

May 15, 2017

Dear San Diego Volunteers,

I hope you are excited as we are about SSP 2017! This letter contains **important information** about the unique activities we have planned for our volunteers in [San Diego](#) this summer.

First, we are eager to be working with **Celeste Caton**, our new **Border Coordinator**, who has been connected with SSP volunteers for the last two years as a United Methodist Global Mission Fellow in Tijuana. Celeste will be planning and coordinating thought-provoking, safe, and exciting experiences for our San Diego volunteers on Adventure Wednesday this summer.

Second, we are pleased to partner, for the third year in a row, with the [San Diego Canyonlands](#), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the natural canyons in the San Diego area. Because the City of San Diego owns the canyons, we need each volunteer to sign a special **waiver**, which you will find in this packet.

Every volunteer also needs to bring some form of photo **identification to use the YMCA's showers**. A school ID, state-issued ID, passport, or passport card is sufficient.

Lastly, all participants will have special permission from U.S. Border Patrol to approach the U.S. – Mexico border, from either the Tijuana or U.S. side. This shared experience will provide volunteers with an opportunity to explore the perspective of someone separated from friends, family and loved ones across the border. As part of this experience, we will hear from a Border Community Liaison Agent, United Methodist Global Mission Fellow who lives and works in Tijuana, and two pastors who serve with El Faro Border Church and work with deportees and migrants. After visiting the border, all volunteers will visit another location, either in Tijuana or the U.S., before meeting altogether in Mission Bay, CA for swimming, a BBQ, song time, and debriefing the experience.

There is a limit to the number of participants who can visit **Tijuana, Mexico** due to the bus size. To take part in the Tijuana visit, participants must notify bring a valid [passport or passport card](#), a **photocopy** of the passport or card, and those under 18 must bring **signed permission** from **both** parents or legal guardians (page 7). *Group leaders should contact the office by June 1 to reserve these first-come, first-served spots.*

Please complete all the items in this packet to ensure your group is prepared for your trip! Let us know if you have any questions. We look forward to serving with you!

Blessings,



Veronica Russell

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Sierra Service Project

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San Diego Canyonlands

In this packet you will find the necessary forms and information to prepare your youth and counselors for some of the work you'll be doing for the community of City Heights. One of these projects is working at the San Diego Canyonlands, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the natural canyons in the San Diego area.

The city encourages public use of these beautiful, undeveloped spaces by local residents. They are a wonderful resource for the residents of City Heights, the community where we will be completing our various other work projects throughout the week. Our volunteers made great strides in 2015 and 2016 through [SSP's partnership with the Canyonlands](#):

"With their hard work spread out over eleven different urban canyon sites, and with 20+ volunteer days, this contribution of over 1,500 service hours will have a lasting benefit for the underserved community of City Heights."

– Freddy Arthur, Field Supervisor for San Diego Canyonlands

We are excited to return to work with the Canyonlands and impact more of the City Heights community in 2017! This summer, **each work team will spend one day working in the canyons**. Expect work such as mulching, trash removal, planting native shrubs, and removing invasive species.

When your group is at the Canyonlands, it will be **hot** and **sunny**. Pack work clothes accordingly: **hats, sunglasses,** and **sunscreen** are especially important for this day of outdoor work. **Long pants** are **highly** recommended by Canyonlands staff, as we will be working in terrain with bristly underbrush. Wearing shorts could contribute to minor injury.

To find out more information on their history, programs, and conservation practices, please visit the San Diego Canyonlands web page at www.sdcanyonlands.org.



SSP youth cleared trails and brush in the Canyonlands in 2016.

*Because the City of San Diego owns the canyons, we need each participant to sign a **waiver** to work there. Please distribute the Canyonlands waiver, found on page 6, to **all** your youth and adults, and bring the completed forms with you to site. The forms will be collected upon your group's arrival.*

Items Required to Work at San Diego Canyonlands:

1. **Waiver and Release of Liability Form** (page 6). Bring the *original signed* form AND *one copy*.

Tijuana, Mexico Visit

After breakfast on Wednesday morning, volunteers will be divided into groups based on whether they are traveling to Tijuana or staying in the US. We ask that everyone maintain an attitude of flexibility, as this division will result in work teams and church groups being reorganized to form new groups for the day. Here are some important details about the visit to Tijuana:

1. Celeste Caton or another experienced leader will lead the team into Tijuana, accompanied by SSP staff. We will be met at the border by a bilingual United Methodist Global Mission Fellow who lives and works in Tijuana.
2. The border crossing will be **on foot**. We will drive to the border, park on the US side, and walk into Mexico.
 - a. Participants are required to fill out a basic customs form and provide it along with their passport or passport card to Mexican officials. There will be knowledgeable guides present to help with any questions. This process can take 20-40 minutes.
3. We will be picked up by a bus in Tijuana that will transport us throughout the day, then meet the U.S.-based SSP group at the border fence.
4. The first stop will be at El Faro (“The Lighthouse”), where the border fence meets the ocean. The Tijuana group will enter Friendship Park, which is located there on both sides of the border fence. Here we will hear from local leaders who work with families separated by the border. We hope to have multiple speakers who can share their point of view surrounding these issues.
5. We will break to eat lunch either with immigrants and deportees at a shelter or at a local church with congregants. The group will continue on to other points of interest to learn about the strengths and challenges of the people who lives in Tijuana.
6. At the end of our time in Tijuana, the group be dropped off at the pedestrian crossing with the general public at the border to cross back into the US on foot. Be prepared for a potentially long wait; the process of crossing back into the US can take anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours. Participants will be required to present their passport or passport card to U.S. officials upon re-entry, but no forms are required.
7. Following the border crossing, we will conclude the day at a beach for swimming and our evening barbecue. The U.S.-based group will join us there.

For those concerned about the risk of visiting Mexico, please note that violence in Tijuana has **decreased** significantly in recent years. Daytime visits to the Tijuana border zone are considered very safe. For any questions or concerns regarding safety in Tijuana, please contact director@sierraserviceproject.org, or call our office at (916) 488-6441.

Items Required to Visit Tijuana:

1. A **valid passport or passport card**. We will verify this when your group arrives on Sunday. See [how to apply](#).
2. A **copy of your passport or passport card**.
3. Each participant *under* the age of 18 must complete the **“Consent for International Travel by Minor” form** (page 7). This must be signed by **both** parents or guardians. Please bring the *original signed* form and *one copy*.



SSP youth through the border fence at Friendship Park.

Volunteers Not Visiting Tijuana

After breakfast on Wednesday morning, volunteers will be divided into groups based on whether they are traveling to Tijuana or staying in the US. We ask that everyone maintain an attitude of flexibility, as this will result in work teams and church groups being reorganized to form new groups for the day.

We understand not everyone will choose or be able to go to Tijuana on Wednesday, and have an alternative set of very engaging and impactful activities available for our volunteers who remain in the U.S. We are still awaiting confirmation from some community organizations, but have a general plan for the day:

1. The U.S.-based group will drive to the California Border Field State Park and hike about a mile through the Tijuana River Estuary Preserve and along the Pacific Ocean (flat ground and sandy beach) to Friendship Park, where they will see the SSP volunteers who crossed the border that morning into Tijuana through the border fence.
2. We will hear various perspectives on border issues, including from U.S. Border Patrol Agents and the pastors of El Faro Border Church. We hope to have multiple speakers who can share about their unique experiences and points of view.
3. Volunteers will break for lunch.
4. After lunch, we will complete a large group service project or meet with various community groups to learn about the populations they serve with. Expect to see a new perspective on San Diego and the communities that live there.
5. Following these activities, we will conclude the day at a beach for swimming and our evening barbecue. The SSP volunteers who spent the day in Tijuana will join us there.
 - a. **No passport** is required for any of the above activities. Although SSP has coordinated with the U.S. Border Patrol for a presentation outside of Friendship Park (located on the border), we will not be crossing into Mexico.



The U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The details of these activities may change as we learn of more cultural and educational opportunities that allow us to further develop our plans. No additional forms are required for the U.S.-based Wednesday activities at this time. Please email director@sierraserviceproject.org or call the office at (916) 488-6441 if you have further questions.

All San Diego Volunteers: Forms Checklist

Please note that these items are **not** due in advance to the SSP Office. They should be brought with you to San Diego and turned in to your Site Director upon arrival.

All San Diego Participants:

- Waiver and Release of Liability Form – City of San Diego – Page 6 – *original & one copy*
- Identification for use of showers (*school ID, state-issued ID, passport, or passport card suffice*)

For Those Visiting Tijuana:

- Passport or Passport Card (see [how to apply](#)).
- Photocopy of passport information page or passport card
- Consent for International Travel by Minor – Page 7 – *original & one copy*



SSP volunteers doing the “pinky kiss” on the U.S. side of the border fence at Friendship Park.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM

In consideration of being allowed to participate in the City of San Diego Volunteer Program, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. My child (or I) is volunteering my services for the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department on a voluntary basis without anticipation of payment of any kind.
2. I acknowledge that the City of San Diego has extended its workman's compensation coverage to authorized volunteers and I agree to accept that coverage.
3. My child (or I) will perform tasks that are within his/her (or my) physical capability to the best of his/her (or my) ability, and my child (or I) will not undertake tasks that are beyond his/her (or my) ability. I certify to the best of my knowledge, that my child's (or my) current physical condition is satisfactory for participation in this activity, and that he/she (or I) am free of any health problem that would affect his/her (or my) ability to participate.
4. I agree to inform my child (or I agree) not to use any equipment or tools with which my child (or I) am unfamiliar or do not know how to operate safely.
5. I agree to inform my child (or I agree) to perform only those tasks assigned, observe all safety rules, and use care in the performance of assignments.
6. I agree that my child (or I) may be photographed, videotaped or recorded and that said photographs, videos or recordings may be used for promotional materials. I understand that my child (or I) will not receive compensation for the use of these and that my child (or I) will not be given notice of when these materials are used.
7. I acknowledge that the City will defend and indemnify my child (or myself) in any claim or action arising from my child's (or my) acts that are within the scope of my child's (or my) duties as a volunteer and in compliance with City policies and procedures, in accordance with City of San Diego Resolution No. 286906. I further acknowledge that the City is not required to indemnify my child (or me) against a claim for punitive damages except as authorized by the City Council pursuant to Government Code Section 825 (b). I agree, however, to defend and indemnify the City in any claim or action arising from my child's (or my) acts that are outside the scope of my child's (or my) volunteer duties.
8. I acknowledge that loss or damage to my child's (or my) personal property used while providing volunteer services is not reimbursable under City regulations.
9. I hereby authorize and give my consent for medical care to be given in an emergency situation to the below named child (or to me) while volunteering.
10. THIS AGREEMENT IS BINDING ON MY HEIRS, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES, NEXT OF KIN, SPOUSE AND ASSIGNS.

Volunteer's Name (print) _____ **Date of birth** ____/____/____

Address _____ **Apt. #** _____

City _____ **Zip** _____ - _____ **Phone #** () _____

Emergency Phone #'s () _____ / () _____

Volunteer's Signature (if participant is 18 years or older) _____ **Date Signed** ____/____/____

Parent/Legal Guardian signature required if volunteer is 17 years of age or younger.

This is to certify that as a parent/legal guardian of this volunteer, I do consent to his/her waiver and release as set forth above. My child has my permission to volunteer. I realize that participation in this program is voluntary.

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Relationship to Volunteer _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date Signed** ____/____/____

Approved by City Attorney May 05, 2015

