

## **Community Links International**

### **Puebla, Mexico Immersion**

#### *Safety and Security Statement*

#### **Current Situation in Puebla, Mexico and the District Federal (Mexico City)**

The state of Puebla, Mexico and Federal District (Mexico City) have not been affected by the increased incidents of crime and kidnapping that have taken place in and around the states along the U.S. and Mexico border. The immersion group will fly directly into Mexico City and then travel via first class bus- including additional security check- to the city of Puebla. This has been the practice since Community Links International (CLI) established its project in Puebla in 2006 and minimizes risk for the group while in Mexico City and en route to Puebla. While in the state of Puebla the group will spend the majority of time in the city of Cholula and in the town of Tecuanipan. Boston College has been working with CLI, an international organization that facilitates educational experiences for groups in Mexico, other communities in Latin America and the USA. Boston College has partnered with CLI to facilitate immersion experiences for the past 4 years. The organization was co-founded by Jim Petkiewicz and Arturo Ortega. CLI is committed to providing safe and secure experiences of immersion for educational groups. Every year CLI facilitates immersion experiences for groups from Creighton Preparatory School (NE), Brophy College Preparatory (AZ), Virginia Tech University, Michigan State University, Elms College (MA), Springfield Central High School (MA) and more. Co-founder Jim Petkiewicz worked with his family in Mexico for 8 years as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner and now resides in San Jose, CA. His daughter is BC class of 2016! He is available for additional consult related to this trip and can be reached at: [peckos@me.com](mailto:peckos@me.com)

#### **Staffing**

While in Mexico the group will be accompanied by CLI staff, including co-founder Arturo Ortega and other CLI team members.

#### **Security Precautions**

Throughout the immersion process several practices are in place to minimize risk to participants. These practices are related to transportation, accommodations, communication, home-stays, and more. CLI staff, and long-trusted community families/volunteers accompany the group at all times. All activities are done together. Even the home stays will have 2-4 students together per family. As participants on the immersion, BC students sign a conduct agreement in which they commit to abstaining from alcohol or drugs while on the immersion trip. Students are not permitted to bring expensive electronics, jewelry, nor other items which may draw unnecessary attention to them during the trip.

#### **Transportation**

Upon arriving in Mexico City the group is greeted by a CLI staff member and escorted to the bus terminal (within the airport). The group travels directly to Puebla, Mexico via first class bus. The group is met by CLI staff in Puebla and utilizes CLI vehicles for all travel within Puebla. While in Puebla, the group always travels as a large group. There may be opportunities for students to

break into smaller groups of 4-5 students/group once in a designated area (e.g. the artisan market in Puebla). The group will engage with the local communities during the day through meetings, service, and other activities. In the evenings the group will be at the retreat house for dinner followed by reflection. Usually for the last day the group will travel into colonial Puebla for site seeing, artisan purchases and a celebratory dinner.

### **Accommodations**

The immersion group will stay at the CLI Retreat House (Middle class structure.) in Cholula, Puebla and will have a home-stay experience for 2 or 3 nights in Tecuanipan where CLI team members live and work full-time. While in the CLI Retreat House the group will be accompanied by 3-5 CLI staff that oversee the program. Home-stay families are trusted, long-term collaborators with CLI and have been vetted by CLI; they have years of experience hosting foreign students. Students will stay in groups of 2-3 for their home-stay experience and will meet daily with the entire immersion group for activities.

### **Communication**

Upon arrival at the CLI Retreat House an email will be sent to students' families informing them of the groups' arrival. Throughout the program the trip leader will have access to a GPS phone, in addition to reliable access to email and phone service.