

GLOBAL SERVICE PROJECT: AGUASCALIENTES, MEXICO

The Global Service Project: Aguascalientes, Mexico (GSP) will take place during SU's scheduled Spring Break 2010. The GSP is designed to provide students the opportunity to use their spring break to make a positive difference in the world by working alongside a community in need while learning about Mexican culture and the Mexican people.

THE SERVICE PROJECT:

SU students will work alongside local community members and professional community development experts from the Aguascalientes state social service agency, Desarrollo Integral Familiar (DIF-Estatal). The project will be based in a highly marginalized community and will help that community to provide for itself some of its basic needs. Based on the needs of the community some possible projects include:

1. Planting a community garden to provide much needed fruits and vegetables as part of a strategy to improve nutrition
2. Installing ecological bathrooms for individual families in communities without access to public sewer services
3. Building corrals to keep domestic animals (pigs, cows, sheep, goats) from contaminating vulnerable water sources.
4. Installing clean water cisterns for families in communities with no running water

The final details of the service project will be determined in late fall 2009.



CULTURAL AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES: An important component of the Global Service Project is providing students the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of Aguascalientes, Mexico. To that end, in addition to the service project, students will participate in a variety of cultural activities including some of the following: visits to several XVII and XVIII century churches, food shopping in the Mercado Central, gift shopping in the Casa Indígena – a public social program sponsored by DIF-Estatal that helps to distribute handmade crafts made by at-risk native American peoples, a tour of SU's partner university, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, an afternoon at the natural hot baths at Balneario Valladolid, a visit to the famous Museum of Death – featuring artistic expressions of Mexico's thousands of year old celebration of life and death, and a final program reception at a local restaurant.

DIF-ESTATAL: The Global Service Project-Aguascalientes, Mexico will be executed in collaboration with the State of Aguascalientes' department of social service, Desarrollo Integral Familiar (DIF-Estatal). Professional community development organizers with the DIF-Estatal will organize the community project, acquire materials for the project, provide transportation to and from the program housing in downtown Aguascalientes to the project site, and supervise the students on-site throughout the project. DIF-Estatal runs scores of community development projects for marginalized communities, Centers for Community Development, a center for physical therapy, a home for abandoned children, an activity center for the elderly, a training center for young mothers, and the Casa Indígena center for displaced native Americans, amongst its many ongoing projects.

PROGRAM HOUSING: Students and their faculty director will be housed at Aguascalientes' only youth hostel, Hostel Lukas. The hostel provides very modest accommodations to keep the cost of the program as low as possible for the students. It is located right in downtown Aguascalientes, blocks from the Cathedral, Mercado Central, Plaza San Antonio, and the Museo de la Muerte. Rooms are dormitory style with six students / room with shared bathrooms. The Hostel is locked from the street 24 hours a day, providing excellent security. It is equipped with free-access WIFI throughout the hostel and a modest kitchen where students will prepare bag lunches for the project and some dinners.

COST: Costs for the 2010 GSP: Aguascalientes, Mexico are estimated to be \$1250. A final cost will be determined in late fall 2009. The cost includes international airfare from BWI, all housing costs, cultural activities, money for group meals, international health and emergency insurance, extensive support provided by the SU faculty director, full collaboration with the DIF-Estatal, and all funding to purchase the supplies necessary to complete the project. GSP team members are expected to contribute to fundraising efforts to help raise the portion of the costs, approximately \$200 per student, that will go directly to supplies destined to the host community.

APPLICATION INFORMATION: Application forms are available at the Center for International Education or from the faculty director. Completed application forms are currently being accepted by the faculty director or by the Center for International Education. Students should also submit a completed faculty recommendation form from a faculty member who knows the student well as well as a 300 word essay answering the question: "Why do I want to participate on a service project in Mexico?" Students will be admitted on a rolling basis until the program is full. The program is projected to have a maximum enrollment of 24 students. Once the program is filled, applicants will be placed on a waiting list. The application deadline is November 1, 2009. More information and application materials are available at the Global Service Project: Aguascalientes, Mexico website at www.salisbury.edu/intled/studyabroad/spring/mexico. All questions concerning the program should be addressed to:

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