

## **Guidelines for Volunteer applicants to the GSP Annual Stove Building trip to Guatemala.**

The Guatemala Stove Project's (GSP) primary focus is as a fundraising organization that finances stoves for the indigenous Maya families of the western highlands of Guatemala. The main purpose of our annual trip is to provide our volunteers with an awareness of the living conditions of the families that we support through our stove building program.

We do not charge an organization or volunteer fee for participating in this trip. The trip is organized and guided by unpaid volunteers who generously donate their time and efforts to arrange accommodations, transportation, stove building activities, excursions and provide travel and medical advice. We are one of the few NGOs that does not add on an additional charge for participating in an international volunteer experience.

Since the annual volunteer trip is to promote awareness among our volunteers, our expectation is that you make a commitment to support the fundraising efforts of the GSP before you participate in the annual February trip to Guatemala. This can be done in several ways. It now costs us \$225.00 to fund the building of an improved cooking stove. We are asking for a commitment from each volunteer to raise funds for at least 2 stoves (approximately \$450.00) in the year proceeding and/or following your participation in the volunteer trip. We also ask that you contribute some volunteer hours helping out at promotional events or fundraisers in the year before or immediately following participation in the annual trip.

### **Examples of ways to fundraise for the donation of 1 or 2 stoves:**

Personal or family donation of a stove.

Soliciting donations from extended family members, neighbours and co-workers (certificates are given for group donations of a stove)

Organizing a small fundraiser such as a garage or bake sale, wine and cheese party etc., with proceeds going to the GSP

Selling woven Guatemalan scarves or bracelets which we bring back from our trip each year.

### **Examples of possible volunteer hours:**

Staffing an information table/kiosk at community events such as festivals, trade shows, etc.

Arranging /attending presentations given to churches, schools, community organizations and groups.

Assisting with volunteer meetings by taking minutes, sending out agendas, making up schedules for events, contacting members, etc.

Translating English/French GSP information

Providing advice and expertise in the writing of grant proposals

Assisting with annual fundraisers by helping to book venues, entertainment, organize food and staff information and ticket booths, etc.

Attending and helping to sell tickets for our fundraisers

Assisting with the organization of the silent auctions held at our fundraisers (Perth and Ottawa) by soliciting donations, writing thank you letters and setting up or displaying items and collecting bids.

Assisting with the development of our website.

## **Revised Letter to be sent out when we receive applications**

Dear Trip Applicant:

On behalf of the Guatemala Stove Project (GSP) we would like to thank you for the interest you have shown in submitting your application for the 2011 GSP February volunteer trip to Guatemala. The dates for the trip are **Saturday, February 5 to Saturday, February 19, 2011**. Historically the estimated cost of this two week trip is between \$1,500 and \$2,000 which includes airfare, accommodation (youth hostel and budget hotels) and meals in Guatemala. Most expenses are paid individually by the travelers. A fee for group transportation within Guatemala and the purchase of stove building tools is collected ahead of time.

Our primary objective in organizing and conducting these annual field trips to Guatemala is to provide a real-life, hands on experience of the living conditions of the Maya people.. Approximately half of our days are spent building masonry cooking stoves for the Maya people. Please note that only a small portion of the total number of stoves we build annually are built during our volunteer trip. The majority of our stoves are built by trained masons throughout the year.

Every year we receive more applications for the trip that we can accept since our ideal travel group size is about 22 people. The selection criteria we use for accepting candidates is as follows:

The contribution the individual has made and/or will make to the GSP in the year before the trip and following. This contribution is outlined in the attached Guidelines for Application document. We ask that you make us aware of your plans for a fundraising commitment.

The individual's previous experience building masonry stoves or assisting with the organization of the volunteer trip.

The individual's fluency in speaking Spanish in order to help out with interpreting situations.

The individual's qualifications/experience in the field of medicine (eg. Medical doctors and nurses), as we are a health based organization and always interested in offering opportunities to improve the lives/well-being of the Mayan population that we and our Guatemalan partner organizations serve.

Once the GSP Board of Directors have reviewed and discussed the information you have submitted and assessed all other candidates' submissions, we will advise of your acceptance. Normally the applications are reviewed in November shortly after we have completed our fall fundraisers. If accepted, you will be asked to confirm with us that you are still interested and available for the dates of the trip. Once we have established our list of volunteers, we will begin to make group/ individual travel arrangements. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you once again for your interest,

Respectfully,

**The GSP Board of Directors and Coordinator**