

GUATEMALA 2025 SOCCER CAMPS



VOLUNTEER MISSION PACKET

Dear soccer camp volunteers and leaders,

On behalf of our staff and board of directors, welcome! We're excited about your interest in Champions in Action and our summer soccer camps for Guatemalan youth. This will be a life-changing experience for them-and for you as well.

This packet is designed to help you understand more about Champions in Action and our summer mission trips. It's divided into two sections. The first will give you an idea of who we are, what we do, and what a mission trip with us is like. The second will tell you how to begin preparing once you've decided to come. Please read through this information, and don't forget to sign up for your camp session online at www.championsinaction.org/camp If you have any questions between now and your trip, don't hesitate to get in touch with your team leader (if applicable) or me. This will be another great summer in Guatemala, and we're excited to have you along!

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Guatemala Country Director
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PROLOGUE

It was a November afternoon in 2010, and we were arriving at of all places, a beach in northeast Guatemala.

We had brought some others with us too. 100 Guatemalan boys, to be specific. Teenagers. From the inner city. We had the idea that we were going to spend six days here next to the beach - you know, like, summer camp style. The plan was to play soccer with these boys, share the gospel with them, and equip a group of Guatemalan young men to be their mentors for a whole year afterward.

We must have seemed insane to anyone who was paying attention. This was our first time doing any sort of camp. We were just a small group of Guatemalan and American volunteers with some soccer balls, some seed funding, 501(c)(3) status, and a wild dream: What if we used soccer to connect disadvantaged kids to Christian mentors from within their own communities? What if a generation of mentors invested themselves in helping a generation of youth - many of whom lack the positive influence of fathers and mothers - to make good decisions, pursue their own dreams, and **follow Jesus Christ**?

That was the vision God showed us - wild and uncertain, big and exciting. So we stepped out of the boat, trusting that he would be faithful and praying that our dreams might soon become real.

Since that first little camp back in 2010, over 3,300 children and teens have come through our program, and dozens of young men and women have been their mentors - living out Christian leadership in a tangible, practical way.

The result? Over 155,000 - and counting - of mentorship hours invested in the youth of Guatemala.

Mentors have stepped up and been trained. Kids have put their faith in Jesus Christ and been baptized. Soccer has provided a platform for long-lasting discipling relationships. Fewer youth are losing their lives to senseless violence. More are learning the values that soccer teaches and developing friendships with Christian role models.

As the COVID-19 pandemic took 2020 and 2021 by storm, Champions in Action was uniquely poised to take swift action to support the vulnerable families within our programs. Our mentors had established relationships within the communities, and with the families, allowing them to serve as the hands and feet of our Lord. Through this experience, our program evolved to enable even more long-term impact through our mentor and youth relationships. Our program now encompasses a 6 year mentorship pipeline - focused around our core mentorship through soccer programming - and further supported by other holistic support programs, like food support, a full time social worker and compassion funds, amongst other programs. We continue to see, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the Lord has blessed Champions in Action. The wild dreams that we prayed circles around years ago are now coming true. Our King has been faithful.

And this we earnestly believe: **He's not finished - and neither are we.**

The numbers tell us a lot about the opportunities ahead. The population of Guatemala is nearly 18 million people, and of those, half are under the age of 18. Over 3,200,000 people live in or around Guatemala City alone. Of those, hundreds of thousands are disadvantaged inner-city youth whose lives could be transformed by the presence of role models.

Considering the sobering statistics of violence, homicide, abuse, malnutrition and mass emigration in Guatemala, you might say that these population figures are overwhelming, and in a sense, you'd be right. But we're looking at things a little differently. What we see in the numbers are millions of opportunities.

We are certain that an investment in youth can change a nation from the inside out.

Our vision is to see a generation empowered - by the gospel of Jesus Christ, mentoring and soccer - to transform themselves, their families, their communities and their nation. By God's grace and providence, it's already happening. Violence, addiction and poverty are giving way to discipleship, hope and opportunity. Lives are being transformed.

Are you ready to be part of this? New opportunities are in front of us - starting now.



THE BASICS

Join us for a week packed with unforgettable experiences! From the moment you arrive, we've got you covered. Your camp fee includes a full day of onboarding and training, where you'll connect with your team and prepare for an amazing adventure. We'll take care of all transportation to and from the Guatemala City airport, and you'll enjoy delicious meals and a comfortable stay in the city before and after camp.

How much does it cost? All for **\$1,250** (plus airfare).

Experience a Full Week of Faith, Friendship, and Fun, and Wrap It Up with a Journey to Antigua Guatemala!



Where is the camp at?

Camps take place at El Faro, a Christian retreat center six hours northeast of Guatemala City, halfway between the seaside towns of Livingston and Puerto Barrios.



Okay, but I don't speak Spanish... No problem! Some of our staff are bilingual, and your group will have a translator at all times so that you can communicate with mentors and kids.

...Or play soccer. That's fine too! There's a place for everyone to serve; don't worry.

BOYS CAMP 2025		
\$1,250 + Airfare	A Full Week of Adventure Awaits—Wrap Up Boys Camp with an Unforgettable Journey to Antigua Guatemala	June 20-29th

GIRLS CAMP 2025		
\$1,250 + Airfare	Empower Your Spirit at Girls Camp and Top It Off with a Spectacular Trip to Antigua Guatemala!	July 11-20th

TRIP SCHEDULE



SAMPLE TRIP ITINERARY

Friday

Volunteers arrive in Guatemala
Dinner and hotel

Saturday

Orientation with Champions in Action staff
Historical Reflection
Trauma Training
Team breakout sessions

Sunday

Meet kids, load buses, travel to camp Arrive at camp in early afternoon, settle in, begin camp.

Monday-Thursday

Champions in Action Camp

Friday

Closing activities, pack up
Leave camp by morning
Arrive in Guatemala City in the evening Dinner and return to hotel

Saturday

All volunteers join the incredible trip to Antigua Guatemala.

Sunday

Departures - Most volunteers leave by Saturday evening or Sunday morning.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE AT CAMP

6:00 - Physical training and warm up
7:15 - Volunteer team devotional time
8:00 - Breakfast
8:45 - Share a testimony, group announcements 9:30 - Soccer drills and training
12:00 - Free time; beach time for kids and mentors 1:00 - Lunch, share a testimony
2:30 - Soccer games
6:00 - Free time; beach time for U.S. team
7:00 - Dinner
8:00 - Chapel
9:30 - Volunteer team debrief
10:00 - Get some sleep



*Weekly and daily schedules sometimes change. These example schedules are based on past camps.



STEPS TO PREPARE

Get ready...

- Read mission packet.
- Sign up for camp online (www.championsinaction.org/camp)
- Pay \$150 deposit to confirm your assistance.
- Check your passport's expiration date or start the process of renovating it.

(March-April) Prepare all you need:

- Research and book flights as soon as possible.
- Email flight itineraries to the Champions in Action staff. Read Champions in Action volunteer guide.
- Schedule your second payment (\$550 per individual).
- Complete necessary forms.
- *Receive your passport. (If applicable)

(May) Almost there!

- Ensure to make your final \$550 payment of camp fee at least 4 weeks prior Camp (\$1,250 total per individual). All flights should be booked + forms submitted.

1-2 weeks before

- Final preparations and information distribution. Review volunteer policies and rules again.
- Team and group assignments.

*Note About Passports

Start the process early! You can apply for a U.S. passport on line at www.travel.state.gov. If you already have a passport, make certain that, by the time of your trip, it will still have at least six months before it expires. Otherwise, your airline won't let you board your flight.

NEXT STEPS

1. Engage in a heartfelt conversation with your loved ones. Sharing your excitement and plans for potential international travel can not only bring joy but also provide an opportunity for valuable input and support.
2. As you talk with friends and family about your summer mission trip, encourage them to join you. We're always looking for people who love the Lord and love kids to come serve at our camps.
3. Sign up Online at www.championsinaction.org/camp. **All volunteers must sign up for their camp session Online.** After we receive your sign-up form, we'll get in touch with you (or your team leader).
4. Ensure that you have a valid passport whose expiration date falls at least six months **after** your arrival in Guatemala. Double check your passport's expiration date. Passports **MUST** be valid for at least six months after your arrival in Guatemala. Learn how to apply for (or renew) a passport at <http://travel.state.gov/>.
5. See "[Financials & Fundraising](#)" page later in this packet.
6. Search for round-trip flights to Guatemala City (GUA). Volunteers **MUST** arrive in Guatemala on Friday or via red-eye early Saturday morning. Consult with us (or your team leader) **BEFORE** booking your airfare and forward your itinerary to us once you do so.



CULTURE, ATTITUDE, ETIQUETTE

While you're in Guatemala, you're an ambassador of your community, your country, and Jesus Christ. At all times, speak and act in a way that represents the Kingdom well.

By now this shouldn't come as a shock, but most of Guatemala is unlike your community. The food is different, the streets are different, the culture is different, the churches are different.

Try to understand the reasons behind customs and habits that seem strange to you. Appreciate the differences, and try to notice the similarities. Don't make comparisons between countries, especially regarding money and material possession. A family's home and clothes might be austere (by our standard), but it doesn't mean they're living in misery. Don't show pity for those who have less than we do; really, it just insults their dignity.

Arrive in Guatemala with an open-minded attitude, and be prepared to be surprised. Trips like these have a way of moving the hearts not just of the campers, but the U.S. volunteers too. Sometimes, we Americans go overseas underestimating the people we'll serve; we expect that we're going to love them and minister to them and change their world! ... By the end of the trip, though, we find that we too have been loved, ministered to, and changed. This is our hope for you this summer.

SENSITIVITIES

Keep in mind how you might be perceived by locals. Guatemalan culture is friendly, but it's also formal. Camp is pretty relaxed, but while we're in the city before and after the trip, be sensitive to the nuances of the culture.

Greet people by saying **jbuenos dfas!** (good morning!) or **jbuenas tardes!**

(good afternoon!) before you ask them a question. "**Por favor**" means please and "**gracias**" means thank you-use both as often as possible. When we're in public, don't talk and laugh loudly in groups. Ask strangers for permission before you take their picture. Smile and make eye contact. Be exceedingly polite.

GO WITH THE FLOW

While we're in Guatemala, it's not a question of if plans will unexpectedly change. It's a question of when. We always try to keep things moving as smoothly as possible, but sometimes they don't, and we appreciate your patience as we make changes on the fly. So, when you and your group find yourselves standing in the pouring rain while waiting for a late bus, or you're adjusting to a daily camp schedule that got changed at the last minute, please bear with us. At all times-before, during, and after camp-keep up a positive attitude, a servant heart, and an others-first mindset. It goes a long, long way.



FINANCIALS & FUNDRAISING

PAYING FOR CAMP

By the time you arrive in Guatemala, you must pay the full **\$1,250** camp fee to Champions in Action. The first \$150 is due as an initial deposit, and to reserve your space, at the time you sign up for the trip. The deposit is non-refundable and will exclusively go towards youth programs. Your spot at camp is not reserved until the initial deposit is received. The remaining amount must be completed at least 4 weeks before camp.

We have 2 payment methods, **first:** you (or those who are providing support for you) can may mail checks to us at Champions in Action, P.O. Box 898, Round Rock, Texas 78680. Checks should include "[*your name*] - *Camp Fee*" in the memo line. (If you are coming as part of a church group, please follow the payment instructions given by your trip leader. You might need to submit payments through your church.) **Second:** We are able to accept camp payments online, by using the one-time donation link and add to the comment section a description such as: (*Your name + amount + which camp you'll be attending*), in that way we can identify your payment. Please note, there will be an additional fee to cover the processing costs for the card. Payment to our Texas office is strongly preferred as the best way to submit camp payments.

Finally, because Champions in Action is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, contributions toward your camp fee will be tax-deductible.

FUNDRAISING

Don't let cost keep you from attending! If finances are a concern, we encourage you to tap into your network and raise funds to cover the cost of your service in Guatemala. One of the most tried-and-true ways to start raising funds is to send a support letter. It's easier than you think:

1. Pray and brainstorm to think of all the people who are family, friends, co-workers, etc. Be sure to include friends of your parents. Consider everyone who cares about you and cares about people.
2. Draft a letter about the mission trip and what you'll be doing in Guatemala. Then print out copies. Include your signature and a very short, personalized note to the recipient. If you have time, you might even consider writing your letters by hand; they're sure to stand out from all the mass-printed mail. Remember: the more you personalize your letter, the more likely it is that a person will support you.
3. In the envelopes you send, include a return envelope with your address (or Champions in Action's address) on it.
4. Pray that God moves the hearts of those to whom you send letters, that they might give generously toward the mission you've been called on. Depending on how successful your fundraising is, you might even be able to share your overflow funds with some of the other missionaries.
5. Once you return from Guatemala, be sure to thank your donors- perhaps just a brief note that shares what God did in you and through you, plus a picture of you with the kids and mentors in your group.

BEFORE & AFTER CAMP

Volunteers are responsible for selecting and purchasing their airfare from the U.S. to Guatemala and back. Spirit, Aeromexico, American, United, Delta, and other airlines all have daily flights to Guatemala City. (If you're coming as part of a group, follow your team leader's instructions.)

Saturday we begin an on boarding and training session in the morning and we return to the city Friday night. **Volunteers must schedule their arrival flight for the Friday.** If you must arrive on Saturday, please schedule an early morning arrival via a red-eye. For departures, volunteers generally leave the Sunday morning after camp ends. Please consult with us before purchasing flights.

We usually confirmed the itinerary for our group activities in Antigua Guatemala four weeks before camp. To avoid inconvenience or confusion, we will not arrange events at the last minute or as they approach camp. If you require assistance with any extracurricular activity other than Camp and the Antigua Trip, please notify us ahead of time, and we will check for availability to assist you.

Additionally, you're welcome to schedule your own travels in Guatemala after camp! However, our staff will not be able to help you coordinate transportation and accommodations after Saturday morning.

Please note that Champions in Action will only cover the expense of your hotel stay for the Friday and Saturday nights immediately before camp begins, and likewise, immediately after camp ends. Champions in Action will also cover the expense of your meals with the group during this time. Please bring along extra money if you'd like to purchase snacks or handmade crafts and other souvenirs at the markets in Antigua if you are getting the Trip.

TRAVEL SAVVY

Arrive at your airport in the U.S., passport in hand, at least two hours before your departure. Please do not miss your flight.

Guatemala has an electronic Regional Traveler Affidavit, which may be completed from any electronic device with Internet access. We recommend that you fill it out at least 5 hours before your flight to avoid any difficulty at the airport. Click on the link **Regional Traveler Affidavit**.

When filling out the form, follow these tips:

- When asked for arrival or departure customs, answer: La Aurora, which is the national airport.
- In any fields that ask for your country or nationality, select "Estados Unidos" which indicates United States of America.

When you arrive at the Guatemala airport, get off the plane, follow everyone else. Bathrooms can be found in the hallway after deplaning and before going downstairs to immigration. Continue downstairs to immigration, get your passport stamped and claim your baggage. Don't exchange any money (you will get an unfavorable rate). Walk outside to the pick-up area and look for Champions in Action staff. Once you're outside, someone will probably offer to help you with your bags. Politely decline. Let no one besides you touch your bags.

While traveling abroad, your passport is your most important possession. Don't carry it out in the open, don't leave it unsecured, don't lose it. To a thief, it's worth thousands of dollars on the black market. To you, it's required get back out of Guatemala.

PACKING

Here's a list of items (below) that you might consider packing. Some things are important (we'll list them in **bold**), but most are either recommended or optional. At camp, the weather will be sunny, very humid, and hot (highs in the 80s or 90s Fahrenheit), with rain in the evenings. In and around the city, expect lower humidity and lower temperatures (lows in the 50s or 60s, and highs in the 70s or 80s), with rain in the afternoons and evenings. Please respect the local customs by packing attire that is modest and appropriate for a youth camp. You'll receive a more detailed dress code later.

As a rule of thumb, don't bring anything to Guatemala that is especially valuable (exceptions might include cameras and music equipment).

Passport

Copy of insurance information

Cash, plus debit or credit card (Call your bank and tell them you'll be traveling.)

Athletic shoes

Athletic shorts for each day of camp T-shirts

for each day of camp

Socks and undergarments

Soccer cleats and shin guards
Sweatshirt and/or pants for evenings in the city and while on the bus

Swimsuit

Sunglasses and hat

Casual clothes for the city

Light rain jacket

Small umbrella

Bible, pens, journal, notebook

Backpack

Small pillow and twin sheets

Bathroom toiletries

(shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, etc)

Bath towel and/or beach towel

Shower shoes (flip flops)

Non-aerosol insect repellent Sunscreen

mini laundry detergent pack and/or febreze to freshen up team jersey

Your possessions are your responsibility; Champions in Action isn't responsible for lost or stolen property. We do encourage you to bring some extra cash, just in case. Also, there is a small snack bar at camp that sells treats and soft drinks during afternoon free time. During the trip, you might have an opportunity to buy souvenirs.

Please don't overpack. Please keep suitcases to one large 'checked bag' and a carry on size bag (in addition to your personal items), unless bringing donations or you have received special permission. Space is limited. If you're staying in Guatemala for a while to travel after camp, your hotel/hostel can help you find a place to wash laundry.

Small flashlight or headlamp

Camera (with extra batteries)

Watch or alarm clock

light rain jacket

Dry Gatorade

Small snacks for in between meals

Refillable water bottle

Antibiotic (e.g. Cipro; follow your doctor's recommendation) **Imodium A-D (diarrhea medicine)**

Anti-nausea medication

Hand sanitizer gel

Multiples Face covering (if needed)

Vitamin C supplement (e.g. Emergen-C)

Any personal prescription medication (labeled)

STILL TO COME...

This Missions Packet isn't the end of our communication with volunteers and team leaders! You'll continue to receive communication for us in the months leading up to camp. And, we are always here to answer any questions or logistical concerns you may have. Here's a preview of what's to come:

REGISTRATION FORM

If you haven't already please complete the registration form. This (plus your **\$150** deposit) is what will reserve your spot at camp. The registration form allows us to get to know you, and your experience, a little better and helps inform us with things like team divisions, job assignments and Team Jersey ordering.

HEALTH AND INFORMATION FORM

All volunteers will be required to submit a health information form through the Champions in Action camp website. Through this form, we will collect information such as emergency contact info, dietary restrictions, health needs, etc.

RELEASE FORM

All volunteers must sign a liability waiver form before arriving in Guatemala. If the volunteer is a minor, his or her parent or guardian must also give permission to participate in Champions in Action's activities.

RULES AND POLICIES

There are a number of rules and expectations that all international volunteers are expected to abide by. They exist to keep everyone safe and to ensure that Champions in Action's ministry is not harmed in any way. These rules will include a dress code, cultural guidelines, safety guidelines, behavior rules, and more.

VOLUNTEER GUIDE

A few weeks before camp, volunteers will receive more information about daily schedules, a refresher on organization rules, social media sharing tips, cultural tips, and more.

GROUP AND TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Champions in Action staff will work with team leaders to divide volunteers into groups with youth and mentors at camp. We will also work with team leaders to assign each volunteer to one of the work teams (e.g. soccer, water, worship, media, etc) that will serve youth and mentors behind the scenes at camp. We will be sending you your youth team assignments, as well as work teams, ahead of time so you can prepare accordingly.

CAMP PAYMENTS

Please don't forget to stay on track with your camp payments: \$150 upon reserving camp dates and the remaining amount at least 4 weeks before camp (\$1,250 total per individual, which includes a trip to Antigua). This helps us ensure we're able to reserve everything needed for camp in a timely fashion in order to provide the best experience for you and the kids.

Please note: Our camps are exclusively funded via volunteers' camp fees. No annual operational funding is allocated to covering camp expenses.

SEE YOU SOON!

Thank you again for your desire to serve the Lord and serve kids in Guatemala this summer! As you prepare for camp, please get in touch with us or your team leader (if applicable) if you have questions or concerns.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

