

Greetings from the Center for Global Education and Experience (CGEE) at Augsburg University. We are pleased that your student will be a participant in “**New Activisms, Human Rights and Social Justice**” this coming semester.

You can find information about the program on the [Student Guide](#). In particular please note the information about the schedule and communication (telephone numbers, mailing addresses, etc.).

Accommodations

Students will be living in a variety of accommodations during the semester:

- Guatemala: students will live with a family in the city of Panajachel, after a brief stay at a local hotel.
- San Cristobal, Chiapas: students will be housed in a guest house/hotel.
- Costa Rica: students spend a few days in a San Jose guest house and then live with families southeast of the city. There will be two other shorter homestays in a community north of San Jose, and one several hours south of the city.

We have well-experienced staff in each country who will provide excellent leadership and care during the program. (See the Meet the Staff section on the [Student Guide](#).)

Safety and Security

Two concerns that are frequently expressed when it is learned that the students will travel to Central America are health and safety. Please be assured that the safety of our program participants is of the highest priority. Basic recommendations on personal safety and health are given on the [Student Guide](#), and more detailed information is provided to students during orientation in each country.

We keep a very close watch on the situation Central America. CGEE has 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 on-site staff who are, in turn, in contact with U.S. Embassies. We also receive regular safety and security reports from the [Overseas Security Advisory Council](#) (OSAC) and we regularly check international travel warnings and public safety announcements, provided by the U.S. Department of State.

Additionally, our medical and emergency services provider, [Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc.](#), (EIIA) sends us regular international security reports and provides us with pre-trip resources.

Finally, we register all student groups with the U.S. Department of [State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). This program provides the following services:

- Important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in the destination country, helping travelers to make informed decisions about their travel plans.

- Assist the U.S. Embassy to contact U.S. citizens abroad in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with travelers in an emergency.

We would not hesitate to cancel or to re-route any portion of the program if we it unsafe to travel there.

Health Issues

As far as health is concerned, many students will have to endure a bout or two of diarrhea sometime during their stay, but reasonable precautions in eating and food preparation can minimize the occurrence of this "discomfort." Our staff will be instructing the students about preventive measures, as well as what to do during family stays.

In the case of a more serious illness, there are excellent doctors and hospitals in Guatemala, Mexico and Costa Rica if a situation calls for professional health care. Insurance is also provided through the program (see Insurance Information in the Health and Safety Matters section of the [Student Guide](#)).

Contact Information

Center for Global Education and Experience, Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Minnesota:

24-hour Emergency Cell Phone: +1 612-817-2830

WhatsApp, text or call

[Margaret Anderson](#), U.S. Manager

Phone: +1 612-330-1685

Contact information for other faculty and staff can be found in the [Student Guide](#).

Insurance

Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc.

- [EIIA Webpage](#)
- [Summary of Benefits](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Member Card](#)

Helpful On-line Resources

- [Center for Global Education and Experience](#)
- U.S. Department of State: Of particular interest:
 - [Travel and Living Abroad](#)
 - DOS Country Information Pages: [\(Guatemala\)](#) [\(Mexico\)](#) [\(Costa Rica\)](#)
- On-line news sources: [CNN Americas section](#)
- [Advice for Parents at StudentsAbroad.com](#)

As you may realize, the experience your student is about to have is a very intense and challenging one. For many, the study abroad experience will stimulate a great deal of reflection about personal values and life directions, and you may notice changes upon return 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.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns:

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