

Volunteer Trip Leader Latin American Lutheran Mission

This is a pamphlet describing the Volunteer Trip Leader position in the Latin American Lutheran Mission(LALM). The LALM is a mission that supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico(ELCM) in it's ministry. The ELCM is made up of over twenty different churches and preaching points in north central Mexico. The LALM has a border station which is located in Laredo, Texas. It is from this location that the LALM sends support to the ELCM. Throughout the year much of that support is made up of ministry teams. These teams take trips to the different Mexican congregations to meet, worship, minister, and work with our fellow Christians in Mexico. It is these teams that the Volunteer Trip Leader would lead.

The Volunteer Trip Leader(VTL) needs to be someone who is committed to the work of Jesus Christ and the furtherance of the gospel. The VTL is a short term missionary, a missionary who is working with and as a liaison between two different cultures. The VTL helps two different groups of Christian brothers and sisters to learn about and to understand a little of each other. Thus the VTL needs not only to be fluent or near fluent in Spanish but needs to be able to depend on God for the love and strength to work with a humble attitude in this position. Prior experience as a group leader is helpful as well.

Here is a brief description of a ministry team trip and therein the work of the Volunteer Trip Leader.

The ministry team arrives in Laredo at the border station after a long drive from possibly Minnesota or Iowa, or maybe a shorter trip from somewhere in Texas. The team is met by the friendly VTL and directed to their quarters, shown where the showers are and set up a briefing time. The briefing time *is* when the group comes together with the VTL for a run down of the trip expectations, of rules, and to have questions answered. The VTL and the team leaders at some point on arrival get together and discuss the team, the project, any questions and concerns, and get to know one another as a leadership group.

When departure time comes and the baggage as well as the group is loaded the team comes together in a circle and shares in prayer. It is especially important to pray for ease in dealing with officials at the border. The team then loads and is off. That day the VTL is busy helping the team exchange money, cross the border, apply and receive visas, and direct them to the city or town where they will be working. From this day forward the VTL's Spanish is very important. Often times the VTL is the only bi-lingual speaker in either the team or the congregation.

Once the team arrives at the congregation with which they will be living the VTL talks with the pastor of the church and after introductions arranges sleeping places for everyone. These could be anything from the floor of the church to beds in private homes. A schedule for that night and the following days is then talked over between the pastor and the team leader through the VTL. Flexibility and understanding is very important on the part of the VTL to try and accommodate the needs and as much as possible the wants of the church and the team.

While in Mexico, the team participates with the congregation in their worship services and when possible their ministries. The team usually also has a work project that they are doing for the church while there. This could be anything from constructing a new building to painting to putting up a fence. The VTL assists in buying materials, being or helping the foreman, and helping to keep things running smoothly. Other than the work project the team will usually share songs, testimonies, and at times preaching with the congregation. LALM has the Jesus movie and this is often shown as well one or two nights. During these services the VTL needs to translate for the team as well as the congregation.

The time in Mexico is very rewarding. As VTL one is able to see much growth take place in the team, in the church, and between the two. It is also a time of individual growth and learning as well as growth with God.

At the end of the team's time in Mexico there are tearful farewells and knowledge of brothers and sisters in the U.S. and Mexico who are united through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The teams usually spend another night in Laredo when the team and the VTL go through a debriefing session together to talk and pray of their trip. It is then that everyone realizes how much growth and bonding has taken place inside the group that the VTL is now a part of. When the team departs it can be hard for they often feel that they are leaving a member of their own at the border. The VTL!

Hopefully this brief description has given an idea of what the position of Volunteer Trip Leader is like. It is a very needed and rewarding way to serve God and to also get a small idea of what mission work is like.

Requirements for Volunteer Trip Leader;

- Acceptance of God's call to serve Him!
- An attitude of love, humility, and flexibility!
- Volunteer; through faith in God raise own support for duration of time spent with the mission.
- Fluency(or near fluency) in the Spanish language.
- Leadership experience.

The Volunteer Trip Leader position is most needed during June, July, and August. If able in the spring it is possible to arrange a stay of a few weeks at one of the churches in Mexico to familiarize oneself with the ELCM and the Mexican culture. Dates for position are flexible and arrangements can be made by communicating with LALM director V. Gary Olson.

If there are questions concerning the Volunteer Trip Leader position or Latin American Lutheran Mission please call or write:

Latin American Lutheran Mission
V. Gary Olson, Director
3519 Salinas Avenue
Laredo, Texas 78041 USA

To call: (Office) 956-722-4047
(Home) 956-727-4015

APPLICATION:
VOLUNTEER TRIP LEADER
LATIN AMERICAN LUTHERAN MISSION

Print clearly in pen please.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE (____) _____

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

HIGH SCHOOL _____ YEARS _____

UNIVERSITY _____ YEARS _____
DEGREE/S _____ MAJOR/S _____

MISSION TEAM EXPERIENCE

AGENCY (DESCRIBE) _____

LOCATION _____ LEADER _____

TYPE OF MINISTRY (EVANGELISM, WORK) _____

JOB EXPERIENCE

JOB TITLE _____ YEARS _____

SUPERVISOR _____ TEL# (____) _____

JOB TITLE _____ YEARS _____

SUPERVISOR _____ TEL.# (____) _____

JOB TITLE _____ YEARS _____

SUPERVISOR _____ TEL# (____) _____

SPANISH EXPERIENCE

YEARS OF STUDY _____ FLUENT YES (____) NEAR (____)

APPLICATION continued: VOLUNTEER TRIP LEADER

PLEASE WRITE A SHORT ESSAY EXPLAINING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST:

EN ESFANOL DESCRIBIR UN RAZON FOR QUE USTED QUIERE ESTA FOSICION:

Please return via mail to:

Latin American Lutheran Mission
3519 Salinas Avenue
Laredo, TX 78041 U.S.A.