

ROSTRO DE CRISTO VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Rostro de Cristo Program Information

A. History of Rostro de Cristo

Rostro de Cristo (Face of Christ) is a volunteer and immersion program set up by the St. James Society in Duran, Ecuador. Fr. Jim Ronan began the program in 1988 as a way for people from North America to experience the presence of Christ in the reality of the lives of the people of Latin America. It is a true immersion experience for those who choose to live, eat, work, play and pray with the people of Duran.

The goal of the program is a simple one: to BE with the people. So many people travel to places like to Duran to volunteer and assist the poor, but never take the time to get to know the stories, struggles and joys of the people. We believe that truly seeing the Face of Christ in those you meet in Duran requires that you *be* with them, not only *do* for them. The greatest gift you can give someone is the gift of yourself, and Rostro de Cristo provides volunteers the opportunity to serve in a truly meaningful way. Although RdC volunteers work in many important capacities, this is not an end to itself. The end is to get to know the people as they truly are, and this will, in time, allow you to better know yourself, your sisters and brothers, and God.

While working with and “being” with Ecuadorians, it is very likely that you will experience the love, generosity, friendship and joy from people whom you have never met by simply sharing in the daily life of the poor. You may also experience the generous hearts of Ecuadorians by receiving what little they have to share such as: their homes, time, attention, and open hearts. At the same time, feeling the pain and hardships by hearing and seeing the reality of an Ecuadorian life is common. This love and generosity is experienced through the strong presence of Christ in the Ecuadorian people. The time spent volunteering and “being” in the community allows you to return the same love, and through this shared love, live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. Mission and Vision of Rostro de Cristo

The mission and vision are the driving forces behind what guides the daily life of Rostro de Cristo volunteers. As the program name implies, volunteers are challenged everyday to recognize the face of Christ in themselves and others.

Mission

Rostro de Cristo is a Catholic program whose mission is to provide spiritual and educational opportunities for young people from the United States to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the people of Ecuador. The program invites volunteers to:

❖ Lead a simple lifestyle

“Live simply that others might simply live.” ~Elizabeth Seaton

Rostro de Cristo volunteers are expected to walk with and accompany our brothers and sisters of Duran. Volunteers try to live as simply as possible within the limits of health and safety. Volunteers are asked to challenge themselves and each other with issues of simplicity. This is a term that will be revisited throughout the year and a commitment to simplicity is essential.

❖ **Build an intentional Christian community**

"We cannot love God unless we love each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet where there is companionship [and community]." ~Dorothy Day

Community living is unlike any other living experience; it is a unique privilege and opportunity to reflect Christ's call in our life. Being Christian means we are all sisters and brothers in Christ and how we live together is a reflection of this faith. Volunteers are expected to work together on all things and make decisions together. They are also asked to join together in prayer and reflection. Building a strong faith-based community is imperative to a healthy community.

❖ **Be in relationship with the Ecuadorians and reflect on the face of Christ in their joys and struggles**

"The ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are." ~Johnnetta B. Cole

The work of a Rostro de Cristo volunteer is approached as a relationship; this is done through spending time with people, forming friendships through love, and sharing in the daily lives of the poor. "Being" with the people is another unique aspect of the RdC experience. For example, many volunteers are involved in some form of teaching, whether it be in a classroom or through an after-school program. The work of a volunteer is not just to teach; instead, the work is to build a relationship with the students and the fruit of that relationship is mutual education. Being is not the opposite of doing. RdC volunteers work hard at improving the lives of those whom they are serving, and there is a mutuality of relationships as volunteers focus on being present to those around them.

❖ **Work with the Ecuadorian people to find long-term solutions to the problems of poverty and together seek opportunities to improve the lives of the people**

"Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say 'We have done this ourselves'." ~Lao Tzu

We believe that Rostro de Cristo volunteers must not simply volunteer their time, but work closely with Ecuadorians to improve the lives of the people. We do not go to Ecuador to fix something and leave. It is essential to realize that the people living in Ecuador are the real experts of their situation, and for that reason the

goal of many RdC programs is to eventually hand them over to Ecuadorians. As a RdC volunteer you will be asked to empower the people with whom you are working through encouragement and openness.

Vision

The Rostro de Cristo program brings together the people of Ecuador and the United States in order to:

- ❖ **Foster mutual evangelization in the Catholic tradition through a shared discover of faith**

"Keep the joy of loving God in your heart and share this joy with all you meet especially your family [in Christ]." ~Mother Theresa

Quite literally, Rostro de Cristo volunteers are to reflect the face of Christ to those whom they are serving, and are to search for the face of Christ in everything and everyone. Volunteers are meant to reflect this love of God to the community through acts of faith. In turn volunteers are asked to participate in the faith journeys of other volunteers and Ecuadorians alike.

- ❖ **Transform the world based on the Gospel by promoting understanding, justice, and appropriate development.**

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world." ~Mahatma Gandhi

Rostro de Cristo volunteers are simply asked to change the world. They commit to a lifestyle presented in the Gospel and live out the words of St. Francis of Assisi to “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words”. Quite simply, the Gospel calls us to put the needs of the poor first. A common moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable people and wherever there is structural injustice, we are called to oppose it. Those with the greatest need require the greatest response. By adhering to the Gospel’s message of “Blessed are the poor”, volunteers work to change the world’s injustices.

- ❖ **Inspire life-long commitments to service, social justice and solidarity in the Global community**

"O God, to those who have hunger give bread; And to those who have bread give the hunger for justice." ~Latin American prayer

Volunteers are asked to inspire these commitments in each other, the Ecuadorian people, retreat groups, and the wider global community. Our greatest hope is that the time spent in Ecuador will not fade away after a year, but instead will be a springboard unto a lifetime of service, justice and solidarity with the poor.

C. Pillars of Rostro de Cristo

The spirit of “being” provides the essential foundation to the Rostro de Cristo experience. From this, there are five pillars that support the program and uphold the mission and vision of RdC: community, spirituality, service, simple living, and hospitality.

❖ **Volunteers live together in an intentional Christian COMMUNITY.**

Volunteers live together, pray together, share in each others challenges and happiness, and reflect on the problems and solutions of poverty and social justice. Each volunteer is asked to accept, challenge, respect, and care for one another. Living in an intentional Christian community is more than simply sharing possessions under the same roof. A community of volunteers only works if everyone is willing to participate and contribute to the success of the community. Volunteers are asked to gather weekly for spirituality and community nights. Each member is responsible for doing their part with cooking, cleaning, and basic house upkeep. Volunteers gather each night to share in a meal. The community as a whole is responsible for deciding the best system for cooking, cleaning, reflecting, and participating in each others’ lives. Living in community is not always easy and is something that must continually be revisited and revised. The sheer nature of living and working so closely can be difficult; however, communal living can be a fruitful and life-changing experience with hard work, commitment, openness, and love.

❖ **SPIRITUALITY is at the heart of the Rostro de Cristo experience.**

RdC volunteers are asked to be committed in their faith. Like communal living, the spiritual aspect of your year is your responsibility as an individual and as a community. Being such an ambiguous term, volunteers choose how they want their spiritual path to guide their experience in Duran. Each volunteer is encouraged to have a personal prayer life, but to also share that life with each other. The most effective way to give of oneself in service is by being spiritually nourished. Volunteers should strive for an intentional balance between personal and communal prayer and reflection. We trust and encourage each volunteer community to decide this for themselves, and how groups choose to do this differs from year to year. Spiritual communities are meant to be a safe haven of religious tolerance. You are responsible for creating an environment that is conducive to each others spiritual needs.

❖ **SERVICE is an integral part of a volunteer’s time in Ecuador.**

Volunteers are asked to serve each other, retreat groups, the people of Duran, and God. There are many opportunities to serve and the nature of the program is such that service takes many roles. Some serve, literally, at a local soup kitchen, others serve by educating and some serve by simply listening to a neighbor. Service is at the heart of community and spirituality. Volunteers should be willing to help the community and each other when necessary, always putting the needs of the volunteer community and the larger community before individual needs or wants. Rostro de Cristo has its own programs and as well as partner programs that

volunteers are expected to work in. (Further explanation of these are included in later sections.)

❖ **SIMPLICITY is another way for us to walk with the people of Duran.**

In Duran, many people do not have running water, personal vehicles, steady work, clean water, or extravagant meals. RdC volunteers live, by choice, a simple lifestyle. This does not mean simply doing without things for the sake of doing it; nor does it refer to only material possessions. Living simply means to intentionally enter into a lifestyle that realizes that every decision and action affects the greater whole, and can have positive and negative consequences. To try to maintain an unnecessarily high standard of living is to force others to struggle for the bare necessities of life. We challenge our volunteers to look to their neighbors in Duran as a measuring stick of simplicity. When we strip away and redefine what is necessary, we often find a much ‘richer’ life. By making the choice to live simply, volunteers try to walk in solidarity as best they can with the people they are serving. Matters of simplicity are decided upon by community members and should be revisited regularly throughout the year in Duran.

❖ **As a contributing member of the global community, volunteers welcome others to share in their experience with love and HOSPITALITY.**

The Rostro de Cristo community is an ever-growing family which is not limited to one volunteer’s individual experience. Everyone who visits Duran with RdC is an important thread, which becomes woven throughout the tapestry of the Rostro de Cristo experience. Volunteers realize that their experience in Duran has been made possible by those who have gone before them, and that their time in Ecuador will affect those that continue the ministry after them. Rostro de Cristo welcomes many different visitors in the course of a year, and volunteers should reflect the values of RdC with everyone they meet, whether it be current or former volunteers, family and friends, retreat groups and RdC staff. It is within this spirit of loving hospitality that volunteers begin to understand and live out the wondrous challenge of solidarity, recognizing the intimate connection between all of God’s children.

Ecuador Information

A. Basic Ecuador Facts

Location: Western South America; borders the Pacific Ocean, Columbia and Peru.

Capital: Quito

Population: 13,363,593 (July 2005)

Terrain: Ecuador has four major regions: the Galapagos Islands, the costal plain (la costa), inter-Andean central highlands (la sierra), and the Amazon Jungle (el oriente). There are 22 provinces. Ecuador has the most biodiversity per square mile in the world.

Religion: 90-95% Roman Catholic. Large groups also belong to other churches, such as the Evangelist. Indian nations, most of whom are Catholic due to Spanish colonization, mingle Catholic rites with their own vision of the cosmos.

Languages: Spanish, Indian Languages (Quechua)

Literacy: Age 15 and over that can read and write---92.5%

Government: Republic. Three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The current head of state is Dr. Alfredo Palacios, who was named as president by The National Congress on April 20, 2005 as a consequence of popular coup (forajidos). He replaced the former president, Lucio Gutierrez, who came into power in January 2003. From Juan Jose Flores, the first president of Ecuador, up to Dr. Alfredo Palacios, the current president, Ecuador has had a total of 54 presidents, and Dr. Alfredo Palacios is Ecuador's seventh president since 1996. Elections are held every four years with no reelection and the president may be impeached by a two-thirds majority of Congress.

Suffrage: Voting is obligatory for literate persons 18 to 65 years of age and optional for other eligible voters over 18 years of age.

Currency: The U.S. Dollar since September 9, 2000. (Before, the exchange rate was 25,000 sucres per dollar) Dollarization helped to stabilize the economy after the drastic decline due to falling petroleum prices, natural disasters, and bank scandals in the 1990's, but has had a devastating effect on Ecuador's poverty, making the poor even poorer.

Poverty Line: \$170/month

Population below Poverty Line: 65%

Minimum Wage: The average basic salary is currently \$135 a month.

Unemployment: 9.8% Underemployment—47%

Principal Products for export: Oil generates the most income for Ecuador and is therefore considered to be the most important export. Banana production in Ecuador is the largest and

most important in the world and generates extremely valuable resources for the country. Cacao and recent production of ornamental flowers are considered among the products of highest quality in the foreign market. Handmade crafts are very important for the economy of the lower social classes, especially weavings and textiles, and are primarily exported to the European and US markets. The service industries and tourism are also beginning to generate income for Ecuador.

History:

- *10.000 BC to 1.500 AD*: Advanced indigenous cultures such as the Chorrera, Jama Coaque, Bahia, Tolita, Machalilla and Valdivia (The oldest known culture in the Americas) inhabited the coastal areas of Ecuador
- *1460 AD*: Inca ruler Tupac Yupanqui invaded present Ecuador from the South
- *1534*: Inca Empire is defeated by the Spanish colonists who established themselves and became the new ruling elite; almost three centuries of Ecuador's history correspond to the colonial era and are marked by a continuous mixture of the European and native people and their cultures
- *August 10, 1809*: Quito established the first self-governing 'Junta' in the Spanish colonies in America; statesmen Antonio José de Sucre led the troops into battles against the Spanish Royalist Army and victory was secured on May 24, 1822; Ecuador achieved independence and joined the Gran Colombia, established by Simón Bolívar; eventually Ecuador (as well as the other countries that conformed the Gran Colombia) separated and became independent Republics
- *19th Century*: first years of the Republic were marked by instability and power struggles, caused by divisions between conservatives (from the sierra) and liberals (from the coast); Venezuelan born General Juan José Flores became the first President of Ecuador
- *20th Century*: the country flourished economically associated with the cocoa exports boom that helped improve and stabilize the country's administration; political instability predominated during the 1930s and 1940s; 1941, Ecuador was invaded by Peru and lost control over much of its Amazon Territory; after World War II, Ecuador's economy received a boost due to banana exports; a period of peace and prosperity from 1948 to 1960 followed with three freely elected Presidents
- *Last 50 years*: in the 1960s, foreign companies began to develop oil resources in the Ecuadorian Amazon region which brought economic prosperity in the 1970s; in 1972, a nationalist military regime seized power; 1978 the people of Ecuador voted for a new Constitution and in 1979, Ecuador returned to a democratic government; August 1996, Abdalá Bucaram assumed Presidency, but in February 1997 a general strike turned into a national protest and Mr. Bucaram was dismissed with charges of misgovernment and corruption; January 2000, economic implosion caused by banking scandals linked to President Mahuad led to the adoption of the American dollar; patterns of fraud, corruption, and misgovernment have plagued Ecuador as there have been six different presidents in the past ten years

Economic History: The cacao boom allowed the economy of Ecuador to grow during the last years of the 18th century up to 1925. During this period, Ecuador was the first exporter of cacao in the world and covered 25% of the world demand during the first decade of the 20th century. The chocolate boom allowed the creation of a banking system in Ecuador and encouraged the arrival of European investors.

When the First World War began, however, the exportation of cacao decreased significantly. A major contributing factor to the decline was the competition from the European colonies in Africa that began to produce cacao as well.

In the decade of 1960, oil exploration began in the Ecuadorian Amazon and converted Ecuador into a wealthy country compared to the rest of Latin America. Foreign investments quickly arrived and Ecuador grew economically over the next twenty years. The oil boom allowed the country to modernize more quickly in this decade than during the past 100 years.

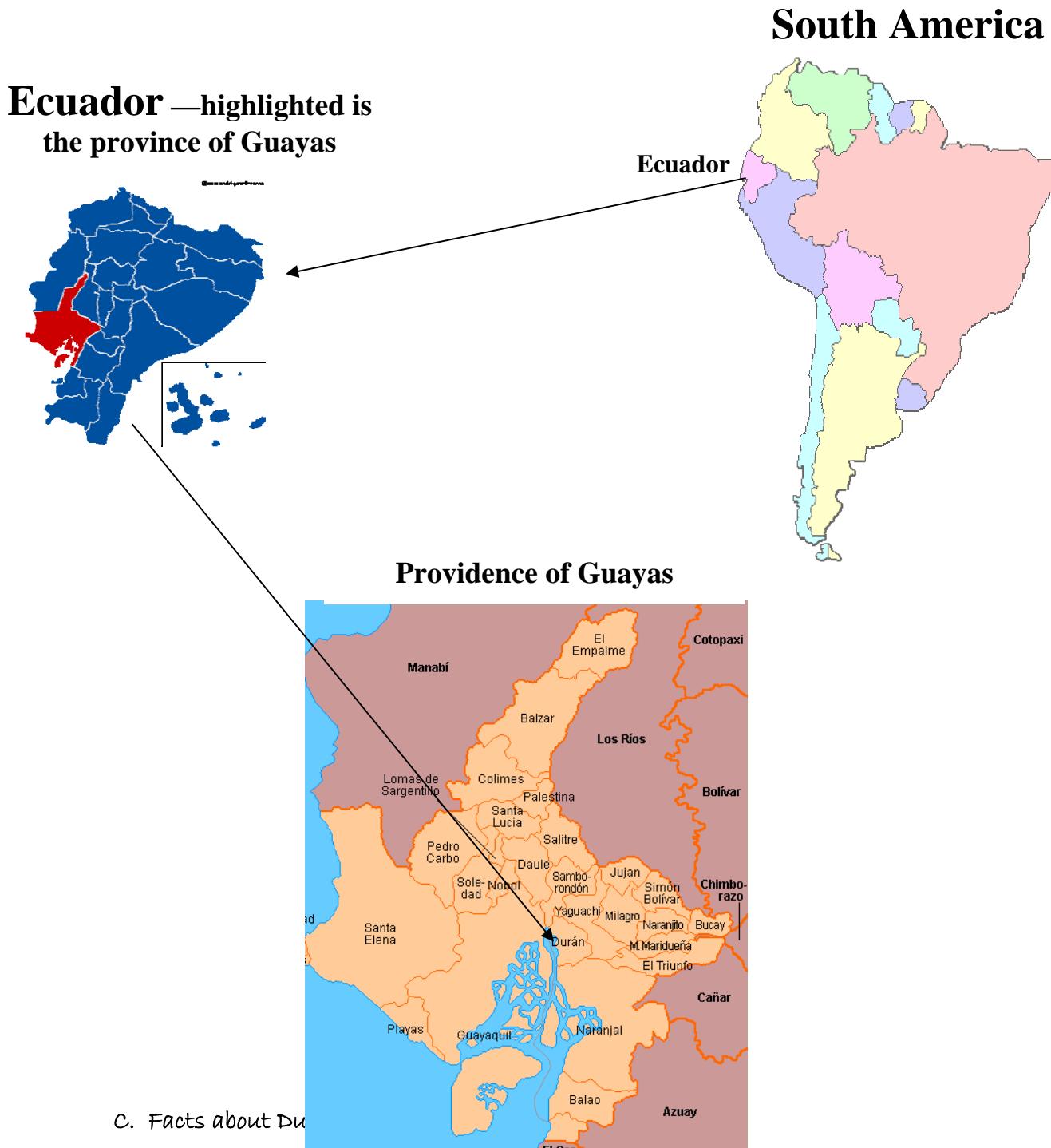
Since 1982, however, the international price of oil has decreased and Ecuador has suffered an economic downfall. Part of that downfall stems from the economic debt amassed by the ineptitude and corruption of Ecuador's military leaders. The debt falls harshly on the backs of Ecuador's most needy citizens who have to deal with a decrease in basic services such as education and health. A fin de siecle banking scandal further decimated the economy as private accounts simply vanished with the failed banks. In an effort to stabilize the economy and halt the slide of the plummeting sucre (Ecuadorian money), Ecuador decided to adopt the dollar as the official currency in Fall 2000. As a result, only foreign banks exist in Ecuador, many of which are European.

For more information on Ecuador check out these websites:

- <http://www.embajada-ecuador.se/Info.HTM> (really good for Ecuadorian History)
- <http://www.goecuador.com/ecuador-general-info/index.html>
- <http://www.economist.com/countries/ecuador/>
- <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ec.html>

B. Where in the World is Duran?

Duran is located on the western coast of Ecuador in the province of Guayas. Duran is 20 minutes outside of Guayaquil, which is the largest city in Ecuador. The outer limits of Guayaquil is separated from Duran by the Babahoya River.



Because of the severe poverty, it is difficult to gather an exact census within the 339 square kilometers that make up Duran. Sources from 2001 estimate 179,000 people live in Duran, but many local estimates suggest the population to be as high as

500,000. The majority of Duran's inhabitants are unemployed or underemployed, and despite its urban setting, Duran has very few large businesses. Due to the lack of industry, Duran is considered a *canton*, not a *cuidad*. Typical jobs include trade positions (welding, repair, beautician), working as a guard, factory work, and odd jobs.

Many residents of Duran have moved from other provinces in Ecuador, and for that reason do not consider themselves from Duran, but where their family is originally from. People in Duran, like all coastal inhabitants of Ecuador, are called *monos* (monkeys), while those from the *sierra* (mountains) are *serranos*. Duran has seen an enormous population increase in the last 20 years. The most common growth in Duran occurs through invasions, where people squat on uninhabited land and slowly construct houses. The coastal region of Ecuador has two seasons – rainy and dry. Dry season is from April/May to November/December, with the ‘coolest’ months being June and July (80s during the day, 70s at night). Rainy season is typically from January to April, and the weather is hot, humid, and rainy (high 90s).

Most families in Duran live in one or two room houses with overcrowded rooms and lack of sufficient space. The majority of people even share beds and sleeping space. While homes do have pirated electricity, the people of Duran still lack the basic necessity of running water. The lack of a sewer system and running water may be due to the fact in Duran there are neither wealthy tax payers nor middle class to fund basic community needs.

Despite these difficulties, there is growth and progress in Duran. Mariana Mendieta de Narvaez was reelected in October 2004 for a second term as mayor of Duran. She is the first mayor in a long line of corrupt Duran mayors to actually put money into the community instead of into her own pocket. Mariana is making good strides in public works such as paving roads and building playgrounds for children. This is especially true near the Rostro de Cristo house in the Antonio Jose de Sucre neighborhood. Across from the Catholic Church *La Porciuncula* is a park that was converted from a trash dump through the organization of committed citizens in Antonio Jose de Sucre.

D. Rostro de Cristo Neighborhoods

There are two RDC houses in which volunteers live, located in different neighborhoods in Duran. These neighborhoods, while only two miles apart, have their own unique features and are in different stages of community development and prosperity. While the houses and neighborhoods are quite different, the desire to progress and work together in faith unites them.

Antonio Jose de Sucre (AJS)

AJS is a small cooperative of about 3 square blocks. Rostro de Cristo has held a strong presence in this community living and working there since 1994. The property has two

buildings; the first is the RdC retreat house which houses 10-15 retreat groups a year. The second building serves two functions: the first floor is a day care center/preschool run by Nuevo Mundo, the second floor serves as living quarters for year long volunteers.

Antonio Jose de Sucre is an older neighborhood than El Arbolito and therefore in many ways more progressed. This small barrio already houses a *casa comunal* (community house), a *cancha* (cement soccer field), a newly constructed playground, a Nuevo Mundo medical dispensary, and continued improvement of paved roads. However, the poverty is still rampant: residents have no running water, there are frequent power outages, standing dirty water in the rainy season, as well as many families who still live in cane houses.

El Arbolito

Construction of the Arbolito volunteer house began in 2002, and was completed in August of 2003. A second house was completed in the fall of 2005 which is now the Arbolito retreat house. Arbolito itself started as an invasion, meaning people built their houses on unclaimed land. Over the past 10 years, Arbolito has grown into a rather large community of nearly 12,000 people located on the northern outskirts of Durán. With limited phone lines, power outages, and flooding in the rainy season Arbolito is still developing as a community.

There is a strong desire for community improvement projects from various members of the Arbolito community including a plan for a future *casa communal* with a surrounding park and soccer court. There also is a presence of the local church youth group, *Nueva Generation* (New Generation) helping out with various community and parish related fundraising and projects.

About the Volunteer Houses

Each volunteer has their own simple bedroom (with ceiling fans), and the bathrooms are shared. There is cold running water, and drinking water is purchased in large bottles. Both houses have washing machines and electricity, but volunteers are asked to be mindful of these resources in light of simplicity and solidarity. Collections of books, board games, and art supplies from past volunteers have formed makeshift libraries (especially in the Antonio Jose de Sucre House). The Arbolito house has a TV and a DVD player, and the AJS has a TV and VCR. Each house has a kitchen and dining area, as well as a sitting room. Volunteers are expected to cook and clean for themselves, and each house receives a weekly food stipend (decided upon by the community). Volunteers are also given a personal stipend of \$60 a month.

Preparation for Ecuador

A. Things to Do

❖ **Passport**

If you do not have a passport, get one as soon as possible. Be sure your passport expires well after your expected return date. Passport renewal cost about \$30, and a new passport can cost anywhere from \$50-100.

❖ **International drivers license**

This can be obtained at AAA, and cost is usually \$15-20. This is a requirement as all volunteers will be driving RdC vehicles. International drivers licenses are only valid with your current US driver's license, so make sure to pack this as well. You will need to present your current drivers license and two passport photos to obtain an international drivers license.

❖ **Vaccinations**

Although the Rostro de Cristo program does not *require* you to have certain vaccinations, we strongly *encourage* you to prepare for your year in Ecuador by receiving the recommended immunizations. Cost depends on your health insurance policy and what vaccines you already have, and can range from free to \$200-300. We recommend that you consult your physician or better yet, a travel clinic that specializes in international medicine. Also, visit the Center for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov) which has recommendations for individual countries, including Ecuador.

** Please note that many travel clinics and the CDC tend to over-recommend the number of vaccines that are necessary for travel to Ecuador. It is better to be safe than sorry, and you would never want to get so sick that it would negatively impact your experience. The majority of volunteers receive Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, Tetanus, and Yellow Fever shots. The majority *do not* take malaria pills, as this is usually recommended only if you travel to the Amazon region.

(Additionally, Malaria pills can have harsh side effects, are often expensive, and there has not been a problem with Malaria in Duran in 20+ years.) Some vaccines come as a series of shots, so please get started on your immunizations NOW.

❖ **Medication**

If you regularly take medication or vitamins you will need to get a year's supply. Visit your primary care physician to obtain necessary prescriptions. Volunteers receive health insurance for the time they are in Ecuador, but this does not cover pre-existing conditions. Many volunteers get travel's diarrhea pills, which might come in handy at some point during the year. (You must get a doctor's prescription for travel's diarrhea pills). Recommended over-the-counter meds: Tylenol/aspirin, Neosporin, Benadryl, Dayquil/Nightquil, eye drops (if you have contacts). There is plenty of Pepto-Bismol and Imodium AD in the volunteer houses, so don't worry about either of these.

❖ **ATM cards/Credit cards and cash**

Most cards are international, but it is good to double check. Call your bank and tell them you will be in Ecuador for one year, and that there may be some international expenditure. Although the monthly stipend is plenty of money to

allow you pay for bus fare, weekend trips, dancing, movies, souvenirs, etc., it is good to have a card *just in case*.

❖ **Passport photos**

You will need two passport photos for your international drivers license, but also for other forms of identification. We recommend about 10 photos, and you get these at stores like CVS, Sears, and other pharmacies. Cost is \$5-10.

❖ **Learn to drive a standard car!**

It is *imperative* that you know how to drive a stick shift car *before* you arrive in Ecuador. All RdC vehicles are standard and we need to keep these running for as long as possible, so do not plan to learn how to drive while you are in Ecuador. We would hate to send you to driving school in Guayaquil, which costs time and \$160! All volunteers will be driving RdC vehicles at some point and time!

❖ **Update your address book**

It is good to have updated phone numbers and addresses of friends and family. Volunteers often send mail back with US visitors, so bring US postage stamps and envelopes so you can keep in touch.

❖ **Loan deferment**

If you need to defer loans, first consult your bank. If you need letters or a confirmation of volunteer status, please contact Ellen Harms (eharms@jcu.edu).

❖ **Copies**

It is a good idea to make extra copies of all papers, documents and identification in case you should need to access this while you are in Ecuador.

B. Fundraising

To help defer the costs of the volunteer program, we ask that all volunteers do fundraising before they arrive in Ecuador. The recommended amount is \$2,000, although anything additional is always appreciated. Here are some tried and true techniques to assist in your fundraising endeavors:

- ❖ Talk to local parishes. Some may allow you put something in the bulletin or talk during the service and send around a collection basket. Included in this packet is a sheet entitled “How to Speak at Your Parish” (appendix 4).
- ❖ Write letters to family, family, or local businesses that describe what you will be doing and ask for donations. This is usually very successful, especially since you will be in Ecuador a whole year. Please refer to appendix 1 for tips for writing a personal appeals letter.
- ❖ Talk to your university, especially if it is Catholic (because RdC is a Catholic program). Campus ministry, Latin American studies, and social justice/service departments or clubs might be able to assist you financially.

Get started as soon as possible with your fundraising efforts because you may need to do follow-up. Fundraising is important not only for raising money, but also for educating people about Ecuador and the poor. This is often the first step in getting people interested and involved with issues of poverty and injustice. Remember that you are not only asking for money, but being a voice for the people of Ecuador!

C. Visas

All volunteers will get their visas together during orientation in Washington, DC. However, you will need to prepare and obtain several things before you arrive at orientation. This list is based on the requirements of the Ecuadorian consulate in Washington, DC.

- ❖ STD/HIV test and doctor's certificate indicating that you are free of communicable diseases. You can visit your primary care physician, Planned Parenthood, or any other clinic. Cost depends on where you go and your health insurance plan.
- ❖ 2 passport photos
- ❖ State police criminal record. You will need to check your state website for further information as the process varies from state to state. In some cases you can do it by mail or you may need to visit your local police station. Cost varies from state to state, and make sure to bring a valid ID.
- ❖ Passport and several copies of your passport
- ❖ “Certificado de Visacion” and “Solicitud de Visa”, which are included in this packet (appendix 2 and 3). Complete the forms and bring them to orientation.

Volunteers will receive the remaining forms during orientation or at the consulate. This includes the visa application form, service justification letter, admission application, and legal/economic support letter. Cost is \$30 for the application form and \$150 for the visa.

D. Packing List

You are allowed two checked pieces of luggage as well as one carry-on and a personal item. The weight limit per checked bag is 50 lbs. These can be suitcases, duffle bags or hiking packs. It is a good idea to have a backpack for weekend travels or for teaching classes. Remember that you can begin implementing the element of simplicity when you pack your bags!

Please note that volunteers should dress moderately and not wear anything that would attract additional attention. Ecuadorians take great pride in their appearance (especially when leaving the house), and volunteers should abide by cultural expectations when dressing. Although some old clothes for work will be useful, casual and neat clothes will be most helpful. Women – please bring only skirts that are over the knee, and form fitting clothes and spaghetti straps are discouraged when leaving the house. Men – Ecuadorian males rarely wear shorts, except around the house, and playing sports. Modesty is key!

- Socks

- Underwear
- Athletic shorts (3)
- Khaki/nicer shorts (4)
- Shirts/T-shirts
- Long pants - Jeans/Khaki pants/Capri pants - (3-4)
- Nice clothes (clothing for Mass and when going out)
 - Men: Khakis and collared/button down shirts
 - Women: below the knee shirts and nice blouses, dresses
- Swimsuit (1-2)
- Rain gear (rainproof jacket and an umbrella)
- Footwear:
 - Sandals that wrap around your ankle (Chacos are amazing, or Tevas)
 - Tennis shoes
 - Black closed-toe shoes for Nuevo Mundo teachers
 - Sandals or something to wear around the house
- Hat and/or sunglasses (nothing expensive!)
- Sweatshirt/fleece/long sleeved shirt/light jacket (2-3)
 - If you plan on traveling in the Andes, this is especially important
- Camera (digital or regular film, a few disposables are nice to have as well)
- Calling cards (MCI and AT&T work best)
 - Most volunteers use these to call the states from the volunteer houses and have people call them back...phone cards go MUCH quicker in Ecuador
- Rechargeable batteries
- Sheets for a twin bed (volunteer beds are a little wide)
- Set of towels (2)
- U.S. stamps
- Bug repellent with AT LEAST 30% DEET
- Sunscreen (minimum 30 SPF)
- Journal
- Toiletries

With most things, bring enough for one or two months, however some things are difficult to find or expensive (i.e. tampons, specific brands of shampoo) and you may want to consider bringing a longer supply

 - Nalgene or some type of water bottle
 - Journal
 - Baby wipes and Gold Bond powder (comes in handy when sweating!)
 - Flashlight/headlamp
 - Battery powered alarm clock
 - Recipes – you will be cooking so start practicing!
 - Any favorite books or reflection materials (keep in mind, these are heavy)
 - Photos – it's nice to have pics from home to show volunteers and Ecuadorians
 - Music – some CDs for the house and mixed tapes for the RdC vehicles
 - Cash – about \$60

Things NOT to bring:

- Pillow or blankets – there are plenty in the volunteer houses
- Fans – every bedroom has a ceiling fan
- Expensive clothing, jewelry, or watches

E. Recommended Reading

It will be good to prepare yourself to live in a new country and culture as much as you can before arriving in Ecuador. Study as much Spanish as possible, especially conversationally, with classes, instructional tapes/CDs, or books. Although we do not expect you to be fluent, the more Spanish you know, the more it will enhance your experience. Also, please note the following list of books, and they will prepare your mind for issues of service, justice, spirituality, community, and Ecuadorian culture.

Faith:

- ✓ **Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith** -- by Anne Lammott. A collection of down-to-earth, witty, and brutally honest short essays, which illustrate the tender mercies of the author's life that nudged her into Christian faith.
- ✓ **Gracias: A Latin American Journal** -- by Henri Nouwen. A moving journal of Nouwen's time in Bolivia and Peru. His words truly capture the joy and struggle to find God in mission work and in the poor of South America.
- ✓ **We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People** -- by Gustavo Gutierrez. Presents the spirituality of Latin American and enlightens its readers about liberation theology in a readable and inspirational manner. (Also check out Gutierrez's **A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation**, which is the 'grandfather' book on liberation theology.)
- ✓ **No Man is an Island** -- by Thomas Merton. A thought-provoking series of spiritual reflections from the mind of a contemplative, Trappist monk.
- ✓ **The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius** -- by Dean Brackley. Uses the insights of St. Ignatius to present genuine decision-making for personal and social change.

Justice:

- ✓ **A Violence of Love** – by Oscar Romero. As an outspoken voice for the poor in Latin America, this collection of quotes and homilies truly stirs the human heart.
- ✓ **Confessions of an Economic Hit Man** – by John Perkins. A shocking, true account of international work as an 'economic hit man', including Ecuador.
- ✓ **The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time** – by Jeffrey Sachs. This breakthrough book outlines a realist plan to end poverty by 2025, written by one of the most respected and world-renowned economists of our time.
- ✓ **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** – by Paolo Freire. This is a classic must-read for anyone working with education or development in third world countries.
- ✓ **The Road to Peace** – by Henri Nouwen. A collection of writings which presents Nouwen's conviction that spiritual life with Christ requires active involvement with the powerless in the world.

- ✓ **Still Following Christ in a Consumer Society** – by John F. Kavanaugh. Exposes the mechanisms of global consumerism and the commodification of human life that drives capitalism.

Service:

- ✓ **Volunteer with the Poor in Peru** -- by Jeff Thielman. A challenging account of a recent college grad's time working with Jesuit Volunteer Corp in Peru. The author invites readers into his feelings, successes, failures and reluctance to return to the US after encountering extreme poverty.
- ✓ **The Long Loneliness** – by Dorothy Day. Autobiography from the founder of the Catholic Worker movement.

Community:

- ✓ **Community and Growth** – by Jean Vanier. Structural and personal tips for intentional community living by the founder of L'arche.
- ✓ **Community of Faith: Crafting Christian Communities Today** – by Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, James D. Whitehead. Provides a comprehensive blueprint for creating intentional communities of Christian spirituality by drawing on theological, sociological, and strategic perspectives.

Simplicity:

- ✓ **Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger** – by Robert J. Sider. A challenging call for a more just society, accompanied with facts, figures, and suggestions.
- ✓ **Freedom of Simplicity** – by Richard J. Foster. Articulates a creative, more human style of living from a biblical and practical standpoint.
- ✓ **Voluntary Simplicity** – by Duane Elgin. An intro into living a balanced, simpler life that is “outwardly simple and inwardly rich”.

Culture:

- ✓ **Culture Shock! Ecuador** – by Nicholas Crowder. A fairly accurate A-to-Z guide through culture, customs, and other ‘Ecuadorian-isms’.

Living in Ecuador

A. Keeping in Touch

There are plenty of ways to remain in contact with friends and family from the United States and communication is relatively easy and accessible.

Phone Calls

Both houses have phone lines that can make and receive international calls. Phone calls from the volunteer houses need to be made with a phone card. These can be bought at local pharmacies. Phone cards from the states are OK, but the minutes go very quickly and it's easier to buy them here. If you do plan on using cards from the states, it is easier to call using card and ask people to call you back. Phone calls can also be made from nearby cyber cafes for 10-20 cents/minute.

Phone # for Antonio Jose de Sucre house: 011-593-4-286-4397
Phone # for Arbolito house: 011-593-4-280-1257

E-mail

There are cyber cafes in both neighborhoods within a few blocks and many in Guayaquil. The internet is relatively quick, easy to use and cheap (about 60 cents an hour).

Mail/Packages

The Ecuadorian postal service is generally reliable. Letters from the US take a week or so to arrive and packages take longer, depending on the weight. RdC has a post office box in Guayaquil, and mail is picked up once a week. Letters can be sent to the US with retreat groups and visitors, so it is a good idea to bring US postage, stationary, and envelopes.

Package Guidelines:

- Send all packages through the US Postal Service
- Make sure all packages are less than 4 lbs!

VERY IMPORTANT: FedEx, DHL and UPS will not deliver to Duran or the RdC post office box, so please refrain from using these companies. If packages are over 4 lbs. there is a hefty tax in addition to postal fees (usually \$20-50 per package). With a \$60 monthly stipend, this severely taxes (pun intended) volunteer cash flow.

Mailing address: Volunteer Name
 C/o Kevin Roberts, Director
 Rostro de Cristo
 Casilla 09-01-1024
 Guayaquil, Ecuador South America

B. Health and Safety

The health and safety of our volunteers is something we take very seriously and treat with utmost importance. We would not want anything to compromise your time or experience in Duran, and because of that, being mindful and knowledgeable of appropriate RdC policies is very important. Volunteers will review the safety policy at orientation and further discuss preventative strategies for taking care of themselves.

Around the RdC houses

Both houses are guarded at night by guards and dogs. There are fences around the premise of each house, although the grounds are generally free of problems. Vigilance and not being complacent are helpful hints to staying safe. Volunteers are encouraged to stay in pairs even during the day and rarely travel on foot at night. Additionally, the reputation of RdC in both neighborhoods has created an informal security system, in which neighbors and friends of the program are helpful in caring for the volunteers.

Insurance

Volunteers receive health insurance while they are in Ecuador, which is provided by Rostro de Cristo. The package does not cover pre-existing conditions. (For specifics, email Helen Rombalski, program manager, at hrombalski@aol.com.) There are local clinics within a block of both houses where doctors are used to seeing problems typical of volunteers. Most illnesses are stomach related and can be taken care of fairly easily with local doctors and medicine. In the event of an emergency, there is ‘first world’ care in Guayaquil.

Food and other health concerns

Generally, volunteers purchase and prepare meals themselves and eat as a community. Although retreat groups are not allowed to eat food outside of the retreat house, this rule does not apply to volunteers. It must be noted that food is a big part of the Ecuadorian culture, and therefore volunteers will most likely eat or be offered food outside of the volunteer house at some point during their time in Ecuador. Cleanliness and smart eating are keys to staying healthy. While living in Duran, we encourage volunteers to live simply and in solidarity with their neighbors. Daily meals should reflect that same simplicity, which is consistent with the reality of Duran. Although there are places in Guayaquil to buy “American” food, we urge – strongly – that volunteers do not go in that direction but rather choose to purchase and eat food like the people in their surrounding community.

Sometimes volunteers are concerned with whether or not they will be able to exercise while they are in Duran. There are ways in which one can exercise *and* be mindful of the culture – by participating in Ecuadorian sports and activities. Soccer (fútbol) is VERY popular and a great source of exercise. Other exercise concerns will be discussed at orientation, but please keep in mind that safety and respect for Ecuadorian culture should always guide decisions regarding exercise.

C. Service and volunteer Work

Rostro de Cristo offers an array of service opportunities for its volunteers. Again, we believe that the work a volunteer does is very important. We also believe that the work is not an end in and of itself, but a manner in which volunteers can more fully enter into the lives of the Ecuadorians they are working and serving with. Volunteers are free to discern and decide where they are called to serve but are expected to be serving full time.

Retreat Groups

One of the unique facets of the Rostro de Cristo experience is that there is constantly an influx of visitors from the United States. Retreat groups come down for an immersion retreat and are mainly from universities, high school and parishes from the US. Every volunteer leads at least two of these groups throughout their year and leading a group is an honor. The volunteer is in charge of the safety, health and basic information for a group of 10-14 people. As a leader, volunteers work with the group the entire time ensuring their experience is positive and meaningful. It is amazing to be able to walk with students and young adults in faith as they take a formative stop towards seeing the face of Christ in the Ecuadorian people. When retreat groups are in Duran, the responsibilities of the volunteer leading the group are expected to be covered by fellow volunteers.

Rostro de Cristo Program:

- **After School Programs:** RdC runs three after school programs in three neighborhoods in Duran: **Valdivia** (located in AJS), **Semillas de Mostaza** (located in Arbolito), and **Manos Abiertas** (located in 28 de Agosto). Each program has its unique attributes but all are based on giving children a safe and positive place to do homework and learn life skills. After school programs run year round, and there are at least two volunteers placed in each program. There are Ecuadorian volunteers who work alongside the US volunteers and are an important part of the programs.

Rostro de Cristo Partners:

- **Nuevo Mundo:** Nuevo Mundo is an opportunity for volunteers to teach in a real high school setting. Volunteers spend the afternoon teaching in the “fundación” school which serves the disadvantaged of Duran and Guayaquil. There is also the opportunity to work with social workers of Nuevo Mundo, in their daycare centers (there are daycares in both neighborhoods), Nuevo Mundo sponsored medical clinics, as well as adjunct teaching opportunities.
- **John Drury Technical School:** The Tech School, located in the Arbolito neighborhood, has many volunteer opportunities in numerous capacities. Recently the school was given to the archdiocese of Guayaquil, and there are plans for the implementation of a *Fe y Alegria* school program opening, which is an organization that offers education to the poor of South America.
- **Padre Damien Foundation:** Sister Annie, a religious sister originally from Brooklyn, runs a hospital and ‘house of dignity’ for Ecuadorians suffering from Hanson’s disease. Volunteers spend time with patients listening, talking, playing games, doing crafts, organizing events, and being a companion and friend.

Other Opportunities

- **Casa de Misericordia Soup Kitchen:** Both neighborhoods have a soup kitchen where extra hands are always appreciated. Volunteers do everything from serving food, entertaining children, and giving public health talks.
- **Oswaldo Guayasamin:** This is a public school located in the AJS neighborhood where past volunteers have taught PE classes.
- **Victor Murillo:** Another public school located in the Arbolito neighborhood where past volunteers have taught English, PE, and values classes.
- **Escuela Particular Alan Lynch:** Named after a former RdC director, this private elementary school is located in the 28 de agosto neighborhood and previous volunteers have taught English classes.
- **Miscellaneous:** Volunteers have also been involved with local music ministry and youth groups, the Guayaquil Women's Prison, women's empowerment groups, reading classes, and government daycare centers.

There is an evolving nature to the service opportunities available with Rostro de Cristo. Some opportunities that were available in the past may no longer be available in the future. On the other hand, there will be new opportunities that arise due to need and involvement within the Duran communities. For this reason, it is important to consult with the in-country director when exploring service opportunities.

Tips for Writing a Personal Appeals Letter

HOW CAN PEOPLE SUPPORT YOU AS YOU COMMIT TO THIS EXPERIENCE?

1. Prayers for your travels and experience while volunteering in Ecuador.
2. Monetary donations to help fund the experience.
3. Interest and time throughout the year and upon your return (you'll want a captive audience with whom you can share your experience).

TO WHOM CAN YOU WRITE LETTERS?

- Family relatives
- Friends of the family
- Former teachers and other school staff
- College friends
- Church leaders (pastors, youth ministers, etc.)
- Former or current employers
- Anyone else you can think of!

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD THE LETTER INCLUDE?

1. Background information about Rostro de Cristo (you can use information from the RdC website at www.rostrodecristo.org)
2. Why you have chosen to become a volunteer in Ecuador
3. How much money you need to raise (It is important for them to understand how much effort you are putting into the experience).
4. How you would like the recipient of the letter to be involved (prayer, financial and emotional support)
5. You may mention that many companies will match financial gifts donated by their employees.
6. Explain the Rostro de Cristo is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization and that monetary donations are tax deductible.

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE WITH THE LETTER?

- A RETURN ENVELOPE with the RDC RETURN ADDRESS
- You may want to make copies of the RDC MISSION/VISION CARD (included) which further explains the purpose of Rostro de Cristo
- Be sure to PERSONALIZE THE LETTER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. It is fine to create a letter that begins "Dear friends..." but be sure to write a personal note that shows that you care about the individual and appreciate the time they took to read the letter.
- HAND ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPES that you send the letters will increase the chances that the recipient opens and reads the letter.
- Mention that checks should be made out to ROSTRO DE CRISTO and to include your name in memo of the check



**CONSULADO DEL ECUADOR
WASHINGTON DC**

CERTIFICADO DE VISACION

NUMERO: _____
(Uso Official/Oficial Use)

FECHA: _____
(Date)

CALIDAD MIGRATORIA: NO INMIGRANTE

CATEGORIA: 12-VII

VALIDEZ DE LA VISA: UN (1) AÑO

NUMERO DE PASAPORTE: _____

VALIDO HASTA: _____

DERECHOS RECAUDADOS: US \$ 150.00

PARTIDA ARANCELARIA: III-13-9

--

DATOS PERSONALES:

NOMBRES Y APELLIDOS: _____
(Full Name)

NACIONALIDAD: _____
(Citizenship)

DOMICILIO: _____
(Address in the U.S.)

ACTIVIDAD QUE DESALLORARA: _____
(Purpose of the visit)

OBSERVACIONES: _____
(Uso Oficial/Official Use Only)

REQUISITOS / REQUIREMENTS: SOLCITUD / APPLICATION (); PASAPORTE VALIDO / VALID PASSPORT (); 2 FOTOGRAFIAS / 2 PHOTOGRAPHS (); CERTIFCADO MEDICO / MEDICAL CERTIFICATE (); RECORD POLICIAL / POLICE RECORD (); JUSTIFICACION NECESIDAD DE VOLUNTARIO / SERVICE JUSTIFICATION LETTER (); DESCRIPCÓN DE ACTIVIDADES / DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITES (); SOLICITUD DE ADMISIÓN / ADMISIÓN APPLICATION (); COPIA NOMBRAMIENTO REPRESENTANTE LEGAL / COPY OF APPOINTED LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE (); COPIA ESTATUOS / COPY OF BYLAWS (); COMPROMISO SUFRAGAR GASTOS / AFFIDÁVIT OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT ().

NOTA: EL EXTRANJERO DEBE REGISTRAR SU VISA EN LA DIRECCON GENERAL DE EXTRANJERIA, DENTRO DE LOS TREINTA PRIMEROS DIAS DE SU INGRESO AL PAIS.

FIRMA DEL APPLICANTE
(Applicants Signature)

JORGE ICAZA G.
CONSUL GENERAL (E)

REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR

SOLICITUD DE VISA/ APPLICATION FOR VISA

SOLICITO SE ME CONCEDA LA SIGUIENTE VISA PARA INGRESAR AL ECUADOR
I REQUEST TO BE GRANTED THE FOLLOWING VISA TO ENTER ECUADOR

EN CALIDAD DE: INMIGRANTE/ IMMIGRANT CON LA VISA CATEGORÍA: 10-
/IMMIGRATION STATUS NO IMIGRANTE/ NON IMMIGRANT /TYPE OF VISA 12-

NOMBRES Y APELLIDOS/ FULL NAME		ACTIVIDAD QUE DESARROLLARA/ ACTIVITY DURING STAY	
NACIONALIDAD/ NATIONALITY		DIRECCIÓN DOMICILIARA/ RESIDENCE ADDRESS	
FECHA DE NACIMIENTO/ DATE OF BIRTH			
LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO/ PLACE OF BIRTH		PASAPORTE NUMERO/ PASSPORT NUMBER	
ESTADO CIVIL/ MARITAL STATUS	PREOFESION/ PROFESION	PASAPORTE VALIDO HASTA/ PASSPORT EXPIRATION DATE	
FAMILIARES QUE INGRESARAN AL ECUADOR/ FAMILY MEMBERS TO ENTER ECUADOR			
APELLIDOS Y NOMBRES/ FULL NAME		PARENTESCO/ RELATION	EDAD/ AGE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

DECLARO QUE LA SIGUIENTE INFORMACIÓN ES VERDADERA, PARA LO CUAL ADJUNTO LOS CORRESPONDIENTES DOCUMENTOS DE RESPALDO.

I DECLARE THAT THE INFORMATION I HAVE PROVIDED IS ACCURATE AND THAT I AM ENCLOSING ALL PERTINENT DOCUMENTS.

FECHA/ DATE: _____

VALOR APLICACION/ APPLICATION FEE: \$30.00

FIRMA/ SIGNATURE: _____

How to Speak at Your Parish

If you are looking to speak about your experience to educate and raise money for Rostro de Cristo, here are some helpful ways to get that opportunity to share with your church community about RDC.

1. Find out if your church has a social justice or service committee.
2. If your parish does, find out who is in charge, call them and ask them to support your efforts by educating the parish on RDC and what you will be doing as a volunteer. They can help move things forward with your priest.
3. If your parish/church does not have a specific committee, approach your priest and ask him to allow you to help educate your church community about what Rostro de Cristo is doing.
4. When asking either a committee or priest, make sure you stress the importance of your experience and your desire to share this with others. Focus on educating and spreading awareness of what RDC is doing in Ecuador and wanting to involve this church community.
5. Let your priest or committee leader know how important it is to you to be able to share what you will be doing and that you want to educate and create awareness about Ecuador and Rostro de Cristo within this church community. You will most likely get the chance to talk when people see how passionate you are about sharing your experience.
6. Allow the parish to understand that by supporting you financially, they will be playing an important part in continuing the ministry of RDC. Without the financial support of others, the opportunity to volunteer and work for justice in Ecuador would not be possible.
7. If you still have no luck after all of this. Find someone you know who goes to a different parish. He/She can go with you to ask at his/her church.

You have a scheduled talk...Now what?

Once you have scheduled a time for your talk, whether it be at your church, high school, local organizations, you can use the RDC website (www.rostrodecristo.org) to pull information for your talk.

1. In planning what you will talk about, it is important to include specific information about Rostro de Cristo, what we do and where the money might be going.
2. Don't forget that it is also very important for people to why you have chosen to become a volunteer for a year and what has led you to this decision.
3. If you would like more specifics or information regarding Duran, contact me (eharms@jcu.edu) and I'll help any way I can.