



Multiple Group Project 2018

Information Packet

Location: Chiriqui, Panama

Project Dates: March 22 – April 1, 2018

Participation Fee: \$895

Children 12 and under: \$745

(Age determined on the start date of the project)

Flights are 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 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. Today, we are continuing to work on various projects in Panama.

Project Overview

Maranatha's Multiple Group Project is designed for teams of 15 or fewer people—groups too small to undertake a typical project on their own. These individual groups may also lack some of the key leadership roles such as cook, spiritual coordinator, team medic, or construction superintendent. Small teams join together for a large group experience, while still maintaining the intimacy and bonding of their own group.

Volunteers will work on a large Education and Evangelism Center (EEC) located north of David, Panama, on the outskirts of a town called Algarrobos. Christian education is something that is greatly needed in this area, and this new school will be the first private school (and only Christian school) in the region north of David. When finished, this school will provide education for more than 400 elementary students. Maranatha volunteers started work on the building in July 2017 and volunteers on this project will continue to lay the block walls for this large undertaking.

Due to safety regulations in Panama, volunteers on this project will need to bring steel-toed boots with them if they intend to help with the construction. A full packing list will be included in the final information packet.

Project Schedule

THURSDAY, MARCH 22
Arrival in Panama City (or David).
Evening bus to Boquete.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23
Orientation and first work day

SATURDAY, MARCH 24
Worship with the local congregation
and afternoon hiking excursion

SUNDAY – MONDAY, MARCH 25 – 26
Work days

TUESDAY, MARCH 27
Isla Gomez excursion

WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY, MARCH 28 – 30
Work days plus Thursday afternoon
souvenir shopping

SATURDAY, MARCH 31
Worship with the local congregation.
Night bus to Panama City.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1
Panama Canal. Afternoon and evening
departures from Panama City.

MONDAY, APRIL 2
Optional Departure Day (Extra Fee)

In addition to the construction site, the group will have medical and dental clinics in several areas of the surrounding communities. We have some leadership in place but need more medical professionals to join the team in order to expand the services we can offer. If you're interested in joining as a medical professional, contact Maranatha.

The group will also conduct some children's ministry activities and other forms of community outreach in the surrounding area. Along with that, there will be a kitchen crew that will help prepare three meals a day. Some may want to work in the kitchen for the entire project, and some may prefer to help a few days and work in other areas a few days. But everyone wants to eat, so we'll pitch in to make sure that happens each day!

Why This Maranatha Project?

Short-term mission trips have become a popular way for people to serve others, make a difference, challenge themselves, grow spiritually, and see unique parts of the world. Most people have several reasons for participating, some stronger than others.

It's important for all Maranatha participants to be clear on the purpose(s) for this Maranatha short-term mission trip. Maranatha's mission statement gives the focus, which is "Maranatha spreads the Gospel throughout the world by building people through the construction of urgently needed buildings." If you wanted to put this into bullet points, the three items that jump out are that Maranatha:

- Spreads the Gospel throughout the world.
- Builds people.
- Facilitates the construction of urgently needed buildings.

Notice that "visiting a new country" or "posting cool pictures" or "donating to a worthy cause" aren't part of the mission statement, even though each one of these may happen on your Maranatha project. But Maranatha's three broad, yet clear, purposes will guide the planning of this project. People say, "This is what it's all about."

While Maranatha will do 30-50 short-term mission trips in 2018, this particular project, the "Multiple Group Project" (MGP), will emphasize the following primary purposes under the overall mission statement of Maranatha. These are what will shape what we plan, what we do, and how we evaluate this particular Maranatha mission project:

1. Service opportunities that grow faith in God.
2. Challenges and bonding for each small group and the larger group.
3. Quality work for God, for others, and for one's self.

Please take some time to reflect on the reason(s) why you are going on this Maranatha mission trip. How do your purposes match what you can expect for this project? What adjustments might you need to make?

Flexibility

"FLEXIBILITY" is the one key word that will be necessary in all that we do on this mission trip. It's not the purpose of the mission trip, but it will be necessary to achieve our purposes. While we make plans, we can almost guarantee that there will be surprises that will force us to adapt. If we aren't flexible, we'll have plenty to feel miserable about and will lose out on multiple opportunities to serve others and to grow ourselves.

Your flexibility will be tested when you're put on a job you don't want to do OR when your accommodations are different from back home OR when the food is strange and tastes different OR when some people bug you and you can't get away from them. Most of us want to grow and improve, but most of us don't want to go through discomfort or make changes in order to achieve that growth.

By going on a Maranatha mission trip, you are putting yourself into a great environment for growth, but that means changes in your life. Are you ready for that? Are you hoping for that? Have you already started to pray for this to be a reality? FLEXIBILITY enables you to grow without breaking. By all means, bring FLEXIBILITY with you because you'll need it just about every day.

Accommodations

During the project, volunteers will stay at Hotel Fundadores in Boquete, Panama. The hotel is basic, between a 1 and 2-star facility, depending on how you rate hotels. We chose this level because it's adequate, safe, and clean, and it keeps the participation fee manageable for groups. We mention this in advance so you can adjust your expectations for the mission trip.

The hotel is clean, provides bedding and towels, private bathrooms, and hot water. Air conditioning is not provided; in Boquete you'll be at a higher elevation than at the construction site, and it is usually cooler. You may choose to bring a portable fan. We also recommend that you bring your own washcloths as they are not commonly provided in Panama. Wi-Fi is available, but it will probably be slower than your connection at home. There is no swimming pool, but there is a large field area for social activities, and the hotel is located in a beautiful setting with trees, plants, and even a small creek.

Room configurations include mixtures of double, queen, king, and single beds. Small groups will be roomed together according to gender. If you would like to room with someone in particular, please let Maranatha know in advance.

Our group will use the kitchen at the hotel and will eat and worship in the dining room. The drive from the hotel to the work site will be about 30 minutes each way by bus.

Excursions

Boquete is a popular tourist destination in Panama. The area is known for its natural beauty, and on the first Sabbath, volunteers will hike to several waterfalls. This hike can be a bit strenuous at first, so volunteers are encouraged to go at their own pace.

On Tuesday, during the project, the group will take a day to visit Isla Gómez, a small island off the Pacific coast of Panama. The island is in a national park and is rather "untouched" but beautiful. The group will bus approximately an hour and 45 minutes to Boca Chica, where they will board 12-passenger boats that will take them an additional 30 minutes out to the island.

Once on the island, volunteers can relax on the beach, swim in the calm water, snorkel, and explore the island. Since the island is a national park, there are no chairs or permanent fixtures on the beach. If you have portable chairs or hammocks that you want to bring, they would be useful on the excursion day. We will spend a few hours on the island before heading back to the mainland.

On Thursday afternoon, after working in the morning, we will take a short trip to Boquete to shop for souvenirs and see the town.

At the end of the project, volunteers will return to Panama City where they'll have the chance to see an important part of Panamanian and American history when they visit the Panama Canal. Completed in 1914, the canal, which cuts across the Isthmus of Panama, enabled cargo ships to take a more direct route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific (and vice versa), instead of traversing the dangerous waters of Cape Horn. 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 visitor's center which includes a three-level museum, 10-minute informative movie, and gift shop.

After visiting the canal, the group will stop by artisan markets for souvenir shopping before heading to the airport for late afternoon and evening departures.

Leadership

Steve Case | Project Coordinator and Spiritual Coordinator

Steve is the president of Involve Youth, a youth ministry organization that energizes young people for service. This includes leading several Maranatha projects each year, including the annual Multiple Group Project. Steve lives near the Maranatha headquarters in Northern California with his wife, Marit.



Luther Findley | Construction Superintendent

Luther has worked in different branches of construction for years and currently maintains the facilities at Sacramento Adventist Academy. Luther has served in construction leadership on many Maranatha projects.



Maggie Petersen | Head Cook

Ever since her retirement, Maggie has been cooking for all kinds of groups in all kinds of places, including Maranatha family projects, Maranatha's Multiple Group Project, and other short-term mission trips. She's amazing in demonstrating flexibility with her circumstances, equipment, staffing, and food availability. Don't plan on losing weight with Maggie's tasty cooking, but expect familiar as well as local flavors and treats.



Mark Turner | Dental Team Leader

Based in Taunton, Massachusetts, Mark takes his dental office on a short-term mission trip each year. His team will form the nucleus for the dental outreach of this year's MGP. Mark's wife, Renita, will also join this project.



Mary Johnson | Children's Ministry Leader

Mary Johnson joins the group from northern California where she works as a middle and high school Spanish teacher. She recently stepped out in faith and took a year off from work to devote more time to short-term mission projects. Many of her trips are Maranatha projects. Her optimism, faith, bilingual skills, and love for God and kids make her a natural for leading the children's ministry program on this project.



Expenses

The participation fee of \$895 covers housing, three vegetarian meals a day, ground transportation to and from the airport and project site, local excursions, short-term travel insurance, a Maranatha t-shirt, and luggage tags. Children 12 and under have a \$150 discount.

This fee can either be paid individually on a per person basis or together as a small group. If your group is paying all together, send a check to Maranatha along with a list of the participants whose fees are included. The group leader's fee will be discounted the original \$500 group deposit that was paid to secure and reserve your spots on the project.

Maranatha must receive all funds and forms by February 20 due to application processing time. Wait for confirmation of acceptance on the project before purchasing your airfare.

All prices are listed in U.S. Dollars. Payments can be made by cash or check sent to the Maranatha office in California (please include your name and "Multiple Group Project 2018") or by credit or debit card online or over the phone.

For Canadian tax-deductible receipts, payments must be made by check to the Maranatha Volunteers International (Canada) Association (address located at the end of this information packet. At this time Maranatha cannot issue tax-deductible receipts for credit card payments.

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 Panama City:** \$500-1000
- **Passport:** \$130 or \$110 for renewal
- **Steel-toed Boots (Panama requirement):** \$25-50

About Panama

Panama is approximately the size of Mississippi in the United States. 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 4 million people. Great progress has been made in education, as access has been broadened to reach rural areas, and the literacy rate is 93%. 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. Although 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 Panama City. Please wait for confirmation from Maranatha before purchasing your airfare to ensure there is still space on the project.

Maranatha representatives will meet you in Panama City. The group will depart in waves on buses headed to Boquete. The drive will take approximately six to eight hours, depending on traffic. Once enough people have arrived to fill a bus, the bus will depart. Luggage will go with you on the bus, but just in case the luggage space fills up and we have to move luggage to a later bus, we suggest packing enough for one night in Panama in a carry-on, backpack, or several people together in one duffle bag to ensure that you have what you need for the first night.



Facts and Figures

Capital:
Panama City

Population:
4 million

Language:
Spanish

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

Religion:
Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant 15%

Currency:
US Dollar

If you arrive or depart outside the posted time frames, you may have long wait times at the airport or may be responsible for paying the additional transportation for your individual airport transfer. It may also result in missed portions of the project experience.

Flights

Arrival | Please plan to arrive in Panama City (airport code PTY) on Thursday, March 22, between 10 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. (this includes Delta flight #393 from Atlanta). The earlier within this window you arrive, the earlier you will arrive at the hotel in the evening.

We are asking volunteers to arrive in Panama City; however, you may prefer to fly all the way to David, Panama (airport code DAV). While this would be a shorter bus ride, it might result in additional expenses. If this option is of interest to you, please check with the Maranatha office before making any reservations. Take into consideration that the Panama Canal is in Panama City, so in order to see the canal with the rest of the group, you will need to fly out of Panama City at the close of the project.

Departure | Please plan to depart from Panama City (PTY) after 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 1. Many flights will leave before this; however, in order to make it possible to visit the Panama Canal, we are asking for evening departures.

If you book a flight out in the morning on April 1, we will make sure you get to the airport, but there will be no refund for missing the canal excursion. You can also book flights in the morning, before 10am) on Monday, April 2, and we will arrange housing for you that night, but there will be an additional \$70 per person that you will need to pay to Maranatha by the final deadline.

Arriving Early or Staying Late?

Panama has some beautiful travel destinations. Some of you may choose to arrive earlier than March 22 or stay beyond April 1 to explore the country on your own. Please make your own hotel and transportation plans for any days outside of the Maranatha project dates. If you have any questions, feel free to call Maranatha at (916) 774-7700.

Travel Resources

- **Azumano Travel:** 800-777-5149 or by email with Erle Dpenha or Azumano Team at corporatetravel@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

Passport | All passports must be valid for at least six months from the dates of intended travel (valid until October 2, 2018). 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.

Traveling With Minors

If you are traveling with a legal minor (under the age of 18 on the date you depart), both parents or legal guardians must travel with the minor. Otherwise, you must have two parental consent forms notarized. This provides government entities with evidence that both guardians have consented to their child leaving the country with the other guardian and Maranatha. 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 Steve Case, Maranatha's project coordinator for the Multiple Group Project.

Staying Healthy

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

Some of these 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 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 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.

How to Register

To Register a Small Group: To register your small group, the group leader will complete the online registration, and pay the group deposit of \$500. Once Maranatha confirms your group, you will be given a link to complete your individual registration.

To Register as a Member of a Confirmed Small Group: Your group leader will have an application link. You will register and select your group name under the drop-down link. Family members can register on the same form. Anyone living at a different address must use a separate form. The form will forward you to a payment page where you can make a deposit online, or you can make a payment over the phone or by check. The group leader will also need to complete the individual registration form.

To Register as an Individual without a Small Group: Please contact Maranatha for more information. While this project gives preference to small groups, there may be a few spaces for individual volunteers who will be confirmed on a first come, first serve basis. Maranatha can provide a registration link.

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
(Canada) Association**
c/o V06494C
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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.

HARD HAT \$11



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

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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*All confirmed volunteers on an International Maranatha Open Team receive a Maranatha t-shirt as part of their participation fee.