



# Young Adult Project 2015

**Location:** Changuinola, Panama

**Project Dates:** August 5-17, 2015

**Participation Fee:** \$990

*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 the country.

In 2013, Maranatha responded to Panama's request for additional churches and schools in hopes that the buildings will have the same, positive impact.

### Project Overview

Maranatha first visited Changuinola more than 18 years ago, when volunteers built the Changuinola Adventist School. Since then, the school has flourished; it now provides a Christian education for more than 450 students. The central Adventist church in Changuinola has experienced an increased interest in Adventism as well, and membership has grown during the last several years. This has led to the birth of several new congregations in the surrounding communities, including the Finca 4 Church.

Earlier this year, Maranatha volunteers returned to Finca 4, which was built in 1996, and they gave the worn exterior a fresh coat of paint. Volunteers on the Young Adult Project will now provide a Sabbath school building for the ever-growing congregation. The floor and structure will already be in place, and volunteers will construct the block walls for the building.

In addition to construction, volunteers will also have the opportunity to participate in various forms of community outreach, including children's ministry programs. If you are interested in leading any of the outreach activities on the Young Adult Project, please contact Maranatha.

### Project Schedule

**Wednesday, August 5**  
**Arrival in Panama City (PTY)**

**Thursday, August 6**  
**Travel to Changuinola**

**Friday, August 7**  
**Orientation and first work day**

**Saturday, August 8**  
**Worship with the local congregation**

**Sunday, August 9 –**  
**Friday, August 14**  
**Work days with midweek excursion**

**Saturday, August 15**  
**Worship with the local congregation**

**Sunday, August 16**  
**Travel to Panama City and visit Panama Canal**

**Monday, August 17**  
**Departure from Panama City (PTY)**

## Accommodations

Volunteers will arrive in Panama City on Wednesday and spend the night at the Riande Aeropuerto Hotel, a short drive from the airport. The following morning, the group will travel by bus Changuinola, which is an eleven-hour bus ride from Panama City.

Once in Changuinola, the group will stay at a basic hotel called Hotel Plaza Changuinola. This newly constructed hotel is approximately a three star establishment. Each room has two double beds and a private bathroom. The rooms are very clean with tile floors, air conditioning, and hot water. Linens are provided, but washcloths are not, so please plan on bringing your own to use during the project. A complete packing list will be provided in your final packet.

While the hotel does have WiFi, keep in mind that connection times can be limited and slow. We would also encourage you to disconnect from the world of technology for this trip to focus on your connection with Christ and those around you.

## Excursion

**Bocas Del Toro** | Changuinola is a very agricultural region of Panama, and the majority of the surrounding area is covered with banana plantations. However, 45 minutes off the coast lies the islands of Bocas Del Toro. These islands are the “Caribbean” getaway for Panamanians and tourists alike. We will take a break from our work to travel by water taxi to the main island, where we will visit a local beach and explore the small town.

**Panama Canal** | Volunteers will get the unique experience of visiting the Panama Canal, which cuts across the Isthmus of Panama. Work was finished on the canal in 1914, and it enabled sailors carrying trading goods to make a more direct route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific and vice versa, instead of traversing the dangerous waters of Cape Horn. Ownership of the canal passed from the Colombian government to the French and eventually the American government, until it finally was returned to Panama in 1999. The Panama Canal is considered one of the seven wonders of the modern world. This short excursion includes a stop at the Miraflores lookout tower, which gives a view of the working canal locks, and a visit to the Panama Canal museum.

## Leadership

**Jessica Shine** | Jessica, a California native and Maranatha mission trip ‘veteran,’ has almost two decades of leadership experience. Her exposure to service began with Maranatha in 1996, during her first Ultimate Workout, in Panama. Since then, she has traveled to almost a dozen countries, sharing the love of Jesus with everyone around her. Jessica loves meeting new people and hearing their stories. She also enjoys music, laughter, reading, the outdoors, and travel. Jessica is looking forward to returning to the country where her heart for missions began and sharing a new sacred experience with fellow volunteers on the Young Adult Project.



## Expenses

The participation fee covers housing for 12 nights, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation, secondary accident insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by July 6, 2015. Please wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, please either have checks sent 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:** \$625-\$850

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

## About Panama

Panama is approximately the size of Mississippi, and this long, narrow country marks the border between Central 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 perhaps best known for its canal, a throughway 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 so far.

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. The first night will be spent at the Riande Aeropuerto Hotel in Panama City. For more information or to see the address of the hotel, visit [www.riandehoteles.com/contactenos](http://www.riandehoteles.com/contactenos). The following day, the group will travel by bus from Panama City to Changuinola, an eleven-hour trip.

### Flights

Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project.

**Arrival** | Please plan to arrive in Panama City (airport code PTY) in the afternoon or evening of Wednesday, August 5, 2015.

**Departure** | Please plan to depart from Panama City (PTY) on the morning of Monday, August 17, 2015.



### Facts and Figures

**Capital:**  
Panama City

**Population:**  
3,510,045

**Language:**  
Spanish and some English

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

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

**Currency:**  
U.S. Dollar

## 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, mention Maranatha for the best fares.

## Entry Requirements

All tourists must have passports valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (February 18, 2016).

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. If time is short, you can expedite the process for an additional fee. Photos can be taken at a FedEx office, Walgreens, or Costco.

U.S. and Canadian citizens can 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.

## Staying Healthy

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends vaccines for hepatitis A, typhoid, and an antimalarial medication other than Chloroquine.

When many people think of Panama, they recall stories of malaria and yellow fever during the construction of the Panama Canal, 100 years ago. However, many of these disease-carrying mosquitoes have since been eradicated through aggressive interventions. Our group will be staying in the Bocas Del Toro province west of the canal, and currently the CDC does not have advisories for malaria in any region west of the capital. However, mosquitoes do thrive in the tropical environment, especially during the rainy season, and can carry other diseases as well. We recommend taking personal precautions to avoid being bitten during the project, especially during dawn and dusk. If you choose to take malaria preventative medication, keep in mind that Chloroquine is not effective against the strain of malaria present in Panama.

You should 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, 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:**

Maranatha Volunteers International  
990 Reserve Drive  
Suite 100  
Roseville, CA 95678

**Canadian Payments Only:**

Maranatha Volunteers International  
Association  
c/o V06494C  
PO Box 6494, Station Terminal  
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