



Community Info



Welcome

You have made the exciting decision to spend a week serving with the people of Sumpango this summer. In response, we want to do all we can to prepare you for the beautiful community in which you will be immersed. That is why we have created this Fact Packet: to communicate information about Guatemala that will be significant as you live within this community.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

By the Numbers | specific statistics regarding the community.

Background to the Numbers | An explanation as to why some of these statistics exist.

Beyond the Numbers | A page dedicated to the potential of the community. These are words from community members themselves as to what is already taking place in Sumpango internally, to defy these statistics.

Things You Should Know | Details to know before heading out to Sumpango this summer.

Partnerships in the Community | Individuals and organizations that we partner with in the community extending our impact far beyond one week.

Long-term Involvement | Ways for you to become and stay involved in this community before you arrive, and after you go home.

Resources | Additional information to dig deeper in your learning of this community.

Understand that this packet reveals just a small glimpse of the complex culture that truly defines the people of Sumpango. Allow this information to create awareness: an awareness that in the midst of these seemingly hopeless statistics, there are individuals and organizations that are relentless, as they continue to reveal the potential that lies within the camp. We are on this journey with you and commit to consistent investment in growing our knowledge and involvement in this community. We are grateful for your partnership with us, as well as the community of Sumpango this summer. God will work in huge ways through you as we come alongside this community. It is my goal to support you in any way I can as questions come up concerning Sumpango and the experience you will have in this community.

Blessings,

Betty Merida

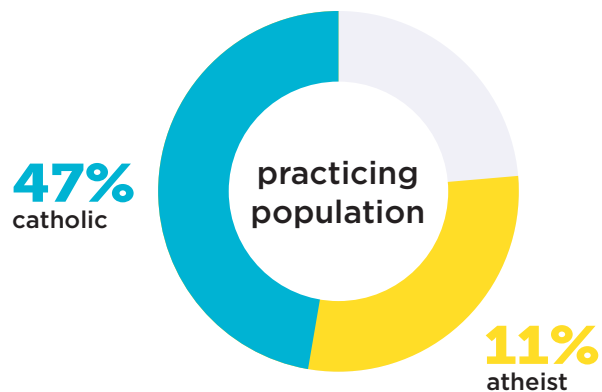
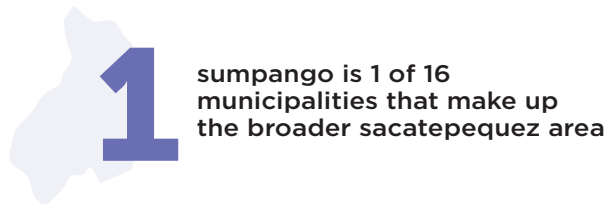
BETTY MERIDA

partnership coordinator

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by the numbers

STATISTICS REGARDING THE COUNTRY OF GUATEMALA



9.3 physicians per 10,000 people

15.8 MILLION total population

7.2 MILLION population under the age of 18

336,606 population in sacatepequez

130,000 people living with HIV



background to the numbers

Sumpango is a microcosm of Guatemala City in many ways. Although Sumpango is a more rural area than the city, many key issues that lead to poverty remain the same. Lack of jobs, education, and substance abuse remain the most prevalent source of despair.

Sumpango is home to a garbage dump that is a focal point of the community's poverty, similarly to Guatemala City. The dump attracts community members seeking anything they can find to sell (usually cans, plastic, or scraps).

Next Step teams will be serving alongside families that are living in the most rural areas of Sumpango, even outside the 'city' area of Sumpango where there is some economic opportunity.

Many families teams will be serving along side will be living 5-10 individuals in a room. In addition to the overcrowded space, families struggle with finding privacy for young boys and girls as they grow into teenagers.

Because of the high percentage of youth (63%) living below the poverty line, many children are forced to leave school at a young age and go work in the fields to bring in any extra income they can for the family. This survival method creates a cycle of poverty that is very challenging for families living in rural Sumpango.

As noted, Guatemala has the highest rate of indigenous people in Central America, which leads to a beautiful country full of rich tradition and pride.

beyond the numbers



Sumpango is the poorest of the poor. Although amongst the poverty, the church has a dream; a dream to serve the community by serving the children of the area. It is our dream is that someday our church will not only have pastors but also have teachers and that someday our children will learn to read and write. Without being able to read and write, kids will never be able to read the bible. But, the leaders of this community are very passionate, very smart and very hopeful.

BETTY MERIDA

Sumpango resident and community leader

Our mission at the church in Sumpango is to win souls. And to do that through our local people. First to befriend them, then to disciple them, and then to empower them. We can develop their ministry and then they can evangelize and soon we will all live a life of adoration and love to the Lord.

PASTOR MANUEL

Pastor in Sumpango

The families that we met in Sumpango are so filled with love and joy. I had the opportunity to spend a week at a home in the country to build a home addition. Not only did the family pour their hard work into the project day in and day out with us, but the laughter, jokes, and dancing we all did together each day really made me understand the love that God has in all of this. The smiles on the faces and the joy in the hearts of the family truly bridged the language barrier and bonded us close together.

STUDENT REFLECTION

in Sumpango



These reflections from members of the community defy the previous statistics. These testimonials explain how God is at work and what can be accomplished through the love of Christ. We are excited to serve alongside this community with eyes that see the potential of this community, as opposed to the plight that exists.

In your time in Sumpango you will have the privilege of serving alongside Betty Merida. Next Step met Betty about ten years ago when we were serving in Guatemala City. In 2012, Betty felt God calling her to move to Sumpango to start her ministry called, 'Breaking Cycles'. Betty now has a home in Sumpango and lives there with her adopted son, Miguel Angel. Betty serves with Next Step in addition to working within various capacities within the community to bridge the gap between different needs and resources within the local community structure and families and the local church. Betty is a tremendous resource for information about the community and it will be a joy to serve alongside her during your trip.

Next Step has chosen to partner with Breaking Cycles and Busca a Dios Church in Sumpango. Pastor Marvin and his family have a strong heart for the Gospel, missions and evangelism. He believes the way to spread the love of Christ to the community is to serve the community in very tangible ways such as housing, education, and food. The pastor and his family will be serving alongside teams during the summer as their ministry efforts reach out into the community.

Spanish and Mayan will be the two most common languages spoken in the neighborhoods that you are serving in on your trip. Most native Mayan speakers also are fluent in Spanish. Next Step will provide a translator on every work project.

Many of the communities you will be partnering and serving in are traditional Mayan communities. Mayan communities have a beautiful and rich tradition. Mayan's are native to Guatemala and love to share about their history and culture so be encouraged to ask questions. You will notice some physical characteristics right off the bat (height, dress, number of children), but their heritage goes much deeper and families will be honored to talk about their life.

As in any community, the range of personal faith is quite vast between the residents of Sumpango. The predominant religion is Catholicism, however, other families may practice traditional Mayan beliefs. While most residents are familiar with Christianity, many follow closely and others are far from God. Feel encouraged and comfortable to openly share your faith. Take the time to relate to the residents and listen to the stories they have to share. God is moving in big ways in Sumpango.

long-term involvement

Below are five practical ways that you and your group can be involved on a year round basis in the community, extending your service much beyond your one-week trip. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming involved in any way.

1. SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF BREAKING CYCLES

The Breaking Cycles ministry survives on support alone. They work year-round in Sumpango running the programs you got to be a part of during your trip, as well as several others. It costs money to run these programs and upkeep the ministry. They have administration expenses, employee salaries, and many other costs they need to pay to keep serving like they do. Please consider supporting the ministry.

2. RECRUIT A SKILLED TEAM FOR AN OFF-SEASON TRIP

Next Step trips expand beyond the summer and we are always looking for skilled teams to work on specific projects in Sumpango. There is great need throughout the year for plumbing, electric and foundation work. Please consider bringing teams back out to serve in the fall, winter or spring.

3. SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF BUSCA A DIOS CHURCH

Unlike many churches in the states, Busca a Dios does not bring in much money through tithing and thus is hard to support the Pastors and projects of the church. Next Step hope to help build a financial foundation for the church to work off of. Please consider supporting the church's efforts by sponsoring a pastor or project.

4. CREATE A PRAYER TEAM

No doubt you saw and experienced a multitude of things that can use the power of prayer during your time in Sumpango. Please consider creating a prayer team to pray at specific time each day for specific prayer items in the community.

5. MAKE A ONE-TIME GIFT TO THE NEXT STEP FOUNDATION

The Next Step Foundation (NSF) is a 501c3 organization that exists to support our communities on a year-round basis. You may make a donation to NSF specifically earmarked for the Sumpango partnership.

resources

The following resources provide online tools to better understand the community you will be serving.

Busca a Dios' Facebook Page

Check out the latest at

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008263517405&pnref=lhc>

Breaking Cycles Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Breaking-Cycles-Guatemala-1021519171246873/>

Embassy of the United States- Guatemala

<http://guatemala.usembassy.gov>

Sumpango Kite Festival

<http://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/magnificent-kite-festival-sumpango-guatemala>

Guatemala Statistics Snapshot

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guatemala_statistics.html