The Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children (FIMRC) is pleased to welcome you to the FIMRC Family. We are looking forward to your service in Costa Rica and hope that you are too. This amazing experience will allow you to immerse yourself in a different culture while providing unique opportunities to get to know a community in the developing world.

This packet contains useful information for your trip and will answer many of the questions that you may have. We hope that you will take a moment to familiarize yourself with the content so that you can confidently travel to our site in Costa Rica. We would like to make your volunteer mission as comfortable as possible, so if you have any further questions after reading through this packet, please feel free to contact us.

As a volunteer with Project Alajuelita, you will carry out vital tasks in support of FIMRC’s mission to provide quality health care to children who are underprivileged and underserved. FIMRC realizes that to truly change the health care conditions of places like Alajuelita, on-site medical attention is only one piece of the puzzle. Diligence in spreading the word about our mission is also necessary so that everyone is aware that there are children who do not receive the medical care that they deserve. Your impact on the community can be felt long after you board your plane home by simply sharing stories of your volunteer mission to friends and family. We are so excited to welcome you to our FIMRC family and are proud that you have decided to join the effort to create a world in which every child has an equal opportunity to benefit from modern medicine.

On behalf of the entire FIMRC team, we thank you for your support and hope your experience is nothing short of extraordinary!
MEET THE TEAM

TATIANA BLANCO, Field Operations Manager (FOM) & Psychologist

Tatiana is Project Alajuelita’s Field Operations Manager and clinic psychologist. Tatiana works with both parents and children undergoing the difficult situations that occur due to high levels of poverty, drugs, physical and mental abuse and urban overcrowding conditions. She takes a unique approach to therapy, hosting traditional sessions as well as utilizing both art and dance throughout the healing process. As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to work with Tatiana during your time in the clinic.

DAYAN ALVARADO, Volunteer and Health Education Coordinator

Dayan has been part of the FIMRC team for many years! Dayan assists in the clinic with taking vitals, recording patient information and creating and implementing health education programs. Dayan will give you a thorough orientation on your first volunteer day, and you will work alongside Dayan each day both in the clinic and during community outreach.

You will have the opportunity to work alongside additional Costa Rica team members during your time at Project Alajuelita. You can learn more about the entire team via the link below. Get ready for lots of dancing, laughing, and fun times!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Costa Rica
Tatiana Blanco, Field Operations Manager
- 06-8307-7250 (mobile)
- operations.cr@fimrc.org
Rita Zuniga, Homestay Coordinator
- +506-8887-0125 (primary)
- rita.zuniga@fimrc.org
Manuel, Driver
- +506-2203-2316 (mobile)

For all calls within Costa Rica, drop the 506 and simply dial the 8-digit number.

FIMRC HQ, Philadelphia
Jessica Kuhlmeier, Volunteer Program Specialist
- 888-211-8575 ext 1 (mobile)
- missions@fimrc.org
Meredith Welsh, Chief Executive Officer
- 267-290-8151 (mobile)

FIMRC HQ Office
- 888-211-8575
  • ext. 1 (Main Office: Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm EST)
  • ext. 5 (24/7 Emergency Line)

When calling Costa Rica from the US, dial 011 before the number. When calling the US from Costa Rica dial 001, then the 10-digit number.

WhatsApp
FIMRC encourages all volunteers to download WhatsApp prior to travel in order to easily communicate with in-country staff as well as friends and family back home. WhatsApp uses your phone’s Internet connection, instead of your cell data, to send text messages and to make voice calls. The app is a free download for iPhone, Android, and Windows phones. All FIMRC team members can be reached via WhatsApp.

Learn More
GET TO KNOW PROJECT ALAJUELITA

BACKGROUND
Setting: Urban
Population Size: 80,000
Region: Central Valley

CLINICAL CARE
Facility: FIMRC’s Community Clinic
Patients Served: 200 monthly
Services Offered:
• Primary: general consults for patients of all ages
• Pediatric: well child visits
• Women’s Health: pap smears, breast exams
• Psychological: individual and group counseling
• Pharmacy: medications, pharmaceutical counseling

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
Health Education Programs:
• Expressive therapy
• Adolescent health education groups
• Nutrition and cooking lessons
• Soup kitchen support through weekly health education sessions on topics such as hand washing, dental care, and exercise

FIMRC’S CLINIC
Our clinic in San Felipe, Alajuelita, FIMRC’s very first project site, was established in January of 2005. FIMRC is focused on marginalized communities that do not qualify for national medical insurance. This, in addition to crowded homes and lack of clean water, makes our programs and our partners a vital piece in the process of providing better health care in the community. Below you will find an inside view into FIMRC’s clinic. As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to rotate through each clinic station, which is outlined on the next page.
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

CURRENCY

Exchanging Money & ATMs
The currency of Costa Rica is the colón. Exchange rates to the US dollar are available at http://www.xe.com/ currencyconverter/. Currency exchange stands in the airport usually give an unfavorable rate, so if you need to exchange dollars, we recommend that you do so after you arrive at the homestay. ATMs will give you a choice to withdraw U.S. dollars or Costa Rican colones. Visa, MasterCard, and debit cards are accepted at tourist destinations as well as in San José.

Notifying your Bank
Before you leave you should notify your bank or credit provider that you will be traveling abroad as unusual credit card use may trigger fraud protection and freeze your account. In the event of an emergency, Western Union or Interbank transfers can be used to obtain cash. Be sure to bring your homestay deposit in American dollars.

BUDGET TIPS

Volunteers generally incur costs during their trip for activities not included in the daily volunteering program. The following is a list of common weekly expenses:

- Refundable homestay deposit: $20 (paid to Homestay Coordinator on arrival)
- Spending money: $150+ (dependent upon spending preferences and interest in excursions)
- Calling card: $6 (approx 20 min.)

It is not necessary to tip taxi drivers. If you are traveling before or after your volunteer mission, tipping is recommended for hotel staff, porters and waiters. All hotels add 10% service tax plus 3% tourist tax to the bill by law. Restaurants add a 25% service charge.

VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required by law when traveling to Costa Rica from the U.S., but we recommend consulting your doctor, as well as www.cdc.gov/travel for the most up-to-date recommendations. Please note, our project site is not located in a malaria zone. Medical decisions are your responsibility, and the cost of vaccinations will be dependent on your decisions.

CLINIC ADDRESS

Clinica Comunitaria FIMRC
Del Super Acapulco 200 Metros al Oeste (CCA)
San Felipe, Alajuelita, San José
(En las instalaciones del Centro Cristiano de Alabanza)
For reference only - not a mailing address

ELECTRICITY & INTERNET

All homestays have a wifi connection. The clinic also offers wifi during non peak times. There are also numerous internet cafes. The voltage used in Costa Rica is 110/220 volts AC, 60Hz. Two-pin plugs are standard (equal sized pin sockets only) so any electronic requiring a three-prong plug will require an adapter.

SAFETY & STEP

You may register for the U.S. State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive information from the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica. You are encouraged to save the Embassy’s contact information prior to travel, which can be found on the Embassy’s website.

REGISTRATION
PACKING GUIDE

It’s time to start packing! Below we have compiled a list of most commonly needed items. We ask that you be culturally sensitive and professional when choosing clothes to bring on your trip; low-cut tops, short shorts and other revealing clothing should not be worn to the clinic, in the city, or during other activities. You should limit your luggage to one suitcase plus one small backpack for your carry-on and daily use. Make sure you have luggage tags for each suitcase.

CLOTHING & SHOES

LIGHTWEIGHT WORKWEAR
Light-weight and loose-fitting work attire such as tanks, t-shirts, capris and comfortable pants are perfectly fine to wear to work in the clinic and community. We recommend scrubs for work in the clinic.

COMFORTABLE SHOES
Comfortable sneakers are acceptable for working in the clinic and community. Don’t forget socks!

FLIP FLOPS / SANDALS
Sandals are great to have for beach trips, nice dinners, and of course, its a great idea to pack flip flops if you wish to have shower shoes.

SWIMSUIT / BEACHWEAR
Be sure to pack your swimsuit, as well as a beach towel, if you plan to visit the coast.

HAT & SUNGLASSES
The sun is strong so be sure to come prepared with a cap and/or sunglasses to block out those rays!

SLEEPWEAR
Don’t forget your comfy PJs. T-shirts, tanks, and shorts are just fine for lounging at the end of the day.

NICE OUTFIT
You may visit local museums, markets, or go out to dinner. If so, you may want to have a nice outfit on hand.

RAIN GEAR
Traveling during rainy season (May-Nov)? Pack a lightweight rain jacket or poncho and rainboots or shoes that you don’t mind getting wet.

FIMRC APPAREL
While not required, you can order FIMRC gear at www.fimrc.org/gear. Items are not available for purchase in Costa Rica.

TOILETRIES

BUG SPRAY
We strongly recommend that volunteers wear effective insect repellent. CDC recommendation is 30-35% DEET.

SUNSCREEN
Pay attention to the SPF! The sun is strong so we recommend re-applying your sunscreen throughout the day.

HAND SANITIZER
Personal sized hand sanitizer is great to have while working in the clinic and community. Wipes are also great to toss in your bag!

TOOTHBRUSH & TOOTHPASTE
We are pretty passionate about dental care! Don’t forget your floss!

MEDICATIONS
Over-the-counter anti-diarrheal and anti-constipation medications are recommended for travelers. If you are prone to motion sicknesses, prepare accordingly. Pack all medications in original labeled containers.

PERSONAL ITEMS
Do not forget shampoo, soap, personal hygiene items, etc. These are not provided by your host family.

WEATHER IN COSTA RICA
Costa Rica’s climate is very predictable, with two main seasons throughout the year. The dry season, during which there is very little rain, generally occurs between late December and April. The rainy season occurs between May and November and offers an average of five hours of daily sunshine. Forecasts for the city of San José can be accessed at www.weather.com. Clothing for your trip should accommodate the diversity in weather and working environments that you will experience in Costa Rica.
PACKING GUIDE

SUPPLIES & TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

WATER BOTTLE
Safe filtered drinking water will be provided for the duration of your stay. Be sure to bring a sturdy reusable water bottle. It is important to stay hydrated!

LIGHTWEIGHT BACKPACK
Basic backpack to carry to the clinic each day that will hold your water bottle and other small necessities. If it's waterproof - even better!

SMALL FLASHLIGHT
While power outages are not common in the area, a small flashlight is great to have just in case.

BEACH TOWEL
Bed linens and bath towels are provided; however, we do recommend bringing your own beach towel if you plan to visit the coast or participate in excursions such as rafting.

GLASSES
Prescription glasses should be brought as a back up to contacts due to the dusty environment. Don’t forget your contact solution!

PLASTIC BAGS
Grocery bags, small garbage bags, and ziploc bags are all great for organizing and storing dirty laundry.

ELECTRONICS
Laptop, camera, smart phone, etc. Not required but great for keeping in touch with friends and family. FIMRC is not responsible for lost or damaged electronics.

SNACKS
Peanut butter, protein bars or any other special snack / treat you can’t easily get in Costa Rica! :)

SPANISH/ENGLISH DICTIONARY
Practice practice practice! A dictionary as well as a small journal are great for learning new Spanish vocabulary!

PASSPORT & LICENSE
Make sure your passport is valid for six months after your travel dates. You should also carry your driver’s license or other form of photo ID.

PHOTOCOPIES
Make photocopies of all travel documents and store them separately from the originals in case they are lost.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Please store all staff member contact information in your phone and print a hard copy to carry with you.

LOST LUGGAGE
It is useful to pack one change of clothes and essential toiletries in your carry-on in case of baggage delay. FIMRC is not responsible for lost or damaged luggage. You must report any loss or damage immediately at the time of the incident and obtain a written report from the local authority. If you have travel insurance, you will need to submit this report to your insurance provider.

If your luggage is lost or damaged by the airlines, a baggage claim form must be filed with the carrier before leaving the airport. In the case that your luggage is lost, our staff will wait for you while you file your claim.
ARRIVAL PROCESS

Below you will find step-by-step instructions designed to help you smoothly navigate arrival in San José. From customs and immigration to baggage claim - we’ve got you covered. Be sure to read through this information carefully and to print a copy of the staff contact information on page 2. **Should you encounter any issues during travel or while at the airport, please contact Rita Zuniga, the Homestay Coordinator.**

1. **Airport Arrival**
   
   Keep your seatbelt fastened until the plane has come to a complete stop and the captain has turned off the fasten seatbelt sign. Be sure to have your customs form filled out before leaving the plane and follow the masses to the immigration lines.
   
   **Friendly Tip:** Keep your passport handy on the plane so you can reference your passport number and expiration date!

2. **Immigration**
   
   Have your customs form ready to give the immigration officer. If asked where you will be going state that **you will be traveling as a tourist to the town of Santa Ana, province of San José, Costa Rica.** Proceed to baggage claim.

3. **Baggage Claim**
   
   Go to the baggage claim carousels. Once you locate your baggage, have your baggage claim stub ready for when you pass by the officers on your way to customs; it is important that you keep the baggage stub given to you when you check your luggage en route to Costa Rica. It is invaluable if your luggage is lost and you will need it to exit the airport. Call the Homestay Coordinator Rita if your luggage is lost.

4. **Customs**
   
   Place your baggage on the x-ray belt and proceed to the other side to recover the bag. If an officer calls you to the side to search your bag, do so and remain calm. Generally they are looking for contraband and if not found will let you go.

5. **Meet FIMRC’s Driver**
   
   Once you have completed the customs process, walk down the hallway and proceed to the left (towards the fast food area), our driver will be waiting for you. His name is Manuel Jiménez, Mariana is his daughter and Anthony is his son, they will have a FIMRC sign. After they meet you, they will drive you to your homestay in Santa Ana. Please wait for Manuel, Mariana or Anthony **in front of the public phones,** to get there, just turn right after you walk through the exit and you will see them. **Do not get into the car with anyone except for Manuel, Mariana or Anthony.**

6. **Arrive at Homestay**
   
   You will be driven directly to your homestay. The trip takes about 30 minutes. Your homestay family will take care of you. You will find a document with the most important information in your room. **Rita will meet you to give you an orientation the next morning after arrival** (Monday to Friday). If you have any further questions before the orientation, you can contact her through Whatsapp (+50688870125) or let your host family know that you need to speak with Rita.
When you join us here at Project Alajuelita, we believe that you will have the most fulfilling experience by living with a Costa Rican family. Staying in a homestay offers a hands-on experience that would otherwise be unobtainable by simply staying in a hotel. The families that we work with love hosting volunteers. It is a safe environment and will give you a true Pura Vida experience! Prior to travel, our Homestay Coordinator will be in touch with a homestay packet about your family. In the meantime, general details about what to expect at your homestay can be found below.

**LETTER FROM YOUR HOMESTAY COORDINATOR**

Dear Volunteer,

As the Homestay Coordinator, I am happy to welcome you to Project Alajuelita! FIMRC is very excited to have you in Costa Rica as a volunteer with us and our homestay families look forward to hosting you!

After arriving at the airport, you will be taken to your host family where you will stay for the duration of your volunteer trip in Costa Rica. If you will be traveling in a group, please note that all of the volunteers will stay with host families in close proximity to each other. We have made every effort to accommodate any housing or meal requests you have made. If you have any pet or food allergies or preferences that you have not already mentioned in your enrollment forms, please let us know as soon as possible.

Once you have settled into your new Costa Rican home, I will provide you a basic orientation to the Santa Ana and San José area: advice on safety, finding the internet cafés, the post office, banks, etc. All volunteers are required to submit a housing deposit of $20USD. This deposit will be returned to you at the end of your stay, unless there have been any damages or lost keys. Please note, alcohol consumption in the homestay and overnight guests are not permitted for any reason. Your orientation will include all FIMRC guidelines for living with your host family. If you are not pleased with your homestay, please let me know.

I will give you a contact card with details of where you are staying, the names of your hosts, their phone number and address. You will also be given a key to their house. It is your responsibility to keep this key safe. Should you lose the key, you will be expected to pay for its replacement as well as the lock change. Shortly after your arrival, we recommend that you and your family discuss living arrangements such as the use of the telephone, hours of arrival to the house, etc. We expect that you will be respectful of their wishes, especially with regard to your evening arrival times in the interest of security.

There is one golden rule which, if you can adhere to it, will ensure that you have the best time possible – “go with the flow.” Always remember that you are living in a different culture, experiencing new and hopefully exciting things. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak to me at any time during your stay in Costa Rica. I thank you in advance for your contribution to our community. Have a safe flight and a wonderful time in Costa Rica! Pura Vida!

- Rita Zuniga, Project Alajuelita Homestay Coordinator

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**MEALS & LAUNDRY**

**Meals**
The program fee that you paid covers your stay in the house for the duration of your trip, as well as three meals a day (a packed lunch will be provided for each clinic day). **If for some reason you cannot attend one of the planned meals, please be considerate of your family and notify them in ample time prior to the meal.** There is no adjustment in the homestay fee for missed meals.

**Laundry**
Laundry service is included in homestay, but if you arrive on your first day with laundry (for example, if you had been vacationing prior to starting our program), you will be charged extra for laundry service. **Laundry service is provided within reason: host families are not responsible for washing undergarments.**

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**HOMESTAY GIFTS**

Although gifts are completely optional, here are a few recommendations: chocolates or other candies, decorative kitchen utensils, photo frames, and mementos from your hometown or university. You could also purchase a small gift for your family while in Costa Rica after your volunteer week as a token of your appreciation for your stay.

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“**My homestay experience was great. Senora Jeanette took great care of me and my friends and provided everything we needed to have a great homestay experience. All the food was exceptionally fresh and she ensured that my food restrictions were met. I couldn’t have asked for a better homestay experience.**

- Erik, Global Health Volunteer, Clemson University
YOUR VOLUNTEER MISSION

First step accomplished: you made it! What is going to happen now? Every week here is different and plans change quickly so flexibility is key! Generally, you can expect to spend each morning assisting at our clinic stations while the afternoons are usually reserved for health education and community outreach activities. You can read more about these activities below, and a detailed itinerary will be reviewed with you during on site orientation.

MONDAY - FRIDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Get up, eat breakfast, and be ready to go to get picked up at 8AM by one of our local drivers. Upon arrival at the clinic, staff will give you an overview of the day and will review your morning clinic duties. After clinical consultations end for the morning, staff and volunteers will eat lunch together.</td>
<td>After lunch, clinical consultations may continue or we may head out into the community for health education activities. We typically finish around 4:00 each day so that you can enjoy the afternoon. You can use that time to take a zumba lesson, visit the local market, or explore Santa Ana.</td>
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Potential Activities
• Greet patients as they enter the waiting area
• Assist with intake before the patient’s consultation
• Observe the pediatrician or clinical psychologist
• Assist with pharmacy operations

Potential Activities
• Prepare and lead health education session at local soup kitchen
• Receive a lesson on local social conditions
• Work with patients on art therapy tasks
• Lead dance therapy session in clinic waiting area

CLINIC STATIONS

Reception Area
You will greet patients when they arrive, locate their charts (or create new ones for first-time patients), collect vital signs including height, weight, and temperature, and call the patients and their caregivers forward into the exam room when the doctor is ready. In addition, volunteers assigned to the reception area will help keep the children entertained while they wait by playing games, coloring, etc.

Exam Room
You will observe the doctor while she interviews the patient and caregiver, examines the patient, and diagnoses his/her condition. In some instances, the doctor will need to perform a medical procedure. You will be able to observe the doctor.

Pharmacy
When working in the pharmacy, you will prepare the appropriate medicine according to the doctor’s prescription. This will be done under the supervision of clinic staff. You will then write instructions for the patient and their caregiver regarding dosage, method, and frequency of medicine. You will deliver the medicine and verbally review the instructions with the patient and/or their caregiver in the reception area.

Medical Records
Effective management of patient information is crucial to the operation of our clinic. Volunteers assigned to this area will create a daily log of patients and enter patient information into the clinic’s electronic database. They will also help improve the quality and accuracy of our existing files so that we can more efficiently locate patient information.

Psychologist Office
You will have the opportunity to observe Tatiana, Project Alajuelita’s psychologist and licensed art therapist. She works with families in the Alajuelita area and will also translate all sessions and allow time to discuss the sessions and the psychological situation in Costa Rica.

Enrichment Center
Your experience is heavily shaped by the people you meet and the relationships you create. While the patients are waiting to see the doctor, we encourage you to play with the kids, read them a story, and/or organize a game. The interaction will not only enrich your experience, but also creates an environment of trust and comfort for the patients, which translates into patients returning to the clinic when additional services are required.
TRANSPORTATION

Your fees paid to FIMRC cover all transportation between the airport and lodging, as well as transportation to and from the clinic each day. If you require additional transportation for recreational activities, our team will be glad to help you coordinate this, however, this would be an additional cost. Each morning during the volunteer program, you will be picked up from your housing and brought to the clinic for the start of your volunteering day. For your return journey to the airport, we will notify you in advance of your pick-up time. We will ensure that you are given enough time for check-in. If you leave or return to the homestay after 8PM, you must be driven by Manuel, Mariana, or Anthony or take a FIMRC-approved taxi, even for short distances. Manuel, Mariana, and Anthony are pictured to the right.

COMMUNICATION

Wifi is available at all homestays as well as in numerous internet cafes. You can use this wifi connection to keep in touch with friends and family via email, Skype, WhatsApp, or other apps that operate via wifi without using cellular data. If you would like to purchase an international calling plan, you must contact your cell provider for coverage details. Additionally, each homestay has a volunteer cell phone that can be used to keep in touch with FIMRC staff. You may purchase calling cards for this phone for calls made to the US. Do not purchase a calling card prior to travel as it may not be compatible. Rita will assist you with the purchase of a calling card, if needed.

EXCURSIONS

Since volunteer activities coincide with the operating hours of our clinics, Monday through Friday are spent volunteering and Saturday and Sunday are spent learning about the local culture. Please see the Excursion Guide provided on the Pre-departure Information page for a look at some of the local excursion options. Excursions do not need to be booked in advance. Rita will assist you once you have arrived in Costa Rica.

PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Privacy and patient confidentiality are essential to FIMRC’s mission and continued operations. Information relating to patients and their treatment is confidential and must not be distributed or disclosed in any way. It is especially important for all volunteers to exercise caution when using the Internet or social media outlets, so as not to communicate any sensitive or confidential information or images.

DUOLINGO

Spanish is the primary language in Costa Rica. While English is spoken in many businesses and tourist destinations, it is not widely spoken in Alajuelita. We strongly encourage you to practice common Spanish phrases, greetings, and vocabulary that may be useful in the homestay and clinical setting. The more you are able to communicate the more you will gain from your experience. Many volunteers have found the free language learning app Duolingo helpful. We encourage you to download the app to begin practicing your Spanish.
It is imperative that you are as honest as possible in the medical history section of your volunteer profile. Indicating past or present illnesses does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering, rather it ensures we are able to accommodate any special needs you may have during your stay.

**TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY**

Upon arrival in Costa Rica, you will receive a thorough orientation that will include tips on staying safe and healthy during your volunteer experience. Below you will find a few tips to begin considering before your volunteer experience.

- Stay in good physical condition – eat well, sleep, relax, avoid lots of caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and sugar.
- Stay hydrated! Do not drink large amounts of alcohol or caffeinated beverages when you suspect yourself to be dehydrated. Filtered water is provided for you for the duration of your volunteer experience.
- If you take any kind of medicine on a regular basis, you should **bring with you a more-than-enough supply** to last you for the duration of your volunteer experience. You should have this medicine in its own “official” medicine bottle and pack it in your carry-on luggage. You must inform staff immediately if something should happen to your medication (such as losing it) so that all efforts can be made to remedy the situation.
- Find a comfortable way to share your feelings. Keeping your feelings inside will not make them go away. (You are strongly encouraged to talk to FIMRC staff if you’re experiencing difficulties.)
- Use the support system of the program (friends, fellow volunteers, FIMRC staff).
- Maintain a positive mental attitude and sense of humor.
- Practice stress-reduction habits (take time alone, write in your journal, read a book, listen to music, etc.).
- Know that anything you are feeling is okay. Being in a new setting can bring issues to the surface; this is normal.

**FIMRC STAFF SUPPORT**

If you are not feeling well - tell us! FIMRC staff are there to assist with issues that affect your health, safety, and well-being during the course of your volunteer experience. Please keep FIMRC staff informed of any situations.

**MEDICAL HISTORY**

It is imperative that you are as honest as possible in the medical history section of your volunteer profile. Indicating past or present illnesses does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering, rather it ensures we are able to accommodate any special needs you may have during your stay.

**MEDICAL CARE**

In the event of a medical emergency, you will be taken to CIMA Hospital in San José. This hospital is affiliated with Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, Texas and provides a standard of care comparable to that of a hospital in the US. More information is available at www.hospitalcima.com.
FAQs

Below, we’ve prepared a list of common questions that we receive to help you further prepare for your volunteer experience in Costa Rica. After reading the FAQs, if you still have questions, send us an email at missions@fimrc.org. We are always happy to help!

What if I miss my flight or am delayed during travel?

Please contact the Homestay Coordinator, Rita, immediately. Please have Rita’s contact information on hand. She can easily be reached via WhatsApp.

Will I have a toilet and shower?

You will! Every homestay has showers and toilets. The showers are all cold, but most everyone prefers a cold shower here anyway since it is always so hot. The toilets are the same as they are in the US, but you cannot throw toilet paper in it.

Can I drink the tap water?

No. Volunteers should not drink any tap water in Costa Rica. We recommend bringing a water bottle to fill up with purified water that is provided at the clinic, as well as your home-stay. Also, bottled water is inexpensive and easily accessible.

Will there be other volunteers in Costa Rica at the same time as me?

If you are traveling independently, there is a great chance that there will be other volunteers on-site. If you would like to connect with other volunteers prior to travel, simply email missions@fimrc.org. If there are other volunteers enrolled for your same dates, we are happy to place you in touch!

Do you have any advice for first time travelers?

The most important thing for you to bring to your trip to Costa Rica is a sense of flexibility. It is important to remember that you are entering a culture not bound by tight schedules. We hope that you will embrace this opportunity to immerse yourself in a lifestyle that is unlike your own and truly experience Costa Rica.

Will I have internet access?

Wifi is available in all homestays. There are also numerous internet cafes in the local area.

What about the weekend?

Since volunteer activities coincide with the operating hours of our clinics, Monday through Friday are spent volunteering and Saturday and Sunday are spent learning about the local culture or traveling on excursions. Excursions and associated transport costs are not included in your program fee; however, Rita is always happy to help you arrange excursions once on-site!

Am I required to wear scrubs in the clinic?

Volunteers are not required to wear medical scrubs in the clinic, though you certainly can if you wish! Day to day attire on-site is casual so pants and t-shirts are acceptable.
You’ve traveled to Project Alajuelita and seen our work first hand, now what? Whether you are looking to join a university chapter, interested in donating towards on-site projects, or simply want to keep in touch, there are many ways to stay involved with FIMRC after your volunteer experience. A few of our alumni resources are below.

**ALUMNI PROGRAM**

All volunteers are invited to join over 4,000 volunteers in the FIMRC Alumni Program! In 2015, we began our Alumni Program to connect past volunteers with one another and with staff at our project sites in the hope that you will continue to promote our mission in your own community. By joining the Alumni Program, you will gain access to exclusive updates, travel discounts, and more! Visit [www.fimrc.org/alumni](http://www.fimrc.org/alumni) for more information.

**CHAPTERSHIP PROGRAM**

A chapter is made up of individuals committed to serving as FIMRC’s voice in their community. FIMRC chapters play a number of vital roles including raising funds for special medical projects, coordinating volunteer groups to travel to our clinic sites, and providing service in their own communities. If you want to know if your university or community has a FIMRC chapter or if you’re interested in starting one, e-mail [chaptership@fimrc.org](mailto:chaptership@fimrc.org).

**ADOPT-A-PROJECT**

Our Adopt-a-Project program is a way for volunteers to stay connected to our project sites through fundraising for special on-site initiatives! Click below to access this year’s current projects and to see how you can continue to contribute to the success of Project Alajuelita!

**CONNECT WITH US!**

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Have a wonderful trip!

Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children
www.fimrc.org
1518 Walnut Street
Suite 1504
Philadelphia, PA 19102
888.211.8575 ext. 1