

## VISITING TEAM PRE-ARRIVAL INFO



### GENERAL INFO

#### Welcome to 911 LIFE!

We are so excited that you will be coming to Colombia to minister with us at 911 LIFE! We believe Colombia is in a very unique and special time in which people are very open to hear and accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are so glad that you have the chance to be a part of it. We value you, and want to honor and thank you for encouraging us with your visit. Don't forget to get a small prayer team to intercede for you before and during your trip.

Below are a few basic things which will help you to prepare and pack for the trip. The best attitude to have that will serve you the most is "I'M FLEXIBLE AND I'M HERE TO SERVE." This shows a servant's heart that's able to roll with the punches and will prepare you when things don't go as planned.

#### Airport, Immigration, and Visas

If you are a US citizen, you will get a tourist Visa stamped in your passport upon arrival. No other Visa is needed for short-term visitors. At the airport, Immigration will ask you where you are staying and what you are doing in Medellín. Please reply with the following information:

- *"We are tourists visiting friends."*
- If you will be staying at 911 LIFE, please say, *"We will be staying at our friends' house."* The address is *Cra. 42 #40-09, Medellín in Las Palmas neighborhood.*
- If you will be staying at a nearby hotel or AirB&B, please give that address.
- If they (or you) want to contact us when you're in the airport, our numbers are:
  - Tom +57 313-793-4146
  - Jen +57 313-793-4169

## **Weather**

Located at 5000 feet above sea level and less than 500 miles from the equator, Medellin, Colombia, has the best weather in the world! Temperatures throughout the year are consistently between 70 - 85 degrees F with 65% humidity. There are very few mosquitos or annoying insects, and the moderate rainfall rarely causes inconveniences. We suggest bringing sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses, as well as a light jacket or sweatshirt for the evenings. Since it is so high above sea level, there is little to no risk for mosquito-borne diseases such as Yellow Fever or West Nile Virus. Water from the tap in Medellin is safe to drink, but 911 LIFE will provide treated bottled water just to be extra safe.

## **Food**

You can expect to be served Colombian-style rice, beans, salad, chicken, beef, pork, tropical fruit, veggies, pasta dishes, eggs and cereal for breakfast, and some basic sandwiches. Please try to be flexible and tolerant by eating the food prepared. If you have any food allergies, please let us know ahead of time through the Application Form that will be sent to you.

## **Safety**

Like all large cities, Medellin has many different types of neighborhoods, so it's important to be "street smart." Always be in groups of at least two when on the street, even when going to the corner to get a soda. Please always ask permission to go anywhere other than the scheduled activities. You are able to move around, but we need to know where you are and who you are with at all times for security reasons. When staying at the 911 LIFE Missions Base, everyone should be inside the base for the night by 9:00 pm unless there is an activity scheduled. Please be very careful crossing the streets (especially right in front of the foundation). Motorists rarely respect traffic laws or norms, motorcycles speed between cars, and buses and taxis drive very erratically.

Always smile, say "Hola," and look at people (even suspicious people) in the eyes on the street. In the Colombian culture, this shows strength, love, and respect, and will aid in your protection.

## **Dress Code**

We do not employ a strict dress code at 911 LIFE. However, we do give suggestions regarding what is normal and appropriate for this culture. Usually, men and women in Medellin wear pants, not shorts. For women, wearing short shorts is considered sexy and can easily distract from ministry. However, you are welcome to wear modest shorts while on a tourist day or relaxing at the base. For church events, Colombian men typically wear tennis shoes or dress shoes and jeans or slacks for men. Women typically wear jeans, or slacks with a blouse. Dresses are also good. Most of the ministry times outside of church we will be on the street or at the base, so feel

free to dress comfortably. Flip flops are fine for the dorm and bathrooms but not on the street. It's preferable to have closed-toe footwear on the street because of uneven sidewalks, and the abundance of unannounced holes and broken concrete.

### **Personal Items**

When staying at 911 LIFE, please bring your own towels for the shower. It's also important to bring your own personal **water bottle** to carry with you throughout the day. Many public and church bathrooms do not have toilet paper, paper towels, or soap, so we suggest visitors bring travel kleenex (tissues) and hand sanitizer.

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## **Policy for Staying in the Missions Base**

Welcome to 911 life foundation! It is a blessing to have you with us and to be able to provide you with accommodation in this wonderful place, which has recently been remodeled. Because the Lord has provided this building and the finances to remodel it, we want to keep it well cared for so that we can continue to provide a pleasant and comfortable home for people involved in the ministry. It is important for us to have the same understanding when it comes to taking care of our building.

Here at 911 Life, we cultivate a culture of LOVE, HONOR and RESPECT. In order to cultivate this culture, we have to have some guidelines to help us walk in line with our culture. In this document there is a list of things that you will need to understand before, during and after your stay here at 911 Life's Missions Base in order to help us with the construction and culture of 911 Life.

### **MISSIONS BASE**

When you are staying at 911 Life's Missions base, you will be responsible for the following:

1. Visitors are not allowed without prior approval from 911 Life Administration.
2. Never open the door for someone you don't know, especially at night.
3. It is prohibited to eat or drink in the bedrooms.
4. Clean the bathroom you are using every other day.
5. Sweep and Mop your room every other day.
6. Sweep and Mop the common areas every other day.

7. Empty your bathroom trash every day and take it to the waste collection room.
8. Replace toilet paper, paper towels and soap when the dispensers are empty.
9. Empty trash and recycle bins in common areas and bathrooms when necessary and take them to the waste collection room.
10. Clean the coffee maker and clean the coffee area everyday. (If Used)
11. If something breaks or is unsafe, notify 911 Life staff immediately.
12. Keep your personal items safely in your room, 911 Life is not responsible for personal items that are lost or stolen during your stay at the mission base.
13. Keep the entrance gate to the base closed at all times; this is for everyone's safety.
14. When you leave the base for longer periods of time, leave the door and the gates closed.

## **CULTURE**

To help cultivate a culture of Faith, Hope and Love; every resident will need to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Please remember to always be loving and respectful to each other.
2. If you are leaving the building, please inform a 911 Life staff that is in charge and your roommates telling them where you are going and how long you will be away.
3. Do not leave the base alone at night.
4. Please leave your things tidy because there could be 5-6 people staying in one room.
5. After 10 p.m please remember to keep the volume down in the common areas because some people may be sleeping.
6. Please do not give monetary or other gifts to the Colombians or missionary staff without the permission of Tom Atwater.
7. If there is a conflict, do not take it right away to the 911 Life staff, MEET WITH THAT PERSON FIRST AND RESOLVE IT. (MATTHEW 18:15)

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## **PROTOCOLS**

911 LIFE serves at-risk children and families, it is important that all people who collaborate with the foundation are on the same page. This protocol is to align ourselves with basic attitudes and

behaviors, so that we can minister well and ensure that the mission and vision of 911 LIFE has coherence in all areas.

### **Giving Gifts or Money**

Without prior approval from the 911 Admin team, we ask that you do not give gifts or money to volunteers or personnel of 911 LIFE, those to whom we minister to (including on the street), nor anyone connected with an associated ministry or church.

Our 911 Life staff and volunteers are also not permitted to directly give gifts or money to the children or families of the foundation, or to any person in the neighborhood, without authorization. This is because such giving can create a security risk for the foundation, staff, and future visiting teams. Due to the above, all donations must be channeled through the administration of the Foundation. Having said that, it is not looked down upon or discouraged to give gifts. It just must be done through the 911 LIFE administration and must be given anonymously.

Volunteers and staff of 911 LIFE are not allowed to solicit gifts, money from visitors or offer services or products for purchase without the approval of the 911 Life Administration. Please let us know if they do so.

### **Positive Words**

At 911 LIFE, we do our best to maintain a culture of love, honor, respect, humility, and gratitude. It is important not to speak ill of others, nor to share private or sensitive information to third parties. This is considered gossip, and goes against the Biblical principles found in James 3 which 911 LIFE maintains. If there is a conflict between two people, it is their responsibility to follow the steps to resolve conflicts found in Matthew 18.

### **Image of 911 LIFE**

While visiting Colombia you will be representing 911 LIFE in the streets, as well as in churches and at ministry events. What you say and do reflects on 911 LIFE, so we ask that you do your best to always treat others with love and honor.

### **Prayer Protocol**

At 911 LIFE, we bathe everything we do in love. Please be aware of this when praying or ministering, so that the person receiving ministry feels the genuine love of God through you.

Try to avoid ministering alone in a segregated place. It is always better for at least two people to be praying for one person when there is ministry to avoid any misinterpretation.

Although the culture in Colombia is very physical and affectionate, be careful where you place your hands when praying for others. It's usually best to place them on the back, head, arms, or below the knees of the person receiving ministry. Also, we try to place women with women, and men with men. If that is not possible, please ask the prayer recipient to place his/her hand on the affected area, and then place your hand on top of theirs.

### **Confidentiality**

911 LIFE deals with vulnerable populations who deal with many sensitive issues. The foundation also has donor contacts who support it. It is not allowed to use this data or contact these people and entities for any reason if not approved by 911 LIFE. In addition, the personal data of the employees, volunteers, children, and families served by 911 LIFE are confidential.

All 911 LIFE accounting and finance information is private and confidential.

### **Romantic relationships**

As part of our ministry policy, we do not recommend romantic relationships between employees and / or volunteers or visitors. This helps maintain a professional environment.

Many people come from abroad to volunteer at 911 LIFE or visit with mission teams to fulfill a call from God. All of these people make a commitment to dedicate the first 12 months in Colombia to God, and to not seek nor participate in romantic relationships. By engaging in a romantic relationship, they can not only miss the true missionary purpose and calling on their time in Colombia, but also be sent home for breaking their commitment.

However, we know that the heart is not easily controlled. Therefore, if a volunteer or an employee is emotionally attracted to another person, they should express it to the spiritual leader of the foundation (Thomas or Jennifer Atwater) to consult steps to follow.

### **Activities Outside Schedule**

All students and visiting team members must get permission from 911 Life administration in order to go anywhere or do anything that is not already on the official team schedule. Doing otherwise is grounds for dismissal.

If there is permission to go to the mall or corner store visiting team members and students must go in groups of at least 3 people.

### **Child Protection**

At 911 Life we are here to serve and protect children and families. If there is any suspicion of inappropriate behavior toward children the 911 administration must be informed.