

## ***Teachers Making Connections Educational Brigade – Level 1 Frequently Asked Questions***

***Q: What are the dates for the next trip?***

**A:** Typically, the winter brigade travels during the last week of February and the summer brigade goes during the last week of July. Please contact [Peggy Esselman](#) for the next brigade's departure date.

***Q: How much does the trip cost?***

**A:** The trip costs approximately \$1500. This includes airfare, room and board, transportation in Honduras, translator fees, tips, etc. You may want to budget \$50-\$100 (depending on personal spending habits) for incidentals in the airports, the convenience store close to the dorms, and shopping at the end of the week. Also plan on spending approximately \$75 for a passport (if you don't have one already), \$50 for teacher t-shirts, and \$200 for shots and medication prior to the trip. There are many ways to fundraise for the trip and the HETO director will work with you if you need help getting started.

***Q: Do I have to be able to speak Spanish to go on the trip?***

**A:** No. We will be accompanied by translators who are fluent in Spanish and English at all times. These translators will help us with our daily activities and will assist us in teaching our lessons to the Spanish-speaking students and in our communications with Honduran teachers. However, if you do have experience in speaking Spanish, the trip will be a great way to practice!

***Q: What if I need to leave or come home a day early?***

**A:** While we want you to enjoy the entire week with us, we also understand that things sometimes cannot be changed or missed here at home. Please let [Peggy Esselman](#) know as soon as possible if you have a conflict with the travel dates.

***Q: How long is the plane ride from Indianapolis to Tegucigalpa?***

**A:** Approximately 5 hours in the air, plus a short layover in the Houston or Miami airport.

***Q: Is Honduras on the same time as Indiana?***

**A:** Honduras is only one hour behind Indiana time. This makes communicating with loved ones back home easy!

***Q: Where will we stay and how will we get around?***

**A:** We will stay in the Nuevo Paraíso dorm complex. We will be housed in camp-style dorms that are complete with sheets/blankets/pillows, dressers, and traditional style bathrooms with toilets, sinks, and showers. We will travel to and from the airport and to and from all HETO partner schools via pickup trucks driven by Honduran drivers. The trucks will be air-conditioned and are usually the same models we are used to seeing on the roads in the US.

***Q: What is the food like and is it safe to eat?***

**A:** We will eat three traditional Honduran meals per day while in Honduras. The cooks at Nuevo Paraíso are accustomed to preparing food for foreign mission groups and take all necessary precautions when washing, preparing, and storing food. If you have food allergies or have certain restrictions (i.e. vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant...) let Peggy Esselman know. The cooks will prepare a variety of dishes and no one will go hungry, no matter what his/her food restrictions are. Nuevo Paraíso will provide water coolers full of safe drinking water for HETO teachers to use when filling up water bottles, brushing their teeth, etc. When we arrive at Nuevo, we will discuss and review safe hygiene practices while living in Honduras.

***Q: What is a typical day like?***

**A:** On a typical day, we will:

- wake up and prepare for the day
- eat a hot breakfast at Nuevo Paraíso
- visit one HETO partner school to present lessons, visit with teachers, watch Honduran teachers at work, speak with administrators, and participate in and lead professional development sessions
- return to Nuevo for a hot lunch
- visit a second HETO partner school and complete the activities listed above
- return to Nuevo for a hot dinner

- relax and share thoughts on the day in the gazebo at Nuevo
  - go to bed, ready for another exciting day at HETO partner schools
- \*\*You will be provided with an official daily schedule for the week\*\***

***Q: What is the dress code for HETO teachers?***

**A:** When we are at work in the schools, teachers will be expected to dress casually, yet professionally. HETO teachers traditionally wear skirts, capri pants, or khaki pants with a HETO t-shirt that will be purchased prior to travel. Shorts and tank-tops can be worn around the dorm area once the group is done teaching for the day. You will be provided with a packing list as soon as you commit to the trip.

***Q: Should I be concerned about crime?***

**A:** Honduras is a third-world country and is the poorest Spanish-speaking country in the world. Just as in other countries, criminals take advantage of travelers and those who are not accustomed to their environment. However, the HETO groups have never encountered a problem with any person or animal while traveling. We are never without a Honduran guide and we are always well-protected. Common sense and knowledge of customs and the culture are important to know and is something that we will take VERY seriously.

***Q: What kind of shots and medicines will I need to take to keep myself safe?***

**A:** Please consult your own physician, or plan to see the travel doctor with the HETO group. Generally, traveling teachers receive the following shots/medicine to prevent; malaria, typhoid, tetanus, Hepatitis A. You can obtain more information prior to your appointment by consulting the <http://www.cdc.gov> website. Some insurance companies cover the cost of necessary shots/medications, while others do not. Please contact your insurance representative to discuss your personal plan's benefits. Additionally, you may choose to purchase travel insurance which will assist you in your return to the U.S. should you become ill while traveling. The HETO director can refer you to some insurance carriers should you wish to purchase this type of coverage.

***Q: Should I obtain separate health or travel insurance before traveling?***

**A:** Participants should check with his/her insurance provider to determine whether international travel is covered under the policy. If not, it is highly recommended that teachers obtain outside medical coverage for the trip in case of (an unlikely) need for medical evacuation or treatment. Treatment and/or evacuations can cost many thousands of dollars out of pocket if insurance is not obtained.

***Q: Do I need to change money from US dollars to Honduran lempira before traveling? Do Honduran merchants accept travelers' checks?***

**A:** It is not necessary to change money before leaving the United States. We will change some money at the airport in Tegucigalpa before heading to the Project. Most merchants accept both lempira and US dollars, but many are not equipped to handle travelers' checks. There is an easily accessible ATM machine close to the Project should a traveler need more cash on the trip.

***Q: What should I pack for the trip? How many suitcases am I allowed to bring?***

**A:** A [suggested packing list](#) can be found at [www.heartineducation.org](http://www.heartineducation.org). Since travelers are limited to one carry-on suitcase for all clothing and personal items, it is suggested that participants pack light. There is an inexpensive laundry facility at the Project if travelers need to wash clothing mid-week. The two suitcases that are allowed by the airline for international travel will be used to transport needed school supplies for the Honduran schools. It is very expensive to ship materials ahead of the brigade, so the suitcases allow us to bring the items our schools have requested.

***Q: Do I need a valid US passport to travel to Honduras? How do I get or renew my passport?***

**A:** All Americans traveling to Honduras need a passport that is valid for at least 6 months after the brigade travel dates. The US Passport cards are not valid for air travel, nor are they valid for travel to and from Honduras. If you need to get, update, or renew your passport, please visit the [government's website](#).

***Q: Can my husband or other family member travel with me?***

**A:** Because of our purposefully small brigades, HETO only permits licensed teachers within the state of Indiana and special guests to join us on brigade trips. Please speak to the HETO director with any unique scenarios.

***Q: What are Honduran students and their classrooms like?***

**A:** Because of their lack of supplies and adequate teacher training, Honduran students are usually a few grade levels behind where US teachers expect their own students to succeed. For example, a sixth grade student in Honduras may only perform to a third or fourth grade level in the US. Honduran teachers typically lecture to their students and like many US teachers, feel the pressures of grade-level testing and therefore often “teach to the test”. However, it is important to remember that despite the cultural differences in education, Honduran children act and behave like our own precious students!

***Q: How do I get my school and American students involved?***

**A:** HETO encourages all HETO teachers to work closely with their home schools and their own students while planning their trip. What better way to encourage multi-culturalism in the classroom than to include your students in planning the activities you will complete with the Honduran students. Feel free to use your own creativity and ideas from HETO alumni when working with your own students. Also, with the recent addition of the Internet at Nuevo Paraíso, you can plan to keep in contact with your students while you are gone.

***Q: What are some lesson plan ideas to get me started?***

**A:** HETO Alumni teachers have taught lessons in a variety of subjects including: reading/literacy, math, music, physical education, as well as English and even Spanish grammar. These teachers have employed a variety of hands-on methods to get the Honduran students up and moving around. Consider the best-practice methods that are popular in the US when making your decisions regarding lesson plans. *Keep in mind that most schools do not have access to electricity or basic materials. Plan to bring EVERYTHING you need to teach your lesson.*

***Q: What things have HETO alumni teachers done to fund-raise for the trip?***

**A:** HETO teachers have done some of the following things to help offset the cost of their trip.

- applied for and received grants within their school corporation
- held a garage sale (alone or with other HETO teachers)
- sold artwork or other personal crafts/items
- took on a second job over the summer or school breaks and devoted all money earned to the trip
- sold candy/cookies in their classrooms
- held workshops or classes for elementary aged students over the summer or during school breaks
- auctioned their services off to their colleagues (traded a lunch/recess duty or offered to sub in another teacher’s classroom in exchange for a donation)

Please contact [Peggy Esselman](#) for a sample fund-raising letter and HETO’s tax ID number, if needed.

***Q: How do I work with my students and home school once I return?***

**A:** HETO requires that returning teachers complete one service project for one of our 11 HETO Partner Schools. This project can be anything that meets the needs of the home school/classroom, as long as it is approved by the HETO Executive Board in advance. HETO encourages teachers to use their creativity in developing projects with their students and suggests tying the service project in with existing curriculum.

***Q: What types of post-trip activities have HETO alumni teachers completed?***

**A:** Please visit our [HETO Alumni page](#) at [www.heartineducation.org](http://www.heartineducation.org) for descriptions of many of the activities that have been completed recently.

***Q: I know of a school that would like to help, but they cannot afford to send a teacher at this time. Can that school still participate in some way?***

**A:** HETO accepts schools as both partner schools and what are called “sponsor schools”. These sponsor schools help HETO by holding school supply drives, collecting money, and getting the word out about our mission. Please contact [Peggy Esselman](#) if you know of a school that would be interested in acting as a sponsor school.