

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ,

The following information represents an incredible weeklong opportunity that you should consider for next summer. The Higher Ground Mission Trip promises to be an exciting and eye-opening time of ministry you won't want to miss! A team of highly motivated young leaders will be chosen to serve disadvantaged youth and their communities through various outreach activities and training experiences. Team members will stay at Higher Ground Camp in St. Paris, Ohio venturing out to neighboring areas to encounter the disenfranchised and often overlooked members of society as part of their missionary experience. In addition, the team will complete several campground projects on site and participate in the dynamic Path4Teens youth development training program.

An integral component of the Higher Ground Mission Trip is servant training. This entire experience has been especially designed to challenge, inspire, equip, and prepare team members for acts of greater service on this specific mission field and also their own personal mission fields upon returning home. Long after this short term mission trip ends team members will be geared to live lives of significance through the development of personalized mission and vision statements. Each member will develop an action plan perfectly aligned with their gifts and talents. Through the completion of field journals, participants will be guided in a step by step process to answer questions like....

Who am I?

Where am I going?

And just how am I going to get there?

While our most important objectives in this mission will be to

1) share our lives through service and

2) discern our personal meaning and purpose,

we will also enjoy the sights and sounds of our surroundings and have some fun. As I share so often, we **WORK HARD AND PLAY HARD!**

We want to make this trip a special experience for each student. We realize many options are available to you in the summertime. Please thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the **Higher Ground Mission Trip**. Fulfillment and challenge await!

In Christ,

Andy Cisneros, Graysen Pack, & Julie Driskill

Overview

Dates: Sunday, July 5 through Friday, July 10, 2009

Site: Higher Ground Camp, St. Paris, Ohio

NATURE OF THE TRIP:

Higher Ground Mission Trip will involve a select number of students and adult staff. Our mission will focus on personal leadership development, the physical construction of a team building course, and interactions with inner city kids and their communities.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION:

This is not a retreat, break-a-way, or lock-in. The experience will be a life-changing encounter that is geared to promote personal and spiritual development in the life of each participant. Team members should expect to be challenged! In view of this, not all students are ready to participate. Emphasis is placed on the student's meeting of requirements before he/she is permitted to go on the trip. There is a possibility that a student might be accepted, but later dropped from the team because of a failure to fulfill the following requirements.

1. DEMONSTRATE A WILLINGNESS TO MODEL THE MISSION TRIP MINDSET.

We realize that this is a subjective issue. However, if during the training and preparation process a student demonstrates a non-cooperative or negative attitude, it could be a hindrance to the team for that student to be placed on site. If this situation arises, an initial conference with the student and his/her parents will be arranged in order to convey the concern of the leadership team. If no progress is made in this area after the conference, the student will be asked not to participate in the trip.

2. PAPERWORK, FUNDING, PRELIMINARY MEETINGS, AND PRE-TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AND ATTENDED BEFORE THE MISSION TRIP DEADLINE.

We realize that there are genuine conflicts that prevent students from participating in certain requirements. It is our desire to work with students and to be as flexible as possible. ***However, if a student misses any of these requirements with no explanation, he/she is UNABLE to make the trip to Higher Ground. It is the student's responsibility to notify Pastor Andy of genuine conflicts or questions in a timely manner.***

3. PARTICIPATE IN A FOLLOW-UP PROJECT UPON COMPLETION OF TRIP.

Team members will be encouraged to weigh their experiences and new insights from the Higher Ground Mission Trip by completing a post interview and public report upon returning home. As part of the week long training experience the team members will also be developing individualized projects of their own design for implementation in hometown communities. Participants will be asked to report about the success or challenges of these ventures upon their completion. Our earnest prayer is that this trip will be like a stepping stone - a launching pad of sorts for numerous inspired missions and acts of service of the team members own choosing.

Team Expectations

As a potential member of the Higher Ground Mission Team I realize the importance of being a vital team member. In view of this realization, I will, with God's assistance try to model the following mindset:

BE POSITIVE

In my relationships, I will discipline myself to look for the best in people. Even though I may recognize their weaknesses, I will focus on their strengths.

In my speech, I will realize that words can be sharp swords that pierce people and hurt them. I will speak words that build up, not tear down. I will strive to encourage, not discourage.

In my attitudes, I will strive to have an optimistic outlook. This means that even if I do not understand or agree with something, I will choose not to gripe or complain. Instead I will seek to learn from each experience to grow in new and interesting ways even when it may be difficult.

REMAIN OPEN

I understand the need for me to be open to new friendships. I need to get to know new people. I also need to let new people get to know me. I will avoid believing any presumptions of people based on their age, popularity, looks or giftedness.

I understand the need for me to be open to God. I believe that God loves me and wants to have a close relationship with me. I am open to growing closer to Him, becoming more obedient to His commands, listening more to His words, and having Him become more real in my life.

SHOW RESPONSIVENESS

I will attempt to be sensitive to other people's needs.

I will give intentional thought as to how I can serve my teammates in tangible ways.

I will be responsive in my speech, discerning the impact of my words on others.

STAY ENCOURAGING

I realize the awesome power of encouragement.

I will do my best to affirm the positive qualities I find in my teammates. When others are down, I will try to cheer them up.

ACT RESPECTFULLY

I will respect and honor all people at all times.

I recognize the importance of obeying those in authority and the adults who are responsible.

I will model an attitude of respect at all times.

OUR CORE VALUES

There are many facets to the Higher Ground Mission Trip. Nothing is accidental. From the theme verse chosen, the material we read, the small group discussion, the site assignments and the daily schedule all these things fit together to help us accomplish our goals for the trip. It's important to understand some of the core values that influence our planning and priorities for the trip.

WE VALUE SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN THE LIVES OF EACH PARTICIPANT.

We believe that the ultimate goal of the trip is for each participant to experience personal spiritual growth and development. A top priority of the pre-trip training and on-site experience is deepening our faith.

WE VALUE SIMPLIFYING OUR LIFESTYLE.

We believe that in spite of the short-term discomfort of a rustic lifestyle, we reap long-term benefits through an increased appreciation of the abundance that God has given us. We also believe that this will encourage us to develop a lifestyle of thankfulness.

WE VALUE STUDENT LEADERSHIP.

We believe that developing leadership and responsibility in students is a vital part of this experience. We will do all we can to show students how God can use them when they are willing to be used.

WE VALUE CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE.

We believe that getting to know and respect minorities and those less fortunate will help us to become better neighbors in our own culturally diverse community. It will also increase our awareness of the challenges of cross-cultural ministry.

WE VALUE A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

We believe God smiles when believers live in harmony with each other. Furthermore, we believe that none of us alone can accomplish as much as all of us together.

WE VALUE THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A MISSIONARY.

We believe that one of God's special callings in life is that of a cross-cultural missionary. We want to give each participant a small taste of what the preparation and life of a missionary might be like and to understand that regardless of where we live, we all our missionaries! We encourage all team members to acknowledge the unique mission

field right outside their own front door and seize opportunities to influence the world around them for the cause of Christ.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE COST FOR THE HIGHER GROUND MISSION TRIP?

The out-of-pocket student fee will be \$350 per student. We require a \$50.00 deposit (non-refundable) in order to secure a commitment by the student for his/her role in the mission trip upon acceptance into the team. The final payment is due by **May 31, 2009**.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR THIS MISSION TRIP?

Any student currently eighth grade and actively involved in their church may apply to participate in this mission trip. Students should carefully consider whether or not they are ready for this type of experience. We want to insure that every student goes into the experience with the proper mindset. It is important to realize that an application for this Higher Ground Mission Trip does not guarantee acceptance to the team.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER GOING?

It is going to be an incredible experience! Higher Ground Missions Trip is a great way to experience significant personal and spiritual growth, make new friends and gain a new sense of appreciation for all you have. Higher Ground Mission Trip is going to be a life-changing experience!

HOW DO I APPLY FOR HIGHER GROUNDS MISSION TRIP?

Begin the application process by contacting Pastor Andy Cisneros thru email acisneros2692@aol.com, or phone 765-438-1144 informing him of your interest in the trip.

WHAT IF I CANNOT AFFORD TO GO ON THE HIGHER GROUND MISSION TRIP?

Money should not be the deterrent to involvement in Higher Grounds Mission Trip. Through a combination of youth ministry mission budgeting, any student who is accepted to the team and works to secure the funds will be able to participate. We are more than willing to work with each student to make it possible for him/her to participate regardless of the financial situation. Several fundraising opportunities are available for team members and their families.

WILL I NEED ANY TRAINING FOR THE TRIP?

Team members will be guided to participate in an online personality profile before arrival at Higher Ground Camp. A survey and background information will also be requested and collected of participants before the mission trip experience takes place.

IS HIGHER GROUNDS MISSION TRIP JUST A LOT OF WORK, OR IS IT FUN TOO?

Higher Ground Mission Trip is not a typical event/trip. **It will require a lot of work and sacrifice.** However, the results can be really rewarding. Our emphasis prior to the trip will be on preparation (spiritually, relationally, and culturally). We will certainly have a lot of fun, but that will not be our goal. During the first few days of the trip, there will be early mornings, long days, hard work, real ministry and time spent together. We will have a lot of fun and make memories that will last a lifetime. Higher Grounds Mission Trip will most definitely be fun, but it will also be a lot of work.

WHAT IF I AM ACCEPTED, BUT LATER CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?

All students will have to pay the \$50.00 non-refundable deposit when they are initially accepted into the team. This money will be used to cover some of the cost of training. We must pay a number of deposits and expenses for the trip that are per person; therefore, \$50.00 is contractually committed, whether a student actually participates in the trip or not. If unique circumstances arise, we will work with students who feel they cannot participate.

WHAT KIND OF STUDENT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ON THE HIGHER GROUNDS MISSION TEAM?

The Higher Ground Mission Team is not just for students who have it all together; but it is also not a reform school. In the selection process, consideration is given to students who have a servant's heart, demonstrate willingness to make new friends, and most importantly, exhibit openness to developing a stronger relationship with God.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM ACCEPTED ON THE TEAM?

Students will be notified by December 1st. Students will then need to begin identifying those who will receive support letters.

WHAT WILL A TYPICAL DAY BE LIKE ON THE HIGHER GROUND MISSION TRIP?

Without going into specific details, for the first few days, students can expect to get up very early each morning, eat breakfast together, then have quiet times, followed by a day of ministry and training at our site. We will have a lunch and possibly a break before returning to the worksite. Evenings will include dinner together with the team, group time and evening activities.

CAN I COME TO OHIO LATE OR LEAVE EARLY?

Because of logistical purposes and such advance notice of all dates for this trip, it is simply **impossible to make arrangements to come late or leave early!**

MAY I WRITE SUPPORT LETTERS IN ORDER TO MEET \$350 STUDENT FEE?

The most commonly asked question of them all. Certainly! We encourage students to make the ASK of family and friends to stand in the GAP. All monies received after final payment deadline will go to team costs and supplies.

DO I NEED ANY EXTRA MONEY FOR THE TRIP?

During the trip you will NEED AND WANT extra spending money. You will buy your own lunches to and from Ohio. In addition to these meals, we will have the opportunity to make additional purchases in various places, plus any other stops for pop or ice cream. Only you know how much you spend for food.

IS THERE A DRESS CODE?

All shirts must have sleeves that go beyond the shoulder (**NO** spaghetti straps, tank tops, or even half shoulder shirts). Guys and girls **must** have one-piece bathing suits. Shirts will be worn at **all** times. One Sunday outfit is needed (no shorts or T-shirts for Sunday). Gentlemen will be wearing shorts or pants that fit tightly around the waist rather than sag below the waist. Thus, belts will be worn! The classic bench-mark for length of shorts is...if I were to wear your shorts would you be embarrassed walking with me. If the answer was yes...then the shorts are too **SHORT!**

IS THERE ANYTHING I NEED TO DO MEDICALLY?

YES! We suggest that your Tetanus shot be current. Please be assured that you have had a tetanus shot within the last 10 years.