

# *MCI for Hope* FAQ

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These are some of the questions that were asked during the *MCI for Hope* Information Night on Oct. 5. They are answered to the best of our knowledge at this point in time.

## **What are the accommodations like?**

- Accommodations will likely be the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of one of the dormitory buildings. Beds are available but we recommend that everybody bring their own sleeping bag.
- Here are some pictures to give you an idea of what the accommodations are like. There are three main rooms. We will use one room as a common room (bottom), one room for the boys, and one room for the girls.



## What are the washrooms like?

- Washrooms consist of “squat” toilets. Here are a few pictures.



- Shower facilities are also available.



## **Is the water safe?**

- HCC does have a borehole which provides relatively good water. However, in order to ensure safety and health, we will buy bottled water during our time there.

## **What is the weather like?**

- Since the orphanage is located at a high altitude, the weather is often quite cool. When the sun shines, it can get hot, and it can be easy to sunburn. In general, seasons are often determined by rainy periods.
  - Dec & Jan = hot
  - Feb = starting to rain
  - March & April = rain
  - June = sometimes rain
  - July = coldest
  - Aug. = good
  - Sept = rain
  - Oct = rain sometimes
  - Nov. until 1<sup>st</sup> week in Dec = rain

## **What type of clothing should be worn?**

- Since it often can be cool, it is best to bring layers of clothes along. Men are often expected to wear pants, and for the most part the weather is cool enough that this is most comfortable anyways. For women, pants, skirts, and capris are acceptable. Tank tops would not be appropriate. It would be good to bring something a bit “dressier” for Sundays. In general, dress comfortably and in layers. Warm clothes for the night are recommended as it gets cold when the sun goes down.

## **What is the terrain like at HCC?**

- There is quite a bit of land that does not have grass. Therefore, when it rains, it can get quite muddy. Appropriate footwear and clothes for rainy weather will be necessary to deal with the moisture.

## **Will we be able to do laundry?**

- Hand washing is possible. Other than that, laundry facilities will not be available.

## **Is there HIV/AIDS at HCC?**

- HIV has significantly affected the African continent over the last 30 years. Kenya has not escaped these effects, including orphaned children. MCI's activities and involvements at Hope Community Centre will take place in such a way to provide safety for all participants.

## **What type of immunizations are needed? When should that get started?**

- It is necessary that each student/family make an appointment with a Travel Health Nurse. We went to the Travel Health Clinic located in Boundary Trails. We received the following as recommended immunizations.
  - Hepatitis A & B
  - Typhoid
  - Tetanus/Diphtheria/Polio
  - Yellow Fever
  - Meningococcal Meningitis
  - Measles Mumps Rubella
- Each student/family will have to make the appropriate decisions in consultation with their doctor/health nurse for their situation.

## **Is there medical expertise at HCC?**

- There is no on-site nurse. The closest medical facility would be just across the river at the Catholic Hospital. Other than that, Nairobi would be the most likely destination for medical attention which is about 1 ½ hours away.

## **Is it possible to phone/email home during the trip?**

- We have our own Kenyan cell phone and international calls are both easy and relatively cheap. We will provide our number to families in case of emergency. Email and internet is also quite accessible. We will be bringing a laptop along, and will purchase a modem stick which in our experience has worked quite well at HCC. This laptop will be for the leaders only, except in the case of emergencies.

## **What are the flights like? What type of connections?**

- Flight times and connections will be confirmed once the group has been chosen. It all depends on what is the most practical and cheapest option. For example, our most recent quote goes through London on the way there and then Brussels on the way back. In both cases, the layovers are only a few hours long.

## **Will the flights be purchased as a group?**

- Yes.

## **What type of currency is used and how much cash should be taken?**

- Kenya shillings is the currency. At the time of writing, the exchange rate is 103 KSh = \$1.00. That will likely change by the time we arrive in Kenya. The amount of cash taken will be decided once all the details are in place. However, we hope to make many of the arrangements ahead of time so that students will carry only a minimal amount of cash.

## **How does travel insurance work?**

- This will likely be up to each individual. We will look into all the possibilities but suspect that each family will have to make that decision on their own.

## **What are the fundraising opportunities? Will they be as a group or self-directed?**

- There will be a number of fundraising opportunities available to the whole student body. For example, Mom's Pantry forms are available right now. Other items such as Co-op cards, IGA cards, frozen pizzas, etc will be made available throughout the year.
- We will also plan on doing group fundraisers. Besides the potential financial support, this will be important for several other reasons. First, it will be a good opportunity to build group dynamics. Second, it will allow for greater non-financial support and awareness for both the MCI community and those outside of MCI.
- If individuals want to plan self-directed fundraisers, it would be best to discuss that possibility with the group and group leaders.

## **Are there cultural gestures of "superiority", for example, bowing?**

- Certainly Kenyan culture is a courteous one and making sure visitors are welcome and have the best is very important. However, there are not really any common physical gestures.

## **What is their historical/ancestral religion?**

- Kenya would be described as a Christian nation. There would be a historical/ancestral religion although I am not very familiar with that information.

## **What is Masai Mara (the safari) like?**

- Masai Mara is one of the premier places to see wildlife in Africa. Described by the Lonely Planet guidebook as “breathtaking” and “world-renowned”, it is a large area of grasslands that contains an abnormally high concentration of wildlife. We plan on spending 2 nights at a semi-luxury tented camp just outside of the park. The company we are working with is one that is trusted and used often by MCC workers. They are just in the process of finishing their own camp which should be ready by the time we go in spring. Although the details need to be confirmed, we will likely have two game drives – one in the evening on the first day, followed by a full day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day.

## **What type of staff are at HCC?**

- The staff at HCC are both dedicated and talented. They have approximately 10-12 teachers who are dedicated to giving the best education possible at all grades. There are several staff that are in charge of taking care of the babies. There are a few staff/helpers in the kitchen, as well as several staff that are involved in the livestock and farming. There is a pastor at HCC who has endless compassion for the students at HCC.

## **What is a typical day like at HCC during their break?**

- It is hard to describe a “typical” day at HCC as there seem to be few of them. Schedules change and times are flexible. Daily chores are often a part of the routine as is helping out where needed. On occasion, extra study time or opportunity for exam revision is also given during the break.
- We will be setting up a schedule of daily activities that we will be in charge of, although, an ability to adapt to each day will likely be necessary.