

Hoops Sagrado is an Adams Morgan-based youth leadership and development nonprofit that gives D.C. high school students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend a month during the summer in the highlands of Guatemala learning another language and culture, teaching Mayan indigenous children basketball skills, developing a sense of self, and gaining a new perspective on life.



Each year, 15 to 20 students travel to Guatemala where you use the game of basketball as the common thread with your Guatemalan counterparts to learn how to communicate with, understand and appreciate another way of life, which while different, shares many of the same challenges you may face at home — racism, poverty, broken homes, lack of opportunities and social marginalization.

What You'll Do

Each weekday morning, you will spend about four hours in Spanish immersion class. You will work one-on-one with a Spanish teacher who will work with you at your level. Classes can involve trips to the local marketplace as well as other cultural locations throughout Quetzaltenango (Xela) where you can put your new Spanish skills to

use. Some of you will be able to earn Spanish credit from your high school back in DC.



In the afternoons you will travel by bus to four remote villages where you'll set up basketball camps at the local elementary school and spend several hours every weekday playing, teaching and practicing the game of basketball with 20 to 30 children between the ages of 8 and 13. The clinics culminate in a tournament between boys and girls teams from each village. The work in the villages will help you earn all of your community service hours for graduation.



In addition to school and the basketball camps, time is also spent learning about the local culture by visiting ruins left by ancient Mayans, traveling to the home of a weaver to see how blankets and other handicrafts are made, and attending a professional soccer game, among other things. Hoops Sagrado also participates in basketball games against local Guatemalan teams, which often involves traveling to other, nearby towns on the weekends. Many activities including movie and pizza nights, are planned throughout the week.

Where You'll Stay

Xela is a city of approximately 100,000 people in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. The temperature ranges from the 70s during the day to the 50s at night.



While there, you and at least one other Hoops volunteer will stay with a host family. Your host families may, or may not speak English. Most of the homes are within one mile of the school. You will be expected to eat all three meals a day with your family, particularly the noontime meal which is the most important meal of the day in Guatemala. Chicken, black beans and rice are an essential part of many meals; and corn (either as tortillas or tamales), an integral part of the Mayan culture, is always served.



When You'll Go

The trip takes place each summer for a month. Although the dates vary from year-to-year, we usually leave for Guatemala in mid-July and return to D.C. about 30 days later in mid- to late August.

What You'll Need

Although we'll give you a complete list of items you'll need for the trip closer to departure time, here are a few things to keep in mind that you'll need for your time in Guatemala: a passport, Spanish-English dictionary, basketball shoes, a pair of khaki pants, black polo shirt, small gift for your host family, a rain jacket, a duffle bag to use as your luggage for the whole trip, and a small bag or backpack to use each day.

Hoops Sagrado covers the cost of most everything while you are in Guatemala. The only money you will need is spending money and most volunteers bring about \$200 for their time in Guatemala.

Hoops Sagrado Scholarship

In addition to the exchange program Hoops Sagrado also funds scholarships for 100 Guatemalan students to attend high school, many who participated in the camps.



The project seeks out indigenous teenagers from precarious financial backgrounds who demonstrate the ability and motivation to attend secondary school with the hope that they will one day go on to a university. Hoops Sagrado contributes tuition fees, uniforms, housing, food, and all other expenses incurred during their time away from home in school.

Overall, Hoops Sagrado offers a tremendously unique, transformative experience to young people from two different cultures.



"The Hoops Sagrado program has been the most influential stepping stone in my life, and I'm pretty sure that many of my friends in D.C. and in Xela would agree with that statement. It is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity and experience."

--Sam Levy

Wilson Sr. High School 2004

Hoops Sagrado '03, '04, '05, '06 & '07

How to Apply

If you're interested in becoming a part of the Hoops Sagrado family and spending a month in Guatemala this summer, please fill out the enclosed application form and write a one to two page essay explaining why you want to go on the trip and what you think you'll bring to the program. Mail your application to:

Hoops Sagrado
Attn: Application
P.O. Box 21332
Washington, D.C. 20009

HOOPS

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