Thank you for your interest in the Soccer Without Borders Culture Exchange in Granada, Nicaragua! This document is meant to answer some of the questions you may have. We hope that you will find it useful and that it will allow you to make a more informed decision about whether traveling with us is the right choice for you. Feel free to contact us if you have questions or concerns after reading this document.

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**MISSION and VISION:**
Soccer Without Borders’ **mission** is to use soccer as a vehicle for positive change, providing under-served youth with a toolkit to overcome obstacles to growth, inclusion, and personal success.

Our **vision** is to provide all youth program participants the opportunity to realize their inherent potential. SWB creates safe and supportive team environments through which participants build friendships, gain skills and confidence, and form powerful mentor relationships.

To this end, SWB maintains three core values to guide our work: **Focus on the Whole Person:** SWB believes in a whole-person approach. Our programs help young people come into a greater understanding of their bodies, minds, and voices.

**Authenticity:** Soccer Without Borders gives voice and value to the ideas of local leaders. We mobilize local expertise, empowering and employing resident experts to educate from within the community.

**Process-oriented:** SWB believes that the process is often more important than the outcome. We uphold process-oriented values that create a culture of acceptance, an inclusive environment, and steady progress toward our goals. These values are:

- The inherent potential and gifts of all young people
- Honesty and authenticity in speech and action
- All learners as teachers and all teachers as learners
- Openness to all perspectives, voices and people

**YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America, and the second poorest in the Western hemisphere. 48% of the population lives below the national poverty line. Granada is located an hour south of Nicaragua’s capital, Managua and its international airport (MGA). A former Spanish colony, Granada is a small city located on Lake Nicaragua, widely known for its colonial-era structure and architecture as well as a burgeoning tourist industry. Spanish is the primary language and proficient local English speakers are rare. Schools in Granada are generally half-day, with a majority of youth dropping out prior to graduation from secondary school. In fact, only 48.9% of youth participate in secondary school. (UNICEF, 2013) As a result,
there is a huge need for youth-centered programs to provide positive learning opportunities, and to facilitate useful personal and social skills.

Fútbol Sin Fronteras (Soccer Without Borders) Granada aims to provide opportunities for girls to succeed on and off the field, gaining self-confidence through the powerful benefits of team sports. Through daily educational, athletic, and social activities, girls develop key skills and a sense of belonging in a community that does not always offer them that opportunity. Your orientation will include a much more extensive description of the work and themes. This Culture Exchange joins high school students from the United States with youth program participants from Granada.

The Exchange runs from July 31 – August 6, 2016. Arrival on the 31st is mandatory, departures can be August 6 or 7 depending on your preference.
TRIP OVERVIEW:

Objectives: The objectives of this trip are two-fold. First, participants will learn first-hand how the power of sport can be harnessed to create safe spaces, build individuals’ confidence, and provide a platform for education to under-served and socially excluded communities. The second objective is culture exchange. Respecting another culture and appreciating its differences will be a key theme. A willingness to see oneself as a short-term guest in a foreign community, rather than a benefactor, will allow you to experience your surroundings more perceptively. Understanding that your time in Granada will be brief, we nevertheless hope you form a special attachment to your host family and gain a sense of the community of Granada.

Components: During your time in Granada you will be a coach, a player, a teacher, a student, a peer, a guest, and a friend. Specific components include:

- **Playing and coaching soccer**: Trip participants will receive a mini-coaching course on our gym class curriculum and have the chance to coach gym classes in local schools, sharing their love of soccer with elementary age students. You will also have many chances to play, both alongside SWB participants and coaches, and with one another.
- **Cultural events**: Activities that introduce you to the culture of Nicaragua will be a constant throughout the week. From homestays to
cooking class, to Spanish lessons, to a dance lesson, and tours of local attractions, the group will leave with a better understanding of Latin American culture, but also what is specific to Nicaragua.

• **Seminar:** One of the unique aspects of this trip is the opportunity to reflect on the experience in the moment. After the group’s initial orientation, there will be three discussion-based seminars during the week that create a space for shared reflection and learning about the context in which SWB operates, concepts in international development, and ways to “get active and give back.”

• **Peer exchange:** Our Soccer Without Borders program in Nicaragua includes much more than just soccer. Our participants have weekly educational and team-building activities, on and off the field. This Exchange group will join in these activities and get to know life as a teenager here in Granada.

**EXPENSES/EXPECTATIONS: Please read closely!**

This trip utilizes a “pay it forward” model. Many similar trips will charge a large all-inclusive fee for participation. We view our Culture Exchange participants as future members of the SWB family. As a result, we charge a small fee to cover the costs of participation and require each participant to undertake a fundraiser of their choice prior to departure. This creates an investment in the experience and in the program you will be visiting, even prior to arrival. To give you a better sense of how it works, details of each expectation are below:

1) **Trip Fee:**

The cost for your trip is $600 which includes housing, in-country transportation, meals, and all scheduled entertainment:

- Housing in a home-stay with a local family associated with SWB.
- Nicaraguan food is tasty and we will eat like locals! All meals are provided by SWB as well as snacks and purified water. We also provide each participant with a small per diem (daily allowance) for things like Gatorade and other snacks. However, we will challenge you to live like locals for one week, so daily smoothies, lattes, etc. from the tourist district will exceed this per diem. You are welcome to bring additional funds, however we hope that you will invest in local living!
- You will receive a Soccer Without Borders Granada t-shirt.
- You will receive lessons in Spanish, cooking, and dancing.
- The group will take an excursion to one of the eco-tourist destinations of Granada, either Las Isletas, La Laguna de Apoyo, or the Masaya Volcano.
● We will arrange your airport transportation to and from MGA.
● Our community center in Granada does have free internet.

2) Fundraising with Positive Tracks:
In addition to the trip fee, each participant is expected to fundraise a minimum of $500 in support of the program. Of course, you are encouraged to exceed this amount! Our program operates 45 weeks per year, meaning that your efforts go a long way to ensure we can offer as much as possible to the girls during the other 44 weeks.

Upon acceptance and confirmation of your slot, you will immediately become a member of our Ambassador Program presented by Positive Tracks (www.soccerwithoutborders.org/ambassadors). Positive Tracks is an amazing non-profit whose mission is to encourage young people to “get active and give back” using the power of sport. Through our partnership with Positive Tracks all funds that trip participants raise will be doubled! You will receive a fundraising packet with ideas and participate in a group conference call to share and brainstorm.

3) Flight:
Your flight cost is not included in the above costs. You should book your flight to Managua (MGA) on Sunday, July 31. This airport is very easy to maneuver, and we will provide detailed instructions to meeting your SWB representative upon arrival. Airfare costs to Managua, Nicaragua are typically between $550 - $800. Note that we do not allow Spirit Airlines flights as the travel times are extremely challenging. While they may appear the cheapest, their baggage and other fees quickly add up.

4) Equipment: Each trip member is asked to devote a portion (~40 lbs) of their one free checked bag to bringing used equipment for the program. If you want to bring more (which would be much appreciated), a second checked bag costs $40 on most airlines. Equipment can easily be collected in your local communities or SWB has a very large supply of equipment ready for transport in Boston, MA; Berkeley, CA; and State College, PA. We will share a wish list with the group once it is finalized, but generally gently-used soccer balls, cleats, uniforms, etc. as well as school supplies are needed items.
**LANGUAGE and GROUP:**
The group will be approximately 15-18 students from across the United States. In selecting the group, rising college freshmen, seniors, and juniors are giving first priority, however rising first-years and sophomores are encouraged to apply! Familiarity with Spanish is helpful but not required. The group will reflect a range of Spanish-speaking abilities, and the trip leaders will help with translations.

**TRIP LEADERS:**
SWB has 9 full-time staff members in Granada: 2 American staff and 7 Nicaraguan. In addition to these staff, a trip coordinator will oversee the group, live in the same homestays, and work to prepare you for departure.

**SAFETY:**
This will be the fifth year of this culture exchange, and our seventh year with a year-round presence in Granada. We have never had any safety issues with our trips to Granada, due in large part to being an embedded part of the community. As in any city, walking on unknown streets after dark or leaving belongings unattended is risky, thus trip leaders are well-versed in safety precautions and will take the group through an extensive safety orientation. Granada is a wonderful place and we have facilitated a positive experience for more than 350 U.S. participants!

**CLIMATE:**
It’s hot and humid! Come prepared to be in the sun for prolonged periods. It cools off some at night but not much, so a commitment to hydration is really important. We will send out a packing list before departure.

**INSURANCE:**
Soccer Without Borders has a general liability insurance plan and a membership with Global Rescue ([www.globalrescue.com](http://www.globalrescue.com)) for Medical Advisory Services. All students and their parent/guardian must sign a waiver. If your personal medical insurance does not cover international travel, we recommend that you get some kind of inexpensive short-term travel medical insurance for your trip. Here is a link to an organization that provides this type of coverage: [http://www.imglobal.com/coverage/patriot/](http://www.imglobal.com/coverage/patriot/)

**HEALTH:**
During your week in Nicaragua, we will be walking a lot and there will be opportunities to play and coach. If you have injuries or health-related issues
that might inhibit your participation, please note these on your application. Some dietary restrictions may also be challenging to accommodate, so please make a note of these as well.

In terms of vaccinations, none are required but we recommend that you speak with your doctor before going to Nicaragua to see what they recommend. You should bring any necessary medication with you but, if necessary, there are doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals available in Granada.

**PASSPORT/VISA:**
If you have a valid US passport, you do not need to apply for any kind of visa before you go. Rather, you will purchase a tourist card ($10.00) upon arrival, which is good for 90 days. If you have a passport from a country other than the U.S., visit this website to check on your requirements: [http://nicaragua.visahq.com](http://nicaragua.visahq.com). The cost of this tourist card is your responsibility and is not included in your fee.
SAMPLE ITINERARY
Mandatory arrivals Sunday
Departures Saturday or Sunday from Managua Airport (MGA)

Sunday:
  All Day         Arrivals
  Evening        Orientation with SWB staff

Monday:
  9:00am        Breakfast and first seminar
  11:00am      Group activity with local staff
  1:00pm       Tour, lunch
  3:30pm       Pick-up soccer
  6:00pm       Homestay dinners

Tuesday:
  9:00am        Breakfast at SWB office
  10:00am      Spanish classes with local instructors
  Lunch        Seminar Session 2 at field- Coaching for Youth Development
  5:30pm       Evening activity with SWB youth at the office
  7:00pm       Dinner with families

Wednesday:
  9:00am        Meeting at office- breakfast and Seminar Session 3
  10:30am      Morning gym classes at local schools
  Lunch        Practice with SWB youth teams
  5:00pm       Bracelet-making workshop
              Dinner out

Thursday:
  9:00am        Breakfast at SWB office
  10:00am      Morning gym classes at local schools
  Lunch        Seminar Session 4, activity planning for evening event with SWB youth
  5:30pm       Evening event in office

Friday:
  9:00am        Breakfast at SWB office
  AM           Trip to local Cultural Attraction
  3:30pm       Showcase game between SWB Alumni players and Exchange Team
  7:30pm       Closing dinner

Saturday:
  9:00am        Practice with SWB youth
  Afternoon    Masaya Market or departures

If you have further questions not answered here, please contact Allie Horwitz,
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