

Volunteer in Guatemala!



2017 Program
FAM Non Profit &
Project Genesis

About Project Genesis

Located in San Andres Iztapa,
Chimeltenango, Guatemala

Project Genesis is a registered nonprofit that was founded in 2012 by Ricardo Armas, a Guatemalan-born writer who fell in love with this forgotten community and has dedicated his life to helping raise the children who live there out of the cycle of poverty. Genesis serves 80-100 children, aged 3-14, providing them with educational support, nutrition, health services and a safe place for them to learn and play.

There are over 400 children in the surrounding communities that need the project's services, however as of right now the program is struggling to stay afloat and continue due to lack of funding and volunteers.

Project Genesis takes its namesake from Ricardo's daughter, Génesis (pronounced: HEN-esis), whom he named to reflect the fact that her birth completely changed his life, giving him a new beginning. Ricardo quit his job and began coming to work with the kids every day. He has been running Project Genesis full-time for over four years, with no salary or stipend. Ricardo's love for this project has put him in debt, he's sold his car, his bed, and is struggling to provide for his family let alone for these wonderful children. We believe in Ricardo and in the project which is why we have chosen to work hard to make sure that it survives. Many of these children live in very tiny houses with sometimes over 20 other people, in harsh conditions, without enough nutrition. Some of their parents are earning as little as \$8 per day or less with many children to feed and take care of. Chimaltenango is a gang ridden, very dangerous city; finding safe places to run and play is not very easy for the children. Genesis has been a blessing for these children and families over the last four years. Learn more at www.genesisguatemala.org



Besides providing the children with basic needs such as clean drinking water, educational support, a safe place to play and a meal each day, Project Genesis:

- Provides the kids with hope for the future and shows them the opportunities ahead of them.
- Encourages locals to get involved in their community, and teaches them that they can make a difference.
- Directly improves the health of the children through nutritional and medical programs.
- Provides a community gathering and social meeting space.
- Instills positive values such as cooperation, sharing, and integrity.
- Directly improves the environment in which the children live through recycling programs and waste removal.
- Supports the development of arts and culture in a community that cannot otherwise afford the luxury of education in these areas.

Your stay in Antigua

Depending on your budget and privacy needs we have lodging for you. We can provide volunteer housing that is shared with other volunteers or arrange a private apartment or condo in and around the Antigua area. All lodging units will have hot water, a kitchen, wi-fi and linens and towels provided. Exact location varies dependent on your needs and availability however all of our housing locations are in or around the Antigua area.



Getting Around....

A tuk tuk is the cheapest and fastest way to get around and averages \$2-\$3 per ride anywhere in the city of Antigua.

Taxis are also available and recommended after 11PM when the Tuk Tuks are not running and they average around \$5-\$6 for a ride anywhere in Antigua.

Walking/By Foot: Antigua is a small city and almost everywhere is walkable. Walking during the day is safe of course but we recommend tuk tuk or taxi's at night unless you are walking with other people after dark. While Antigua is very safe, we always tell our friends and guests to be alert, leave valuables at home, pay attention and not to flaunt expensive items or cell phones while walking around the city at night.

Chicken Buses are available to take you just about anywhere to surrounding cities and villages if you are up for an adventure. The average cost for a ride is about 5Q which is less than \$1USD.



Antigua is a small city surrounded by volcanoes in southern Guatemala, about an hour from Guatemala City airport. It's renowned for its Spanish colonial buildings, many of them restored following a 1773 earthquake that ended Antigua's 200-year reign as Guatemala's colonial capital. Notable architectural examples include baroque La Merced, a squat, yellow-and-white church. It's an integral part of the city's famous Semana Santa, a holy week with parades and rituals. Antigua climate is very agreeable, with warm sunny days and cool dry nights.

FAQS

Do I need to speak spanish?

No, but downloading Duolingo and taking a few lessons wouldn't hurt!

What kind of food will I be eating?

Antigua has food options from all over the world that are cheap & delicious. You can get literally whatever you are craving. We recommend trying all of the Guatemalan dishes as they are "Rico!" Only drink tap water and be wary of eating street food.

What is the currency? How should I bring money? How much do things cost and how much will I need each day?

The Guatemalan currency is the Quetzal. The conversion rate is \$1USD = 7.5Q Everything in Guatemala is about 1/4 of the cost we pay here in the USA. The best prices are at the market which is in Antigua. You can eat for \$10 a day in Guatemala or splurge and indulge in the fine dining establishments in the city if you wish. The best way to get currency is from an ATM in central park area or exchange cash at a bank (bring your passport!)

What will I be doing while volunteering?

Our goal is to provide a welcoming, educational and fun environment for the kids and help Project Genesis in any way needed. Different duties include teaching, playing games, art activities, cooking and serving lunch, accompanying them to doctors/dental visits, building the new school or even just playing soccer! We need volunteers that initiate activities and come prepared. The program is new, without much structure since we normally lack volunteers.

What is a typical week and schedule like?

Monday-Friday we meet around noon at a cafe in Antigua and are picked up in a truck by Ricardo, the founder of the project. We then travel to Chimaltenango (30 min) and start picking up the kids in the truck in San Andres Itzapa (throughout the streets) When we arrive to the project the first part of the day is spent on learning, homework and education. We then go outside and play or do activities/crafts/puzzles/sports for the next half of the session. Followed by that is their daily prayer and lunch which we usually help pass the food. After that, we load up the truck and head back home to Antigua around 6PM!

Activities & Adventures:

- **Spanish Classes (Weekly, daily or private lessons are available and cost varies by package)**
- **Volcano Hiking Tours (Cost varies by volcano adventure)**
- **Lake Atitlan Weekend Getaways (cost varies by lodging/# of people/Location)**
- **Coffee Finca Plantation Tours (\$10-\$30 pp)**
- **Yoga Classes (\$7-\$10 per class)**
- **Trips to Earth Lodge for lunch on the hilltops overlooking Antigua. (Less than \$10 round trip via shuttle plus meal or booze costs- lodging per night also available for weekend trips)**
- **Photoshoots of your adventures or volunteering experience by Nelo. (www.nelomh.com)**
- **Weekend excursions to Lake Atitlan, magical Semuc Champey or even Tikal!**

