

Mission Trip Support Raising at Friendship Church

Introduction

We are so glad you are joining the adventure of a mission trip with Friendship Church! We will be praying for you as you prepare and as you raise financial support. It is important that you understand all of the information in this packet, so please read through it carefully and thoughtfully. If you are a student, we expect your parent to read through this document as well.

Early in your training, you will be given all the instructions and help you need to be successful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your trip leaders. Do not wait to ask questions.

Support Raising Policy at Friendship Church

The information below is based on *Mission Trip Support, Fund Raising Policy #042111.1.*

All support for a mission trip is administered at the sole discretion of the Missions Committee and is non-refundable. All donations are considered tax deductible and donors will receive a receipt at the end of the year.

Each individual participant is solely responsible to raise all funds necessary in support of their participation on a mission trip. This may be done by writing support letters asking others to participate in funding your trip or by paying for the trip yourself. We believe this is the beginning of the development of reliance on God's provision for the trip. It is never too soon to start praying, so please stop reading and take a moment to pray about this now.

Your trip leader will provide you with a schedule of support-raising milestones leading up to the trip. It is important that you meet these milestones. A minimum threshold amount must be turned in within a reasonable amount of time in advance to cover transportation costs. NOTE: these dates and amounts are subject to change depending on airfare availability. Please ask your trip leader for details.

Trip Funds Shortages

In the event that an individual is unsuccessful in raising a portion of his/her own personal support, the remaining unfunded portion will be placed on a credit card 14 days after RETURNING from their trip. Credit card information for the person participating or their parent/guardian must be provided to the team leader at the time of initial application for the mission trip. All credit card information will be kept secure in the locked accounting office at the Prior Lake Campus of Friendship Church for the duration of training and will be shredded one year after the end of the mission trip.

Trip Fund Surpluses

In the event that surplus funds remain after the completion of a mission trip, due to any number of factors (i.e., reduced expenses such as transportation or lodging, etc.), additional funds will be applied in a set order of priority (noted in detail in the Support Fund Raising policy). The final disposition of excess funds is at the discretion of the Missions Committee. However, the recommendations and/or sentiments of the returning Short-Term Missions Team shall weigh heavily and be given serious consideration in the final decision of the Committee.

Support letters must be prepared in such a way as to explicitly convey the provisions above to potential supporters/donors as they consider contributing to the highlighted mission trip.

Instruction for writing and distributing a support letter follows.

Writing a Support Letter

This is a support letter "how to." Please pray your way through this process! People often underestimate the amount of thought and planning that goes into this stage of the trip. The steps laid out below are intended to answer the most frequently asked questions and give you a guide to the process. If along the way you have more questions, please ask your trip leader. A sample letter will be provided.

Step 1: Brainstorm

- Brainstorm your list of people to whom you can send a letter. Include family, friends, coworkers, sports teams, family friends, and the lady in line at the grocery store!
- No more than 50% of your list may be Friendship Church families.
- Gather addresses.

Step 2: Compose Your Letter

There are five parts to a support letter. They are:

1. Greeting and Introduction
This is where you get to briefly catch people up on your recent life and introduce the opportunity you have to go on a mission trip. (3-5 sentences)
2. Trip Summary
This should be about a third of your letter. It includes the country you are going to, trip dates, mission organizations you are working with and the basic itinerary. Get people excited about what you are doing! Be contagious with your enthusiasm! (5-10 sentences)
3. Request Prayer Support
Believe it or not, this is the most vital support you will be asking for! Nothing happens without God working, and we must ask Him to work. Ask supporters to indicate on the response card if they are willing to commit to this. (2-4 sentences)
4. Request Financial Support
Don't be ashamed to ask for help! Let them know what your total cost is, what it is used for (travel, project and housing costs) and how they can donate. Ask them to fill in the response card as well. CRITICAL INFORMATION TO INCLUDE:
 - Checks must be made out to Friendship Church
 - All donations are tax deductible
 - All missions finances will be distributed at the discretion of the Friendship Church Missions Committee
 - A donation receipt will be mailed out at the end of the year.
 - Responses are to be returned to YOU (NOT the church!)
 - Give them a deadline date at least 3-4 weeks before you leave
5. Thank You and Closing
This is where you thank them for considering your request and let them know that if they have questions, they can ask you! Include your contact information.

NOTE: Your letter does not have to be in "letter" format. Make a brochure and keep it simple or make a half page postcard instead. Get creative! Make it personal.

Step 3: Proof Your Letter

Read and proof it yourself, then have your team leader read it to make sure it is accurate. DO NOT send your letter without approval from your team leader!

Step 4: Send It Out!

Include one of the provided response cards and pray that God would bless those whom you are sending it to and to provide what you need.

Support Raising FAQ

How many letters should I send?

Typically, of the total number of letters you write, 50% of the recipients will send some kind of support back. Sometimes, it just gets shuffled in with the rest of their mail and a SHORT reminder by email, phone or Facebook will trigger their memory. Personal contact (in person or by phone) typically gets a better response. A good rule of thumb is divide your total amount to be raised by 25 and use that number as the minimum number of letters to send. If you are raising \$1500 send a minimum of 60 letters. If \$2500 send 100. Be prepared to send Thank You notes to anyone supporting you both when you receive support and to update them about your trip when you return. The cost for envelopes, paper and postage will be your responsibility.

Who should I send letters to?

PRAY and ask God to reveal the people you should send a letter to. Include family, personal friends, sports buddies, friends of the family, the lady in line behind you, your doctor, dentist, eye doctor, etc. In fact, carry a few letters with you just in case you come across someone new you would like to give one to! Avoid omitting someone from your list because you don't think they will be able to support you financially. The prayer support they may offer is even more important. You will NEVER know what a person will choose to give unless you ask.

We STRONGLY request that only 50% of the people you send a letter to be Friendship Church attendees. Please be sensitive to the fact that most of the other adults/students that will be going on various missions trips this year will also at some point send a letter to people that attend Friendship Church. Consider carefully your relationship to church attendees and prayerfully send a letter to those you wish to receive one.

Who should my supporters make their check out to?

Checks should be written out to "Friendship Church."

What if a check comes in and it is made out to me?

Call the supporter before turning the funds in and explain that there will not be a tax deduction offered if the check is written out to you.

If they are OK with this:

Endorse the back of the check with "Pay to the Order of Friendship Church" and sign it.

If they want the tax deduction:

Ask that a second check be written that is payable to Friendship Church and destroy the first check.

What if my name, the trip title or the word "missions" is in the memo line?

It is ok. This happens sometimes. If it does, it is still tax deductible.

Where should responses be returned to?

All responses should be mailed directly to you. Please do not have funds mailed to or dropped off at the church. Also, if a supporter asks, the ONLY supported way of returning their gift is through YOU first. Please do not put donations in the offering plate, on anyone's desk at Friendship Church, at the Welcome Center, in the drop box at Shakopee, etc. It all must go to YOU.

What do I do with the money when I get it in the mail?

You will fill in the required information on your Personal Support Tracking sheet found in your packet as well as on your Deposit Ticket included in each Deposit Envelope. Then put the money in the envelope provided for your next meeting and turn the envelope in to the Financial Tracker for your team.

Can a person get a refund?

Once Friendship Church receives the check in any way, the money is not refundable.

How does the church know that it is money for my trip?

Your deposit envelope will have all the necessary information on it to get it into the correct account.

How do I know how much money I have raised?

You will receive a Personal Support Tracking worksheet at your first team meeting. Every dollar of support received should be written on this sheet by you. This is the best way to keep track of how much money you have personally raised. If you lose track please talk to your trip Financial Tracker. They can retrieve the information if absolutely necessary.

What will the money be used for?

Each mission trip comes with its own cost structure based on the location, needs and in-country costs that will be incurred. Most of the money will go towards airline tickets, reimbursement to the mission organization that you will be working with, and to cover transportation, specific projects you are involved in and daily care while you are on location. We do our best to get the fairest prices possible. However, we don't always know what the total end cost will be, so we ask for your grace if or when the price for your trip changes.

Can I use some of the money I raise to buy personal stuff for the trip?

If the check is written out to Friendship Church, you cannot use the money for your personal expenses.