means, "the island of enchantment". YouthWorks serves in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, which is one of the oldest and the largest geographical municipalities on the island, comprised of ocean, mountains, countryside and a small plaza. While Puerto Rico is often known for its pristine beaches and tourism, the island also has a diverse landscape ranging from desert-like areas to beautiful waterfalls and mountains. It is rich in culture with incredible music, food, and art.

Puerto Rico was inhabited solely by Taino Indians, until the Spanish colonized the island and its people in the fifteenth century. An influx of African enslaved people and Spanish settlers, primarily from the Canary Islands, has shaped and influenced the culture in ways that are still present today. After the Spanish-American war in the nineteenth century, the United States acquired Puerto as a commonwealth, making Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens. This history has created a unique cultural identity amongst Puerto Rican people, fusing traditions and customs from the indigenous Taino, African and Spanish ancestors.

Puerto Rico's complex history results in a complicated relationship with the United States. While Puerto Rican residents have benefitted from being a commonwealth of the United States in some ways, the commonwealth status has also created some complex systemic issues. As residents of a U.S. territory, Puerto Ricans lack representation in the Senate and are unable to vote in presidential elections.

Additionally, years of natural disasters (including major hurricanes, land erosion, earthquakes), as well as government corruption and the global pandemic have created significant challenges for residents.

Despite the challenges experienced on the island, Puerto Rico and its residents have always been resilient, recently standing against government corruption, fighting for justice for residents, reclaiming land for local agriculture and rallying to create economic redevelopment as well as rebuilding initiatives to combat housing challenges, economic hardship and lack of resources.



**"WELCOME TO ARECIBO!**

**OUR CHURCH IS A  
COMMUNITY THAT  
PREACHES THE WORD  
AND RECEIVES ALL AS  
BROTHERS AND SISTERS  
IN CHRIST.**

**SERVING WITH US, YOU  
WILL EXPERIENCE OUR  
JOY AND GRATITUDE  
TOWARDS YOUR  
SOLIDARITY IN  
COLLABORATING WITH  
OUR CHILDREN. THE BEST  
THING ABOUT OUR  
COMMUNITY IS WE CARE  
FOR EACH OTHER AND  
LOVE EACH OTHER AS  
FAMILY. I HOPE YOU  
HAVE A CHANCE TO  
LEARN THAT GOD'S LOVE  
DOES UNITE US AND  
THERE IS JOY IN CHRIST."**

**ILIANA  
SERVICE PARTNER**





## HELPFUL INFORMATION

### YOUTHWORKS HISTORY

Since 2003, YouthWorks has fostered and maintained relationships with churches, ministries, social service agencies and local leaders who help shape the experience participants have and ensure Respectful Service is taking place. It is a privilege to be invited and welcomed into this community.

During your time in Arecibo, you will get to learn from and serve alongside local organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army, local farms involved in revitalization efforts and other non-profits meeting the tangible needs of residents. Your service may also include working alongside teachers in a kids' summer camp, collaborating in minor agricultural projects, serving and preparing meals for the community and working alongside local volunteers in community centers. You will experience local food, cultural aspects of the Puerto Rican lifestyle and worship alongside the Arecibo community.

#### Flexibility

Due to the nature of partnerships in Puerto Rico, your group may serve at the same location all week. While we typically try to provide a variety of service opportunities during the mission trip, some of our partners have requested the same group of volunteers for the entire week.

#### Effects of Hurricane Maria

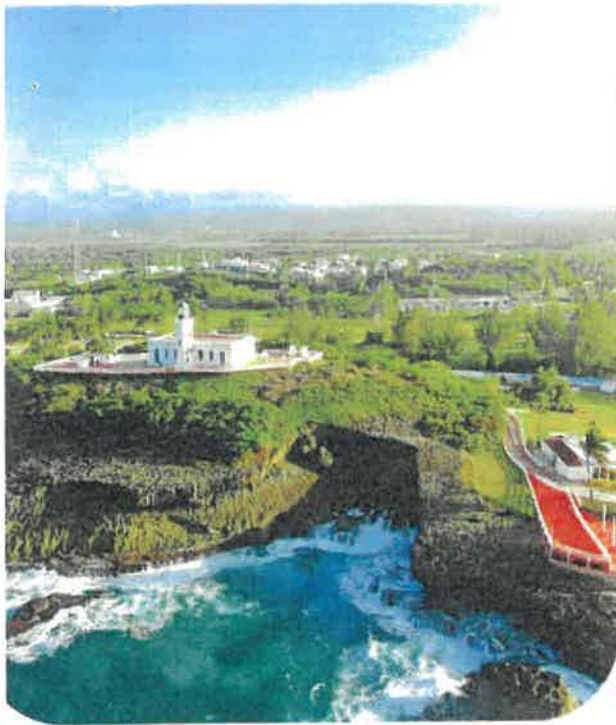
Since Hurricane Maria, the island still struggles from an unstable power grid. Power outages are common occurrences and will require flexibility from your group. In addition, it is not uncommon to have a temporary loss of water or low water pressure. Having served on the island for more than 20 years, YouthWorks is prepared to respond to these situations and assist your group if these issues arise during your trip.

#### Transportation

Because Arecibo is an urban area, please come prepared for city traffic and makes some drive times to service projects or Evening Activities up to 30 minutes.

#### Climate

Puerto Rico is a tropical island. Although the summer is often hot and sunny, weather can change drastically from one day to the next. Come prepared for rainy days as well as high temperatures (often above 100 degrees). This will require flexibility from your group since plans might need to change at the last minute due to the weather. YouthWorks is always prepared with a backup plan for these situations.



**"THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO WILL BE TRAVELING HOME WITH US IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS. MY GROUP HAS BEEN MOVED THROUGH THE WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS FORMED THROUGHOUT THIS WEEK. THE SERVICE WE PROVIDED IMPACTED BOTH THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE THAT LIVE HERE AS WELL AS THE TEAM MEMBERS THAT PROVIDED THE WORK."**

**ADULT LEADER**



# BASIC MEAL PLAN

## & Allergy Information

<h3>Breakfast Examples</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continental Style Breakfast*</li> <li>• Eggs, Sausages and Croissants</li> <li>• Breakfast Burritos</li> </ul> <p><i>*In response to group feedback, we have added additional items to our historical "Cereal Breakfasts," to give everyone more filling breakfast options.</i></p> <p><i>Each breakfast menu has additional accompaniments. This can include oatmeal, yogurt, toast, hard-boiled eggs, fruit, salsa, muffins, etc.</i></p>	<h3>Lunch Examples</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub Sandwiches</li> <li>• Wraps</li> <li>• Bagels</li> <li>• White/Wheat Bread Sandwiches</li> </ul> <p><i>Each lunch includes a choice of ham or turkey as well as fresh sandwich toppings such as tomatoes, lettuce, cheese, etc. Peanut butter and jelly are also offered along with a variety of side options, which may include cookies, chips, granola bars, crackers, fruit, etc.</i></p>
<h3>Dinner Examples</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwiches</li> <li>• Chicken Stir Fry</li> <li>• Taco and Nacho Bar</li> <li>• Pizza</li> <li>• Grill Out (Burgers, Hot Dogs)</li> <li>• Chicken Sandwiches</li> </ul> <p><i>Each dinner menu has specific accompaniments (veggies, pasta, chips, fruit, etc.). Every dinner meal includes an abundant side salad and a simple dessert item (cookies, pudding, rice krispie treats, etc.)</i></p>	<h3>Snack Examples</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granola Bars</li> <li>• Pretzels</li> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Chips and Salsa</li> <li>• Fruit Snacks</li> <li>• Chex Mix</li> </ul> <p><i>Snacks are served in the afternoon and in the evening. Limited allergy-friendly (dairy-free, nut-free, gluten-free) options will be available for those who need them.</i></p>

*\*Exact meal items may vary from site to site.*

## DIETARY CONCERNS & FOOD ALLERGIES

Due to the nature of large group meal preparation, we cannot guarantee a participant will not be exposed to any certain food. Nor can we promise to have exactly the right food to meet every special dietary need.

For those participants who are gluten-free, YouthWorks will provide GF bread and GF cereal. We also provide a non-dairy milk option.

Navigating the ingredient lists and having access to the correct foods invites too much room for error for staff who don't know or understand a required diet. **We recommend that participants with severe allergies or special dietary needs bring supplemental food for the week as well as any medication(s) or EpiPen that may be needed.**





# YOUTHWORKS DAILY SCHEDULE

These are the components of a typical YouthWorks mission trip. Because every community is different, the schedule may vary at some sites and on certain days. You can find a Sample Daily Schedule on page 2.

## SUNDAY

### 4:30-6:00 P.M. - SUNDAY ARRIVAL

Our staff are excited to welcome you to site! When you arrive, staff will help you get settled. The Site Director will confirm paperwork with Trip Leaders, and Trip Leaders will split their students into ministry crews for the week.

### DINNER & CLEANUP

Adults will eat dinner with the Site Director and will go over Adult Leader introductions.

### ORIENTATION & THE GATHERING

Staff will lead groups in an orientation to share what groups can expect during the week. Staff will then lead groups in a large group time of processing, worship and reflection called The Gathering.

### CHURCH GROUP TIME

After The Gathering, each church group will get together in their own space to process the day and discuss the day's theme. YouthWorks considers this the most important programmatic aspect of the day. We will provide each group with a Church Group Time Guide, which contains questions and ideas to help the Trip Leader facilitate this time. There is about an hour on the schedule each evening for Church Group Time.

### 10:30 P.M. LIGHTS OUT

## MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY

### 6:45 A.M. - BREAKFAST PREP CREW

### 7:15 A.M. - EAT BREAKFAST & PREPARE LUNCH, BREAKFAST & BUILDING CLEANUPS

All crews will help with the preparation and cleanup of meals at different times throughout the week. These times of prep and cleanup will be led by YouthWorks staff. During breakfast, everyone will put together a bag lunch to take to their service sites.

### MORNING DEVOTIONS

Every morning, groups will have time to connect with God. To help with this, everyone will receive a YouthWorks Trip Journal, a resource that will connect students with Jesus and their experience during the week by way of the YouthWorks summer theme.

### 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. - MINISTRY DAY

After a brief circle-up time, crews of youth and leaders will depart for ministry sites. (These crews, selected by Trip Leaders, will be together all week at service sites as well as for meal prep and cleanup crews.) YouthWorks staff will give orientations for service sites to help students and adults understand how they will be serving each day.

### SHOWERS & AFTERNOON SNACK

### ADULT LEADER MEETING

Each day, Adult Leaders will attend a meeting with the Site Director. This time allows the Site Director to hear how things are going and communicate what happens next. It's also a great time of processing and sharing.

### DINNER PREP, DINNER & DINNER CLEANUP

Crews will be assigned to dinner prep and dinner cleanup.

### EVENING ACTIVITY & EVENING SNACK

Evening Activities allow students to interact with the community through cultural, educational and fun activities that engage the whole group. Some activities occur in the afternoon before dinner. Some sites include Option Night, when during a portion of the afternoon or evening groups can choose between additional free time or activities in the community provided by YouthWorks.

### THE GATHERING & CHURCH GROUP TIME

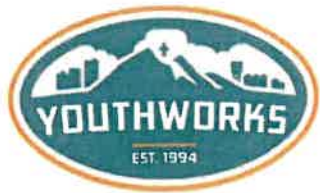
Along with morning devotions, The Gathering will further develop the week's theme, with the purpose of connecting students' mission trip experience with God and with life back home. Our goal of The Gathering is to set you up well for Church Group Time.

### 10:45 P.M. - LIGHTS OUT

## FRIDAY

### BREAKFAST, CLEANUP & DEPARTURE

Although Friday departure varies by site, groups will typically pull away by 9:00 a.m. Before departure, groups will load their vehicles, help clean the housing site, eat breakfast and have a short send-off time to close out their week.



# HOW TO WRITE A GREAT SUPPORT LETTER

*When you write a support letter, you're doing way more than just asking for money and prayer – you're inviting someone to participate in your trip. While they won't be hopping in the van with you, they will be filling the vital role of providing support in your mission trip experience. Keep this in mind as you write and send your support letters.*

*The following are some quick tips on what to put in, what to avoid and how to share your mission trip support letter.*

## - 10 WRITING TIPS -

- 1. Keep it short.** One page is plenty. Quality trumps quantity.
- 2. Make it look good.** First impressions matter. If designing documents isn't your cup of tea, find a friend who can help. Including a picture of you or your team is an easy win.
- 3. Proofread it.** Errors are fairly noticeable... and often avoidable. Have someone help you by checking for any errors before you hit PRINT.
- 4. Don't forget the details.** Where is the trip? What are the dates? What will you be doing? Is there a send-off service beforehand? How much money are you trying to raise? If they want to donate money, how should they do it? A great way to ask for money is to suggest a couple options for dollar amounts (e.g., "I recommend a gift of \$50, \$100 or \$150, but of course, any amount is welcome.")  
  
*Also include whether donations are tax deductible. Ask your church if gifts qualify. Many qualifying organizations recommend that checks have nothing written on the Memo line. If that's the case, write something like this: "Gifts are tax deductible. You can make checks out to ABC Church, but please do not write anything on the Memo line as this could jeopardize your gift's tax-deductible status."*
- 5. Be interesting.** Share about what you are doing, the place you are going and the people you will be with, but don't drag out your letter with tons of minute details.  
  
YouthWorks provides a Community Info Sheet for each of our communities. You can include some of those details about the community you're headed to in your support letter.
- 6. Make it personal.** People want to support you! Don't send a generic letter from the team when you can send a personal letter from you. While you might share some details about your team, also include what *your* hopes, fears and needs are.
- 7. Don't just write a "fundraising letter."** Support is so much more than people's money. At the same time, there is nothing to be ashamed about when offering people the opportunity to be generous. If asking for money is part of the support you need, make it secondary to asking for prayer. Even if people can't contribute financially, they can certainly still support you.
- 8. Ask for prayer.** And be specific when you do. Give them 4 or 5 things they can pray for, for example: the community and ministries you are visiting, your team, your travels, etc. (If you wrote a team covenant, there is probably some great things to pray for in there!)
- 9. Be humble and respectful.** Don't make the place you're headed seem destitute in an effort to make your trip sound more significant. Remember that Jesus is the hero, not your team. Use language that honors what God is already up to in the place you are headed. Use phrases like, "serve alongside," "partner with" and "learn from."
- 10. Say thank you.** A great way to end your letter is with gratefulness for the people you are asking to partner with you in this mission trip. Thank them in advance for whatever way they choose to support you.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENDING YOUR LETTER

**Think about when to send.** A good time frame for many mission trip teams is about 3 or 4 months before your trip. Consider that you don't want to send it so early people forget about the trip by the time you go, but you also want prayer for your team's preparation process, not just the actual trip. Also, consider when you need financial support to arrive and plan accordingly.

**Intentionally pick your people.** Don't DM your letter to all your Instagram followers. Instead, take 10 or 20 minutes to think through to whom you should send your support letter. A few groups of people to consider include family, friends (even if they don't have money to give you), people you know from church, people you know from school, people you want to invite to know you better, etc.

**Don't overload someone.** When requesting financial support, coordinate with your team to make sure the same family in your church doesn't receive 20 letters from 20 different mission trippers.

**Use snail mail.** There's something meaningful about getting a support letter in the mail. When you put it in an envelope you could even include a separate picture asking for prayer during your trip. Who knows – you might wind up on someone's fridge. 😊

**Consider print quality.** If you're printing your letter or picture, make sure you use a printer that doesn't make your letter look like it's from the 1980s. Maybe your church or a friend can help, and if not them, invest a little money at a local print shop. It's worth the extra trouble.

Sending support letters is an important part of your mission trip process. They begin a story that you get to continue telling after the trip! Include others in your story by writing a really great support letter.

*On the next page, you can find an example support letter that demonstrates many of the ideas listed in this resource, please feel free to copy and adapt content as needed.*

## NOW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA...

Social media is certainly a place to share information quickly and easily about your upcoming mission trip, however, think critically about the best way to share and request support through these platforms. Especially to the older generations, social media may seem a bit impersonal. A few things to keep in mind:

**Keep it personal.** Fundraising for your mission trip is truly more than just about the funds. It's about partnering with communities to be a part of what God is already doing there. While social media allows you to reach a large and broad audience, be sure to also connect with *individuals* so they feel connected to you and what you will be doing.

**Consider your intended audience.** Who are you trying to reach? Peers? Relatives? Adults from church? Different generations of people tend to gravitate more to certain platforms. Meet the people in their preferred virtual spaces. If you personally aren't on these platforms, maybe connect with someone who is (like a parent) and ask them to share your content.

**Get creative.** Social media is a visual space. This opens many opportunities to visually share the story about your mission trip. Consider your gifts. Do you enjoy photography or graphic design? Perhaps you're good at creating fun Tik Toks or you're a pro at Instagram stories. You can share links, personal testimonies, content from partner organizations– you name it. There is no end to ways you can invite others into the story of your mission trip.

**Don't let it be the only thing.** Support raising may cost you time and personal comfort. Often, for millennials and Gen Xers, social media is an easy and comfortable space. While it's good to play to your strengths, try and branch out from your comfort zone. Try and have conversations "IRL" about your upcoming mission trip. Understand that while support raising isn't always easy, it can be good and a growing experience for you and a way for others to join with the work of God on your mission trip.



Dear Friends and Family,

From July 14-20 I'm excited to be headed to Kansas City, Kansas leading a mission trip with my youth group from Calvary Church. We're going through YouthWorks, a short-term missions organization that specializes in setting up life-changing Christ-centered trips for teenagers. The neighborhood we'll be serving in is largely Latino, so we'll be participating in bilingual worship and sharing some Mexican food cooked by friends in the community. One of the interesting issues we'll be learning about is how local ministries respond to the many undocumented workers within the community. Additionally, we'll be serving the community through helping facilitate a sports camp for kids, restoring old houses with a local ministry and serving through partnerships with various local organizations.



As you can probably tell, it's going to be a full week of listening to, learning from and loving on the people we meet in Kansas City, and there is going to be a great opportunity for growth within our group.

I would love it if you would pray for this mission trip experience. Pray for the 17 of us who are going - that we would be open to learning from the community we're visiting and grow closer as a group and closer to Jesus. Pray for the YouthWorks staff who are living in Kansas City all summer long and will be leading us during the trip. Pray for the community members who we meet - that we could love and honor them well. Pray especially for the kids who we'll get to do ministry with - that they would connect the love we show with the love Jesus has for them. Finally, pray for me - that I could really experience this YouthWorks mission trip week in a fresh and effective way. If you will commit to praying for us, please let me know. I would love to share that news with my team.

Also, many members of our team are still working on fundraising for this trip. Please consider supporting us financially. I recommend a gift of \$50 or \$100, but of course, any amount is more than welcome.

Gifts are tax deductible and can be made out to **"Calvary Church"** and mailed to:

**Attn: Sam Townsend  
c/o Calvary Church  
1234 Calvary Way  
Roseville, MN 55113**

If you do send a check, please do not write anything in memo line as this could (because of laws I don't quite understand!) jeopardize the tax-deductible status of your gift.

Thank you for considering supporting us through prayer and/or giving. This trip would be impossible without the generosity of so many.

I'm excited for this new opportunity, and I'm looking forward to sharing about it with you when I return.

Grateful for the places God draws us,

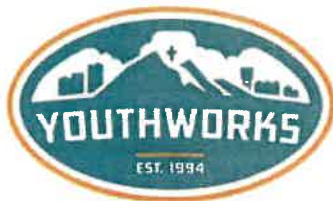
Sam Townsend

#### KANSAS CITY, KS FACTS & STATISTICS

Kansas City, KS is the lesser-known twin of the city of the same name just across the border in Missouri. The two cities join each other at the Missouri/Kansas border, the junction of the Missouri and Kansas rivers. Being a river town, Kansas City is a port of entry for farm products and is a large commercial, industrial and agricultural seat of the Midwest.

With a community tagline of "Kansas City: Change Your Perspective," it is clear that Kansas City would like to climb out of the definitions it has had to bear over the years. Poor economy, low median income and high unemployment coupled with high dropout rates, increasing teen pregnancy and homelessness make life difficult for many Kansas City residents. In fact, among the homeless population in Kansas City, 56% are families with children.

- The population of Kansas City, KS is 142,320.
- Kansas City is the third largest city in Kansas.
- The median household income is \$36,211, compared to \$47,451 statewide.
- 21.6% of the population is living below the poverty level.
- The racial makeup of Kansas City is 48.9% White, 30.1% African American and 16.8% Hispanic.
- The unemployment rate is 7.8%



# CLOTHES TO PACK

## for your Mission Trip

Participants going to Puerto Rico have an alternate packing list.  
Check your paperwork page for the PR Packing List.

### CLOTHING

During the week your clothes may endure paint, sweat, mud and lots of love from children! Bring clothes that you can work and play hard in. Make sure clothing covers all undergarments when you move around.

- ☐ Shorts with at least a three-inch inseam
- ☐ Long pants - Some service sites require these.
- ☐ Short-sleeved shirts
- ☐ Long-sleeved shirts, sweatshirts and/or light jacket for cool nights
- ☐ Underwear and socks
- ☐ Tennis shoes or work boots that cover your whole foot and that can get dirty or wet. You'll wear these to service sites and in the kitchen. You can bring a pair of other shoes or sandals for the housing site.
- ☐ Comfortable swimsuit for high levels of activity and for privacy in the shower, if necessary
- ☐ Shower shoes - Flip-flops are great for this.
- ☐ Work gloves - Optional; helpful if you're working outside.

### OTHER STUFF

- ☐ 3-5 face masks in case they are needed during your trip
- ☐ Small shower bag or backpack
- ☐ Towel and washcloth
- ☐ Soap, shampoo, deodorant, other toiletries, extra contact lenses, backup pair of glasses, etc.
- ☐ Sleeping bag and pillow
- ☐ Air mattress or camping pad for sleeping on floors. **Mattresses must be twin size or smaller.**
- ☐ Bible and pen
- ☐ Reusable water bottle
- ☐ Sunscreen, lip balm, hat, sunglasses
- ☐ Spending money for snacks and souvenirs - Talk to your Trip Leader for further details.
- ☐ Flashlight

### NOTES ON PACKING

Because space is limited in the sleeping rooms, everything but your sleeping bag and camping pad or air mattress should fit in one duffel bag or suitcase.

Please check the weather forecast for the community you are visiting to help you know how to pack.

Coordinate with others in your group to make sure that as a group you have some of the following:

- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Battery-powered alarm clock

### PLEASE AVOID BRINGING

- **Blow dryers, curling irons or straightening irons.** Shower time is short and many of our housing sites do not have the power to run all these small electronics at one time.
- **Electronic devices, too much cash or other valuables** that you would consider to be irreplaceable. Also, consider leaving your phone at home. These items can distract you from others during the week and may be susceptible to theft. *YouthWorks is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.*
- **Clothing with obscene, vulgar, threatening, abusive or discriminatory language or images.** Do not bring any apparel that represents hate groups or is gang-related, or any apparel that promotes alcohol, chemicals, tobacco or any other product illegal for use by minors.