

# Ultimate Workout Reunion

**LOCATION:** BONGO ABAJO, PANAMA

**PROJECT DATES:** DEC. 26, 2014 – JAN. 4, 2015

**PARTICIPATION FEE:** \$650 for UW Alumni  
\$800 for Non-Alumni

*Flight to Panama City is not included in the participation fee*

Information Packet



## MARANATHA IN PANAMA

Maranatha's first major initiative in Panama was nearly twenty years ago. Starting in the mid-1990s, Maranatha constructed 31 new churches, refurbished 16 churches, and built five Education and Evangelism Centers. Since then, those schools and churches have helped Seventh-day Adventist membership to grow in Panama. In 2013, Maranatha responded to the country's request for additional churches and schools in hopes that the projects will have the same, positive impact.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 1996, volunteers on Maranatha's teen project, the Ultimate Workout (UW), constructed the Bongo Abajo church in Panama. Since then, church members have spread God's love to the surrounding communities and started another congregation in Bongo Arriba. Last year, volunteers with Maranatha's Christmas Family Project constructed the Bongo Arriba church.

Now, former UW volunteers are returning to reconnect with members at the Bongo Abajo church. The Ultimate Workout Alumni Association has put together a short project over the New Year's holiday, inviting alumni from past projects to reconnect through service.

When UW left Panama in 1996, the church they left in Bongo Abajo was fully blocked and awaiting paint. Within a couple of weeks, the churches were in full use. That was more than 15 years ago and the church has been used on a regular basis for everything from evangelistic meetings and Sabbath school to medical clinics and emergency shelter. This building has withstood rain showers and the ever-present Central American sun and heat. Yet, the structure is showing the strain of nearly two decades with multiple stains and faded paint.

Volunteers on the UW Reunion Project will renovate the Bongo Abajo church. They will give the church a much-needed facelift by painting it inside and out. Volunteers will also assemble two One-Day Church buildings that will be used as a church and Sabbath school classroom for a nearby congregation. The group will also conduct community outreach programs in the local neighborhoods.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

### Friday, December 26

Arrival in Panama City and spend the night

### Saturday, December 27

Travel to Bongo Abajo

### Sunday, December 28 – Wednesday, December 31

Work Days

### Thursday, January 1

Return to Panama City

### Friday, January 2

Panama Canal Excursion

### Saturday, January 3

Emberá Indian Excursion

### Sunday, January 4

Departure from Panama City

This project specifically targets UW veterans from the past 24 years. Those who have had a connection to the UW through family and friends are also invited, as well as those who feel called to serve in this ministry. We are expecting a small group of 15-30 volunteers to join this project. You're invited to be a part of it!

## **Accommodations**

The first night of the project will be spent at the Riande Aeropuerto Hotel in Panama City, just minutes from the airport. After a night of solid rest, we'll embark on an 8-hour bus ride to Bongo Abajo in the morning.

### **HOTEL ADDRESS:**

**Riande Aeropuerto**  
**Vía Tocumen, entrada al corredor Sur**  
**Ciudad de Panama**  
**+(507) 291-9000**

In Bongo Abajo, volunteers will relive some of the conditions from UW experiences past! Volunteers will camp at the Bongo Abajo church, so be sure to bring a tent or hammock, bedding, and towels to use during the trip. Basic showers are available, but because water service is not always dependable, you may find yourself bathing in the nearby river.

At the end of the project, volunteers will return to Panama City to enjoy some of the famous sites of Panama and spend time reflecting on the difference UW has made in the lives of so many. The group will stay at the Radisson Summit Resort just outside the city. The Radisson provides breakfast in the morning, free Wi-Fi, and a pool.

### **HOTEL ADDRESS:**

**Radisson Summit Hotel**  
**Omar Torrijos Ave**  
**Paraiso 0844-2014**  
**Panama Canal, Ciudad de Panama**

## **Excursion**

After completing the renovations at Bongo Abajo, volunteers will return to Panama City for excursion activities. The first excursion will be a full day cruise on through the Panama Canal aboard the Pacific Queen. The tour starts in the Pacific Ocean, passes under the Bridge of the Americas, traverses through two sets of locks, and ends at Gatun Lake on the Atlantic side of Panama. Breakfast and lunch are provided on the boat. The following day, the group will take a trip in dugout canoes to an Emberá Indian village where you will see, first hand, how the indigenous people live day to day. That afternoon the group will go to a nearby zoo that is part of a national park in Panama. The cost of these excursions is included in your participation fee.

## **Expenses**

The participation fee for this project covers housing, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation to and from the airport and project site, the Panama Canal and Emberá Indian excursions, secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

Because this project is designed for UW alumni, the UW Alumni Association is helping to subsidize the participation fee for alumni who wish to join the project. The participation fee for alumni is \$650 and the participation fee for non-alumni is \$800.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by **November 24, 2014**, due to application processing time. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, please either have donors send money directly to you or 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 until you have collected the full amount of your participation fee before submitting your participation fee to Maranatha.

## **ESTIMATE OF ADDITIONAL COSTS**

**Flight to Panama City:** \$525 - 750

**Passport:** \$130 or \$110 for renewal

## **Leadership**

### **Dan Skau | Project Coordinator**

Dan's passion for UW kept him returning year after year. But he began to see a need for something that would last longer than just two weeks each summer. He initiated the UW Alumni Association to keep UW veterans connected to missions and each other, as well as recruit new participants and raise funds to support current volunteers. Dan will bring his vast UW experience and coordinate this unique UW Reunion project.

### **Daniel Medrano | Co-Construction Superintendent**

Daniel joined the UW in 2009 and has gone on to lead volunteer construction sites for Maranatha projects with church teams, the Ultimate Workout, and a variety of open teams. He currently studies engineering at Victoria College in Texas. Daniel is bilingual, which definitely comes in handy when working with the local church members or just playing a game of "futbol" with the local kids.

### **Jose Luis Diaz | Co-Construction Superintendent**

Jose joins the group from Puerto Rico, where he is studying engineering and construction management at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. He first joined Maranatha in 2008 on UW18 in Chile. He has since proved his expertise in construction leadership, coordination, and translation. Jose knows how to have a good time and will undoubtedly brighten your day.

## **Giving Opportunity**

The Bongo Abajo Church is in desperate need of a new coat of paint, and this is one of the main jobs that we hope to accomplish during the trip. However, in an attempt to keep the costs reasonable, the cost of paint and supplies is not included in the participation fee. We need your help in raising the money for painting supplies. Would you be willing to make a donation so we can complete these renovations? Please consider donating yourself, asking your pastor to dedicate an offering towards the project, or asking your family to donate in lieu of giving you a Christmas gift. You can donate directly to Maranatha by sending a check or by calling (916) 774-7700 and making a debit or credit card donation. Please indicate to Maranatha that the donation is for the UW Reunion painting supplies. You will receive a tax-deductible receipt, and the money will go directly to this project.

## **ABOUT PANAMA**

Panama is approximately the size of Mississippi, and this long, narrow country marks the border between North and South America. Early inhabitants of Panama tended to reside on both sides of the country near oceans, swamps, and rivers. It is no wonder that the country was named Panama, meaning "Abundance of Fish." As an illustration of its moniker, Panama is full of fish markets.

Panama is best known for its canal, a thoroughway connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Constructed by the United States, after a failed attempt by the French, the canal opened on August 15, 1914. It was a historical moment for the world and the United States, as the country's sovereignty over the "Canal Zone" marked America's rise as a superpower. Nearly a century later, the canal is now under the control of Panama's government, and it remains an important link in world trade. It has seen the passage of more than 800,000 vessels in its time.

Aside from the canal, Panama is a fast-growing country with 3.2 million people. Great progress has been made in education as access has been broadened to reach rural areas, and the literacy rate is 93%. Interestingly, female enrollment at secondary schools is dominant, and in 1999, Panama elected its first female president. Unfortunately, Panama still struggles with socioeconomic disparities. Poverty is great, particularly among the indigenous people. While the government has implemented social programs, the problem is still widespread.



Weather in Panama is fairly tropical. Temperatures average in the 70's and 80's year round. The rainy season lasts from May to January, and in June, visitors can expect anywhere from 10-20 inches of rain. This weather provides an excellent environment for tropical animals. Panama boasts a vast biodiversity with 218 different mammal species and the largest number of avian species in Central America, including large populations of macaws, quetzals, parrots, and toucans.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

Volunteers will purchase their own plane tickets to the capital of Panama City (see below). Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project. Volunteers will spend the first night at the Riande Airport Hotel in Panama City before traveling together by bus to Bongo Abajo the following morning.

### Arrival

Please plan to arrive in Panama City (airport code PTY) in the afternoon or evening of Friday, December 26.

### Departure

Please plan to depart from Panama City (PTY) in the morning of Sunday, January 4.

## Travel Resources

**Azumano Travel:** 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle at [edpenha@azumano.com](mailto:edpenha@azumano.com)

**Butler Travel:** 503-879-5005 or by email with Nathanael at [nathan@butlertravel.com](mailto:nathan@butlertravel.com) or with Ellen at [ellen@butlertravel.com](mailto:ellen@butlertravel.com).

**Kayak:** [www.kayak.com](http://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 from the dates of intended travel (July 7, 2015). If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at [www.passport.gc.ca](http://www.passport.gc.ca). It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

Tourists are permitted to travel in Panama for up to 180 days without a visa. Citizens of other countries, please consult the Panamanian embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

## FACTS & FIGURES

**Capital:** Panama City

**Population:** 3.5 million

**Language:** Spanish and some English

**Climate:** Tropical, hot and humid. Rainy season from May to January.

**Religion:** Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant 15%

**Currency:** U.S. Dollar

## MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS AND PRECAUTIONS

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommend vaccinations for hepatitis A and typhoid.

Some of these vaccines you may already have and some you may deem unnecessary for this trip. Because Maranatha is not a medical organization, we recommend that you schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor to talk about the medical risks in Panama and the ways to minimize them.

## 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 by credit card online or over the phone or with a check made out to Maranatha Volunteers International and sent 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 point, \$150 is non-refundable and the remainder will depend on the reservations and the project arrangements already made.

Register online at [Maranatha.org](http://Maranatha.org) or over the phone.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Phone:** (916) 774-7700

**Fax:** (916) 774-7701

**Email:** [volunteer@maranatha.org](mailto:volunteer@maranatha.org)

**Website:** [www.maranatha.org](http://www.maranatha.org)

**Mailing Address:**

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International  
990 Reserve Drive  
Suite 100  
Roseville, CA 95678

**Canadian Payments Only:**

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International Association  
c/o V06494C  
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Vancouver, BC V6B 6R3