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# General Volunteer Packet

## *Honduras*



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## The Role of the General Volunteer

We cannot keep a medical mission running smoothly without the help of our general volunteers! General volunteers contribute to our mission by supporting the work in the surgery center and on the NPH ranch. By cleaning the ORs between cases, helping to wash medical instruments, helping to wash scrubs and other medical linens, and filing and scanning patient charts, they help the surgery center run efficiently. On the ranch, they support our NPH partners by helping in the kitchen, garden, and other workstations.

## Why Are General Volunteers Important to the Success of Medical Missions?

During non-medical mission weeks, the local staff is able to fill the general volunteer roles and keep the surgery center functioning smoothly. However, during medical mission weeks, the local staff is unable to keep up with the extra volume of work that comes with greater surgical cases and 45+ extra people in the surgery center/visitor center! For this reason, general volunteers are essential to filling key gaps during medical mission weeks: there are more scrubs to wash, more ORs to turnover, more meals to serve, and more cleaning that is needed. There are also certain necessary activities that only take place during medical missions that general volunteers are needed for such as serving volunteer/staff meals and cleaning meal containers. General volunteers may also have special skills or added time to complete projects the full-time staff do not have time for such as uploading old patient charts into the electronic medical record system, collecting patient/staff stories, fixing the sidewalk to the surgery center, and more! Just like the clinical volunteers on a mission, each general volunteer is an important and valuable member of the medical mission team.

## Our Approach

One World Surgery adheres to best practices for international volunteering and short-term missions. Among these best practices is allowing the community to identify its own needs and priorities. The role of international volunteers should be to empower and support the local community in carrying out its own solutions. Since international volunteers have limited information about the dynamics of a local community and the cultural context, they risk creating projects that will not be useful and at worst, may inadvertently harm the community. Even with the best intentions, volunteers may disrupt local power dynamics, take away paying jobs, or create dependence.

To avoid these pitfalls and make a sustainable impact, our approach is to collaborate with our NPH partners and our local staff in Honduras, to determine the jobs and projects that will best meet their needs. Whenever possible, we work alongside local people who lead our volunteers in these projects instead of trying to do the job for them.

Another best practice requires that only skilled volunteers perform skilled jobs. Again, this practice ensures that volunteers do not cause harm in the communities in which they serve. This is why volunteers in the surgery center are only allowed to perform duties within their training and experience. Similarly, this is why volunteers are generally not permitted to serve in caregiver or teacher roles at the NPH home. These types of projects and assignments are only available when a volunteer has the required skills and when it is appropriate for a short-term



volunteer to fill the role, instead of a paid local person.

## Assignments

Rather than being assigned to a single role for the entire mission, general volunteers will usually rotate between various jobs in the surgery center and on the NPH ranch. Each day, non-clinical volunteers will sign up for the next day's shifts (morning and afternoon) with the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator or Hospitality Team. In some cases, such as trips with a large number of nonclinical volunteers, daily general volunteer roles will be assigned in advance.

We encourage all general volunteers to work both in the surgery center and on the ranch. For patient safety, we need to limit the number of general volunteers in the surgery center at any given time. We may ask you to take a turn at a ranch workstation to give another volunteer an opportunity to work in the surgery center. We may ask you to serve in a role that really needs to be filled to keep the mission running smoothly. Come with a spirit of service, willing to help wherever and whenever needed and to fully participate in the service aspect of the trip. **It will not be possible to spend the entire trip observing, shadowing, or scrubbing into cases.**

## Examples of General Volunteer Assignments

Descriptions of possible ranch and surgery center jobs and activities can be found in the tables below. Please note that available jobs are subject to change due to constantly evolving needs on the ranch and in the surgery center and may be different during your particular mission.

All jobs and activities will be discussed during the Sunday surgery center orientation. The surgery center orientation will start with a session for all volunteers. Then, we'll break off into groups of clinical and general volunteers. During the general volunteer orientation, we'll review details for the surgery center and ranch workstations and activities including what to wear, what to expect, and where to meet for your shifts.

Please note that many roles and activities have capacity and minimum age requirements. Children under 13 must be supervised by a nonclinical adult parent or guardian during all jobs and activities.

## Special Projects

Adult general volunteers may be assigned to special projects within the surgery center or on the NPH ranch according to their unique skill sets. Some examples of special skills that have been used in the past include carpentry, mechanics, IT or photography. Please complete the special skills survey included in your registration follow-up forms. If we find a match between your skills and a current need at the surgery center or NPH, our local team will contact you with further information about potential projects either prior to or during your trip. **Please keep in mind that there may not always be a match between the skill set you would like to use and the projects available at the time of the mission.** Additionally, our interpreters are prioritized to the surgery center, and often, we do not have the resources to enable non-Spanish speaking volunteers to provide specialized services on the ranch (i.e. teaching, counseling).

**If the One World Surgery team does not reach out to you about a special project prior to**



your trip, you should assume that you will be participating in the typical general volunteer assignments described in the rest of this packet.

## The Surgery Center Experience

While we love exposing young people and those considering a career change to the medical field, our primary goal is to provide high-quality surgical care to the under-resourced. Patient safety and quality of care always come first. If you do not have the training or education required to perform a specific skill in the U.S., you will not be permitted to perform that skill in our surgery center in Honduras.

General volunteer jobs in the surgery center will include tasks that help keep the surgery center running efficiently and can also be learned quickly during the on-site orientation. All general volunteers, including students of health professions, will be required to assist with these jobs. If they would like to observe surgical cases (age-permitting), general volunteers will be assigned to observation shifts to ensure that everyone is contributing to the mission of the week. Additionally, the number of observers in each surgery will be limited due to patient safety.

### ***Observation and Scrubbing Policies***

**Volunteers must be at least 15 years old in order to observe a case in an OR and at least 18 years old to scrub in on a case in an OR.** Only 2 general volunteer observers are allowed per OR. For total joint cases, general volunteers will not be allowed to scrub into surgery unless they have previous medical experience, such as an MA or CNA, and should plan to stay in the room from draping to closure to prevent infections. Any exception must be approved by the Honduras Medical Director, Chief Medical Officer, or Chief Operations Officer. Clinical volunteers in the OR are responsible for following best practice guidelines and keeping patient safety and dignity a priority. Please do not allow any volunteers to perform tasks outside their scope of practice. Volunteers who violate observation policies may be banned from the surgery center for the duration of the mission, sent home at their own expense, or prohibited from attending a future mission.

### Scrubbing In (18+)

#### **Permitted**

Holding an extremity  
Holding an instrument  
Applying suction  
Applying gauze  
Cutting stitches  
Helping to tear down after a case

#### **Not Permitted**

Placing blocks or placing IVs  
Using an instrument  
Suturing  
Making incisions  
Preparing/administering injections  
Cleaning wounds

## Surgery Center General Volunteer Roles

Please note that when we have small missions or few general volunteers, we may combine surgery center roles in order to best utilize our volunteers. For example, turnover crew may be asked to help with instrument cleaning during down time, or the trash helpers may be asked to keep the kitchen clean. The below roles are not comprehensive of all general volunteer roles

that may be available during the week of your mission:

Role	Activities	Requirements
<b>OR Turnover</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean ORs after each case to prepare for the next case</li> <li>• In between cases, perform general upkeep by removing trash and laundry throughout the surgery center and replacing supplies (i.e. paper towels)</li> </ul>	<p>Change into scrubs and have safety goggles or mask with shield on.</p> <p>You will see blood and other bodily fluids; please take note if you are squeamish.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>Instrument Helper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with cleaning, sterilizing, and preparing surgical instruments</li> <li>• Wrap sterilized instrument sets</li> <li>• Fold towels and surgical gowns</li> </ul>	<p>Change into scrubs and have safety goggles or mask with shield on.</p> <p>Will work with trained sterile processing specialist.</p> <p>You will see blood and other bodily fluids; please take note if you are squeamish.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 18 and up</p>
<b>Surgery Observer</b>	Observe a surgery in the OR	<p>See above “observation and scrubbing policies”</p> <p>Wear scrubs, a mask, and have safety goggles or mask with shield on.</p> <p>No cell phones allowed</p> <p>At any time a clinical volunteer may ask you to leave the OR.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up</p>
<b>Scrub into surgery</b>	Scrub into a surgery in the OR	<p>See above “observation and scrubbing policies”.</p> <p>Wear scrubs, a mask, and have safety goggles or mask with shield on.</p> <p>No acrylic / painted nails or permanent jewelry allowed</p>



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		<p>No cell phones allowed.</p> <p>At any time, a clinical volunteer may ask you to leave the OR.</p> <p>You must observe a case before you can scrub in. A Trained OR staff (MD, RN, scrub tech) watch you scrub and pass you before scrubbing into surgery.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 18 and up</p>
<b>Kitchen/ trash Helper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the surgery center kitchen clean and organized (i.e. wipe down tables and counters)</li> <li>• Prepare Coffee</li> <li>• Cut and prepare fruit</li> <li>• Communicate with surgery center coordinators regarding late meal arrivals</li> <li>• Empty kitchen trash</li> <li>• Pick up trash around the outdoor surgery center waiting areas</li> </ul>	<p>Do not change into scrubs</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>Meal Server</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with serving breakfast / lunch to staff and volunteers in the surgery center</li> </ul>	<p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>Laundry Assistant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the OWS staff in laundering all the linens and scrubs</li> <li>• Transport scrubs and linens from surgery center to the laundry building</li> </ul>	<p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>Dental Clinic Helper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the OWS dentist in the dental clinic</li> <li>• Hand the dentist instruments, observe dental cases, clean and sterilize instruments, clean dental area, and help prepare for dental cases</li> </ul>	<p>Change into scrubs</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up</p>
<b>Photographer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as photographer, documenting all aspects of the mission</li> <li>• As requested, assist with slideshow on final night of the mission</li> </ul>	<p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up</p>
<b>EMR Projects / Organize Medical Files</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in scanning and filing patient charts</li> <li>• Support patient coordinator and patient services supervisor with special projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 13 and up, under 13 with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>



<b>Clinic Scribe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Record patient notes during consult with surgeon/physician</li></ul>	<b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up (some clinical experience preferred)
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## The NPH Ranch Experience

Safeguarding and upholding the rights of the NPH children are of utmost importance, and we will never neglect these duties in order to provide a volunteer with a “feel-good” experience. Please keep in mind that NPH frequently hosts visiting groups (medical mission and other), and we want to integrate ourselves into ranch activities in a way that minimizes disruption to the routines and resources of the ranch and all those who live and work there. For children who have experienced a traumatic or unstable upbringing before coming to NPH, following a strict routine helps create a feeling of security.

We are also sensitive to the fact that creating bonds with many short-term volunteers may lead to or exacerbate attachment issues in the children, and we recognize that many jobs working with children are better suited for individuals who are trained, speak the local language, and understand the local culture. For all these reasons, there are limited opportunities to volunteer with the children, and the following activities are **not** available to our volunteers:

- Serving as a caregiver (Tio or Tia)
- Observing or teaching classes at the school
- Participating in activities at the school, during school hours
- Activities with school-aged children after school during designated homework and chore time
- Waking children up or putting children to bed

We also strive to respect the privacy of the children who live at NPH. If you would like to visit an hogar (children’s home), the school, or workshops outside of a scheduled workstation or activity, you should first check with the Hospitality team or Volunteer Engagement Coordinator to ensure it’s an appropriate time.

You should expect that at least one of your ranch assignments during the week won’t go as planned. Perhaps the NPH worker will be late, or the opportunity will suddenly become unavailable at that time. There are many reasons why this might happen.

The way of life on the ranch will likely be different than what you’re used to back home. Your medical mission week will present many great opportunities to practice patience and flexibility! Our team will help you find another assignment if your original one doesn’t go as planned; please make them aware.

You should also expect that there will not be interpreters at the ranch workstations. We concentrate our resources on providing interpreters for our patients and clinical volunteers in the surgery center, where understanding one another is critical to providing safe care. If you don’t speak much Spanish, use this as an opportunity to practice, and there’s a lot that can be communicated with gestures. Time and time again, we see our volunteers form relationships with local staff despite language barriers. Don’t let the fact that you don’t speak Spanish deter you.



## NPH Ranch General Volunteer Roles

You should expect to be assigned to at least one volunteer role on the ranch during your medical mission week; as a general volunteer, you will not be permitted to spend your entire time in the surgery center. Some of these roles will be offered as ‘afternoon experiences’ rather than full volunteer shifts and are open to both general and clinical volunteers. An ‘experience’ cannot take the place of signing up for a morning or afternoon volunteer shift.

Role	Activities	Requirements
<b>OWS Garden, Landscaping, and NPH Farm help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to the garden – weeding, raking, picking vegetables</li> <li>Planting flowers</li> </ul>	<p>Long pants, closed-toe shoes, insect repellent, and sunscreen are strongly recommended</p> <p>Bring water</p> <p><b>All Ages</b></p>
<b>Moscatti Meal Helper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help the Moscatti cooks in the kitchen prepare breakfast, lunch, or dinner!</li> <li>Chop and peel meats and vegetables</li> <li>Clean kitchen and dishes</li> </ul>	<p>Long pants and closed toe shoes required.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up, 10 and up with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>NPH Kitchen Helper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help the NPH cooks in the NPH kitchen</li> <li>Help prepare meals for the children, sort beans, and peel corn</li> </ul>	<p>Long pants and closed toe shoes required.</p> <p><b>Age Requirement:</b> 15 and up, 10 and up with the assistance of parent/guardian</p>
<b>(Experience) Wash the Pigs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help the NPH farm hands clean the pig pens</li> <li>Use a hose to wash the pigs and clean out their pens</li> </ul>	<p>Long pants and closed toe shoes required.</p> <p><b>All Ages</b></p>
<b>(Experience) Milk the Cows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NPH farm hands will show you how to milk the NPH cows and give you a chance to try as well as taste the milk</li> </ul>	<p>Long pants and closed toe shoes required.</p> <p><b>All Ages</b></p>
<b>(Experience) Playtime with Pequeños</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play with kids ages 3-17 during their afternoon playtime.</li> </ul>	<p>Please do not give the kids anything during your playtime (your phones, keys, candy, food etc.)</p> <p>Please read the informational packet on our website and ensure you are following the NPH media policies.</p>



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		All Ages
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## Meals

Breakfast is delivered to the surgery center between 8 and 9 AM. If you will be going to a ranch workstation in the morning, your breakfast will be available in the Moscati center in a container with your name on it. You are also welcome to eat from the breakfast items available in the Moscati Center guest kitchen (cereal, fruit, toast) before heading to your workstation. Lunch is delivered to the surgery center between 12:30 and 1:30 PM. If you're participating in an afternoon ranch workstation, you can have lunch in the surgery center before your shift, or you can choose to have your lunch in the Moscati Center. Please communicate with the hospitality team via WhatsApp so they know where to leave your meal. All participants will meet at the Moscati Center between 6:30 and 7 PM every night for dinner. All volunteers – not only general volunteers – are expected to help serve dinner, wipe down tables, and clean the dishes at least one night during the medical mission. Volunteers are expected to wash their own dishes after mealtime.