



# SPRING 2019 GUIDEBOOK

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Dear Encuentro Dominicano Student,

Welcome Comunidad 27! We are excited to see you soon in Santiago! We've created this guidebook, or *guía*, as a comprehensive guide to everything you need to know about your semester in the Dominican Republic. We hope that you spend some time with your family and friends looking it over as you prepare to depart. We hope that you also talk to friends who have done the program, email any questions to the Global Engagement Office or the Encuentro Dominicano Academic and Student Life Directors. Also, please check out our Facebook page and website to get a full idea of what your semester will be like.

We've included lots of information in the *guía* so that you and your family have one place to get all of your questions answered. We realize that preparing for a semester abroad can be overwhelming and for your convenience, we've created two separate guides. These pages you hold here contain **essential** information and it is vital that you read it all thoroughly. We have also created a supplemental guide which goes more in-depth into Dominican history, ILAC history, and policies, and you will find that information on the Encuentro website.

We look forward to meeting you soon, and hope that all your preparations go smoothly to set you up for a great semester. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with either of us with any questions you might have. ¡Hasta pronto!

Sincerely,

**Margarita Dubocq**

Academic Director

[margaritadubocq@creighton.edu](mailto:margaritadubocq@creighton.edu)

Dominican Cell (829) 333-6164

**Kat Turco**

Student Life Director

[katturco@creighton.edu](mailto:katturco@creighton.edu)

402-253-7517



## Preparing Yourself for the Program – The Semester Before:

### ***Academics***

The semester before you are going on Encuentro Dominicano, you will work with the Encuentro Dominicano Campus Coordinator, Jill Muegge, to register for your courses. Encuentro Dominicano Academic Director, Margarita Dubocq, is the University's academic officer on site in the Dominican Republic. All academic questions and concerns should go to her. Sign and return all required forms and documentation on your [Jays Abroad Portal](#) before you leave. **If you do not turn in your forms you will not get academic credit, and ALL forms must be turned in before departure.** (Encuentro Dominicano students DO NOT have to complete the *Study Abroad Course Approval Form* required for all other study abroad and exchange programs.)

All courses offered through Encuentro Dominicano are certified through Creighton University, including independent study courses with Creighton professors. Coursework taken through participation in the Encuentro Dominicano program will factor into your Creighton GPA and will appear on your Creighton academic record.

### ***Passports and Visas***

If you do not have a passport that is valid for at least six months after your return flight, you must get one immediately. Make sure that your passport is signed and has at least 4 empty pages for immigration stamps. Visit the [U.S Department of State website](#) for information on obtaining or renewing your passport. If you are NOT a US citizen, check with the Dominican embassy for travel rules. Please visit <http://drembassyusa.org/> for details. *Take extra copies of your passport with you in case it is lost or stolen.* Keep the copies separate from your original passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, notify the Student Life Director, Kat Turco and she will help you notify the local authorities and U.S. Embassy.

### ***Dominican Republic Visa (all students)***

No visa is required in advance for US Citizens to study in the Dominican Republic. All Encuentro Dominicano students will be required to pay a departure tax of approximately \$98.00 USD upon their departure at the end of the semester. Encuentro Dominicano staff will guide students through this process in pre-departure orientation.

### ***Cuba Tourist Card (for students enrolled in the elective course: Cuba and the U.S.)***

Students participating in the Cuba & The US elective course will be required to have a tourist card before entering Cuba for the week-long immersion. This must be purchased in Miami International Airport during the layover from Santiago → Havana, Cuba. More instructions are provided on page 17.

### ***Travel Arrangements***

Students will receive flight details (arrival date, departure date, airport information) from GEO and should book an airline ticket according to the schedule provided. **Students must arrive to Santiago on the flight recommended by GEO to take advantage of group airport pickup.** Students choosing to arrive on a flight OTHER than the recommended flight will be responsible for their own transportation from the Santiago airport to ILAC upon arrival to the Dominican Republic. Students may shop around for the best flight costs. [STA TRAVEL](#) and [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com) have student rates or you may book directly with the airline.

### ***Accommodations***

During your time at the ILAC center, you will stay in single-sex dorm rooms (4-6 people per room). You will be provided with a mosquito net, pillow, sheets, and a towel. Each room has a bathroom with a shower, closet space, selves and desks, which you will share with your roommates.

During your campo immersions, you will be staying with volunteer host families and accommodations will be discussed during the immersion orientation in the D.R. Living conditions are rather humble. The host families look forward to having you participate in family activities and are excited to share their lives with you. Since they are opening their home to you, it is important that you be respectful. You will quickly see how special Dominican hospitality can be.

If you plan to stay in the Dominican Republic after the end date of your program you may apply to stay at the ILAC Center for additional days, but this is depending on availability and not guaranteed. You must speak with the on-site staff to inquire about this possibility, and you will be responsible for the cost of your room and board during any additional days.

### ***Medical Forms***

Before you leave, you must have a physical with your physician or a physician in Creighton Student Health. Here you will complete the confidential *Health History/Health Clearance Form* with your physician's signature. Speak with him or her about taking some medications with you. This might include medications for motion sickness or antibiotics, if needed.

### ***Medical Conditions***

It is **extremely** important to get prescriptions filled in advance if you have any health conditions for which you take regular medication (for example, diabetes, asthma, heart problems, depression, allergies, etc.). **You should take enough medication with you to last the entire time you will be away.** If you give yourself shots (insulin, allergy shots, "EpiPens" for allergic reactions), carry a letter from your physician that justifies your possession of needles and/or syringes.

If you use electronic equipment to monitor a health condition (for example, glucose monitors for diabetes), be sure you have plenty of batteries. Also ask your doctor about possible changes in medication amounts, considering you will probably be under some stress, especially during your early adjustment period in your new environment.

**\*Always pack medications in a carry-on bag, not in your checked luggage, which may get lost or separated from you. ALWAYS KEEP MEDICATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER, with the prescription information on the container.**

### ***Dental and Eye Care***

Have a dental check-up and have any needed dental work completed before you leave. Be sure that you carry your prescription for glasses you and a back-up pair of glasses, if possible. If you wear contacts, we recommend that you also bring a pair of glasses to use in case of eye infections and/or unsanitary conditions.

## ***Immunizations***

Encuentro Dominicano requires students to abide by all health-related guidelines specified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as well as those provided by the US State Department through its consular information. Make an appointment with your doctor to discuss or obtain the required vaccinations. It is also important to be sure that all your current vaccinations (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, etc.) are up to date. Be aware that some immunizations need to be started months in advance of your departure. **It is very important to obtain all vaccinations BEFORE leaving for the DR.** Here is a list of the CDC's current immunization requirements for the Dominican Republic:

- Hepatitis A and B
- Typhoid
- Malaria Prophylaxis
- Rabies (please consult with your physician)

**\*Please note that these recommendations are subject to change. Please consult the CDC website prior to travel.**

## ***Creighton Global Travel Security Program and ISIC Travel Insurance***

In partnership with World Aware (formerly iJET International), the Global Engagement Office (GEO) supports Creighton students 24/7 with the Creighton Global Travel Security Program. You will be enrolled by GEO staff and then receive a welcome e-mail and instructions on how to install and use the app. *All Creighton study abroad students will be assessed a \$100 Global Travel Security Fee to his/her Creighton University bill for this service. Non-Creighton students, please inquire with your study abroad office for pricing information.*

### **What are the program benefits and how does it work?**

- Upon booking your international trip, you will receive a trip acknowledgment email from World Aware with a pre-trip briefing and invitation to create a personal account.
- A personal account provides several benefits, including access the Worldcue® Mobile app for iOS and Android devices. Worldcue® Mobile gives you access to information affecting your travel and wellbeing, including real-time push notifications of significant events, country risk ratings, and a library of tips for hundreds of cities.
- Worldcue® Mobile puts assistance resources at your fingertips: Tap "Hotline" to connect with a Creighton 24/7 Emergency operator. Tap "Safety Check-in" to confirm your safety. Tap "Crisis Signal" to broadcast a silent distress signal.

### **ISIC/GBG Emergency Medical and Travel Insurance**

All study abroad students are enrolled in Creighton's travel insurance for international activity through the [International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#). This international health insurance covers medical evacuation, family airfare expense, and repatriation of remains. **This policy does not replace Creighton's student insurance; it supplements needs you might have when away from campus.** Review the [ISIC/GBG travel insurance policy](#) before departing.

**All medical treatment in the DR will require payment upfront for services**, and then you will submit receipts and documents for reimbursement through ISIC/GBG. Make sure and keep all your documents for reimbursement.

### ***Phone & Communication Options***

Encuentro Dominicano provides you with a mobile phone for local use while in the DR. The phone is provided free of charge, but **it is YOUR responsibility to load the phone with minutes via prepaid card**. The cost varies depending on how much you use the mobile phone, but the average cost is \$10USD/month. Prepaid phone cards from the US do not work in the DR. **You are required to bring this phone whenever leaving the ILAC campus for safety and security reasons.**

If you lose or damage this phone, you are responsible for the replacement cost (approx. RD3,500, or \$70 USD).

Many students bring their smartphones and only use WiFi capabilities when at ILAC and other locations with WiFi. Some students pre-purchase an international cellular/data plan before departure, but these plans are generally expensive. Another option is to purchase a local SIM card for your smartphone but your phone must be unlocked and SIM card-capable before leaving the US.

**Whatsapp** – We strongly recommend downloading this free WiFi messaging app for contact with Dominicans and friends/family back home. Whatsapp **MUST** be downloaded before leaving the US as it requires an SMS confirmation.

**Skype**- Skype has different calling plans to contact us cell phones and landlines.

## Preparing Yourself for the Program – Weeks Before Departure:

### **Budget**

**Cash:** Do not exchange U.S. money for Dominican pesos before you leave. There is a money-exchange house near the ILAC center, so you can easily exchange money once you arrive.

**Credit/Debit Cards:** Take a major credit or debit card (or both). VISA is one of the most widely accepted credit cards worldwide.

**Notify your credit card company and bank(s) that you will be abroad, so they can expect international transactions.** Check with your bank to determine international withdrawal fees. Some students take a second credit card (kept in a separate location from the primary card) to use in cases of emergency.

**ATM Machines:** There are many ATM machines in Santiago and throughout cities in the DR.

**Traveler's checks:** Do NOT bring travelers checks.

**Planning your Budget:** Your housing, most meals and program transportation costs are included in the program cost. You will want to plan for additional spending money while in the Dominican Republic. You should consider making plans for emergencies and consider other discretionary spending you might need when planning your individual budget. Talk to students who have gone in the past for a better sense of how much you may spend.

### **MANDATORY STUDY ABROAD COSTS**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Average Cost (in USD)</b>
Orientation Dinner	\$20
Orientation Guagua Rides	\$5
Phone Card for Local Cell Phone (required)	\$40 for the entire semester (\$10/month)
Sosua Day Trip (orientation trip)	\$15
Lunch in Santo Domingo (academic trip)	\$20
Dinner in Santo Domingo (academic trip)	\$20
Service Site Transportation for whole semester	\$25-\$45
Reorientation Dinner	\$20
Final Service Site Trip	\$2
Departure Tax (paid upon departure from DR)	\$98

**SEMESTER AVERAGE MANDATORY TOTAL COST: \$275 - \$300 USD**

**Medical Costs:** Students are responsible for their own medical costs. Most costs are covered by ISIC but must first be paid out of pocket. Expect to pay \$40-\$60 in cash for each medical visit, plus the cost of transportation, labs, and prescriptions (as needed). **AVERAGE MEDICAL VISIT COST: \$70 USD**

## OPTIONAL SEMESTER COSTS (INCLUDING NON-STUDENT LIFE EXCURSIONS)

<b>Optional Travel/Trips</b>	
Climbing Pico Duarte	\$150 - \$320 (depends on # of days and mules)
27 waterfalls	\$15 + transportations + food, drinks, etc.
Trip to the beach	\$15 for transportation + other expenses (food, hostel, drinks, etc.)
<b>Average total Cost: \$350 USD</b>	
<b>Dining Out</b>	
Restaurants	\$15 - \$25 each time you eat out
Drinks	Varies greatly (\$2.50 - \$9 per drink)
Snacks	Street food is usually \$.50 – \$2.00
<b>Average total Cost: \$320 USD</b>	
<b>Laundry</b>	
Laundry Detergent	\$20
Machine and Dryers	Free
<b>Average Total Cost: \$20 USD</b>	
<b>Transportation (Misc.)</b>	
Taxis (must use after 7 p.m.)	~\$10 – \$20 dollars round trip total (usually much less when shared)
Guaguas (local bus)	\$0.25 p/student p/trip
<b>Average Total Cost: \$200 USD</b>	
<b>SEMESTER AVERAGE OPTIONAL TOTAL COST: \$900 - \$1,200 USD</b>	

### Other Costs to Consider

Souvenirs	Fall/Spring Break Trips
Trips to other cities/beaches	Special Groceries (if you choose)/Shampoo/Soap/etc.
Supplies for Service Site (optional)	Visits back to Campos
Skype Credit	Family/Friend Visits

**\*\*Emergency Funds:** It is important to be able to access emergency funds if you need to seek medical attention. Think about bringing an extra credit card so that you can access money in the case of an emergency.

### ***Dress Recommendations:***

**Dominicans (in both the city and campo) are sharp dressers.** Going to the movies, mall, out to eat, even to class at the local university is an “event” for most people. Women usually will wear a blouse, nice jeans, and nice sandals or flats. Men will tend to wear button up or polo shirts, nice jeans, and dark-colored or leather slip-ons. Wearing athletic clothing outside of athletic events (running shoes, leggings, loose fitting t-shirts denoting an event or sorority/fraternity) is a very American thing to do.

For women, we recommend more long pants/jeans rather than capris or skirts for additional protection from mosquitoes. Light colors and light materials are best, and clothes that wrinkle easily are not recommended. **You can purchase laundry detergent in the DR.**

The Student Life Director will provide more information in orientation in the D.R. about proper dress and specific dress guidelines. Wearing spaghetti straps, mini dresses/skirts, and shorts above the knee are not permitted on campo immersion or at ILAC, but you can wear them to the beach. See the guidelines below.

**In the City:** Females can wear long shorts/capris, though pants and long skirts may be preferable. Males are encouraged to wear long pants. Locals tend to dress up every day. Sloppy dress is not in style.

**In the Campo:** Daily dress for males and females includes long pants and a shirt. Work clothes are jeans/pants, t-shirts and tennis shoes or boots. Tank tops, sleeveless tops, and shorts should not be brought to the campo except for sleeping. Bring a long-sleeved shirt or lightweight jacket. Females may wear a long skirt/dress to church.

### ***Dress Code:***

**At the ILAC CENTER:** Shorts and skirts must be at least knee-length. Running shorts should be worn **exclusively** for exercising, never in the buildings. Tops must be worn over sports bras when exercising. Sleeveless tops are okay, but short-shorts, spaghetti straps, backless or sheer tops are not appropriate at ILAC, especially Monday-Friday, 8-5 p.m. These items are appropriate for sleeping in the dorms.

**At Service Sites:** Appropriate dress varies from site to site; however, students should look put-together when going to their service sites. Shorts and sleeveless tops are not appropriate for service. Culturally, respect is shown through clothing and physical appearance. Wearing extremely casual clothing to service sites (loose t-shirts or ripped jeans) could be seen as a lack of respect.

## Encuentro Dominicano Packing List

### Clothes and Shoes:

#### For ILAC & service sites:

- Jeans/pants for daily wear 3
- Shorts (**knee length** or longer) and/or capris 1
- Shirts 6
- Blouses, nicer shirts, collared shirts (appropriate for church) 5
- Pants or dresses (or other appropriate church attire) 1-2
- Tennis shoes 1 pair
- Sandals (with straps are recommended- Chacos/Tevas/Keens) 1 pair
- Tank tops (to work out/sleeping/at ILAC-NOT spaghetti straps) 3
- Athletic shorts (to work out/sleeping/at ILAC) 2

#### For campo immersions:

- Lightweight Climbing/rugged boots (also used for hiking trips) 1 pair
- Flip-flops (1 pair that can be used for showering) 1-2 pairs
- Long skirts (at or below the knee) or nice pants for church in campo 1-2
- Work dry fit pants/jeans 2-3
- Work t-shirts 3-5
- Work shoes (old athletic shoes) 1 pair

#### For nightlife in Santiago:

- Nice shoes (for dancing/going out, wedges OK for women) 1-2 pairs
- Dress shirts (for dancing/going out) 4
- Dresses (for dancing/going out) 2-3

#### Etc.

- Sweatshirt and Sweater 2
- Long sleeve shirt 1
- Socks (long and short) and underwear 10 - 12
- Pajamas/Sleepwear/Sweat pants 1
- Swimsuit (and a sarong/beach cover-up) 2-3
- Cross-body purse for daily use in Santiago 1

#### Required Additional Items

- Laptop or tablet for school work
- Passport & License (or other form of ID)
- International Student Insurance Card (ISIC)
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Reusable water bottles (2 large bottles)
- Journal
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Alarm Clock (battery operated)
- Backpack or duffle bag (for weekend trips)
- Flash drives to save school work
- Prescription Medicines (4-month supply)
- Basic First Aid Kit (band-aids, Neosporin, painkillers)
- Baseball or sun hat
- Credit/Debit card
- Hand Sanitizer
- Bug Repellent (with 30+% DEET)
- Rain jacket

**Optional Packing Items** – Some can be purchased in the DR, but may be expensive

- Headset for SKYPE use/earphones
- Sunglasses
- Watch
- Sunblock (SPF 30 or stronger)
- Dramamine
- Laundry Bag
- Camera
- Planner/Agenda
- Spare Batteries
- Pair of Scissors

***Suggestions for Host Families:***

Photos and postcards are the recommended gift for host families.

***Luggage***

Check with your airline for specific requirements regarding luggage size and weight. Many airlines allow one free checked bag for international flight, as well as one free carry-on and personal item. They may charge fees for additional luggage. Pack essentials in your carry-on bag (medicine, contact lenses and glasses, etc), and a spare change of clothes in case your luggage is delayed. Tag all luggage with your name and address.

***Passport and Documents***

Make two photocopies of all your documents - passport, student identification card, driver's license, student insurance card and policy, etc. Carry one set of copies in a place separate from the documents themselves and leave another set at home with your family.

*Never pack your passport in your checked luggage.* While traveling, always keep your passport with you. Once arrived, you will store your passport in a safe at the ILAC Center. Carry a copy of your passport with you while traveling around the Dominican Republic. The Student Life Director will provide this copy.

## Preparing Yourself for the Program – The Day of Departure:

### **Safety**

Safety guidelines:

- Do not carry money and important documents all in one place.
- Never pack essential documents, valuables or medicine (anything you could not do without) in your checked luggage. Put them in your carry-on bag.
- Take only the credit/debit cards you will use.
- Keep a separate list of cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures for credit cards, passports and visas, identification and insurance cards. Ensure someone at home has a copy.

For international flights, arrive at least two hours prior to departure to navigate airport security.

### ***For your own safety while traveling:***

- Do not watch other people's luggage in the airport or leave your bags or articles unattended.
- Do not check bags for anyone else or carry gifts/packages for anyone you do not know very well
- Avoid suspicious, abandoned packages in the airport and elsewhere and report them to security personnel.
- Watch for suspicious behavior and do not be shy about reporting it.

### ***Getting Your Luggage***

After customs, pick up your luggage from baggage claim. It will then be x-rayed. Have your baggage claim tickets handy in case airport attendants ask to see them.

If your luggage did not arrive, go to the baggage claim service desk. Do NOT leave the airport without providing ILAC's phone number and address so that your airline can deliver your luggage directly to ILAC once it arrives.

#### **ILAC**

Carretera Duarte Km. 7½  
Licey al Medio, Santiago  
Dominican Republic  
Phone: 809-736-0095

## What to Expect: Getting to Know Encuentro Dominicano

*Encuentro Dominicano* students will be expected to live consistently with the Creighton Code of Conduct and the CESI Code of Conduct. Remember that all actions while enrolled as a student in the *Encuentro Dominicano* are direct reflections upon the CESI Center, Creighton University, and the USA.

### **Rules and Regulations**

#### **Curfew**

ILAC curfew is **2 a.m.** every night. There are consequences for breaking curfew, which will be covered in orientation. This curfew for student safety and protection. *This curfew is subject to change as the Student Life Director sees necessary.*

#### **Leaving the ILAC Center**

We encourage you to leave the ILAC Center and explore Santiago and the Dominican Republic during your free time. As a general safety precaution, you are not permitted to leave ILAC's immediate surroundings (as defined by the Student Life Director) by yourself. You must leave with at least one other student and must always carry a cell phone to call or be called in case of an emergency and must notify the Student Life Director of where you are going.

#### **Alcohol**

**Consuming alcohol is NOT allowed at the ILAC Center or in the *campos* at any time. No exceptions.**

The legal drinking age in the Dominican Republic is 18. However, drinking alcohol your choice and responsibility, and there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior. Most Dominican alcoholic beverages have a higher alcohol content than those in the U.S., especially beer.

Alcohol usage is different in the D.R. than in the U.S. You will see alcohol use on the streets of Santiago and in the *campos*. While drinking is socially acceptable, getting drunk is not. You should not walk the streets drinking beer as it is disrespectful to local Dominicans, and you should not bar hop on foot. Once it gets dark in Santiago, you need to use taxis.

Individuals and groups of intoxicated US citizens are prime targets for thieves. Be cautious of your surroundings, especially if you have chosen to drink alcohol.

#### **Illegal Drugs**

The possession or use of illegal drugs is not accepted in the Encuentro Dominicano program and is grounds for being dismissed from the program. The penalty for illegal drug possession is considered a "criminal offense" with immediate and prolonged jail time, without due process or bail. Students need to understand the seriousness of breaking Dominican laws, as the Dominican legal system is not going to care if you are a Creighton student and you will have to abide by their legal process.

#### **Personal Relationships/Sexual Activity**

Respectful friendships with Dominicans are encouraged at the ILAC Center and in the *campos*. "Respectful friendship" does not include romantic, intimate physical behavior of any kind, including sexual activity and kissing. Sexual activity in the Dominican Republic involves great personal risk

including scandal, sexually transmitted diseases, and the potential for sexual assault. Relationships that can disrupt the functioning of the Encuentro program or jeopardize the relationships which Encuentro has built among the Dominican people will be a violation of the Creighton Code of Conduct.

As the University's Code of Conduct states, "Any sexual activity which is not in accordance with the Judeo-Christian values of Creighton University and the specific doctrinal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are prohibited on University property or in the course of activities sponsored by the University or its organizations." Therefore, engaging in sexual activity may result in your being sent back to the US, which includes withdrawing from all Encuentro courses and paying for all remaining airline and University fees.

Please also note, Dominican law does not protect students from sexual assault in the same way that laws in the United States may. If a student chooses to initiate a sexual encounter or consensually agree to one, they have little or no protection in the Dominican law should they choose to withdraw their consent.

Students are advised that it is NOT safe to go off alone with a Dominican of the opposite sex, and that seeking out a place to be alone with a Dominican might be misunderstood in the cultural context as meaning something different than originally intended. Private conversations can take place privately but should be in open places where other people are nearby.

## What to Expect: Service Learning

### **Encuentro Dominicano Service Sites**

You will visit all the service sites during orientation before you choose your placement. The comunidad will learn how to navigate public transport (guaguas a.k.a. vans) to get to service site during orientation. University policy stands that students are responsible for all transportation costs to and from their service site. Costs vary among the sites and students will be learn the costs during orientation. Students MUST always be seated within the guagua and not hanging off the side.

#### **Hospicio San Vicente de Paul**

*Description:* Hospicio is one of the few elderly “hospice” care facilities in the Santiago area. Hospicio is a community for 70 elderly individuals. USAID has reported that Hospicio is considered a location where the need for food is “great”. USAID has contributed to this problem through donations of international donations of food to supplement the meals provided at Hospicio. Many of the individuals at Hospicio lack friendships and relationships with others.

*Expectations:* Students who choose this site will spend a lot of time conversing with the members of the community. A decent command of Spanish is helpful. You may participate in daily Domino games, occupation therapy or physical therapy. You may also attend in the daily religious ceremonies with residents.

#### **Caritas**

*Description:* Run by a small order of nuns, *Caritas* is a feeding program for poor children in the Santiago area. There are more than 30 feeding centers throughout the city, but the one in Licey is closest. *Caritas* feeds between 30-60 children daily so they may attend school with a full stomach. Students arrive mid-morning and assist with reading to children, playing, serving food, and helping to clean up. Currently, students work at *Caritas* centers in Licey and in Cien Fuegos.

*Expectations:* Basic Spanish is necessary to interact in this service site, it will also allow one a glimpse into poor families and the food challenges they face. You will need patience to manage the chaos of 30-60 children during a normal visit.

#### **Angeles de CONANI (Hogar Luby)**

*Description:* Hogar Luby was founded in 1991 as a home for disabled children and adults. It was privately owned and managed and used cages until the mid-1990’s when cribs were introduced. On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005 it was taken over by CONANI, a governmental organization that works specifically with children (ages infant-18). There has been much speculation about exploitation and scandal under the initial ownership and management. Since the time that CONANI took over, the home has seen many changes. These changes include better treatment of residents, cleaner living conditions, more organization and higher payment for employees. Recently, the government has donated the lower level of the original building. The extra physical space is great for the residents and provides the children with the opportunity to be outside. Under the old management, families had to pay for their loved ones to live in the home. Now, under government control, the services are free. There are 14 paid employees. There are 3 who work a rotating night shift so that there are always 2 people (one nurse and one childcare professional) with the children throughout the night. In addition, there is a physician who comes to check on the residents Monday thru Friday, and is on call.

*Expectations:* Walking into Hogar Luby can be difficult. Others find walking into Angeles de CONANI a joyful place, where extremely disabled children an fairly-functional children are cared for. CONANI is under-funded and while the staff will keep a child alive, there is very little physical therapy, psychological and speech therapy, and other typical first world opportunities for growth and development.

**Acción Callejera**

*Description:* Acción Callejera is an organization that works with street children in Santiago. Many of the children at the center have dropped out of school to make a living on the streets, shining shoes or washing car windows. They are a very vulnerable population whose rights are often neglected. Acción Callejera provides a variety of services to the children—counseling, homework help, meals, showers and recreation. They also work heavily in prevention, since it is much harder to rehabilitate children accustomed to the rough life on the streets than it is to prevent children from leaving their homes and schools in the first place.

*Expectations:* Volunteers are expected to help the children in the areas where it is most needed, whether it be homework help or recreation. There are also possibilities of creating and implementing new programs with the approval of the director of the organization. This service site requires a decent command of Spanish.

*\*Note: Due to different sizes of Encuentro communities, sites may not be offered all semesters.*

## What to Expect: Cuba & The US: Havana Immersion

### Travel & immigration

Your round-trip ticket to Havana, Cuba will be booked by Creighton University GEO. When you receive the flight information via e-mail **please confirm within 24 hours that the name and passport information on your ticket is correct**. All students will fly from Santiago → Miami International Airport → Havana, Cuba.

**You are responsible for purchasing the Cuba Tourist Card (visa) during your layover in Miami. The cost is \$100.00 USD and is paid to American Airlines. You will purchase this at the gate before you board the plane to Havana.** American Airlines staff at the counter will assist you with this purchase. You can pay for the tourist card with credit or debit card.

Transportation from ILAC to the Santiago airport is provided for the group and you will meet your immersion leaders upon arrival in Havana (unless instructed otherwise).

### Money

**NO US CREDIT OR DEBIT CARDS are accepted in Cuba, so it is cash all the way.** Three meals a day will be provided at your residence, but you will likely want to do some exploring on your own as well. **You will need US Dollars to exchange in Cuba because they will not exchange Dominican Pesos. GEO recommends bringing \$100 USD to take to Cuba.** You can bring it with you to the DR or take cash out at the ATM in Miami during your layover from Santiago to Havana. This should be enough to cover any shopping, drinks, cover charges that you will encounter in your week, but it can vary depending on your spending habits.

### Internet

**WiFi is unreliable** and available only at designated areas in Havana and you must have an internet card to be able to access it. GEO will provide each student with a 1-hour WiFi card for you to use during your time in Cuba. The instructors will hand out the WiFi cards in Havana and will also point out the WiFi access areas in the city.

### Packing

You will want to pack for the week in Havana in a **carry-on suitcase or backpack!** Recommended dress is similar to that of ILAC. The dress code for service sites is the same as in the DR – a clean and professional look. There will be a beach day, so pack your swimsuit, too! Other recommended items include: travel towel (for the beach), sunscreen, walking shoes/sandals, over-the-counter meds, an umbrella, and a daypack for touring around during the day.

