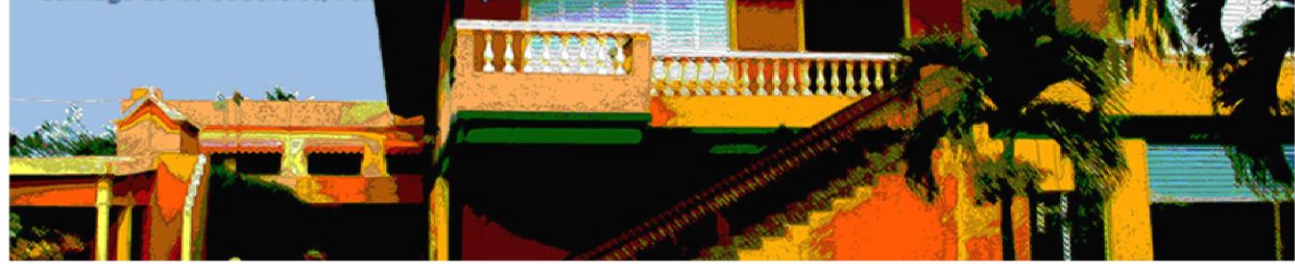


LA CASA GRANDE

Centro de Misiones Internacional
Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic



“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15 NKJV

Trena and Tim Johnson

Trena’s Cell: 1-829-881-7710

E-mail: johnsonfamilydr@yahoo.com

Tim’s Cell: 1-829-718-6266

DR Home Phone: 1-809-736-7722

Website: <http://www.casagrandedr.org>

Facebook: La Casa Grande CGCMI

Thanks for Asking!

We’re excited you’re considering a trip to the DR and La Casa Grande. Short-term trips are as beneficial for those who come as for those who receive the ministry, and God is using short-term missions to do amazing things in the world. We are privileged to join with teams from all over the world in obeying Jesus’ command to preach the gospel to every creature!

About La Casa Grande

We are Tim & Trena Johnson, and our family has been in full-time missions since December of 1986. We have three sons: Rodney (25, married to Anna, in the USA), Neal (22, with Hillsong in Australia), and Darren (19, working here in the DR).



We moved to the DR in November of 1995 from Guatemala, and the Lord led the way, giving us exactly what He promised: a big house, which is our base for community ministry events as well as housing short-term teams from other places.

Our main ministry emphasis is evangelism. We work with all Bible-believing local churches, helping them reach out to their communities through park and street evangelism; ministry in jails, churches, and schools; pastors’ training and seminars; kids’ Bible club; and humanitarian aid. In all of these places, we distribute tracts, utilize gospel film/DVD ministry, and catch attention with impactful dramas, puppets, music, testimonies, and preaching. We emphasize reaching the lost with the good news of Jesus and being instruments that God can use in His work.

So What Does a Short-term Trip to La Casa Grande Look Like?

We're glad you asked! The following sections should give you an idea of what you can expect, as well as some helpful packing information. Also make sure you check out our Outreach Preparation handout, which will help you know how to get ready!

A video a visiting team made can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNHYKMK635M>

Staying at La Casa Grande

Part of our ministry is receiving missions groups. We're not a resort, but we do want people to enjoy their time here even amidst the busy ministry opportunities. We recommend a stay of 7 to 14 days, 10 days being a common choice, depending on the participants' ages.

When groups come, they stay right here on the mission base's first floor; our personal home is on the second floor. We have several dorms that sleep 8 to 12 people each, and a few private rooms for couples or families with small children. Rooms can be rearranged to meet the needs of the group. We host many family groups, youth groups, and men's groups. We do not have a minimum group size, but we are able to house and transport up to about 40 people.

We have men's and women's restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers. Our electricity is 110V and the same plugs as the USA, although the electricity often goes out.

Meals are served "family buffet style" for breakfast, dinner, and supper. Please let us know in advance if anyone on your team has any medical dietary restrictions. We do ask team members to help with dishes and meal cleanup.

We also have a swimming pool (open only at specific times, with separate swim times for guys and girls). We have a big backyard, with volleyball on the grass, a full basketball court, and a thatched-roofed gazebo for relaxation and fellowship.

One small washing machine is available, though we do ask that you only wash what's necessary, like team T-shirts or costumes for dramas. Please bring your own laundry soap. We don't have a dryer, but line-dried smells better anyway, right? ☺

Wi-Fi is available if you bring your own computer or other device. You can purchase phone calling cards, use our landline for \$.20/minute (international), or you can download Skype on your device to call home for free! For parents' peace of mind, you may wish to set up a phone chain or Facebook group so each family can stay in touch with ministry and prayer requests from the team.

Do You Need to Know Spanish?

Well, the DR is a Spanish-speaking country, so if you do, or just want to brush up on your travel-guide vocabulary, great! But we are available and willing to interpret for you, something we count on doing for most of our teams.

Ministry with La Casa Grande

We are not a big organization, but our hearts' desire is to give those who are with us an opportunity to experience life and ministry here just like we do. During your stay, we'll plan to visit at least one Spanish church and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ here.

As you're getting ready to come, work with your group to build unity and to be ready to share the love of Jesus with the people of the Dominican. Prepare testimonies to share in our evangelistic outreaches (check out the Outreach Prep handout). Also look at the individual talents of your group members. Music, drama, puppets, and any other forms of sharing the gospel are effective. Do you dance? Do you juggle? Do you play sports? We can use it!

We have a sound system (microphones, music hookups, etc.) we take with us and set up at all outreaches, so everyone can hear! As far as music for dramas goes, we are able to play from digital sources (not CDs, sorry).

This is a great opportunity for you to focus on God's purposes in the nations, developing yourself personally and getting ready spiritually. In our experience, the more you put into a short-term trip, the more you have to offer, and the more you take home with you when it's over.

Our daily schedule changes, often at the last minute, depending on the number of outreaches we do. It could go something like this:

| | |
|---|---|
| 7:15 a.m. | Rise, get ready, and personal devotions |
| 8:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:30 a.m. | Group devotions and getting focused for the day's outreaches |
| 9:15 a.m. | Clean up the kitchen, dorms, and dining area |
| 10:00 a.m. | Personal devotions and practice time for skits, dramas, songs Work project on the mission base or a morning outreach |
| 11:00 a.m. | Meal prep help in kitchen |
| 12:30 p.m. | Dinner (our main meal of the day) |
| 1:15 p.m. | Clean up |
| 2:00 p.m. | Afternoon ministry outreach or girls' swimming |
| 3:00 p.m. | Afternoon ministry outreach or guys' swimming |
| 5:30 p.m. | Supper |
| 6:00 p.m. | Get ready for evening outreach |
| 6:30 p.m. | Leave for evening outreach |
| After outreach: time of group sharing, prayer and testimonies of the day. | |
| 11:00 p.m. | Lights out (depending on schedule) |

When we have teams, one day a week at 10:00 a.m. 150-400 neighborhood kids walk to La Casa Grande for Kids Club. It would be great if your group could prepare something for them. Most have accepted Jesus as their Savior and are growing in their faith, but come from homes where their parents are either non-Christians or new believers.

Travel to the Dominican

Passport: Each adult and child needs a valid, current passport. If you don't have one or need to renew yours, start here: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Flights: Book your flight into Santiago, Dominican Republic (STI). Not Santiago, Chile! Do not book a flight into Santo Domingo without permission from us; Santo Domingo is far away and flights there will incur additional transportation costs.

Age Limit: La Casa Grande does not have a minimum age limit, but the airlines and the DR government require written, notarized permission for minors to travel abroad without their parents. The US Embassy recommends this on their website.

Immigration Form: On the plane to the DR, flight attendants will usually hand out an immigration form which must be completed before you go through customs. (If traveling from a country other than USA, please check with a travel agent or your own national regulations.)

On the line where it asks where you will be staying, put:

La Casa Grande, Calle 20 Casa #11 Gurabo, Santiago, Dominican Republic.

The purpose of the trip is "tourist" or "pleasure"

The flight info they request will be your last flight leaving the States. Your port of arrival will be STI if you are coming into the Santiago airport.

See also: <http://dr1.com/travel/prepare/documentation.shtml>

Tourist Card: If you're traveling on a USA or Canadian passport, you will need to get a tourist card, which costs \$10 USD. You will be directed to a line to purchase this before going through customs in the DR airport. There is typically no physical card; it's more a fee you pay on entry.

Departure Tax: The DR charges a \$20 USD departure tax. Currently the tax is being added into the ticket purchase price, so that fee is paid in advance with your tickets. The government charges are subject to change.

Other Resources: There are a couple of DR info websites that may be of interest to you:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

http://travel.state.gov/tips_caribbean.html

Vaccinations and Malaria Tablets

We personally do not take any additional shots other than those recommended by general immunization. You may check with your local health department to see if there would be any other recommendations for shots. Concerning malaria tablets, we neither take them nor do we generally recommend them to teams coming. Cases of malaria are uncommon here. There may be some risk, but taking the tablets presents an almost equal risk, as with any other strong medication. Do as you feel comfortable.

Two common, though now infrequent, mosquito-borne illnesses are chikungunya and dengue fever. However, there are no preventative medications at this time. Your best defense against these trip-wreckers is to arm yourself with bug spray that is a minimum of 30% DEET and spray regularly, since the insects are day-biters. Alternative sprays are typically not as effective against mosquitos that carry these diseases. So far we've never had a team member who followed these guidelines come down with any of these.

Health Insurance

If you or your team members do not have foreign health coverage, here is the website of a Christian company that offers group and individual health and medical evacuation insurance (both are highly recommended) for short- or long-term trips at reasonable prices. They are called Good Neighbor Insurance.

Check them for a quote: <http://www.gninsurance.com/short-term-team/>

Emergency Information

You may give our phone numbers to family so that they can call in case of emergency.

Calculating the Cost

- Ministry expenses: \$40/person per day. This includes a room and 3 meals a day, as well as ground transportation to and from the airport and to all ministry outreaches.
- Tourist Visa: \$10
- Round-trip Airfare: Averages \$550-\$800. This includes the Dominican exit tax. We're happy to offer tips and tricks about our flight-search methods.
- If you're a group leader, you may want to factor in a little extra for incidentals or extra group meals before or after you're on base with us, or even to sow into a ministry here in the country.

La Casa Grande Dress Code

Though "mission trip" often conjures images of less-than-stylish apparel, we might say that a better guideline is to choose clothing that glorifies God, does not cause offense or temptation, and is honoring to the culture in which we are ministering.

About honoring the culture: Dominicans in general are very conscientious about what they wear, trying hard to look their best despite what they have or don't have, as a way of showing respect to those around them. Ladies in church usually dress business casual or nicer (stylish dresses, or pencil skirts and nice blouses, and high heels or dressy sandals), and men typically go in button-down shirts and Docker-style pants, almost never wearing shorts in public. We need to be mindful and respectful of both cultural differences and anyone to whom we are presenting an image of Christ. So we'd encourage group members to dress well, remembering that we represent not just ourselves, but our ministry and God's love, too.

That said, aside from church times, the Casa Grande dress code is pretty casual.

- At the base, long/Bermuda style shorts (or capris) are acceptable for both men and women, as well as T-shirts or sleeveless shirts (no spaghetti straps, tight fits, or bared midriffs, please—seriously, guys, that goes for you too!). Just keep modesty in mind!
 - Ladies, skirts are great, and sometimes the coolest clothing option. Just no miniskirts or tightfitting shorts, *por favor*. Knee-length is a good skirt guideline.
 - Men, shirts are required at all times, except when swimming.
 - Light cotton clothes are usually coolest.

- Footwear
 - Ladies, sandals are appropriate anytime.
 - Guys, sandals are great unless we are going into the prison or government buildings—then enclosed shoes are required.
 - Rubber flip flops are useful for showering and beach days, but not really appropriate for church ministry times.
 - We highly recommend bringing comfortable walking shoes.
- Ministry times, when the dress code changes:
 - Ladies, we usually ask that you wear modest skirts or dresses for ministry in church settings, though capris or long pants/jeans are permitted for outdoor services. No shorts for ministry sessions!
 - Guys, for ministry times you should wear long pants, and no tank tops or sleeveless shirts. Yes, you read it right—no shorts! In churches, dress pants are usually most appropriate. Jeans are often okay if they are neat and clean, but you may find them too hot.
 - Note: boys under 12 years old may wear longer shorts.
- Swimsuits
 - Ladies: Please be as modest as possible with your swimwear. Wear shorts over high-cut leg openings, no two-piece suits.
 - Gentlemen: Please wear modest, loose-fitting, longer-style swim trunks (leave the Speedo at home, please).
 - Girls and guys will have separate swim sessions at the mission base.
- Please avoid clothes that promote questionable or illegal activities such as alcohol, smoking, and drugs; also avoid clothes with suggestive messages or graphics on them.
- Jewelry
 - Please be conservative when you select jewelry to bring along. Wearing a lot of expensive jewelry can cause division and distraction in ministry settings or draw too much attention on the streets.
 - Body piercings other than earrings (for women only) are not acceptable in most ministry settings. We suggest that you leave them home or be prepared to take them out.

Packing for a Missions Trip to the Dominican Republic

We recommend bringing the maximum number of suitcases permitted by your airline. This does two things—it allows extra space for souvenir purchases, and also provides some room in case we need you to bring anything with you when you come. **Please contact us prior to the trip to find out if we need you to transport some items.**

Don't forget to pack your carryon with a change of clothes and other essentials, in case your baggage gets delayed! Check the TSA regulations regarding how to use smart packing of your electronics and liquids to avoid security hassles at the airport: <http://www.tsa.gov/>. Our list is NOT exhaustive, and some items may not apply to you—add or subtract as you need.

For travel:

- Passport
- Boarding passes
- Money belt
- \$10 USD for tourist visa

For ministry:

- Bible/sermon notes
- Journal/notebook/paper/pens
- Supplies/props for dramas, puppet skits, singing
- Music for outreach singing/dramas/dances. It's best to have it on an MP3 device such as an iPad, iPod, iPhone, cell phone, flash drive (our sound system does not allow for CDs). You may want a backup copy in case of technical problems with one device.
- Music/instruments
- Small gifts/toys for kids in outreaches. (You'll meet hundreds of kids—things like yarn bracelets, stickers, and balloons are often great—see the Outreach Prep handout)

For hygiene:

- Toiletries (pack in Ziploc bag as per TSA regulations. Also prevents spillage)
- Razor, shaving cream
- Toothbrush/paste/floss
- Soap, shampoo/conditioner
- Comb/brush
- Facial cleanser/scrub
- Tissues, Q-tips, nail clippers, scissors (pack according to TSA)
- Hand sanitizer or antibacterial towelette packs
- Contact lens solution, case, glasses case
- Deodorant

Clothing:

Men

- Necktie/suit jacket (very optional)
- Handkerchiefs

Ladies

- 3-5 dresses/skirts, often required
- Cosmetics (conservative)
- Sanitary needs
- Hair fixers (hairspray recommended with this humidity!)
- Slip(s)/Nylons (if appropriate; nylons very optional)

General

- 4-6 pairs of slacks, jeans, capris, etc.
- 6-8 shirts/blouses (possibly 1 with long sleeves for bug/sun protection)
- 1 set of older work clothes (more if you are on a work team)
- Long shorts (leisure time only)
- Pajamas, robe (lightweight and modest)
- Underclothes and socks
- Sweater or jacket (lightweight)
- Shoes and sandals (comfortable)
- Flip flops for showering
- Belt(s)
- Umbrella/raincoat or poncho
- Hat for the sun and heat, sunglasses
- Swimwear and beach towel

For personal use:

- Non-electric alarm clock (electricity frequently goes out)
- Ear plugs (for travel as well as LOUD Dominican churches ☺)
- Computer/Wi-Fi-capable device (at your own risk); chargers
- Dirty clothes bag (pillow case)
- Water bottle (sports type; must be empty before going through airport security)
- Flashlight with extra batteries—the electricity goes out frequently
- English/Spanish dictionary
- Insect repellent/bite ointment
- Sunscreen (very important this close to the equator), sunburn treatment
- Laundry soap
- Cheap watch (maybe to give away when you leave)
- Photos of your family (to show to your new friends)
- First aid kit
- Personal medicines (vitamins/allergy tabs/aspirin/caladryl/epi-pen/anti-diarrheal)
- Personal snacks like: gum, candy, dry fruit, granola bars, crackers, peanut butter
- Spending money (for souvenirs, gifts, ice cream, Coke). Money can be cash or blank personal check, but NO traveler's checks. We can convert cash to DR pesos here at our local money changer where the rates are better.
- Email addresses of friends/relatives/supporters,
- Camera/batteries/accessories/charger
- Larger groups may need to bring some sheets and towels.

Please Don't Bring

- Expensive electronic devices, such as PSP, DVD players, etc. We have a sound system to use for outreaches, so don't worry about bringing anything like that.
- Clothes with messages or graphics promoting questionable or illegal activities
- Weapons, including knives, guns, mace, spears, ball and chains, bow and arrows, rocket-propelled explosives, mines, nunchucks, booby traps, etc.
- Illegal or questionable substances, including drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- Voltage convertors or any special plug adaptors. The electric here is 110V, and we have plugs just like in the States.

If you have further questions or there is any way we can be of service to you, let us know!

You remain in our prayers as you make plans and preparations for your outreaches. What a privilege to be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission!

Blessings in Jesus,
Tim and Trena Johnson

Mail carrier address (delivered to us weekly):

Tim & Trena Johnson
Agape Flights SGO 12330
100 Airport Ave E
Venice, FL 34285-3901 USA

Address for donations:

Tim & Trena Johnson #125
C/O In His Service
P.O. Box 14154
Tulsa, OK 74159 USA

Please make checks payable to "In His Service" and put "Acct #125" in the memo. Please do not write our names anywhere on your check.

**"For our light and momentary troubles
are achieving for us an eternal glory that
far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes
not on what is seen, but on what is
unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but
what is unseen is eternal.
2 Cor. 4:17, 18**