

Greece Trip Info Packet

This packet contains important details and information that is critical to the success of this trip and the safety of you and your team. As a team member, **you need to be absolutely sure to review and understand all content**. Please ask your Team Leader if you have any questions.

Location:	Athens, Greece
Type:	*Private Group Trip Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Franklin TN
Trip Dates:	July 14 – 25, 2017
Team Leader:	Dave Dillard (dillard@servantgroup.org) Executive Director, SGI
Team Assistant:	Gretchen Thomas (domestigretchen@gmail.com) SGI Field Coordinator, Greece

** This is a private church group trip; [click here to learn about other available trips](#).*

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Introduction

WELCOME

Thank you for considering joining our July 14–25, 2017 team to help serve refugees in Greece. The worldwide refugee crisis is huge, but you can make a difference as you step forward to represent the hands and heart of Christ to those who have lost so much.

As you pray and prepare for this opportunity, please keep in mind that the refugee situation in Greece, and around the world, is very fluid. Ever-changing needs, numbers, events, strikes and government regulations can re-direct and even sideline the best laid plans. Extraordinary flexibility and patience will be required on your behalf; if you need things to go according to plan, please reconsider applying for this trip.

BACKGROUND

On this trip, we will be serving among refugees in Athens, Greece. Due to its geography, Greece is a primary point of entry for refugees fleeing wars and fighting across the Middle East and Africa.

Most of the refugees in Greece arrive from Turkey following a very dangerous crossing of the sea in inflatable rafts. This route is officially closed, yet the sea-crossing is short but very dangerous. Refugees pay large sums of money to smugglers to help them get across. Many are from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, but they come from places as far away as Bangladesh, North Africa, Congo, and even the Dominican Republic.

Some refugees come from professional urban backgrounds, some come from rural poor areas. Some took a plane to Turkey, others walked overland for weeks or months. Many have lost close family members, and all have lost everything they knew and loved about home to find a safe place to live. A great documentary film you should watch as you consider and prepare for this trip is [Exodus](#).

Over 50,000 refugees are currently stuck in Athens. Most want to find new homes in places like Germany or Sweden, but because of increasing restrictions by potential host countries, most face the hard choice of either being sent back home or applying for asylum in Greece, - a country already under much economic strain with limited job opportunity.

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

During this project, we will partner with a Greek church that runs a number of shelters and day-centers for refugees in Athens. The people of Greece have done an

outstanding job of welcoming an overwhelming tide of refugees, and it is our honor and privilege to go volunteer as their helpers.

The women volunteers on this team will serve each day at a shelter for refugee moms and their kids, - a safe place where they can come during the day, bathe, wash their clothes, let their kids play, drink some tea and meet new friends. Volunteers will assist with basic hosting activities and help permanent staff with ongoing maintenance and cleaning tasks.

The men volunteers on this team will help with maintenance, painting, light construction and rooftop gardening tasks at a shelter serving unaccompanied minors. Many young men lost their entire families to war and are traveling alone, while others may be the only one their family could afford to send to seek safety in Europe. Along the way, there are many who try to take advantage of their situation, and this shelter works to provide a safe place for them to live while they are in Athens.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

Date	Location	Activity
Fri, July 14	Travel Day	Fly Nashville to Athens. Flight TBD.
Sat, July 15	Athens	Arrive Athens mid-day. Evening orientation meeting.
Sun, July 16	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Mon, July 17	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Tue, July 18	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Wed, July 19	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Thur, July 20	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Fri, July 21	Athens	Serve at refugee shelters
Sat, July 22,	Athens	Tour historic Athens (Acropolis, Parthenon, Areopagus)
Sun, July 23	Athens	Attend Greek church services. Travel to Corinth.
Mon, July 24	Corinth	Tour ancient Corinth & Nafplio .
Tue, July 25	Travel Day	Fly Athens to Nashville. Evening arrival. Flight TBD.

Each evening, we will meet for a short time of debriefing and prayer. Afterwards your team leaders will announce the forthcoming day's detailed schedule, including meeting times, places and volunteer assignments.

TEAM APPLICATION & SELECTION

The target team size for this trip is 6 women and 4 to 6 men. You must be at least 19 years old to apply. Teens (ages 13-18) are also welcome to apply only if accompanied by one or more of their parents on the trip. To apply, please complete this online application:

[Trip Application, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church – Greece Trip, July 14-25, 2017](#)

Each potential team member (e.g., spouse, accompanied minor) must submit their own application.

The deadline for trip applications is May 1, 2017. You will be notified of your approval no later than May 5, 2017, but typically you will hear back from us within a few weeks.

KEY DATES

March 1	Applications Open
May 1	Applications Due
May 5	Final Team Announced
May 10	Deadline to Apply for Church Support
June 1	Deadline to Turn-in Support
July 1	Team Meeting #1
July 5	Per Diem Checks Mailed to Team Members
July 8	Team Meeting #2
July 14	Team Departure
July 25	Team Return

ITEMS YOU NEED TO SEND TO SGI

Once approved as a team member, you will need to submit the following items as indicated; copies of all forms are located at the end of this document.

Please **mail or hand-deliver** the following items in one envelope to:

*Servant Group International
ATTN: GREECE 7-17
506 Tanksley Avenue
Nashville, TN 37211*

1. A black & white photocopy of your passport
2. Emergency Contact Form
3. Liability Release Form
4. Team Member Agreement

Next, please **email** the following items to your team leader, Dave Dillard (dillard@servantgroup.org)

1. A passport style, forward facing photo of yourself against a plain background (you can use your phone camera)
2. A brief personal bio that can be used to help introduce yourself to fellow team members, trip leaders, and national partners. (3 or 4 sentences).
3. A copy of your full flight itinerary to/from Athens once you have it booked.

TRAINING & TEAM MEETINGS

SGI will mail approved team members a small book to help introduce them to the peoples and cultures we will be working with.

We will also have 2 mandatory team meeting(s) per the following schedule for orientation, training, prayer, and developing updates:

- Meeting #1 – July 1, Sunday School hour, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church
- Meeting #2 – July 8, Sunday School hour, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church

TRIP COST & BUDGET

The trip cost per team member is \$1800 plus airfare.*

This amount may be adjusted as needs, opportunities and situations develop.

Costs per person for custom group trips may vary depending on group plans. For more information, please contact your church team leader or Lisa Harris (lharris@servantgroup.org)

***SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING AIRLINE TICKETS & COSTS**

In the price noted above, the cost for round-trip airfare to Athens is not included. Please note that each individual will be responsible to book and pay for their own airline tickets to/from Athens. Ticket prices are seasonal, and typically range between \$800 to \$1600 round trip.

You are welcome and encouraged to raise or turn-in enough additional funds to cover all or part of airfare costs (refer to section “Funding Your Trip”). If you do so, you can submit a reimbursement request along with a copy of your airline receipt to SGI using this [reimbursement request form](#) and we will mail you a reimbursement check for the appropriate amount. Please note that any reimbursement request must correspond directly to costs incurred for travel to/from Athens.

We will provide information on the specifically recommended flights on or before May 1, 2017 via email so you can book your own ticket. Our goal is for all or as much of the team as possible to travel on the same flights, but we will also specify an acceptable window for flight arrival/departure times and point of rendezvous in case you need to book flights other than the ones recommended.

(For example, you may have frequent-flier miles with a particular airline you want to use, you may be departing from another city, or you may want to book an alternate return route or extend your stay overseas.)

Note: Once you have booked your ticket, please email a copy of your ticket itinerary to your team leader, Dave Dillard (dillard@servantgroup.org).

LODGING

We will be staying at a hotel in the Acropoli section of Athens. This is a safe area close to the Parthenon museum with lots of restaurants, small markets and places to walk. We will also be spending one or two nights at a hotel in Corinth.

Hotels in Greece are clean and comfortable, but maybe a little smaller than you are accustomed to. Breakfast and Wi-Fi will likely be offered at the hotel.

Based upon team constituency and available room configurations, we will be putting 2 (and sometimes 3 people) per room. You will have an opportunity to request a particular roommate. Final details regarding hotel names and locations will be sent to you via email prior to the trip departure date.

FOOD & DINING

You can use funds from your per-diem ([hyperlink](#)) to buy food as needed. When dining out as a group, please do not ask the waiter to split the ticket. Instead, ask for one ticket and have everybody pitch-in cash to cover the tab. Tips are not expected but very welcome, particularly in tourist areas (5 – 10% is adequate). Also, in Greece you have to raise your arm and ask for the waiter to bring the bill, otherwise you will sit and wait a long, long time.

Breakfast

Most mornings you will grab breakfast on your own at the hotel or nearby café. There are lots of coffee and pastry shops in the area. Breakfast may or may not be included at the hotel, but you are welcome to use funds from your per-diem ([hyperlink](#)) to buy breakfast.

Lunch

For lunch, we will probably be able to send out a few team members to pick up sandwiches for the team, or if the schedule is really busy, you may need to

skip lunch. For that reason, it is highly recommended that you carry a few protein bars or snacks and some water with you each day when we head out.

Dinner

For dinner, we will eat at local cafes, sometimes as an entire group if announced, but otherwise most evenings we will break up into smaller groups.

PER DIEM FUNDS

Prior to team departure, SGI will mail you a check to cover your per diem. These are funds that you will use to buy your food, snacks, museum tickets, etc. on the trip. The per diem rate is \$50/day, including travel days.

You will need to cash this check when you receive it, take the cash with you on the trip, and exchange it to euros at the Athens airport upon arrival. You can exchange it into euros stateside, but you will pay a much larger conversion fee.

It is doubtful that you will spend all your per diem. You are welcome, but not required to return any excess to SGI for continuing support of our work with refugees in Greece.

WHAT TO PACK

Please pack light. Large suitcases will greatly complicate transit between locales in Greece. Many team members are able to pack all they need for one week in a single carry-on. Also, please check with your airline regarding luggage restrictions.

Key items to bring:

- Your passport
- Copy of your passport, front & back of credit cards, and drivers license
- Your per diem cash
- A money/passport belt or neck pouch
- Copy of emergency contacts
- Extra spending cash if desired
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Appropriate clothes for volunteer work
- A small backpack or shoulder bag for each day's excursions
- A light rain jacket or poncho
- Your smartphone / camera
- Protein or snack bars
- Basic toiletries
- Any prescription meds and copy of prescription
- Sunscreen
- Swimsuit

Note: Unless approved by your team leader, do not collect, donate, buy or pack items to give to refugees.

CASH, CREDIT CARDS, AND ATMS

With the per diem, you should have enough cash to cover your daily expenses. Bring extra funds if you plan on doing some souvenir or gift shopping. Most stores will accept major credit cards, but may refuse or hesitate and ask for cash instead. You may or may not be able to withdraw cash from ATMs; there is a daily limit, sometimes the lines are very long, and sometimes the banks are simply closed.

LOCAL WEATHER AND TIME

[Current time Athens, Greece](#)

[10-day weather forecast](#)

[Typical annual weather per month](#)

PHONE & INTERNET

Cell coverage is fairly comprehensive throughout Greece, and most restaurants, hotels and coffee shops offer free Wi-Fi. You may want to contact your cell phone provider and purchase a temporary international coverage package if you need to be reachable at all times, versus only when connected to a Wi-Fi network.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Prior to the trip, your team leader will email you a list of Emergency Contact numbers and addresses. Once you receive it, please give a copy to one or more immediate family members, print out a copy to take with you, and if possible keep a copy in your email inbox available for online access.

Funding Your Trip

You can raise support for and/or self-fund your trip. If you don't like the idea of raising support, then you are normal. The main thing to keep in mind is this: By raising support, you're giving many others who can't "go" a chance to participate, encouraging them to pray, and appropriately involving the wider Body of Christ. You might feel bad about it, but your supporters do not.

Once approved as a team member, you can self-fund or begin raising support for your trip. Do not send funds to SGI or begin raising support unless you have been approved to do so by your team leader, Dave Dillard.

All funding and support raising will be directed through Servant Group International, a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency and tax-deductible receipts will be issued for all qualifying donations.

All your support needs to be turned in to SGI no later than June 1, 2017 for you to be included on the team.

Following are details and specific instructions per funding methods:

- 1) Self-Funding
- 2) Church Funding
- 3) Online Support Raising
- 4) Offline Support Raising (most common)

SELF-FUNDING

You can self-fund all or part of your trip cost. All self-funding amounts must come through SGI. To self-fund via a check, please mail your check to:

Servant Group International
ATTN: GREECE TRIP 7-17
506 Tanksley Avenue
Nashville, TN 37211

Please make check(s) payable to "Servant Group International" and be sure to put "Your Name, Greece 7-17" in the memo field.

If you prefer to self-fund all or part of your trip using credit card, please call our office manager Kim Goddard at 615-832-2282 for details. Please note that the credit card processing company will deduct 4% from the amount you give. (For example, to fund your trip a net \$1000, you will need to make a gross donation of \$1040).

Your gross self-funding gift amount will be considered tax-deductible and you will receive a tax-receipt from Servant Group International.

CHURCH SUPPORT

If all or part of your funding is coming from your home church or another church, please ask them to make the check(s) payable to “Servant Group International,” and put “Your Name, Greece 7-17” in the memo field

Have them mail it to your home address (or inquire and they may let you pick it up at the church office). You can then send this check along with your other support to the SGI Office as noted in the adjoining sections.

You are welcome to [apply for short-term trip support from Cornerstone Presbyterian Church](#) if needed. Funds are limited, and please note the deadline for submitting an application for support from the church is May 10, 2017.

ONLINE SUPPORT RAISING

If you prefer to raise all or part of your support online, we recommend you setup a personal fundraising page with GoFundMe. It is easy to use, interfaces well with email and social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), and connects to your personal bank account. It can certainly make the whole support-raising process simpler and faster.

To fund their service, GoFundMe will automatically deduct a small percentage from each online donation they process for you.

Please note that funds raised using GoFundMe or other online crowd-funding services will not be eligible for a tax-deduction receipt from SGI. Please let your potential donors know that online donations will not be tax-deductible, and if they want a tax deduction, they should make their donation via check (refer to section “Offline Support Raising”).

GoFundMe will periodically transfer net funds to your personal bank account once they clear. Afterwards, you can write a personal check to transfer funds to SGI. To be fair to your donors and the IRS, please attach a post-it note to that check indicating “online \$ no tax” so we will not issue you a personal tax-deductible receipt for funds raised in this manner.

OFFLINE SUPPORT RAISING

This is the most common and successful method of support-raising, - using newsletters, stamps, pledge cards, and return envelopes. The recommended process is outlined as follows:

1. Develop your list of potential supporters

You should be able to come up with a list of 50 – 80 family and friends, plus 1 or 2 churches. If you have immediate family members who are supportive of your plans, ask them to help you think of names for your list.

Note: You will need physical mailing addresses, not just emails.

2. Craft your support letter

Prepare your support letter per the following guidelines and send it to Dave Dillard (dillard@servantgroup.org) for review/approval.

[Sample Support Raising Newsletter](#)

An effective personal support letter should be:

- Brief (200-300 words)
- Broken into 3-5 short paragraphs
- At least 11 point font and 1.25 line spacing
- Fit on one piece of letter-sized paper front or front & back
- Include a picture of you with an interesting caption
- Include one or more pictures depicting Greece and/or refugees with interesting captions

What to write?

- Introduce yourself by sharing briefly what your life has been like recently (school, work, family, etc.)
- How God has been leading/calling you to join this trip and go to Greece
- Where you are going, when you are going, and who you are going with.
- Some background about the refugee crisis, and how you plan to help.
- How much you need to raise, when funds are due, and who to make checks payable to
- Include instructions for making donations in a text box at the bottom of the page
- Underline key parts of the letter
- Close by thanking readers for their prayers and support

Note: Please don't get preachy and don't get too detailed. Most people who support you will do so because of their personal relationship

with you, not because of where you're going, what you're going to do when there, or some great theological point or appeal you made in your letter.

3. **Print your support letter & pledge card**

Get your approved newsletter printed at a copy service center like Staples or Kinkos (Staples has a very good online ordering service).

Here is a PDF version of the pledge card you should print and include with your mailing:

[Pledge Card for Greece Trip Support Raising](#)

- Have them print the pledge card on card stock, preferably white. Take note that the card is printed 3-up to a page, so make sure the printer understands to split and trim the cards to size and how many final cut pieces you require.
- Pledge cards do not need to be printed in color, but it looks better if done so.
- It is highly recommended that you get your support letter printed in color on white paper.
- You will save a lot of time if you go ahead and ask the printer to tri-fold (z-fold) the letters for you.
- Also, please print 20 – 30 extra letters and cards because you will invariably think of more people to send them to, want to share them when you speak to groups, or have friends who ask for copies to share with their friends.
- If you take your materials to the printer in person versus online, you will need to save them as PDF files on a portable jump drive with no other items saved on the drive.

4. **Buy your envelopes**

- At an office supply store purchase:
 - enough sending envelopes (No. 10) for your letters.
 - enough security lined (privacy) return envelopes (No. 6 ¾) or other size that will fit in the No.10 sending envelope and also fit your pledge card and a donor check.
- Print or handwrite your personal home address on the return envelope

5. **Assemble your mailing**

- Be sure to **hand address** each sending envelope to ensure a good open & read rate. Do not forget to put your return address on the sending envelope; this also encourages a good open rate. Do NOT print your labels or envelopes using a computer.

- Print or handwrite your personal home address on each of the return envelopes. Affixing a stamp is very helpful and produces good results, but may seem presumptuous based upon your audience. Your choice.
- Personally sign each letter with blue or colored ink and also write a short personal note to the recipient at the top if appropriate.
- Tuck the pledge card inside the flap of the return envelope, and tuck both into the tri-folded newsletter. You do not want the pledge card or return envelope showing through the front or back of the sending envelope.
- Mail with a real first-class stamp. Do not use metered mail, online postage, or non-profit rate services.

6. Collect Checks and Send to SGI*

As you receive donations and pledge cards at your home, make copies of them for yourself and keep everything together in a folder.

Once each week, mail or hand-deliver collected pledge cards and checks to:

Servant Group International
 ATTN: GREECE 7-17
 506 Tanksley Avenue
 Nashville, TN 37211

** Important Note: Be sure to securely wrap the checks in a piece of paper that has your full name and trip dates on it.*

7. Build Your Prayer Team

Assemble a team of 5 or more people who will be praying for you as your prepare, go, serve and return. Keep them updated via email.

8. Thank Your Donors

Be sure to send a hand-written thank you note to each donor as gifts come in. Also, please send them a follow-up note or letter after your trip. It makes all the difference in the world to those who supported your trip.

9. Seek Opportunities to Share in Person

Approach and ask the following people or groups for an opportunity to come share about what you are doing:

- Church leadership (re: opportunity to share with the church at large in a service)
- Sunday School classes
- Bible study groups
- Home groups
- Other church groups

Hint: In each of these meetings, be sure to ask permission to make copies of your support letter (with a pledge card and return envelope stapled on the back of each one) available to the audience.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT RAISING FAQs

A donor gave a check, but made it payable to me personally. What should I do?

For a donation to be tax-deductible, it must be made payable to Servant Group International or SGI. If the donor wants a tax-deduction, you should ask them to re-write the check payable to SGI. If you have already cashed or deposited the check, you can return the funds to them and ask them to re-write the check payable to SGI.

If the donor does not care about getting a tax-deduction, then you can deposit the check in your account and send a corresponding amount via personal check in to SGI. If you decide to keep the funds and not run them through SGI, then that amount will not be applied towards the minimum amount you need to turn-in or raise.

A donor or group gave me cash. What should I do?

If the donation was from a group (i.e., Sunday school class), then put the funds in a envelope marked accordingly and turn it into SGI with your other support. No tax deductible receipt will be issued to “group” donations.

If the donation was from an individual who wants a tax-deduction, you should put cash in a small envelope, write their name and mailing address on it, and turn it in with your collected funds.

If the donor does not want a tax-deduction, you should put cash in a small envelope, mark “anonymous” on the envelope, and turn it in with your collected funds.

If you decide to keep the funds and not run them through SGI, then it will not be applied towards the amount you are required to raise or turn-in.

My church or a donor wants to, or is offering to, support me directly and not go through SGI. What should I do?

Though we appreciate the donor’s generosity, support that bypasses SGI will not be considered to count towards the total support goal you need to raise prior to deployment. SGI’s domestic and international ministry is supported in part by funds raised by all team members, full-time, part-time and short-term. Without this revenue, SGI could not operate, care for its teams, or maintain opportunities to serve on the field.

Our advice is to communicate this to the donor, and ask them to kindly direct their support through SGI. If they still decide to not route their gift through SGI, then that amount will not be applied towards the minimum amount you need to raise or turn in.

I am planning (or able) to self-support my travel. Why do I need to run the funds through SGI?

SGI's domestic and international ministry is supported in part by funds raised by all team members, full-time, part-time and short-term. Without this revenue, SGI could not operate, care for its teams, or maintain opportunities to serve on the field. If a team member self-supports and does not run their funds through SGI, SGI finds itself in the difficult position of shouldering additional responsibilities without corresponding financial resources. Therefore, we require that you run your funds through SGI to be part of the team.

I am self-funding all or part of my trip. Will I get a tax-deductible receipt?

Yes, it is considered a donation and the SGI Home office will mail you a tax-deductible receipt.

Will my donors get a tax-deductible receipt?

Yes, the SGI Home office will mail a tax-deductible receipt for each gift to the donor. Donors will also get a year-end total tax receipt each January for the prior year.

Will SGI respect the privacy of my personal donors?

Yes, SGI will not add or transfer your personal donor to any mail or email list.

I want to combine this trip with other travel. Is that okay and how will finances be handled?

Please contact your team leader to discuss. This is usually okay and quite common. You will need to be sure that you meet arrival and departure windows specified by your team leader. Funds routed through SGI can only be used to fund those portions of your trip directly associated with your travel to/from Athens and your term of volunteer service in Greece.

I want to go on this trip, but need to arrive and/or depart on days different than outlined in the trip itinerary. Is that possible?

Typically not, because of the added complication to team logistics and volunteer work assignments, but please contact your team leader to discuss.

What if I raise extra funds?

You can use extra funds to [reimburse your airfare as noted in this section]. Beyond that, funds over and above the amount you are required to raise or turn in will be applied towards SGI's work with refugees in Greece.

A donor gave a check, I turned it in to SGI, but it still has not been deposited. Is everything okay?

Yes, SGI will hold all your donations until you have reached the minimum required total amount before depositing them. By doing so, we are able to void donor checks and return them to you, thus effectively cancelling or "returning" donations if you do not raise enough funds. Please note, once donations are processed by SGI we are unable to return them to you or to the donor.

What happens if I don't raise enough support, decide not to go, or must cancel my plans?

As noted [above] SGI will hold all your donations until you have reached the minimum required total amount before depositing them. By doing so, we are able to void donor checks and return them to you, thus effectively cancelling or "returning" donations if you do not raise enough funds.

Once donations have been processed and deposited by SGI, per tax regulations we are unable to return them to you or the donor. If your funds/donations have already been processed and you are unable to join the trip, your support can either be:

1. Transferred to an active SGI project or team member, or
2. Held at SGI for up to 12 months if you think there is a reasonable chance you will try to go on another short-term missions trip with SGI. After the 12 month window, funds will be redirected to another SGI project or account.

In either case, please contact your team leader as soon as possible to discuss these options.

Travel Guidelines

PASSPORTS & VISA

You will need a valid U.S. passport for this trip. The expiration date of your passport must extend at least 6 months beyond our anticipated date of return. Please find and check your now!

[How to obtain or renew a U.S. Passport](#)

You will not need to acquire a Greek visa for this trip as we will be there under 90 days. The U.S. Passport is all you need.

Note: If you have traveled to or spent time in Europe during the past 12 months, please ensure that you still qualify for another visit at this time per Schengen territory restrictions. If you spend three months in the Schengen area during any six-month period, you must wait another three months before you can apply to enter the Schengen area again without a visa.

[Click here for more information regarding Schengen territory time restrictions.](#)

PARENT TRAVELING WITH CHILD

If a child (under the age of 18) is traveling with only one parent, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service may require additional paperwork in the form of a notarized letter.

Although there is no specific standard wording for the permission letter, it should be worded along these lines:

“I acknowledge that my wife/husband/ (full name and passport number) is traveling to Greece on (trip dates) with my son/daughter (full name and passport number). He/She has my permission to do so. My personal contact information is (full name, address, phone, email).”

Finally, please produce three (3) signed and notarized copies of the letter. Give one copy to the traveling parent, one copy with the traveling minor, and one copy stays with the parent not traveling.

Also, be sure to bring an official copy of the minor’s birth certificate with you.

[Click here for more information for a parent traveling with a minor.](#)

SUBWAY AND GETTING AROUND ATHENS

To get around Athens, we will be doing a lot of walking and lots of subway riding each day.

It may seem complicated at first, but the [Athens Metro Subway](#) is very efficient, safe and simple once you figure it out. You will purchase one or two subway passes to cover your week and keep it with you each day. (During 2017, the Metro is in the process of transitioning from paper tickets to electronic cards, so it is not certain at this point what the situation will be during our trip.)

There are 3 main lines (Red, Green and Blue) with 4 terminals that allow you to cross between lines. The platform and train name will correspond to the last stop on that particular line in the direction that the train is going. Plot your course using train names and crossover terminals.

Note: Please be absolutely aware and certain of your target stop before getting to the train. Write it on your hand if you need to. The subway is often overcrowded, and you may not fit in the car when the door opens. If that happens, make sure someone on your team knows it, then wait for the next train and go to your target stop and wait on the platform where you exit the train. One or more team members will wait and meet you there.

Always carry your subway pass with you to avoid being fined. Also, please pick up a business card from your hotel's front desk and keep it with you each day when you go out. That way, if you need to, you can show it to a taxi driver and ask him to take you back to the hotel.



Tip: If you have a smart phone, download the app CityMaps2Go and load the Athens city map to mark and share key locations.

TRIP INSURANCE

We will purchase for you a short-term trip insurance policy through TalentTrust Consultants and provide you with a copy of policy documentation. You will need this whether or not you are already covered or carry insurance for international travel. The cost of coverage is included in your budget.

[Click here for more details regarding trip insurance coverage and benefits.](#)

Safety & Health

CRIME & SECURITY

Athens is a wonderful city, but as one of the world's foremost tourist destinations, there are invariably people and areas you need to be aware of. Here are some important tips:

- Never go anywhere alone; always be with another team member.
- Do not travel to or wander around parts of the city without getting approval from your team leader or assistant team leader.
- Always cross streets at designated pedestrian crossings.
- If you encounter any type of protest or demonstration, small or large, turn and walk far away as soon as you can.
- Always carry a copy of your hotel's address (pickup a business card at the front desk) and a copy of your team leader's phone number with you at all times.
- If you get bumped, surrounded by an argument, musician, beggar or other distraction, be aware or get pick-pocketed.
- Wear a money belt (neck or waist worn under clothes) and split up your valuables.
- Wear your backpack in front of you on subways, and keep your wallet thin and in front pocket, not hip pocket. Secure your pants pocket opening with a safety pin.
- Never lay your phone on the table beside you (grab and run!).
- If you become hopelessly lost, keep trying to contact your team leader or another team member by phone, text, WhatsApp, AND email. If you don't have a phone, kindly ask a local to try and call on your behalf. If you can't reach your team for instructions, please make your way back to the hotel.
- NEVER accept an invitation from someone you don't know to go with them to a shop, restaurant, tourist spot or otherwise for any reason whatsoever. They may seem nice, but they are likely after your money, dignity, or kidney.

MEDICAL & HEALTH

Greece is a modern country. Emergency or routine medical care will be available and accessible if needed. Please let your team leader, assistant or national partner know if you need medical attention.

Emergencies

The general Emergency number in Greece is 112.

Vaccinations

The U.S. State Department does not recommend any special vaccinations for travel to Greece, but it is recommended that you check with your physician, let him know you are traveling to Greece, and make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines.

Prescriptions

Carry prescription medication in original packaging, along with a copy of your doctor's prescription.

Animal Contact

Do not try to make friends with cats, dogs or other animals you meet on the street; they may carry unwelcome diseases.

Food & Water

There are no guarantees, but food and water in Greece typically does not cause any issues for travelers. Even so, it is recommended that you drink bottled water, not tap water.

Jetlag

You can't avoid it, but [click here for some tips to help you cope with jetlag.](#)

After the Trip

If you are not feeling well after your trip, you may need to see a doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor about your travel, including where you went and what you did on your trip. Also tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

Team Guidelines

PERSONAL CONDUCT GUIDELINES

As a measure of safety and consideration, please keep these guidelines in mind at all times. Also, don't be afraid to remind a fellow team member of guidelines if needed:

- 1) If you suspect or feel harassed, assaulted or in danger for any reason, or know of another team member who feels the same, it is your immediate responsibility to let the Team Leader know.
- 2) Never go anywhere alone; always be with another team member.
- 3) Do not travel to or wander around parts of the city without getting approval from your team leader or assistant team leader.
- 4) Do not be alone or isolated with a refugee of the opposite gender, or with a refugee worker of the opposite gender from another organization or team.
- 5) Do not seek to build cross-gender relationships with a refugee. Many come from very conservative cultures. Men should work with men; women should work with women.
- 6) Do not be alone with a refugee minor or any minor not your own.
- 7) Don't be loud, overly giggly or boisterous in public, - it screams "Hey look at me, I'm from the USA."
- 8) If asked, you came to Greece "to help the Greek people care for the refugees," versus you "came only for the refugees."
- 9) Do not offer to help any refugee with resettlement or relocation costs, paperwork or processes. Also, do not invite or suggest that a refugee come visit you in the U.S. or move to the U.S. Offers to help can easily be misconstrued as promises to help, resulting in broken relationships for you, the refugee and the long term workers.
- 10) Be very slow to (i.e., never) suggest or demonstrate better ways to do something to a Greek, a refugee, or any other international you will be serving alongside. Relationship is more important than efficiency in most cultures, and Greece is not the right place to practice American ingenuity.
- 11) Be very quick to respond to and follow instructions from your Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader.

12) If you have a problem with another team member, speak directly to that team member, not others, about it (Matthew 18:15).

TEAM DRESS CODE

Modesty is important when working among refugees. Many come from countries and/or faith backgrounds where a much more conservative style of dress is common. In order to more effectively serve them and not put up barriers, all volunteers, male or female, must abide by the following dress code when serving among refugees:

Approved

- Jeans or other long pants
- T-shirts, polo shirts or long sleeve shirts
- Dresses/skirts below the knees

Prohibited

- Shorts
- Tank tops/muscle shirts/spaghetti straps
- Tops that do not cover entire shoulders
- Pants/jeans/skirts that do not cover knees
- Tight-fitting clothing
- Tights/leggings/yoga pants (unless covered by an item that meets code)
- Bare feet
- Military fatigues
- Apparel that advertises alcohol or tobacco
- Apparel that is overtly religious
- Clothing with holes/tears

When not serving among refugees, you may dress comfortably and appropriately for the weather and venue, but modesty is still appreciated.

GREEK LAWS

You are subject to local Greek laws. If you violate local laws, even unknowingly, you may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Here are some basics to keep in mind:

- 1) The Greek Constitution and law prohibits proselytizing. Do not proactively seek to impose your belief system upon another person, or offer items or materials that could be so construed.
- 2) Do not give, share, or offer to pay for a ride, ticket or lodging for any refugee. Doing so may be considered human trafficking. If pressured to do so, your answer is simply, "My organization does not allow me to do that."

- 3) You are not allowed to photograph military installations. If you do, police may arrest you.
- 4) Mace or pepper-spray canisters are illegal in Greece. Such items will be confiscated and may result in detention and arrest.
- 5) If you violate regulations on Greek antiquities, you could face a large fine or even a prison sentence. Customs authorities strictly regulate the export of Greek antiquities, including rocks from archaeology sites. Make sure you are not purchasing a restricted antiquity and carry a receipt for anything you buy.
- 6) Carry your passport or some form of photo identification at all times, preferably in a concealed money belt. Police may detain you for questioning if you don't have your passport with you.
- 7) Illegal drug possession and driving while under influence can get you arrested and carry heavy sentences in Greece.
- 8) If you are arrested or detained, ask police or prison officials to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately.

RESTRICTED PHOTOS, POSTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Unfortunately, we need to exercise strict discipline regarding all photos, email, and online communication associated with refugees or those serving among them.

Some refugees are still being sought after by those who would do them harm. Also, given the ubiquitous nature of social media, pictures or posts may be seen by distant family members and generate unwelcome confusion, grief or conflict.

Five simple rules. If your particular question is not addressed, please assume it is prohibited.

- 1) People.
Do not take, share, post photos or mention the actual name or identifying characteristics of any refugee or any worker, national or expat (other than a fellow team member) that is serving among refugees. (If a new refugee friend wants to take a photo with you for themselves it is okay, but please use your discretion.)
- 2) Places:
Do not take photos or mention the actual name or identifying characteristics of any buildings where refugees or refugee ministries reside.

- 3) Groups:
Do not mention or post the actual name or identifying characteristics of any organization, ministry or church serving among refugees.
- 4) Government:
Do not write or post anything negative regarding any effort by the government or any organization that is working to help care for refugees.
- 5) Social Media
Do not “friend” or add any refugee to Facebook or any social media platform. Their friendship with you can harm them or their families in their home countries. Also, your activities and those of your friends on Facebook may cause cultural offense and confusion. The only acceptable exchange is email addresses, but only if you are the same gender.

ALLOWED PHOTOS, POSTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Even with the aforementioned restrictions, we hope you will still take time to communicate your experiences during this week, as they are the key to helping us get the word out and support these types of opportunities. Here are some particular guidelines and requests:

- 1) Ask First
If you are unsure if a picture, post or article would be okay, please check with your Team Leader or Assistant Team Leader.
- 2) Include SGI
Add SGI’s Director of Communications, Colleen McGarry, (abundantblessing@gmail.com) to your email updates list, friend her on Facebook, and send her links of any blogs you may post. She will check with you before re-sharing anything very personal with SGI’s online audience.
- 3) Send Pictures
Please send (via email or FaceBook) to Colleen McGarry interesting pictures and videos of you and the team in action (serving, traveling, dining, etc.).
- 4) Tag Us
As we will be posting approved material from this trip, please follow Servant Group International on Facebook to stay in the loop. Also, please tag Servant Group International in your posts on Facebook or Instagram about the trip.

@ServantGroupInternational
#ServantGroupInternational
#SGIgreecetrip
#SGIathens

- 5) Use Pseudonyms
Refrain from tagging or identifying refugees or those serving them by name. This is relevant even in your personal email update letters.
- 6) Tell the Stories
People love stories. When relating the experiences of a refugee or a conversation with them, be careful that distant friends, family members, or even enemies could not discern the specific identification or location of the person you are writing about.
- 7) Be Discreet
Certain words and terminology related to faith can trigger unnecessary attention towards SGI, our teams overseas, or others serving among refugees. Please use appropriate discretion and check with your team leader if you have any questions.
- 8) Be Honest
Share about your experiences and how it affects you as a person. Tell about the work, funny stories, cultural surprises, and how you are making a difference.
- 9) Help Us
Finally, if you blog or would be willing to write a blog post for SGI please let Colleen McGarry (abundantblessing@gmail.com) know. Thanks!

Building Relationships

CULTURAL GUIDELINES

The rich culture, history and hospitality of Eastern cultures is usually overwhelming to those who have the privilege of building these friendships. Here are some cultural guidelines to help you on your journey:

1) Greetings

Use the language guides (LINK) on this page and learn how to say “hello” and a few other kind phrases in Greek, Arabic and Dari. It will open up many doors for new friendships.

2) Conversations

Ask lots of questions and listen to their story, even if it is hard for you to understand. Your patience and attention can help validate their feelings and bring small measures of hope and healing.

3) Politics

Don't be lured into defending or critiquing American foreign policy. Kindly deflect such conversations back to your personal hope for the safety, welfare and God's care of your new friend, their family, and all people.

4) Trauma

Many refugees have experienced overwhelming amounts of trauma. Behavior that may appear aggressive, greedy, or unusual can all be very natural responses to the experiences they have survived. Children in particular may act troubled or exhibit abnormal patterns. Be patient, aware and understanding

5) Hands

Men greet men with a handshake – right hand only. The left hand is considered unclean. Men do not greet women with a handshake, except in rare situations where the woman extends her hand first. You can greet most women with a polite nod of your head. Cross-gender hugs and body contact are a definite “no” in almost all circumstances.

6) Eyes

Eastern cultures are very conservative. Men should limit interaction to only men, and women to women. Do not mix this up. For example, a woman should avoid intentional eye contact or long conversations with a man and vice versa.

7) Shoes

Take your shoes off before entering a home, tent or room, even if your host insists you don't need to. The bottom of your shoes might not be dirty, but it can be considered religiously “unclean.”

8) Shoulders

Dress very conservative. Men should not wear tank tops or shorts. Women should wear loose-fitting clothing that covers shoulders, below the elbows and well below the knees. No low necklines.

9) Feet

Don't cross or stretch out your legs in a manner that points the bottom of your feet or shoes at someone. This can be considered very impolite.

BASIC LANGUAGE SKILLS

It is not expected that you will learn a foreign language for a trip of this duration, but a handful of Greek, Arabic, and Dari phrases will add much to your trip enjoyment and certainly help you make new friends. Your new refugee friends will be deeply honored if you know a few kind words in their language.

[Basic Greek words and phrases](#)

[Basic Arabic words and phrases](#)

[Basic Dari words and phrases](#)

MATTERS OF FAITH

Be mindful that proselytizing is against Greek law. Our friends in the Greek church know their country and know how to handle particular situations. We are guests who should be very careful not to bring any trouble upon them or ourselves. We are going to simply serve, love and help.

- Do not insult or speak light of anyone's religion or prophet at anytime. Always be respectful.
- It is okay to offer to pray for needs of friends you make, just ask permission from them first and don't make a big show of it.
- When serving, if you are asked about your faith, you can always answer, "As a follower of Jesus, I believe that... ..What do you believe?"

Forms to Complete & Return

Please print, complete and **mail a hardcopy** of all the following attached forms to:

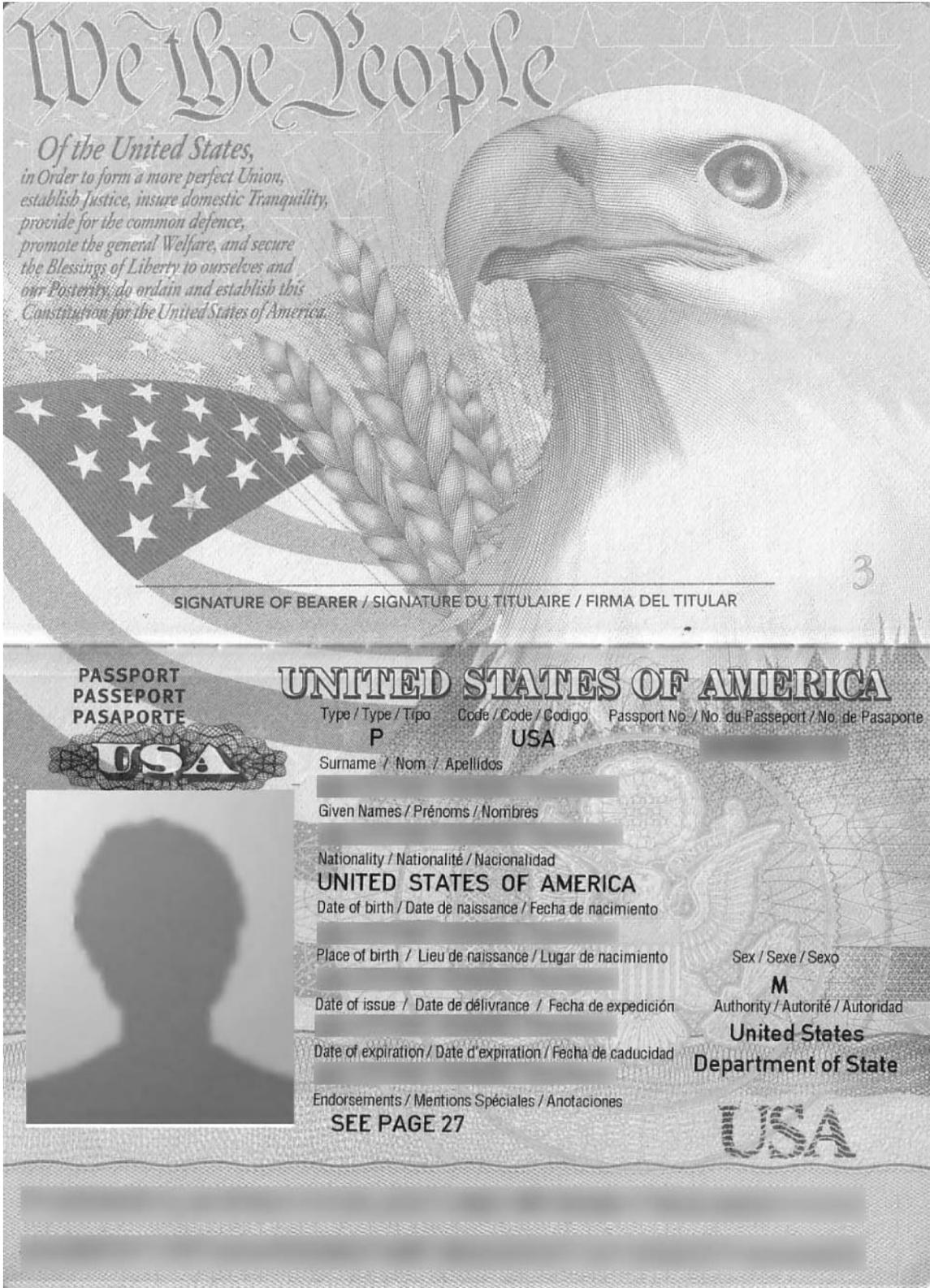
*Servant Group International
ATTN: GREECE 7-17
506 Tanksley Avenue
Nashville, TN 37211*

- 1) Photocopy of your passport
- 2) Emergency Contact Form
- 3) Liability Release Form
- 4) Team Member Agreement

Also, please remember to **email** the following 3 items to your team leader, Dave Dillard (dillard@servantgroup.org)

- 1) A passport style, forward facing photo of yourself against a plain background (you can use your phone camera)
- 2) A brief personal bio that can be used to help introduce yourself to fellow team members, trip leaders, and national partners. (3 or 4 sentences).
- 3) A copy of your full flight itinerary to/from Athens once you have it booked.

Black and White Photocopy of Passport



Emergency Contact Form

My Name _____

Please list any allergies and/or medical conditions your Team Leader should be aware of:

Emergency Contact #1

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Emergency Contact #2

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Primary Contact at your Church

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Team Member Agreement

- I have read the entire contents of the Greek Trip Info Packet, and will be responsible to follow all included instructions, guidelines and policies.
- I will let my Team Leader know immediately if I or another team member feels harassed, threatened or in danger at any point.
- I will submit to the authority of my Team Leaders while on this trip.
- I understand that all trip plans, schedules, activities, and locations can drastically change depending on situational developments. I will be flexible.
- I will demonstrate respect for the belief system of others and respect both Greek law and SGI's position regarding Matters of Faith.
- I have read, understand and agree to the Team Dress Code.
- I will not travel about alone in Greece, but purpose to be with at least one other team member unless otherwise specifically approved by my team leader.
- I understand the rule of conduct when serving among refugees is men with men, women with women. I will not serve alone with a refugee minor.
- I will not provide or pay for any type of transportation for a refugee.
- I will not take or share photos of refugees, facilities where they meet or live, or of other workers serving among refugees.
- I will not "friend" refugees on social media.
- I will not mention refugees or other workers by name in posts or written material, nor reveal information that could be used to determine their location or identity.
- If I have a problem or issue with anyone on the team, I will speak openly first with that person before I speak with anyone else or talk to the team leader.
- I understand that \$1750 support must be turned in to SGI on or before June 1.
- I understand I am required to book and pay for my own airline ticket to/from Athens, and that I can be reimbursed for all or part of my airfare from excess funds raised or turned in.

Signature _____ Date _____