



Stepping Stones

FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

160 Ivy Creek Ln Unit 201, Lynchburg, VA, 24503 • 1-681-2288 • www.steppingstonesglobal.org

GROUP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GALAPAGOS 2023 INFORMATION SHEET

Are you ready to make an impact? Below please find the payment schedule for the trip to the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador 2023

Dates of the trip:

March 11-March 18, 202

FEES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE.

Type	Amount	Due date (days prior to arrival)
Down Payment(non-refundable)	\$250	No later than October 15, 2022 (To keep a spot on the trip, should be paid immediately).
Second Payment	\$550	Due 90 days prior to departure
Third Payment	\$550	Due 40 days prior to departure

How to Pay the Trip Fee

You can either pay on-line at: <https://www.steppingstonesglobal.org/galapagos-2023-payments> or can pay by personal check or money order:

Please make checks and money orders payable to Stepping Stones. Please do not send cash through the mail.

Mailing Address: Maggie Flynn, 160 Ivy Creek LN Unit 201, Lynchburg, VA 24502

Program Fee: SSGD has a \$250 Program Fee. All fees are used to cover the cost of planning, organizing, and implementing the group's volunteer activities, and to help offset the administrative and operational costs incurred by Stepping Stones in the pursuit of its nonprofit mission.

For volunteers entering the Galapagos, our partner foundation processes Galapagos National Park Fee waivers for all group individuals (if official requirements are met; see below).

Stepping Stones organizes the group projects, organizes transportation to and from the work site, supplies necessary tools/equipment, offers general support, and awards Stepping Stones certificates for all those who successfully complete the program (upon request).

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Please note that circumstances at the host sites can change quickly and without warning—weather patterns can shift on a dime, COVID restrictions may change, necessary transportation can blow a tire or break an axle, and political/institutional dynamics can suddenly reverse course. Should a significant disruptive event occur, and it becomes impossible to continue with a scheduled project, Stepping Stones will endeavor mightily to place groups in other volunteer settings.

Trip cost does not include:

- International flight to Guayaquil, Ecuador (GYE)
- International Health Insurance (must be purchased to travel to Ecuador)
- Some meals
- Extra curricular activities
- \$10 Fee at the Airport in Guayaquil the day we leave (this may change)

LATE FEES/ LATE ADDITIONS. If you fail to submit payments by each deadline, you will be charged an additional \$25 per missed deadline.

AUTOMATIC CANCELLATION. Stepping Stones reserves the right to cancel a group's proposed volunteer activities once either of the following criteria have been met:

- Stepping Stones has received less than 50% of the individual's total fees 90 days prior to arrival; or
- Stepping Stones has received less than 100% of the individual's total fees 30 days prior to arrival.

In the event of an Automatic Cancellation by Stepping Stones, neither the group nor group individuals are eligible for any refunds.

CANCELLATION BY VOLUNTEER. If a volunteer wishes to cancel their trip, a formal written notice of cancellation must be sent to either Emily Caldwell, emily@steppingstonesglobal.org in order to be eligible for a refund. Please note that as this is a formal cancellation, the letter must be signed and dated by the volunteer. Because the preferred method of communication is email, a scanned version of the letter is sufficient, but the letter must be dated, and signed by hand.

Once a volunteer has decided to cancel their trip, the amount of any potential refund is determined by the date/time that the properly-signed and –dated cancellation letter is received by Stepping Stones.

If the individual properly notifies Stepping Stones of cancellation within 60 days of the date of arrival, the individual is eligible for a 25% refund on whatever Program Fees have been made. If an individual properly notifies Stepping Stones of cancellation within 30 days of the date of arrival, the group is eligible for a 10% refund on whatever Program Fees have been made. Stepping Stones must comply with travel agency, hotel and bus cancellation policies as well.

No refunds will be given when notice of cancellation is less than 30 days before the date of arrival.

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Refunds for Transportation and Materials Fees are made solely at the discretion of Stepping Stones. In determining the content of any potential refund, Stepping Stones will take into account what supplies have been purchased for the cancelled program, any costs incurred by Stepping Stones for cancelling transportation, and staff time devoted to organizing the program.

In the event that a refund is granted, SSGD will send a refund as soon as it is able.

GALAPAGOS VOLUNTEERS

GALAPAGOS NATIONAL PARK FEE / GALAPAGOS GOVERNMENT COUNCIL FEE

The Galapagos Government Council Fee of \$10 is payable at the Guayaquil/Quito airports (cash only). The Galapagos National Park Fee of \$100 is payable at the Baltra Airport in the Galapagos Islands (cash only). Please note that there is no ATM at the Baltra Airport in the Islands—be sure to leave the mainland with cash enough to cover the park fee. However, because we are entering the Galapagos as volunteers the \$100 is waived.

FEE WAIVERS

Stepping Stones offers waivers for the \$100 Park Fee for volunteers entering the Galapagos. We cannot emphasize enough that it is a privilege to receive this waiver, and abuse of the waiver can jeopardize your status in the Islands, and our reputation within the Galapagos community. You also may receive a fine if it is abused. Please take these requirements seriously.

Note: To receive the waiver, each group member must

- Work on certified Stepping Stones projects for 75% of his/her time in the Islands (reserving no more than 25% of his/her time for tourism activities); and
- Agree to engage in tourism activities on weekends unless determined otherwise by Stepping Stones staff.

Finally, volunteer group members are **ineligible** to participate in a boat cruise. Day trips to San Cristobal, Isabela and Floreana are permissible. Because of the strict immigration laws in the Galapagos, we must abide by the laws in order to continue to serve the Galapagos community. You can still see a lot of flora and fauna within the mentioned islands above.

In order to ensure that your waiver is processed in time, you must complete and submit your waiver paperwork to us no later than 45 days before your arrival. Once your paperwork is complete and processed, we will send you a waiver for your \$100 Galapagos Park Entrance Fee. However, because of the paperwork SSGD has to submit to the Ministry of Health, paperwork must be submitted no later than October 20, 2023.

NOTE: If you submit your paperwork late you will be liable for a late fee of \$200 in order to get the necessary documents through on time.

If you have any questions please contact Emily Caldwell at emily@steppingstonesglobal.org