



## Important Information You Need To Know...Before Your Trip

As you are preparing to embark on this adventure to Harmons, it is important to have accurate expectations for your trip to be successful. These expectations play out in simple things like how and what you pack - and more complex things like mentally arranging yourself to properly serve others and willingly give up perceived rights.

The following (although not exhaustive) are expectations of which you need to be aware:

This trip may involve some of the hardest work you've ever done in your life.

Complaining is not profitable; encouragement is contagious. Even when you're dirty, stinky and exhausted, Jamaican kids don't care - they just want your attention. Your living conditions will be different than what you are used to in the States: showers will be very, very short and always cold; the sun will be very hot; and the bus ride from the airport to Harmons will be very long - which is probably the last thing you will want after flying all day. You will be expected to leave virtually everything you brought in Harmons - so don't bring anything you must bring home. Your personal space will be constantly violated because Jamaican kids don't see invisible barriers. Your heart may get broken. You may not want to leave. You may want to come back. Did we mention it will be hot?

As you are gathering items to take to Harmons, keep in mind that you can only take 50 pounds plus what you manage to jam into your carry-ons. That might sound like a lot, but it really isn't. Once you get to Harmons, you will wish that you could have brought everything you own. The following is how we require all teams to pack.

1. Each team member is asked to take two carry-ons (a backpack and small rolling suitcase) and one checked suitcase. Don't pack in large duffle or military bags. These types of bags only draw unwanted attention to yourself and your entire team when going through Jamaican customs. This extra attention may cause customs agents to thoroughly search everyone's bags. Another red flag for customs has been wearing camouflage clothing, so please refrain from wearing that through the airport. Good-conditioned, soft-sided suitcases can often be found at thrift stores or garage sales. Be sure the suitcases are large enough to pack 50 pounds in each of them. Avoid older, hard-sided suitcases. **IMPORTANT:** Please only bring checked-on

suitcases that you can leave in Jamaica. Please bring good-conditioned, soft-sided suitcases that have wheels.

2. The one checked suitcase per team member needs to weigh as close to 50 pounds (without going over) as possible and will be **full** of items to be donated or used by the team during your trip. Be sure to only bring suitcases that are large enough to actually hold 50 pounds. Do not guess a suitcase's weight. Take the time to weigh each bag.

**Pack the following personal items in your two carry-ons (we recommend a roll-behind, small suitcase that you are willing to leave in Harmons and a backpack):**

- swimsuit (modest 1-piece or tankini that touches in the middle for females)
- sleepwear
- socks and undies for 7 days
- Bible, pen, and journal
- flashlight and extra batteries
- snacks for yourself (granola bars, fruit snacks, protein bars, etc.)
- flip flops
- personal medicine (Dramamine, etc.)
- personal hand sanitizer
- personal face mask(s)
- work clothes for 5 days (sleeved t-shirts and shorts/pants)
- casual clothes for 2 days
- work shoes (travel wearing either your work shoes or flip flops)
- work gloves
- hat or bandana
- one towel for showering
- one hand towel
- one outfit for possible school service and/or church service:  
Girls: dress or skirt at least knee-length with shoulders covered.  
\*Fitted shorts under skirt/dress are suggested for comfort/modesty.  
Guys: long pants (jeans are okay) with a collared shirt like a polo.

**IMPORTANT:** All personal items should only be packed in your carry-on luggage and backpack. The only exception is if you have personal toiletries or liquids over 3.4 ounces. These items should be securely placed in a ziplock bag, labeled with your name, and placed in a checked suitcase. **Note:** We will be asking each team to bring specific, needed items to be donated that will take up space in checked bags, so *all other personal items must fit in carry-on bags*. Please plan on donating your work clothes and small carry-on suitcase. You should be able to travel home with just your backpack.

**Pack the following items in your checked suitcases (per person):**

- Assigned team food items (you will receive list closer to trip)
- Box of cereal or other personal breakfast food (ie. pop tarts, granola bars)
- 1 can of corn & 1 can of green beans
- 2 rolls of toilet paper
- ½ gallon water bottle (please put your name on duct tape on your water bottle and be sure to stuff items inside it). Smaller water bottles are not large enough.

We encourage breaking up in groups of 4 or 5 and sharing personal items such as sunscreen, shampoo, toothpaste, shower soap, snacks, bug spray, etc. that will be used in Jamaica. Remember not to pack liquids over 3.4 ounces in your carry-on. In addition, the food items that team members are assigned are VITAL. These food items are used to help feed the team while you are in Harmons, so it is important that each member bring and pack their assigned items.

***IMPORTANT:*** Please do not pack short shorts or tank tops. After a long, sweaty day of work, even the sturdiest tank tops look pretty risqué. T-shirt sleeves can be rolled or tied up but please do not ruin them by cutting them off. There is no need to waste valuable space or electricity with hairdryers - your hair will be dry within minutes anyway.

**Last few important packing tips:**

The last thing you want is to open a nicely packed suitcase in Jamaica only to find that your large plastic jar of jelly exploded inside. To prevent this catastrophe from happening, duct tape anything with a lid and put any item that could get squeezed and explode in a gallon-size Ziploc bag. Do not pack items that could puncture or explode near the edge of the suitcase. Protect these types of items with clothes. Be careful packing sharp items or tools near breakables. Canned vegetables do not need duct tape. In addition to food items, toiletry items like shampoo should be protected with duct tape and Ziploc bags.

You will be packing together as a team. Instructions will be given to group leaders as to how to plan and execute a packing party. It is a good idea to weigh your suitcases with an accurate scale. There are expensive airport penalties if a suitcase weighs more than 50 pounds. Try to put heavier items (i.e. cans of spaghetti sauce) in smaller suitcases to help them reach 50 pounds. Make sure all suitcases have names and addresses on them. Don't put the same color yarn or some other "group marker" on the suitcases. This will only draw attention to the large number of bags your group is bringing into the country.

We would appreciate all your work clothes being donated at the end of the week. In addition, please plan on returning to the States with no more than your backpack.

## **Camera Policy**

While in Harmons, participants are allowed to take photos only on the Harmony House property – this includes courtyard time. And we suggest being courteous and asking Jamaicans at the Harmony House if you can take their photo before you do so. However, we ask that you do not take your camera around Harmons – to the worksites, on the walking tour, etc. Taking pictures often becomes invasive and a barrier to building relationships. A Jamaican staff member will serve as the team photographer for the week and will continually visit all worksites and take requests, etc. There will be hundreds of photos collected throughout the week and put on a USB flash drive available for purchase at the end of the week, so you will have lots of digital memories of your trip. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

Your week in Harmons will be a cell phone-free environment. You are welcome to bring one to use during travel in the U.S. However, once you arrive at the Harmony House, all cell phones will be collected and put in the safe. Please don't plan on using your cell phone as your Bible or your camera, as you will not have it with you throughout the week.

## **Spending Money**

Do NOT exchange money at the airport. We suggest each person bring between \$150 and \$250 cash for personal spending. There will be soda, smoothies, coffee and craft items for sale throughout the week in Harmons. We do accept personal checks on Craft Night if you want to bring your checkbook for that purpose. In addition, a challenge is given at the end of each week for the team to participate in an individual project by donating money. We suggest bringing some smaller bills for soda and smoothies. When buying coffee, crafts and donating to the challenge, credit cards are accepted (a 4% fee is added to credit cards), but checks are preferred. Do not bring Traveler's Checks or ATM cards. Towards the end of the week, you will have the opportunity to enjoy one of the destination treasures of Jamaica such as YS Falls, Dunn's River Falls, Blue Hole, Montego Bay beaches, etc. This destination excursion will depend on availability and current travel guidelines. Plan on paying approximately \$20/person as well as the additional cost of lunch on this day.

**IMPORTANT:** Don't forget you may need money at your departing airport for luggage fees, which are not covered in the cost of the trip. Fees vary from airline to airline and can be paid for on a credit card at the airport the day you leave for Jamaica.

**IMPORTANT (PANDEMIC ADDITION):** The current Covid-19 travel regulations require each team member to take a Covid-19 rapid antigen test and provide the negative results to return to the States. Covid-19 tests will be approximately \$55/person and are not covered in the cost of the trip. Each person will need to pay in cash for their test.

## **Health Issues**

If anyone on your team has a significant health issue, please email our Trip Coordinator, Christa Benito, at [christa@wonbyonetojamaica.com](mailto:christa@wonbyonetojamaica.com) at least a month before your trip so appropriate precautions can be taken on the ground in Jamaica.

## **Daily Updates**

Be sure to direct your friends & family to view team pictures that will be updated daily throughout the week at [www.wonbyonetojamaica.com](http://www.wonbyonetojamaica.com). These pictorial updates will be done through our Facebook page, but can be accessed through our home page under "Current Photos." Photo updates may also be found on our Instagram account throughout the week @wonbyonetojamaica.

**Information team members need regarding Jamaican Immigration forms that are completed on the plane** – Please also see the document detailing this process, which your group leader will have. You should have a copy of that with you on the airplane.

Intended Address in Jamaica:

Harmony House, Harmons, Manchester Parish

Purpose of Visit:

Write "Missions" in the blank space by "other"

If asked for a Jamaican Contact by the Immigration Officer:

Mr. Donald Wright – Harmons, local phone number 876-817-2118

## **Customs**

After collecting your checked suitcases, you will need to exit through a Green Customs line. Minors need to go through this line with an adult and be listed on the back of their form, even if they are not related. If asked by Customs officials what is in your bags, reply that you have food and clothes. If they ask if you have anything to give away, they are concerned that you personally may be bringing new items to sell. You are not, so reply that everything is used and is being donated. Again, details for customs procedures are in another document.

## **Phone numbers in Jamaica for Extreme Emergencies**

Christa Benito (Trip Coordinator): 1-866-376-9289

Loyd Jackson's Jamaican cell phone: 1-876-419-1718

Don Wright (Jamaican): 1-876-817-2118 or 1-876-356-7487

Harmony House phone: 1-210-610-4486