

AUGSBURG COLLEGE

Center for GLOBAL EDUCATION *and EXPERIENCE*

Dear Parents:

Greetings from the Center for Global Education and Experience at Augsburg College. I am pleased that your student will be a participant in our study abroad program in southern Africa this coming semester. I want to take this opportunity to anticipate some questions you may have. You can find an electronic version of the program manual that was sent to participants at <https://web.augsburg.edu/global/APA/Manuals/NAS17.pdf>. In particular please note the information about communication (telephone, mailing address, etc.) in the General Information section.

The students will live for most of the term in a large house in Windhoek. A significant number of class sessions are conducted in this house. We have a competent, well-experienced staff in Windhoek who will provide excellent leadership during the program. Students will also have homestays with families in Windhoek and in a rural community in the north of Namibia. Our host families go through a close screening process before they are chosen, and are required to attend an orientation session which includes briefings about the homestay program, its objectives, logistical information health and safety as well as other general guidelines.

Two concerns that are frequently expressed when it is learned that the students will travel to Namibia and the Republic of South Africa are health and safety. Please be assured that the safety of our program participants is of the highest priority, and we monitor the situation in southern Africa even carefully. Basic tips on personal safety and health are given in the program manual, and more detailed information is provided to students during orientation in Namibia. Additionally, we keep a very close watch on the situation in southern Africa. The Center for Global Education has permanent staff, consultants, and numerous resource persons in the region with whom we keep in close contact. We monitor security issues through regular contact with our staff in Namibia who are, in turn, in contact with the U.S. Embassy in Windhoek. Through professional organizations we regularly receive and share comparative security information with others in the field of international education. Additionally, our medical and emergency services provider, [Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc.](#), sends us weekly and sometimes daily reports on world "hot spots" in real time as they arise. Finally, we stay in touch with the U.S. State Department and regularly visit their web page to remain abreast of the most current travel warnings and public announcements throughout the world.

Over the past 26 years, the Center has conducted more than 70 two-three week travel seminars for students and adults in southern Africa, and has been coordinating semester abroad programs there since 1994. Thus we have gained a great deal of experience in the region. We would not hesitate to cancel or to re-route and portion of the program should something occur that made it appear unsafe to travel there. As far as health is concerned, it is not uncommon for a long-term visitor to have a bout or two of diarrhea sometime during the stay. This is more likely to occur in rural areas than in the capital. Reasonable precautions in eating and drinking can minimize the occurrence of this discomfort. Our staff will instruct the students about safe eating habits particularly as to what to do during the family stay.

In the case of a more serious illness, there are good doctors and hospitals in Namibia and South Africa if a situation calls for professional health care. During family stay, host families are provided emergency health kits, and training on how to use them.

The following resources may prove helpful:

Center for Global Education in Minneapolis, Minnesota:

24-hour Emergency Cell Phone, Minneapolis Office: 612-817-2830

[Margaret Anderson](#), Program Manager

Phone: 800/299-8889 or 612/330-1685

Center for Global Education in Windhoek, Namibia:

[Albertina Shifotoka](#), Site Director

[Lamont Slater](#), Instructor and Program Coordinator

011-264-811-292-773 – Cell Phone (emergencies only)

011-264-61-228-773 – office number to contact staff

011-264-61-250-737 – house phone for students to receive phone calls

Helpful Websites/Resources

- [Center for Global Education and Experience](#)
- U.S. Department of State: Of particular interest:
 - [Countries and Regions](#)
 - [Travel and Living Abroad](#)
 - Official Blogs ([Namibia](#)) ([South Africa](#))
- [The Namibian](#) (Namibian newspaper)
- [Mail and Guardian](#) (South African newspaper)
- On-line news sources such as:
 - [CNN World News - Africa](#)
 - [MSNBC World News - Africa](#)
- [Advice for Parents at StudentsAbroad.com](#)

The experience your student is about to have is a very intense and challenging one. For many students, the study abroad experience stimulates a great deal of reflection about personal values and life directions, and you may notice some changes upon returns home. Your student will likely want to share all the adventures with you and may, at times, find it difficult to communicate the intensity of the experience. An accepting and open environment will make it easier to share and integrate the experience.

Again, please contact me if you have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Anderson

Program Manager

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