



Ultimate Workout Alumni Project 2016

Information Packet



Location: Varital Este, Panama

Project Dates: December 26, 2016 – January 8, 2017

UW Alumni Participation Fee: \$550

Non Alumni Participation Fee: \$700

Flight to David, Panama is not included in the participation fee

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 2014, the Ultimate Workout (UW) Reunion Project was scheduled to go to Panama to renovate a church that Ultimate Workout volunteers had constructed in 1996. Then, just a few weeks before the project was to begin, an UW veteran, named Gabriel Modiga, passed away. Many of the volunteers committed to the 2014 reunion project knew Gabriel, and suddenly their upcoming mission trip took on a deeper meaning.

During the project, volunteers not only renovated the church they had planned on, they also raised enough money to construct two One-Day Church buildings to be used as Sabbath School classrooms for another congregation in Varital Este. They dedicated the project and the new buildings to Gabriel, and placed memorial plaques at the structures.

The following year, Gabriel's parents participated on the UW Reunion Project in Corozo, Panama. While there, the group went to Varital Este to visit the congregation where they had built the One-Day Church frames. The volunteers learned that the congregation was struggling financially, and they had been unable to raise the money to complete the walls of the new buildings. While both structures were being used weekly, they did not have walls yet.

Project Schedule

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26

Arrival in David, Panama and set up camp

TUESDAY, DEC. 27 - FRIDAY, DEC. 30

Work days

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

Worship with the local congregation

SUNDAY, JAN. 1 – WEDNESDAY, JAN. 4

Work Days

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

Excursion: Travel to Boquete

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

Excursion: Optional activities

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7

Worship with the group. Enjoy Boquete. Travel to David, Panama

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Departures from David, Panama

An idea was sparked, and the group decided to fundraise and return the following year (2016) to complete the walls. (The group is still fundraising, if you would like to make a donation, please contact Maranatha.)

Now, everyone is invited to return to Panama to complete the walls for both of these Sabbath school structures as well as paint the church sanctuary that was built by the church members. In addition, the group will conduct local community outreach in the community.

This project specifically targets UW veterans from the past 26 years. However, 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

During the project, volunteers will get to relive the experience of a true Ultimate Workout by camping next door to the job site. We'll set up camp in the yard of the church elder's home. A river near the property will serve as our bath. There will also be a few shower stalls set up for solar showers or bucket showers. Portable toilets will be available at the camp. Volunteers will need to bring a tent and/or hammocks as well as all their bedding and towels for the project. A full packing list will be provided in the final information packet. Meals will be prepared in a makeshift kitchen at camp.



At the end of the project, volunteers will head to the town of Boquete, Panama. Boquete is known to be one of the most beautiful ecological areas of the country. There, volunteers will stay at the Lerida Coffee Plantation, a plantation that has been turned into a hotel. Separated from the main hotel area is a large house, and a few small cabins, where the volunteers will stay. Bedding is provided. The rooms also have A/C, hot water, and Wi-Fi.



Excursions

On Thursday, on the way to Boquete, the group will take part in one of three excursions: zip lining, bird watching tour, or a coffee tour. This tour is included in the cost of the trip. Friday will be a free day. The hotel offers additional activities that volunteers can choose to take part in for an additional \$35 per person.

Expenses

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

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by November 21 due to application processing time. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

Maranatha participation fees are tax-deductible. For Canadian tax-deductible receipts, payments must be made by check to the Maranatha Association (address located at the end of this information packet). For U.S. tax-deductible receipts, payments can be made by cash, check, or credit/debit cards.

If you are fundraising or receiving donations, please either have them 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 David, Panama: \$850 - \$1,200

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 helped to initiate 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 | Construction Superintendent

Daniel joined the UW in 2009 and has gone on to lead volunteer construction sites for Maranatha projects with church teams, UW, 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.



Alex Slikkers and Jayden Dalke | Lead Masons

Both Alex and Jayden got their start in mission trip leadership through UW. Alex started in 2008 in Chile, and Jayden first joined in 2009 in Ecuador. Both were strong leaders on the construction site and earned their spot as project staff the following years. Now they join the Alumni Project to help guide the construction and provide Mason expertise on site.



Dwain Esmond | Spiritual Coordinator

Dwain joins the group from Maryland where he lives with his wife, Kemba, and their six year old son, DJ. He first joined Maranatha in 2006 when his job as editor of *Insight Magazine* presented him the opportunity to join UW in Peru. Since then, he has joined several UW projects and has served as spiritual coordinator on several of the trips. Dwain enjoys seeing new places, and he looks forward to seeing God in everything that happens on the project.



Loretta Jessop | Head Cook

Loretta joins the group as the head cook. She and her husband Gary have been serving together as Maranatha volunteers since the 1980's, both internationally and in the United States. They reside in western Washington where they are very involved in their local church and enjoy spending time with their family. It has been their goal to bring all of their grandchildren on a Maranatha project. Loretta is used to cooking wonderful meals in rough conditions. Gary often helps lead the construction projects or gives Loretta a hand in the kitchen.



Jessica Perez | Team Medic

Jessica first started volunteering with Maranatha in 2007 in Ecuador on UW. Since then, she has joined multiple projects throughout the years in Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and Panama. When not on a Maranatha project she lives in Tennessee where she works as an ER nurse. She has a heart for service and healing. On this project, she will be ensuring that volunteers stay safe!



About Panama

Panama is approximately the size of Mississippi. 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 city of David, Panama (see below). Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project. Volunteers will travel together by bus to the project location.



Facts and 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

Arrival

Please plan to arrive in David, Panama, (airport code DAV) in the afternoon of Monday, December 26, 2016. Please arrive before 6pm.

Departure

Please plan to depart from David, Panama, (DAV) in the morning of Sunday, January 8, 2017

Additional Flight Details

There are very few flights that go directly to David, so you will most likely have to transfer in Panama City, Panama. Please note that Copa Airlines (code share with United) is the only airline that transfers directly from the international airport (PTY – Tocumen). Most other airlines require you to take a flight out of the domestic airport (PAC – Albrook). Maranatha recommends flying with Copa and transferring in the international airport. If you take a flight into Tocumen and out of Albrook, you will need to get your bags, leave the airport, and take a taxi or other form of transportation to the domestic airport across the city. If transferring from Albrook, please allow for at least four hours to make this connection.

You will need to depart from David, Panama, on Sunday. Your flight will probably transfer in Panama City again, and there are a few flight itineraries with which you can get a connection out that evening. Some flight itineraries might require an overnight layover. If you book one of those options, please make your own reservations for that night's accommodations and transportation to the airport. The Hotel Riande Aeropuerto has a free shuttle to and from the international airport (Tocumen).

Travel Resources

- **Azumano Travel:** 800-454-4099 or by email with Erle at edpenha@ciazumano.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, make sure you mention Maranatha to receive a discounted service charge.

Entry Requirements

All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (July 8, 2017). 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. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process, so plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport.

Citizens of the United States, Canada, and most European countries do not need a visa to enter Panama. 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.

Traveling With Minors

If you are traveling as a legal minor (under the age of 18 on the date you depart), both parents or legal guardians must travel with you. Otherwise, you must have two parental consent forms signed and notarized. This provides government entities with evidence that both guardians have consented to their child leaving the country with the other guardian and Maranatha, as well as gives Maranatha permission to treat you in case of a medical emergency. One original must be mailed to Maranatha, and the other original must stay with you while you travel. If a parent is divorced, the missing parent still needs to sign the form unless the parent traveling with the minor has sole legal custody. In that case, a copy of the divorce paperwork, indicating sole custody, must also be included. If a parent has died, a copy of the death certificate must be included.

You can download a PDF of the Parental Consent Form at www.maranatha.org/resources. This form will ask for two people as appointees of the minor. The first appointee will be the guardian traveling with the child. The other will be Dan Skau, Maranatha's project coordinator for UW Alumni Project.

Health & Safety

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.

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

Zika

Recently the Zika virus has been spreading around Central America and the Caribbean. This mosquito-borne disease acts very similar to a hard-hitting flu with symptoms lasting about two weeks. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for the disease and the CDC has issued a **Level 2 warning**. This warning does not suggest that you postpone all travel, but it does urge travelers to take **heightened precautions** to avoid being bitten. This virus is still being studied, and information is continuing to be released. Currently, there are no known long-term effects; however, there does seem to be a link between the virus and possible birth defects in babies born from women who were infected during their pregnancy. The virus can remain in a woman's body for approximately eight weeks and in a man's body for approximately six months, and it can be spread through physical contact. If you or your partner is pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or are trying to get pregnant in the next six months, Maranatha recommends speaking with your doctor to determine if you should travel.

Giving Opportunity

The group is still fundraising for the cost of the block and painting supplies. This is the main project the group is going to be working on, so raising the funds is an urgent need in order to have enough work for the group. Would you be willing to make a donation so we can complete these projects? Please consider making a donation, asking your pastor to dedicate an offering toward 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 Alumni Extra Donations. You will receive a tax-deductible receipt, and the money will go directly to this project.

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 or over the phone.

Contact Information

Phone: (916) 774-7700

Fax: (916) 774-7701

Email: volunteer@maranatha.org

Website: 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
Vancouver, BC V6B 6R3

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