

# AMIGOS RECRUITING INFORMATION

## I. GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT AMIGOS

The purpose of recruiting is really quite simple. As a recruiter your job is just to tell your story, to share your AMIGOS experience with as many eligible participants as possible. Your job is to let others know that there is this amazing opportunity out there for them, and at the same time allowing AMIGOS to grow as an organization. Here are some outreach tactics that have worked for recruiters in the past.

- ❖ Post all your amazing photos from the summer on your Facebook and Myspace pages. Tag them all to the official AMIGOS page.
- ❖ Actually tell your friends about AMIGOS and what you did this summer! Show them your photos; invite friends to any Info Sessions your Chapter Holds
- ❖ Show the AMIGOS video to friends, neighbors, classmates, and favorite teachers.

## II. HELPFUL PRESENTATION HINTS

On the day of the Info Session, Study/Volunteer Abroad Fair, or recruiting visit, arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the presentation. You will want to arrive early enough to set up a TV or DVD player, prepare promotional material, and talk with your primary contact.

- ❖ Dress and speak casually but appropriately for the setting.
- ❖ Bring sample speech in case you draw a blank.
- ❖ Always maintain appropriate eye contact, speak slowly and loudly and integrate into the group (e.g. sitting in a circle).
- ❖ Establish a rapport with your audience by asking questions of them and by being comfortable and confident.
- ❖ Tell your audience why the AMIGOS mission is important to you and how you applied that concept during the summer. Also, tell them how AMIGOS has positively affected you.
- ❖ Never pass out materials before or while you are speaking. Invite interested students to pick up information and sign up to receive more information after the presentation.
- ❖ Do NOT tell horror stories and do not keep information from your audience. Be as accurate and as positive as possible in response to questions.
- ❖ If you are running out of time, prioritize your information and eliminate questions and answers by encouraging those who have questions to meet you after the presentation.
- ❖ Stress using the web for further program information, [www.amigoslink.org](http://www.amigoslink.org).
- ❖ If you have a silent group with few questions, have some questions in mind to discuss. Remember, audiences love personal stories. Have a few of your own in mind to share. Do not be afraid to dismiss the group early.
- ❖ Always repeat important dates (i.e. Application deadline, training dates, etc.). Be sure to leave contact information with the primary contact and thank them both verbally after the presentation and via a note the following day.

# Sample Classroom Presentation

- I. Introduction to AMIGOS
  - a. Amigos de las Americas is an international, non-profit organization that sends volunteers to rural Latin America during the summer to live with local families while working on sustainable community development projects.
  - b. AMIGOS began in 1965 when a group of teenagers traveled to Honduras to administer polio vaccinations.
  - c. This summer AMIGOS will send over 650 volunteers to 7 Latin American countries.
  
- II. The AMIGOS Mission Statement  
Amigos de las Americas builds partnerships to empower young leaders, advance community development, and strengthen multi-cultural understanding in the Americas.
  
- III. AMIGOS DVD (show film) decide upon the short or long version depending on time constraints
  
- IV. My AMIGOS Story
  - a. Tell about your own experience
  - b. Include where you served and what you did
  
- V. What I got out of Amigos – share with the audience how Amigos changed your life.
  
- VI. What you gain from an Amigos Experience
  - Become more fluent in Spanish or Portuguese
  - Gain leadership, social integration, public speaking, and teamwork skills
  - Gain experience with grassroots organizations and international non-profits
  - Get freedom to create personalized secondary projects
  - Go beyond tourism
  - Make life-long friends
  - Make a difference in people's lives
  - The best summer experience you'll ever have
  
- VII. What will you be doing in Latin America
  - a. Volunteers sign up for a six, seven or eight week project
  - b. Volunteers serve in Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama, and Paraguay
    - AMIGOS goes only where we are invited
  - c. AMIGOS volunteers do projects in:
    - Community Nutrition
    - Healthy Households & Communities
    - Youth-to-Youth Community Development
    - Digital Culture

- VIII. Where will you live?
- a. A small town or village or semi-urban area
  - b. With partner (s)
  - c. In a host family
  - d. With weekly visits from project supervisors
- IX. – The participation fee of ????????
- a. The participation fee covers:
    - International and domestic airfare
    - All project related expenses
    - Housing, food, and transportation
    - Training and in-country staff
    - Supplemental international medical insurance
    - 24-hour emergency on-call system.
- X. Fundraising
- a. AMIGOS Chapters do a variety of fundraisers to help lower the cost of the program and to give Volunteers experience explaining what AMIGOS is to different groups of people.
    - Examples of fundraising
      1. Letter writing/Email campaign
      2. Fruit, Coffee, or Bake sales
      3. **Chapter Specific Information**
  - b. AMIGOS provides financial assistance to families that can not afford the fees for the program. Don't let the cost of the program be the reason you don't apply
- XI. Training
- a. Training for your AMIGOS prepares you to:
    - Collaborate with local youth in the implementation of your project
    - Conduct educational activities with kids in your community
    - Immerse yourself in Latin American culture
- XII. Questions
- XIII. Collect contact information for interested students on a sign up sheet.

**Good Luck and Have fun!!**

## ❖ **Answers to Common Questions**

### **1. Who runs the organization? How stable is it.**

AMIGOS is governed by an International Board of Directors with day to day activities coordinated by the International Office Staff in Houston, Texas. With the exception of the small professional staff, all AMIGOS personnel are volunteers. AMIGOS was founded in 1965. Over the past three decades more than 17,000 volunteers have performed 11 million health services. AMIGOS meets the criteria for exchange programs set by the Council on Standards for International Education Travel. AMIGOS is affiliated with the Pan American Health Organization and is a member of the Independent Sector, Interaction and the National Council on International Health.

### **2. Where does the money go?**

Approximately 80% of each dollar raised by the organization goes directly to cover the cost of the program. Program expenses include training materials, support for the volunteers and scholarships in addition to international travel and supplies such as cement and supplies. While food and lodging for the volunteers are contributed by the host communities, the cost of the support provided by the AMIGOS staff is covered by the organization. The other 20% covers the overhead costs of the organization such as administrative expenses.

### **3. Why does AMIGOS work in Latin America when there is so much need in the U.S.?**

Living in another culture, using another language and working with community leaders allows opportunity for personal growth. The volunteers bring back to their home communities increased self-confidence and caring attitudes that are reflected in community activities.

### **4. I am unsure if I have what it takes to be an AMIGOS Volunteer. How will I be assured I have the skills I need?**

The AMIGOS training program offers hands-on experience to learn the necessary skills. During the Chapter training program and in-country briefing, Volunteers learn and practice the human relations, cross-cultural, leadership and technical skills they will need in their project.

### **5. Are all assignments rural?**

AMIGOS tends to work in rural areas because that is usually where our programs can be most effective. Depending on the program, Volunteers may find themselves working in semi-rural to very rural areas.

### **6. Will I be sure to live with a host family? Will they feed me?**

Living conditions vary from project to project. The field staff of your project will have visited your community to determine if you will be living with a family, in a clinic or in a school. The field staff will have also made arrangements for how you will be fed. Often Volunteers are fed on a rotation system in the community. Any problems will be handled by the field staff.

### **7. Is the food and water safe?**

Volunteers typically take water purification tablets or boil their water. During training you will learn to protect yourself from harmful conditions.

### **8. What kind of health care would I receive if I get sick?**

Health care facilities in Latin America range from clinics staffed by our equivalent of residents to hospitals fully staffed with a full range of specialists. The field staff has made arrangements for the care of Volunteers and Volunteers carry an emergency card with instructions about how to seek medical care. The AMIGOS Medical Director reviews the treatment and medication given to Volunteers.

**9. What will happen if something serious happens to me in the field? Can I get out?**

That depends on the situation and seriousness of the problem. Sometimes we can evacuate immediately by private car, ambulance, or even helicopter to a major hospital. Sometimes the Volunteer must receive immediate treatment from the doctor in the local clinic. The field staff, the local doctor and the AMIGOS Medical Director determine what is best for the Volunteer. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

**10. How can I be safe if I just saw governmental problems on TV?**

AMIGOS primary concern is the safety of the Volunteers. Work areas are chosen in the fall of each program year. Each area is monitored before and during the summer for the safety of the Volunteers in addition, the Volunteers are given a step-by-step plan in case of natural political disasters. This information is on an emergency card that they carry with them. International Trustees in the host countries.