

Join Us on our next “Journey of Mutual Exchange” to Haiti!!

When: January 29—February 6, 2016

Cost: \$1,700 (this price begins at the “gateway city” of either Ft. Lauderdale or Miami, FL. Participants need to make their own round trip arrangements from their originating destinations).

Come and share what will surely be one of the great adventures of your life!

SPARE sponsors—this is a wonderful chance to meet your student personally!

Haiti Allies refers to these trips as “journeys of mutual exchange” in order to underscore the priority we always place on being open to receiving the many gifts the Haitian people and culture offer to those who venture to this beautiful island. We will of course offer gifts of service ourselves, but the overriding experience of most participants on these trips is that we inevitably wind up receiving so much more than we give.

Group members will make their own travels plans to get to our departure city in Florida. While there is typically a core of trip participants who live in Haiti Allies’ home state of Wisconsin, there are usually group members joining us from other parts of the U.S. who will meet us in Florida. Haiti Allies will make the round trip flight arrangements from Florida to Port au Prince and all subsequent costs (other than souvenir purchases) are included in the \$1,700 price of the trip.

After arriving in Port au Prince on Saturday, January 30, we will begin the journey with a brief tour of the capital city and then travel to a small mountain village outside Port au Prince where we will experience the gentle rhythm of rural life, receive a cultural and historical orientation, and enjoy the hospitality and warmth of the people in this village. This is a restful and slow-paced time in which we will get to know some Haitian people, learn some basic Haitian Kreyol phrases and customs, catch up with our own hearts and minds, get to know each other, experience Haitian music and drumming, and maybe even learn a few Haitian songs and dances. Activities in the village vary from trip to trip, but often include making coffee from scratch as rural Haitians do, making peanut butter, and learning about Haitian voodoo. The accommodations will be very rustic, but we’ll be safe and welcome and have an opportunity to enjoy the healing magic of Haitian hospitality.

After this initial orientation, we will return to the city and move into Walls International Guest house, a very modest but secure and friendly guest house that will be our home for the remainder of the journey.

Our daily activities in Port au Prince from Monday—Friday will include a number of different adventures and experiences. Haiti Allies's methodology always involves a combination of working with our hands, hearts, and minds. The hands on/service component of the adventure will depend in part on the skills and interests of our group and also on what's happening in the country when we are there. But these experiences typically include volunteering at an orphanage run by the Missionaries of Charity (the sisters of Mother Teresa), volunteering at a hospice-like medical facility also run by the Missionaries of Charity called the "Home for the Dying and the Destitute," and volunteering at a school supported by Haiti Allies in one of Port au Prince's most impoverished neighborhoods. Most evenings we will also have meetings with Haitian friends and leaders who will teach us about various aspects of life in Haiti.

In addition to opportunities to serve and be a compassionate presence, we will spend time together as a group each day processing and reflecting on what we are seeing and learning. These are powerful heart-opening trips that often lead to profound personal insights. There will be space in our agenda for journaling, resting, prayer, quiet reflection, and informal conversation with Haitian friends and other group members. We will touch and be touched by a number of painful and heartbreaking realities connected to the extreme material poverty of Haiti, but participants are almost always inspired and deeply moved by the joy, faith, grace, dignity, and hospitality of the Haitian people.

The group will be limited to 15 persons including the leaders, so please be in touch as soon as possible with trip leader Bryan Sirchio at bsirch@sirchio.com or (608) 577-8716 if you are interested in learning more about this adventure and discerning whether or not it's the kind of journey you'd love to experience.

Deadline for registration is December 1, 2015. We hope to hear from you!