

Christmas Family Project

LOCATION: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

PROJECT DATES: December 18-29, 2014

PARTICIPATION FEE: \$895 per person.

\$745 for children 12 and under

Flight to Santo Domingo is not included in the participation fee

Information Packet



MARANATHA IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Maranatha's history with the Dominican Republic stretches back over three decades. The first contact with the country was made through a Maranatha volunteer named Van VandenHeuvel, who committed months of his life to the Dominican Republic following a devastating hurricane in 1979. Then in 1992, Maranatha embarked to build 25 churches in 90 days on the island nation. More than 1,200 volunteers visited the Dominican Republic, and the effort became a watershed moment in Maranatha's history. After years of focus on one project, one country at a time, Maranatha began organizing multiple projects in each country it entered.

Santo Domingo '92, as the project was called, caused a surge in membership in the Dominican Republic. The churches built sprouted daughter congregations and those groups needed church buildings too. Maranatha returned in 2002 for another significant effort. Once again, the construction generated another growth in membership, and today, the Adventist Church in the Dominican Republic has requested Maranatha's help in providing places of worship for new congregations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

About the Project

Volunteers on the Christmas Family Project will construct two One-Day Churches complete with block walls for congregations in the suburbs of Santo Domingo.

The Luz de la Javilla congregation has been meeting for seven years, and the 60 members are eagerly awaiting a new church building. They currently have a two-level property with an aging wooden church on the lower portion. They have prepared the higher ground for the new Maranatha church that volunteers will be building in December. The old building will remain on the property and will be used for secondary meetings and Sabbath school classes.

The Sinai congregation has been meeting for nineteen years, and currently there are 44 members meeting in a very old, rundown church. The building leaks every time it rains, making it difficult for meeting to be held. They are very excited to be receiving a new church and look forward to meeting the Maranatha volunteers.

In addition to the new construction projects, volunteers will also have the opportunity to paint a Maranatha church that has been constructed by a previous volunteer group and prepped for painting by Maranatha's field crew. Volunteers can also join a variety of outreach opportunities including medical and dental clinics, children's ministry programs, and interactive health programs.

About the Family Project

Each year, Maranatha offers at least two mission projects specifically for families. One takes place in the summer, and the other is at Christmas. Designed to accommodate volunteers of any age—from two to 82—the project is an excellent alternative to a theme-park family vacation or gift-centered holiday. Volunteers

who participate say the experience has not only broadened their perspective on the world and missions, but it's brought them closer together as a family. Families of all kinds and sizes are welcome, and individuals are also welcome to join. Family projects fill up very quickly, so register early to make sure you can join us in the Dominican Republic.

Children at the Project Site

We have different expectations for young volunteers, depending on their age and maturity. We expect children ages 13 or older to put in a full day of work, whether it's helping on the construction site or with the outreach activities. Children 12 years and under may help with construction, but they must work under the supervision of a parent or designated adult.

Accommodations

All volunteers will stay at a Catholic Retreat Center in the countryside outside of Santo Domingo. It is located about 20 minutes from the airport and only 30-45 minutes from the various construction sites.

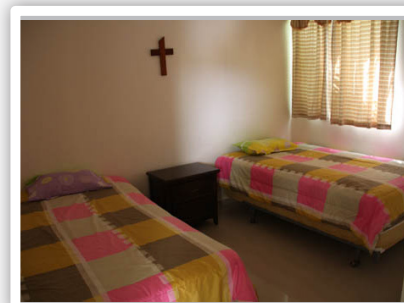
Rooms at the retreat center are clean and modest. Beds are provided (twins and doubles), but you will need to bring your own bedding. Families can make requests for beds in their rooms, such as one double bed, two twin beds, or some other combination. There are a couple large rooms that will accommodate large families. It is possible that larger families may be split into two adjacent rooms. Each room has a fan and private bathroom. There is no hot water, but don't worry! It's already hot outside, so the showering will cool us off! There is also no pool, so the showers will be even more refreshing.

Meals will be held in the spacious dining room. Silverware, plates, cups, and bowls are provided. Breakfast and supper will be served at the retreat center, but lunch will be eaten at the various job sites. Each morning, we will have a short worship together before we head to the construction sites, and we'll have a longer gathering in the evening after supper. During that time, we will report the day's activities from each of the work sites and have group worship.



Excursions

The Dominican Republic is known for its gorgeous coastline, and you shouldn't leave the island without visiting some of its beaches. During the project volunteers will have some time to see downtown, historic Santo Domingo and do some local souvenir shopping. There will also be the opportunity to visit a local beach and enjoy the tropical white sand, warm water, and palm trees. These excursion costs are included in your participation fee.



PROJECT SCHEDULE

Thursday, December 18

Arrival in Santo Domingo (SDQ), travel to retreat center, set up and orientation

Friday, December 19

First work day

Saturday, December 20

Worship with the local congregations and afternoon activities

Sunday, December 21 – Wednesday, December 24

Work and clinic days

Thursday, December 25

Christmas activities and local outreach and excursion options

Friday, December 26

Work and clinic day

Saturday, December 27

Worship with the local congregations and afternoon activities

Sunday, December 28

Local excursion

Monday, December 29

Departure from Santo Domingo

Expenses

The Family Project participation fee covers housing for eleven nights, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation to and from the airport, local excursions, secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by **November 24, 2014** so that reservations can be confirmed. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

If you are fundraising and/or receiving donations, please work with your local church treasurer to collect funds and issue tax-deductible receipts, since it is difficult for Maranatha to track individual small checks. If your church will not work with you, please wait to submit payment until you have collected the full amount for the participation fee.

Estimate of Additional Costs

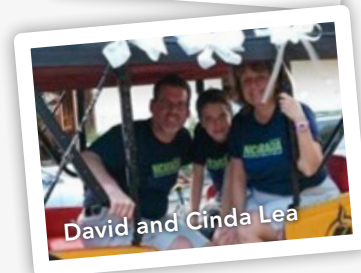
- Flight to Santo Domingo: \$600 - \$1100
- Passport: \$130 or \$110 for renewal
- Tourist Card: \$10 (paid in US funds upon arrival at the Santo Domingo airport)
- Extra Items: Each person in your family will be asked to bring a jar of vitamins for the medical clinic (Men, please bring children's vitamins and Women, please bring a women's multivitamin or prenatal) You might also be asked to pick up a couple construction items or special kitchen requests.

Leadership

Vickie and Bernie Wiedmann | Vickie and Bernie have enjoyed traveling to many countries throughout the years as coordinators for various Maranatha projects, such as the Ultimate Workout and the Christmas Family Project. This will be Vickie's fifth time leading the Christmas Family Project as the overall coordinator, and she looks forward to guiding the group through this amazing service experience. Bernie will lead the construction at one of the church building sites.



David and Cinda Lea Sitler | David and Cinda Lea join the team from Bolingbrook, Illinois where David serves as a pastor in the Conference. They have been married for 19 years and have a 14 year old son, Nehemiah, who wants to be a mission pilot. Cinda Lea has coordinated children's ministry programs for many years and in 2011 she had her first opportunity to lead VBS on a mission trip. They have had the joy of joining Maranatha on three Family Projects since 2010, and the three of them look forward to this opportunity to once again join the project. David will be leading the spiritual aspect of the trip and Cinda Lea will lead the children's ministry programs.



ABOUT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is a beautiful island in the Caribbean with sandy, white beaches and luscious green mountains. It is the second most popular destination in the Caribbean after Puerto Rico, and visitors flock to the island to indulge in fancy resorts and year-round golf courses.

Yet a look beyond the tourist attractions reveals a nation with a history that is not so picturesque. The Dominican Republic lies on the eastern part of an island that it shares with Haiti. Originally, the entire land mass was inhabited by the indigenous tribe of Taínos. The Spanish colonized it in the late 1400s, making it the first permanent European settlement in the Americas. The island, called Hispaniola, suffered centuries of a tug-of-war between the French and Spanish. In 1804, the Spanish ceded the western third of the island to the French and that portion of the island became Haiti. The remaining land became the Dominican Republic, which gained independence in 1844.



Since then, the Dominican Republic has had a turbulent history with ownership returning to Spain, only to have a war to regain independence. The country also fell into the hands of a dictator from 1930-1961. Today, the Dominican Republic is a democracy, working toward maintaining a stable and healthy country. Tourism fuels its economy, and it has the second largest economy in Central America and the Caribbean. However, in the rural areas of the country, poverty continues to be a problem, particularly near the Dominican-Haitian border.

Given its history with colonization, the country's culture is a blend of several influences. Spanish architecture is evident in areas of Santo Domingo, particularly in its cathedrals and cobblestone streets. Merengue, their national music and dance, is ubiquitous in the Dominican Republic, and it originated from slaves who worked in the sugar beet fields, their feet connected to each other by chains. Baseball, an American export, is an obsession for people of all ages, and children can be seen playing games wherever there is space.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flights

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to the capital city of Santo Domingo (see below). **Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project.** After meeting a Maranatha representative at the airport, the group will travel to the project location together.

Arrival

Please plan to arrive in Santo Domingo (airport code SDQ) on the afternoon or evening of Thursday, December 18.

Departure

Please plan to depart from Santo Domingo (SDQ) on the morning of Monday, December 29.

Early Arrivals or Late Departures

Families may choose to extend their time in the Dominican Republic by arriving before December 18 or leaving after December 29. Volunteers that choose to extend their trip are free to make their own reservations and arrangements at their own expense.

Travel Resources

Azumano Travel: 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle at edpenha@azumano.com

Butler Travel: 503-879-5005 or by email with Nathanael at nathan@butlertravel.com or with Ellen at ellen@butlertravel.com.

Kayak: www.kayak.com

When contacting the Azumano or Butler travel agencies, be sure to mention Maranatha for the best fares.

Entry Requirements

All passports must be valid for at least six months (that would be June, 2015) from the dates of intended travel. All visitors must purchase a tourist card upon arrival in the country. There will be stations at the airport to make this purchase. The fee is \$10 and must be paid in U.S. currency. Please bring new, unmarked bills to make this transaction. This tourist card will act as your visa for up to 60 days in the country.

Citizens of other countries, please consult the Dominican embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS & PRECAUTIONS

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last ten years). The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends vaccines for hepatitis A and B, typhoid, and an anti-malarial medication.

FACTS & FIGURES

Capital: Santo Domingo

Population: 10,219,630

Language: Spanish

Climate: Tropical maritime. Little seasonal temperature variation

Religion: Roman Catholic 95%

Currency: Dominican Peso (approximately 42 pesos to \$1 USD)

Temperature Forecast: Mid-Upper 80's Fahrenheit with high humidity and rainstorms

There is a widespread risk of malaria for the entire island; however, it is not common in the city of Santo Domingo. But because the group will take a trip to La Romana at the end of the project, which has reported cases of malaria, it is important to speak with a medical professional about options regarding malaria prevention.

Some of these vaccines you may already have and some you may deem unnecessary for this trip. You should schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in the Dominican Republic and the ways to minimize them.

Another risk is cholera, a bacterial disease that is spread primarily through the ingestion of contaminated food and water. All food prepared by the Maranatha group will be prepared in a safe manner, and purified water will be provided.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register, please complete the online registration and pay the full participation fee or an initial deposit of at least half the total participation fee. You can make this payment online, over the phone, or with a check, made out to Maranatha Volunteers International, mailed to the address below. If for any reason you need to cancel your participation, Maranatha will do their best to refund your deposit up until one month before travel. After that date, \$150 is non-refundable and the remainder will depend on the reservations and the project arrangements already made.

REGISTER ONLINE AT MARANATHA.ORG OR OVER THE PHONE.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (916) 774-7700	Mailing Address:	Canadian Payments Only:
Fax: (916) 774-7701	Maranatha Volunteers International	Maranatha Volunteers International Assoc.
Email: volunteer@maranatha.org	990 Reserve Drive, Suite 100	c/o V06494C
Website: www.maranatha.org	Roseville, CA 95678	PO Box 6494, Station Terminal
		Vancouver, BC V6B 6R3

THE MARANATHA STORE

BUY MARANATHA MERCHANDISE!

Share the spirit of service with Maranatha-themed apparel and accessories.

NIKE CLASSIC POLO \$45



This classic golf polo has stitch-trimmed shoulder panels, flat knit collar, three-button placket and open hem sleeves—with Dri-FIT fabric technology to keep you dry on those hot days.

HARD HAT \$11



This MSA V-Gard hard hat, with Staz-On suspension, ensures excellent shock absorption on the job site.

MARANATHA.ORG



TO ORDER, CALL (916) 774-7700

All prices are excluding sales tax and shipping.

CAP \$12



All cotton and easy to pack, this cap is sure to keep the sun off your face on a mission project and at home.

WATER BOTTLE \$15



The autospout water bottle by Contigo features a one-touch-button spout for convenient one-handed drinking. It also has a spout shield to protect the spout from debris and dirt when not in use—perfect for the project site.

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