



FIELD STUDY

CATEGORY 3 PROPOSAL TO THE RDPSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gateway Christian School

April 5, 2019



CATEGORY 3: FIELD STUDY FOR DESTINATION OUTSIDE CANADA

Destination: Dominican Republic
Departure date: April 9, 2020
Return Date: April 20, 2020

Estimated Distance to Travel: 5340 km (10,680 km round trip)
Estimated Cost Per Student: \$2800-3000
Number of Students Participating: 30
Number of Supervisors: 4

PURPOSE:

Purpose, Objectives, Curriculum linkages to core and optional programs

The HANDS Field Study Experience is intricately connected to Intercultural Studies that is offered at Gateway Christian School. Students are unable to participate in the trip if they have not attended the course. Part of the course's philosophy is to inspire students to achieve success as an engaged thinker, ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit.

"Travel and intercultural experiences are experiential in nature, and often provide some of the greatest life lessons, and as a result, creates lifelong learners."

We believe that as the course exposes students to another culture, they learn empathy, broaden their understanding of the world around them, develop the attitudes and behaviours of global citizenship, and are equipped with skills and abilities they learn to solve problems that they encounter.

In RDPSD, we believe that our students have gifts, talents, and abilities and our world has needs. We carefully expose our students to learning

opportunities that are seamlessly interwoven with the Alberta Curriculum, and Gateway's Throughlines (i.e. earth keepers, justice seekers, God worshipers, faith nurturers, servant workers, order discoverers, beauty creators, creation enjoyers, image bearers, idolatry discerners, and community builders.) These experiences assist students with their own self discovery when attempting to understand what types of issues motivate them to make a difference in the world. With repeated exposure to these types of learning opportunities, students will gradually discover what intrigues and moves them and will be able to ascertain with greater certainty the area of service they may pursue for their livelihood/faith life. During these service learning experiences, our desire is to have students along with the teacher, brainstorm needs that can be met in the community that are linked to the curriculum. Then the unit is wrapped around a thematic approach that consistently points them back to an overarching throughline. After the service learning experience has been completed, we ask that students reflect on this experience so they will have a greater understanding of how this service has changed reality for them and also for the area where the service was completed. We believe that this helps us bring Glory to God which is the foundation of our existence. Upon the return of the HANDS team, Gateway's staff helps to guide the students through a reflective process that considers: "How now shall we live?"

Another purpose of the trip is to see how Canadian organizations and people are connecting with countries around the world to build capacity, support local initiatives, and create opportunities for education and change. EduDeo is the Canadian non-profit organization that Gateway has been connected to since 2011. They have provided connections and opportunities for Gateway's HANDS team in a consistent and practical way.

RISKS:

See attachment.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES (pre-trip, during trip & post-trip):

Pre-Trip:

Students learn about the legal challenges to international travel

Students research information about the host country (Dominican Republic)

Students research how Canadian cultural identity is different from Dominican identity, and the implications this has on travel.

Students learn about EduDeo's mission and vision, and how they are impacting communities around the world

Students participate in a book study on 'When Helping Hurts' - outlining the traditionally harmful approaches to intercultural experiences and how that approach is changing to include identifying areas of poverty locally: including spiritual and emotional poverty

During the Trip:

Students experience the practicalities of international travel (flights, luggage concerns, transfers, layovers, ground transport)

Students are immersed in an intercultural experience: local food, languages (including translators), shopping at local markets

Students connect to locals through spiritual/church community, school community, work site, cultural day

Students lead discussions with same-age peers, lead crafts, songs, and games with younger students, lead discussions with teachers at the partner school

Students learn from their partner school: same-age peer discussions, Students prepare crafts and activities to share with younger students, engage in cultural presentations (leading and listening to)

Students prepare skits, songs, and sporting activities to present to the partner school

Students engage in a community enhancement project, pairing with the partner school to impact the local community

Students learn from NGOs working in Dominican Republic through presentations, videos, and discussions

Students learn about local business, economy, agriculture, politics, culture through a field trip (Sugar cane fields and factory, local cathedral, visiting students' homes)

Post Trip:

Students spend time reflecting on the trip through journals (written before, during and after the trip experience)

Students share their experience with the Gateway parent/student/teacher community through a chapel/assembly time

Students share their experiences in an exit interview

Students hand in culminating assignments that summarize their learning throughout Intercultural Studies

CROSS CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT:

Gateway Christian School has worked diligently to establish a working relationship with a partner school in Managua, Nicaragua. Through our School-to-School program, Gateway and Bautista Libertad have shared personal experiences when the HANDS team is present in Nicaragua between 2011 and 2018. This includes classroom learning time, cultural experiences (similar to a classroom field trip with our partner class), community service projects (in the past this has been the cleaning of a local park/playground), preparing crafts and cultural learning activities for elementary classrooms, walking through the local community and accepting invitations into students' homes. For the first time in 2019, due to political upheaval in Nicaragua, Gateway partnered with a school in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. The Colegio Cristiano Reformado los Guandules became Gateway's new partner school. Franklin is the name of our translator and guide who contracts to EduDeo and as a local Dominican has contacts with builders, suppliers, schools, and cultural opportunities. In Nicaragua, EduDeo partners with a Christian School organization called ACECEN. In the Dominican Republic, a similar agreement has been established with COCREF (Colegios Cristianos Reformados). Prior to the trip, students will research and be taught some of the culture, history, flora and fauna, politics, and economics of Dominican Republic. Students are encouraged to take Spanish 10/20/30 as an option in their high school careers through our partner high school Lindsay Thurber. Students are expected to connect learning from other courses to the learning that they are doing in Intercultural Studies - this could include sports, games, and

activities they learn about in PE, architecture, art, dress, food they learn about in CTS option classes, language, customs, and culture that they discover in Social Studies or English Language Arts. There are many ways that students can connect their own learning to the work that they are doing in Intercultural Studies class.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP:

The purpose of Intercultural Studies is to develop intercultural competencies created through awareness and becoming proficient with relationship skills that are imperative in today's globally connected world. There is a lot of work undertaken for students in preparation for the trip - so that they feel connected to each other and to their teacher chaperones before the trip takes place. During the field study, students are learning about cultural norms, practices, and opportunities of the host country. In-country hosts are essential to the success of the team, and Gateway's HANDS team will develop relationships with our team hosts, our interpreters, and our bus driver. Attempts are made at communicating with the partner classes before we travel to the Dominican Republic. This has been done through Skype in the past, as well as through letters of interest that students write each other. Last year, Gateway exchanged photos and names of students between our two schools. This gave us an opportunity to see and recognize the students we would be spending the most time with. We have developed a long-term commitment with our partner

school in Nicaragua, and our hope and goal will be to do so with our new partner school(s) in the Dominican Republic.

The work that is done at the partner school goes a long way to developing global citizenship. Learning activities are planned that are essential in creating and developing lasting relationships. Most notably, these include creating groups of students that research and present on issues in the two partner countries. Students will spend time discussing and presenting their findings as they learn about issues that affect the two countries differently, or equally.

Reaching out to the wider community through a service project is another recurring activity that the two schools embark on together.

Last year, Gateway and Dominican students worked together to prepare the school yard, and to mix and pour cement in order to create a new courtyard. Working side by side with our partner school's students is a rewarding and team-building experience. The funds that support the building project are raised by the students who attend the trip. This is another tangible way to create connections, and for students to see the importance of their fundraising work in action.

SHARED EXPERIENCE:

Students have an opportunity to share their experiences with the entire Gateway Christian School community in two chapel/assembly settings. Prior to the trip, students and teacher-chaperones highlight

the purpose of the trip to the entire school body. Upon their return, the group creates a slideshow to share in chapel, shares personal anecdotes from the trip, highlights experiences and photos to engage the student population in the activities that took place. Students are also responsible for 'Exit Interviews' - a sit-down interview/presentation that have traditionally been done with Serge Jette and/or Rob Porkka as well as the teacher leaders of the trip. During this time, students answer a variety of questions that they have prepared for, including but not limited to: how did you prepare for the trip?; in what ways did the experiences you gained from the trip connect with the learning that you've already done in your high school career?; how was your faith affected or challenged by the things you encountered in a developing country?

Last year, Gateway moved the trip from a grade 12 experience to a grade 11 experience. One of the key reasons is so that students have a full school year upon their return to share their experiences with the rest of Gateway's student/parent/teacher community. Upon further reflection, they would also deepen their response to this life-changing opportunity.

Leading up to the trip, and while in Central America, a blog documents the experiences, learning activities, fundraising efforts, and personal testimonies of students. While out of the country, students take turns as bloggers to keep parents, teachers, and students informed of the activities that the group is engaged in.

ITINERARY:

As this will be a new experience, and one that is still being planned, an itinerary is still being put together.

Last year's itinerary is attached

March 22: Flight (00:05) to Toronto (lands at 5:50 am)
Flight (10:00) to Punta Cana (lands at 14:18)
Meet contacts and take bus to la Casa de Abraham
Set up rooms, explore retreat center
Supper @ 6:30
Cultural Orientation
Curfew @ 10:00

March 23: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Meet students, tour school
Sports afternoon at local park
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 11:00

March 24: Breakfast @ 8:00
Board bus and head to church
Church service at 11:00
Lunch at local restaurant
Return to Casa de Abraham - pool is available
Supper @ 6:30
Devotions - Reparando Movie
Curfew @ 10:30

March 25: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Classroom visits and cultural lessons
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30

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- March 26: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Leading activities in classrooms
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30
- March 27: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Work day: clean up rubble, leveling ground, prepare for concrete
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30
- March 28: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Concrete Day
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30
- March 29: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to partner school
Reflect on learning with los Guandules students
Visiting student homes
Talent Show
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30
- March 30: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to Santo Domingo
Tourist activities in capital city
Subway, cable cars, los Ojos caves, tourist market
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30
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March 31: Breakfast @ 7:00
Board bus and head to Church
Lunch at local restaurant
Travel to local beach for the afternoon
Supper at Casa de Abraham
Curfew @ 10:30

April 1: Travel Day
Board bus to airport @ 10:00
Flight (13:05) to Toronto, Flight (22:15) to Calgary

SUPERVISION:

Leaders for the trip are still being determined at this time.

Gateway intends to send 4 adult leaders on the trip. Last year for the first time, a parent went along with the team. This was not a chaperone/leader role, but in order to participate in the experience with their child. This is a possibility moving forward as well.

A Contingency Plan is attached

ACCOMMODATION:

Last year the HANDS team was set up in La Casa de Abraham. This is a retreat center outside of the city of San Pedro de Macoris (the city where our partner school is located). This is dormitory style lodging with separate accommodations for males/females. Rooms are modest with bunk beds and private showers and toilets. Adult chaperones stay in a separate room - with males/females in separate rooms as well. Breakfast and supper are provided at la Casa de Abraham, with lunch typically served at the school, worksite or on the tour. The location is gated, and secured at night, with a guard present 24 hours a day. There is running water, electricity, and WiFi.

FUNDRAISING:

Because the HANDS trip has occurred for the past 9 years, the Gateway School community gets behind the fundraising efforts of the team. Regularly scheduled events continue year after year to support students.

The total cost of the trip varies between \$2700 and \$3200 year after year. While the costs with our trip provider have not increased over the last 5 years, the cost of flights does vary. Depending on the size of our group, and the time that flights are booked, flights are more or less expensive.

Teresa Tataryn (Gateway Christian School Principal) has budgeted funds to support students who are unable to make the entire budget. We never want finances to be a reason that a student could not take Intercultural Studies, or participate in the travel experience.

In the past, group fundraising opportunities have included:

Popcorn Sales to the Gateway students

Poinsettia sales at Christmas

Bedding plants and hanging basket sales for Mother's Day

Pancake Breakfast on Field Day in June

All bottle collection from Gateway towards the HANDS team

Spring Highway Clean-Up

All Things Pretty Market set up and take down (Spring market, Christmas market, Fall market)

Change for Change (penny drive by Gateway students)

Other opportunities come up each year by parents or the community - these have remained as group fundraising opportunities year after year.

EXPENDITURE GUIDELINES:

EduDeo Ministries is the organization that Gateway has partnered with over the last 9 years. They make the trip possible. EduDeo looks for flights and compares flights from at least two providers to find the best possible price. EduDeo's costs include in-country fees which include: translators, bus driver, bus rental, accommodations, food, tourist activities, flights, and tax. EduDeo is a non-profit organization, and a portion of the money raised by students is for the purchase of building supplies. While these supplies may be used on the work site before/after the team is in-country, they will be used on the site that Gateway works on.

Last year's breakdown of the cost to each participant was as follows (approximately):

Building Cost = 20%

Logistics (lodging, transportation, food, tours) 30%

Flights 40%

Administration fees to EduDeo 10%