Since the arrival of the Europeans in the early 16th century, and especially over the past 100 years, Nicaraguans have endured civil wars, brutal dictatorships, struggle and hardship. Even after the country won independence from Spain in 1821, a power vacuum led to civil war. For decades there was struggle between conservatives and liberals, and with U.S. involvement, many liberal rebels were put down. By the 1920s, resistance had been mostly quelled, the U.S. detracted its presence and the Somoza family dictatorship began its domination, which would last for more than 50 years. It was finally uprooted in 1979 by the Sandinista revolution.

The Sandinistas inherited a country in shambles. Poverty, homelessness, illiteracy and staggeringly inadequate health care were just a few of the widespread problems. Some 50,000 people had been killed in the revolutionary struggle and 150,000 were made refugees. This, compounded with the fact that Nicaraguan aid to leftist rebels in El Salvador caused the U.S. to sponsor anti-Sandinista contra guerrillas through much of the 1980s, inevitably created further turmoil for Nicaragua for the years to come. 1990 brought the first free elections for Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has a great socio-economic division. A small number of the rich controls most of the wealth while the majority of people are immersed in poverty. The government is often corrupt and the criminal enterprises seem to be on the rise. Many children are orphaned, abandoned or neglected and live a life of malnutrition, begging, stealing, prostitution, and early pregnancies.
The NPH Home

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for “Our Little Brothers and Sisters”) Nicaragua opened in 1994. Casa Padre Wasson is located on rolling hills of picturesque farmland about 45 minutes from the capital, Managua. More than 140 children live in the 16 family-style homes, complete with porches, courtyards and cement pathways throughout the property. An additional 200 children from the community attend the NPH school, and/or receive ongoing support.
Daily Life

Highlights
- A folkloric dance and music group performs locally and in the U.S.
- The farms have a variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as chickens, cows, fish and pigs.
- The wastewater treatment system works without electricity or chemicals and the treated water can be used for irrigation of green areas, gardens and agricultural programs.
- The Samaritan Project at Casa Samaritano on Ometepe Island and at Casa Padre Wasson provides occupational and physical therapy, medical and psychological care, food baskets and more for special needs children in the community.
- The vocational workshops offer certification in shoe-making, sewing, residential electricity, welding, computers, and English.
- In 2018, a tutoring program was developed for community students who could not travel to school because of civil unrest.

Responsibility
Responsibility is one of the most important values that NPH tries to instill in their children. This is why each child is expected to not only be responsible for him or herself, but to contribute to the family. This includes traditional chores such as washing clothes, cleaning, and serving food.

Each child also has additional responsibilities after school and during the weekends. Some work in the gardens, while others care for the grounds and clean common areas. Everyone knows how much effort goes into caring for their home and all the people who live there.

Every child at NPH Nicaragua is asked to do two years of service: one after 9th grade and another after 11th grade.

Typical Day at Casa Padre Wasson

5:30 a.m. Wake up
5:30 - 7:15 a.m. Get dressed, chores, breakfast
7:15 a.m. Walk to school
7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Classes and workshops
12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch together in Ranchon or in workshops
1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Classes and workshops
5:00 p.m. Chores, homework, and free time
6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:30 - 9:00 p.m. Homework, free time
8:00 - 9:00 p.m. Bedtime (depending on age group)

Godchildren
If you sponsor a child at NPH Nicaragua, arrangements will be made for him/her to spend time with you during your visit. Please contact your regional office if you are interested in becoming a Godparent.

National Director Marlon Velasquez is an hermano mayor (“older brother”), who was raised at NPH Honduras.
Please read NPH International’s Visitor Policy and Guidelines, sign the form and return it to your trip coordinator.

Entry Requirements
A valid U.S. passport is required to enter Nicaragua. While a visa is not required, your passport must remain valid until your return date and you must purchase a tourist card for $10 and pay a $2 migration processing fee (both in cash) upon arrival. Tourist cards are typically issued for 90 days.

Vaccinations
Before traveling to Nicaragua, please consult your physician and visit www.cdc.gov/travel

Transportation
- For group trips organized by NPH USA, transportation will be provided by NPH.
- Do NOT hitchhike under any circumstances.

Accommodations
Lodging varies depending on trip package. See specific trip information or consult the coordinator for details.

Food
While at NPH facilities, we will eat just like the children and staff at specific mealtimes:
- Breakfast: 5:30 a.m.
- Lunch: 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner: 6:30 p.m.

Food at NPH is NEVER wasted. If you are unsure you will like what is being served, ask for only “un poquito” (a little), and if you cannot finish, please offer it to one of the kids.

While on day trips, we will eat in restaurants where we are sure that food will be prepared safely.

All visitors are welcome to bring additional snacks to share. Be sure to bring things that can withstand hot and humid conditions and preferably are individually wrapped.

Water
DRINK BOTTLED WATER ONLY. This cannot be stressed enough.

Bathroom Etiquette
It is not possible to flush toilet paper in most Latin American countries due to the poor plumbing systems. Toilet paper and all sanitary products must be thrown in small waste baskets next to the toilet. DO NOT flush toilet paper or sanitary products while visiting the NPH home.

Bring travel toilet paper, or a small packet of facial tissues on day trips. Tissue is not always available in public bathrooms.

Electricity
Electrical outlets are the same as the U.S.: 120 volt, 60 hertz, so no adapters are needed. You should expect power outages, which are common in Latin America.
Travel Tips (continued)

E-mail & Phones
There are nearby Internet cafés for e-mail and phone calls.

Clothing
Comfortable, broken-in walking shoes are a must! The days are warm, so light clothing – shorts, slacks, cotton T-shirts, sandals and/or running shoes – is appropriate.

Keep in mind to dress conservatively and in a tidy manner. Please do not wear anything torn, too short or provocative. If you have any piercings other than ears, please take them out during your visit. If you have any tattoos, please keep them covered. These can be associated with gang activity and we do not want the children to have a negative impression of you.

Currency and Credit Cards
Nicaragua’s currency is the córdoba (C$), sometimes called a “peso” or “real” by locals, or a “cord” by expats. Córdobas come in coins of C$0.25, C$0.50, C$1 and C$5, and bills of C$10, C$20, C$50, C$100 and C$500. U.S. dollars are accepted almost everywhere, however, córdobas are usually easier to use. Always keep at least 200 córdoba on you, preferably in smaller bills, just in case.

Most major credit cards are widely accepted throughout Nicaragua. However, please remember that fraud is increasing all over the world, so you should be cautious.

Tipping
For airport/hotel baggage handlers, $1 U.S. per bag is acceptable. For restaurants and other services, 10-15% of value of service is customary, but not obligatory. NPH drivers, guides or other helpers never need to be tipped. However, if on a full day trip, the group will be expected to provide lunch.

Safety
Outside the gates of NPH, we recommend that you never go alone anywhere. Be vigilant in regards to your surroundings. While at the home, we will be in a very safe and controlled environment. However, it is important to remember to watch your personal property. Our children have all come from very different backgrounds and while NPH tries to help them realize that they are safe now, many of them are still in survival mode. They are not malicious, but for many, taking is the only way they survived.

Departure
There is a $42 departure tax. Many airlines include it the price of the ticket. If the tax is not included, payment can be made at the airline counter upon departure.

Terms to Know

Good morning/afternoon/evening! - ¡Buenos días/tardes/noches!
See you later! - ¡Hasta luego!
How are you? - ¿Cómo está?
Fine, thank you. - Bien, gracias.
Please - Por favor
Excuse me - Permiso
Do you speak English? - ¿Habla inglés?
Yes - Sí
No - No
Thank you - Gracias
You’re welcome - De nada
How old are you? - ¿Cuántos años tiene?
How much is this? - ¿Cuánto es?
More - más
A little bit - un poquito
House - casa
Home - hogar
School - escuela
Backpack - mochila
Office - oficina
Kitchen - cocina
Water - agua
Food - comida
Rice - arroz
Beans - frijoles
Spoon - cuchara
Fork - tenedor
Cup - vaso
Plate - plato

NPH-Related

Pequeño/a - literally “little,” but it is the term used for all NPH children
Tío/a - literally aunt or uncle, but at NPH it is a caretaker
Fr. Wasson - Padre Wasson (Founder of NPH)
Padrino - Godfather (Sponsor)
Madrina - Godmother (Sponsor)
Ahijdo/a - Godchild
Hermano/a Mayor - Older brother/sister - the term for a former pequeño/a or graduate of NPH

Visitor’s Guide: NPH Nicaragua • nphusa.org
Suggested Packing List

Clothes
- Lightweight travel clothes - there is no laundry facility, but you can hand wash!
- Jeans/shorts/travel pants - your preference
- Comfortable shoes for walking - tennis shoes or something with closed toes
- Poncho/lightweight rain jacket
- “Bug off” clothing - REI or Ex Officio (if sensitive to mosquitoes)
- One “nicer,” but still casual outfit

Remember to dress conservatively. No visible undergarments; nothing torn, ripped or too short.

Toiletries
- Hand sanitizer
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Soap (we recommend a pack of disposable face cloths that have soap in the fibers. They work as soap and a washcloth.)
- Toothbrush/paste
- Deodorant
- Razor
- Earplugs
- Soap for washing clothes (if you want)
- Sun tan lotion
- Insect repellant
- Small packet of facial tissues
- Travel toilet paper

Medicines
- Personal prescriptions (can be hard to get or expensive outside the U.S.)
- Pepto Bismol/Imodium
- Advil/Tylenol/Excedrin
- Cipro/antibiotic for travelers’ diarrhea
- Benadryl/Hydrocortisone
- Bandages/Neosporin
- Emergen-C/cough drops

Personal Items
- Pillow
- Umbrella
- Water bottle
- Camera/Charger
- Fly paper
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight (plus extra batteries)
- Travel alarm clock (if desired)

Snacks/Food
While we encourage everyone to eat the food provided (it is tasty), if you are worried about not liking the food, or getting enough, consider packing some pasta or another substitution for a meal, just in case. In addition, you may also want to bring:

- Granola bars/fruit bars/popcorn/snacks to share
- Gatorade packets (it is easy to get dehydrated)
- Good ground coffee and sugar to share

Other
- Passport
- Two copies of passport and credit card information: leave one copy at home
- Pictures of your family to show kids (great conversation starters!) and/or postcards

Do NOT Bring
- Expensive or irreplaceable jewelry or other valuable items
- Flashy gifts
Visitors often ask what items they can bring for the children. Following are some suggestions.

**Clothing and Shoes**
- Underwear
- Socks
- Sandals

**Education/Arts & Crafts**
- Books in Spanish
- Coloring books
- Colored pencils and crayons
- Glue and tape
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Play dough
- Yarn and pipe cleaners
- Beads
- Stickers

**Toys & Games** (for every age group)
- Card games
- Board games
- Jigsaw puzzles (100 pieces max.)
- Marbles

**Sports Equipment**
The kids spend most of their time outside, so think of items that require little or no maintenance and can be shared by everyone!
- Balls
- Jump ropes
- Air pumps with extra needles

**Hygiene**
- Feminine products
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes (for kids AND adults)

**Health Care**
- Vitamins
- Bandages
- Neosporin
- Tylenol

These items are always needed in the clinic. Please contact us if you are interested in donating other medical supplies.

**Other**
- Barrettes and hair accessories
- Inexpensive plastic jewelry
- Batteries of various sizes are always needed and easy to transport

**When in doubt . . .**
Bring things that NPH needs or wants, and that get depleted. If you are still unsure, ask!

**REMEMBER, YOUR VISIT IS A GIFT!**
Neither NPH nor NPH USA want the children to associate your visit with material items. The best thing that you can bring is you! All your kind words, thoughts and affection are going to be the most lasting gift. Building relationships is the most valuable thing you can offer!

**PLEASE DO NOT**
- Bring candy or small items to randomly pass out. This can result in hurt feelings among children who do not receive anything.
- Bring expensive gifts, such as music players, video games or jewelry. This may unintentionally create feelings of jealousy and cause problems for that child.
- Give gifts directly to the children. Give them to the home’s Visitor Coordinator or a staff person.
- Give money to anyone at the home. This can cause confusion about how it will be used and will not qualify for a tax deduction under U.S. law. Please make all donations through NPH USA.
Contact Information

We suggest you leave this information as well as your flight and hotel details (if applicable) with your emergency contact.

National NPH USA Office
134 North LaSalle Street
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60602-1036
Toll-free: 888.201.8880
Fax: 312.658.0040
info@nphusa.org

Regional Offices

Northwest
(AK, HI, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
1800 112th Avenue NE
Suite 270-E
Bellevue, WA 98004-2961
Phone: 425.646.3935
infonw@nphusa.org

Southwest
(AZ, CA, CO, NV, NW, OK, TX, UT)
5110 North 40th Street
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85018-2143
Phone: 480.967.9449
infosw@nphusa.org

Upper Midwest
(IA, MN, ND, NE, SD, WI)
1400 Van Buren Street NE
Fueled Collective, Suite 210
Minneapolis, MN 55413-4605
Phone: 651.482.1703
infoupm@nphusa.org

Midwest
(IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MO, OH, TN)
134 North LaSalle Street
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60602-1036
Phone: 312.386.7499
infomw@nphusa.org

Mid-Atlantic/Northeast
(CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NW, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, Washington, D.C., WV)
265 Willard Street
3rd Floor
Quincy, MA 02169-1565
Phone: 617.206.4940
infoma-ne@nphusa.org

Southeast
(AL, AR, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC)
134 North LaSalle Street
Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60602-1036
Phone: 888.201.8880
info@nphusa.org

NPH Nicaragua
Emergency Contact Information

Km 59 1/2 Carretera Panamericana sur
Contiguo a los Silos de ENABAS
Santa Teresa, Carazo
Nicaragua

Phone: 011.505.888.75637
e-mail: info.ni@nph.org

NPH USA, Federal Tax ID #65-1229309, is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that supports the homes, healthcare and educational programs of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos.