



Welcome to *comunidad Corazón*. Here is some information to help you enjoy your day in Mexico to the fullest.

Corazón's Mission

Building community by strengthening families by enabling service, promoting self-sufficiency and inspiring mutually beneficial relationships across borders

The Corazón mission is simple - Create a self-sustaining community in Mexico by empowering the people to help themselves and each other. We accomplish this through a holistic program focusing on individuals, families and the community they live in through work programs, education, job training and community activities. For volunteers on both sides of the border, Corazón offers the opportunity to roll up your sleeves, get a little dirty and make a tangible difference that day. Even more gratifying, you and your family and your friends get to share the remarkable experience of service to others. There are 5 program areas in *comunidad Corazón*: adult, youth, academics, construction and sustained development.

Your Group:

- **Size:** If you are doing a house build, your group should consist of 35 - 45 volunteers and 20 – 25 for additions. If you exceed these quantities safety becomes a concern and not everyone will have an opportunity to enjoy the full experience. We can arrange other projects (sports, arts and crafts or other construction projects) for larger groups for a nominal fee.
- **Young Children:** For safety reasons, we ask that children 12 and above participate in the construction projects. If you have younger children, we can arrange for other projects. Speak with your trip coordinator.

Preparation for the Build:

- **Mexican auto insurance:** Check with your insurance carrier, some offer coverage in Mexico. You can also obtain insurance online, BEFORE the build at <http://www.Bajabound.com> or at 888.552.2252. They offer competitive rates, convenience, and they support *Corazón's* community center fund.
- **Safety:** Only experienced people should use the power tools. Check with your lead builder before using any. The Lead Builder will give a safety talk in the morning before beginning.
- **Supplies:** Bring sunscreen, hat, gloves, snacks, and plenty of water. Other suggested supplies: canopy, trash bags, handy wipes, hand sanitizer, lip balm, and change of clothes and shoes. Dress comfortably and appropriately. Wear closed-toed shoes. Do not bring anything you can't afford to lose.
- **Equipment: Bring a hammer, tape measure, nail apron, paintbrush, paint roller, pencil and gloves. The only power tool we use is a Skilsaw and that will be provided.**
- **Carpool:** Please carpool. Because traffic in Mexico is challenging, it is imperative to keep the cars to a minimum so that the caravan is manageable and no one gets lost.
- **Donations for family:** Donations may include canned food, bottled water, kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies, hygiene supplies, furniture, dishes, & pots. Donations should not exceed what will fit in a 32-gallon trashcan plus one larger item (furniture or dishes). Curtains can also be made There are 3 3'x3'and 2 2'x2' windows in the house.
- **Other Gifts, Handouts:** Please DO NOT give out any items. We ask that you respect the *Corazón* philosophy: 'Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.' If you hand out items, even as small as candy, you will be taking away from what *Corazón* is trying to teach, and you will be causing problems of inequity in the communities. If you bring donations, please give them to your Trip Coordinator. They will be placed in our donation warehouse and participants can exchange their hours worked for the items you brought.

Legal Documentation:

U.S. citizens entering the United States at sea or land ports of entry are required to have documents that comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), most commonly a U.S. passport, a passport card, a trusted traveler card such as NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST, or an enhanced driver's license.

Exceptions:

Children: Beginning June 1, 2009, U.S. and Canadian citizen children under age 16 arriving by land or sea from contiguous territory may also present an original or copy of his or her birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Canadian Citizenship Card.

Groups of Children: Beginning June 1, 2009, U.S. and Canadian citizen children under age 19 arriving by land or sea from contiguous territory and traveling with a school group, religious group, social or cultural organization, or sports team, may also present an original or copy of his or her birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Canadian Citizenship Card.

Project Day

- **Meet at 6:00 AM:** The group will meet at Terra Nova parking lot off the H Street East exit (360 E. H Street, Chula Vista). Take the 805 South to the H Street East exit. The parking lot is on the right. We will gather, have a brief meeting, and leave shortly thereafter. It is important to be on time because we will not hold up the caravan.
- **Going Down the Night Before:** The Ramada Inn (619.425.9999) and the La Quinta Inn (619.691.1211) offer a discount for *Corazóners*.
- **The Caravan: Drivers must meet with a Corazón representative at 6:10 in front of Von's.** The Corazón representative will review a map and the caravan procedures. Be sure to attend!! Please carpool.
- **Crossing into Mexico:** You will receive a green or red light at the Mexican border. If you receive a green light, bare left and proceed. If you receive a red light, bare right to secondary inspection. We will ensure that all cars have cleared secondary before continuing. At the San Ysidro border ONLY, we will be following signs to a right exit for Rosarito/Ensenada. If going to Tecate, you will need approximately \$8 for the toll road. You may also be directed to the left which is a military check point. They will ask you to exit your car. Don't panic. It is common procedure and much like random inspection at the airport. When complete you will rejoin the caravan.
- **Starting May 3rd, 2008,** Tijuana police will start to issue tickets to Mexican and foreign vehicles traveling within city limits with tinted windows. The local law calls for an invitation to remove the tinting in-situ. If the owner/driver denies to do this, the vehicle will be impounded, and the driver taken before a local judge for payment of a) the towing, b) the impound, and c) the penalty. These three combined can add up to \$150 USD. Only factory tinted windows will be allowed.

Lunch

- **Lunch:** Is provided. We ask the groups for a \$50 donation to cover the costs.

At the Site

- You are on a construction site in Mexico. The terrain is uneven and at times dangerous. Please use caution. Alcohol is not allowed before, during or after the project.
- **Special Skills:** If you have expertise in any field that might be relevant, please let us know early in the day.
- **Stick to the Plan:** *Corazón* houses are built in nearly identical fashion, every time. We have refined our design to be safely do-able in one day by a group of volunteers, many of whom have never built before. We ask everyone to recognize that for safety, consistency, and to make it workable for all volunteers that will be there, we need to do our building the *Corazón* way.
- **When it looks "Almost Done":** By lunch, the walls and roof frame are likely to be up, and the house may tend to look "almost done." It isn't. It's about half done, which means there's still a lot to do.
- **The Finale:** When the house is done, we have a closing ceremony, where we present the keys to the new owner. It's a "must see."

The Trip Home

- **The Caravan:** Your trip coordinator will review a map at lunch time.
- **Crossing the Border:** The U. S. Department of Homeland Security officers at the border will want to see your documents (see page 1), and may ask questions about your citizenship, the purpose of your trip, and what you are bringing back with you.

The Big Picture

- **Events Related to Your Build:** There is a lot of work that goes into preparing for your build, on both sides of the border. As part of your commitment, you are required to load the truck on the Wednesday evening before the build. We are a 99% volunteer organization and need your support to make the project work and keep costs down.
- **Support:** You are also asked to provide continuing support of *Corazón* in the form of a family sponsorship, scholarships, donation drives and/or general support for the *Corazón* program.

After-Thoughts:

- **The Bottom Line:** You have just spent a day doing something that will make a tremendous difference in one family's quality of life. But you will realize the wonderful irony of service is that we receive much more than we give. We hope you have also had a thoroughly enjoyable time which you will never forget.
- **Come Again:** You do not have to be part of a sponsoring group to volunteer. Our web site at <http://www.corazon.org> has a calendar that lists all of our activities. If you're coming with more than a couple of friends, please call the office first, at 949.830.7494, so we can ensure that there is enough for everyone to do.
- **Carry it further:** If you like us, volunteer! Construction projects are just one part of our program. The *Corazón* program is a comprehensive community development program. Our web site at <http://www.corazon.org> offers information on all of our programs, and how you can become involved, whether in Mexico or the U.S.