

BUILDERS WITHOUT BORDERS OF TEXAS

HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES

**This packet contains information for planning a mission trip to
Carbonera, Tamaulipas, Mexico.**



**Thank you for your interest in working with
Builders Without Borders of Texas, Inc.**

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Builders Without Borders of Texas, Inc., (B.W.B.T.) is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization. The organization and its Board of Directors were established in 2003. B.W.B.T. helps individuals, families, and communities in the United States and abroad by assisting in disaster relief efforts, as well as long-term community development in poverty-stricken areas. To find out more about B.W.B.T., please visit www.builderswithoutbordersoftexas.org.

B.W.B.T. leads teams from churches, schools, and civic organizations to carry out projects in communities where assistance is needed.

This packet contains information for the mission team coordinator who is preparing to take a team to Carbonera, Mexico. Whether you are coordinating a mission team of five people or 50 people, B.W.B.T. hopes that you will find this information helpful.

B.W.B.T. has been working on the long-term assistance and community development of Carbonera, Mexico. Carbonera is located along the Gulf Coast of Mexico approximately 125 miles south of the Texas/Mexico border at McAllen in the State of Tamaulipas. Carbonera is a fishing village. The average daily income for a family in Carbonera is approximately \$10. B.W.B.T. has been working in the village since 2004 to bring higher education for the children and adult vocational classes and assistance in small business start-up for people in the village to expand their income source and increase their income. B.W.B.T. owns a mission team dormitory in Carbonera, which houses up to 40 people. The dormitory has two sleeping rooms complete with plywood bunks (no mattresses), two bathrooms complete with toilets, sinks, and showers, a kitchen complete with a refrigerator, stove/oven, and a small freezer chest, as well as a pavilion and a deck that can be used for meals, fellowship time, and outdoor grilling. There is a propane gas grill available for team use. Propane can be purchased in the village. There is also a sewing school adjacent to the dormitory.



Scheduling Your Trip

To schedule a trip, contact B.W.B.T. via email at builderswithoutborders@hotmail.com or call 832-274-3893.

Deciding on a Project

B.W.B.T. has several ongoing construction projects in Carbonera. These include construction of homes, school buildings, vocational buildings, and churches. The project that your team works on will depend on the amount of money you would like to spend on construction materials, the number of people on your team, the length of your trip, the skill level and experience of your team members, and the stage of particular projects at the time of your trip. This can be discussed and a decision made with Kim Reed, B.W.B.T.'s construction manager, when you call to schedule your trip.

Once you have scheduled dates and decided on a project for your trip, you will need to secure it by completing and sending the appropriate forms, which are attached to this packet, along with payment for the construction materials for your project. B.W.B.T does not charge a fee for teams to house in the dormitory. However, donations are greatly appreciated. This donation will be used to pay monthly expenses incurred by B.W.B.T. at the dormitory for electricity, water, gas, and general maintenance and upkeep. Please return the completed Group Registration form, a Medical Release form for each team member, and a check at least two weeks prior to your trip to Builders Without Borders of Texas, Inc., P.O. Box 202, Friendswood, TX 77549. Make checks payable to B.W.B.T.

Preparing for Your Trip

Transportation

You will need to provide transportation for your team to Carbonera. All vehicles that will be crossing the U.S./Mexico border will need the following: Title, registration, driver's license, and credit card in the vehicle driver's name. All of these items must have the driver's name on them. The driver will be charged \$35 on his/her credit card for the purchase of a vehicle visa. The credit card used for each vehicle **must** be in that particular vehicle driver's name. This applies even if you are renting vehicles. If you are renting vehicles, be sure that the rental agency gives you all of the necessary paperwork for taking a rental vehicle into Mexico. This includes a copy of the title and registration and a letter from the rental agency granting permission for the vehicle to travel across the border. You will also need to purchase Mexican insurance for each rental vehicle through the rental agency. Suggested rental agencies that allow vehicles to be taken into Mexico are CAPPs and PV Rentals.

Team Member Paperwork

Each team member needs to fill out the appropriate B.W.B.T. forms and have them available at the border. Adults 18 years and older must have a completed and notarized Adult Medical Release form. Anyone under the age of 18 must have a completed and notarized Minor Medical Release form and a Release for Minor to Travel form. These forms are attached to this packet for you to copy and distribute to team members. The forms are also available to download at www.builderswithoutbordersoftexas.org under *Forms*.

At the border, each team member will need to get a seven-day personal visa. There is no charge for this visa. If your trip will have your team members in Mexico for longer than seven days, they will need to purchase 180-day personal visas, which cost \$22 each.

Each team member must present a passport at the border. Anyone under the age of 18 will also need to present a completed and notarized Release for Minor to Travel form. Information on where to obtain a passport is attached to this packet. You should allow several weeks to receive your passport.

What to Bring

List of Items for the Team Coordinator:

- ⇒ Food for all team meals. There are usually at least two B.W.B.T. board members assisting on the trip and a few of the Mexican men will help with construction. We ask that you plan to feed these people along with your team (5-10 extra people).
- ⇒ Paper goods and eating utensils for all team meals
- ⇒ Toilet paper
- ⇒ Paper towels
- ⇒ 150-quart cooler filled with ice
- ⇒ Igloo-style coolers for each work site
- ⇒ First-aid kit for each work site
- ⇒ Cash to purchase bottled water (\$1.50 per five gallons) and ice (\$2 per 10 lb. bag)
- ⇒ Cash to pay the ladies of the village if they will be cooking dinner for your team (\$3 per person)
- ⇒ Cash to pay the fisherman if they will be taking your team to the island (\$30 per boat for gas/boats hold eight people)

List of Personal Items for Team Members to Bring:

- ⇒ Passport
- ⇒ Bed roll (sleeping bag, sheet, blanket, pillow)
- ⇒ Air mattress or some form of bed padding (pump for air mattress)
- ⇒ Work clothes appropriate for the season (jeans, shorts, tee-shirts, sweat shirts, tennis shoes and/or work boots, jacket)
- ⇒ Casual clothes
- ⇒ Swim suit and beach towel (if your team will be going to the island)
- ⇒ Shower shoes
- ⇒ Personal toiletry items (soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, deodorant)
- ⇒ Bath towel, hand towel, and washcloth
- ⇒ Sunscreen
- ⇒ Insect repellent
- ⇒ Sunglasses
- ⇒ Hat
- ⇒ Any medication you may need (please list these on your medical release form)
- ⇒ Small amount of cash for purchasing snacks and sodas in the village and for shopping and dinner if your team will be visiting San Fernando (small bills - American cash is accepted, but your change will be returned in pesos)
- ⇒ Tool belt, work gloves, hammer, or other gear appropriate for your team's particular project
- ⇒ Disposable camera
- ⇒ Refillable water bottle with your name written in permanent marker

Optional things the team can do:

- ◆ Visit San Fernando, a traditional old Mexican city. There is a town square, market, and restaurant. It is about a 45-minute drive from Carbonera to San Fernando. You will need to provide transportation. If the team would like to eat at a restaurant, each person will need cash (approximately \$6-10 per person).
- ◆ Visit a small island for swimming and fishing. You can pay local fisherman to take team members to the island on boats. You will need to pay them for the gasoline to run their boats (approximately \$30 per boat – boats hold eight people each). Of course, you may pay them extra for their time, if you would like. Please let a B.W.B.T. board member know that you would like to do this so that arrangements can be made.
- ◆ Have some of the ladies in the village cook dinner for your team. They will prepare a traditional meal of fried fish or tamales, beans & rice, chips & salsa, guacamole, and tortillas for \$3 per person. Please let a member of the B.W.B.T. board know that you would like to do this so that arrangement can be made.
- ◆ Conduct a Vacation Bible School with the children in the village
- ◆ Host a popcorn/movie night in the village
- ◆ Collect donations prior to your trip. Put together and deliver health kits to families living on the outer areas of the village. Health kits are quart-sized Zip-Loc bags, each containing: washcloth, bar of soap, small shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, nail clippers, nail file.
- ◆ Host a sewing class. B.W.B.T. has built a sewing school adjacent to the dormitory. The women of the village have learned to sew and quilt. They are then able to sell the items that they make. If you someone on your team has a particular sewing skill that they would like to share with the women, the school is available for holding classes.
- ◆ Have the women set up a “market” under the pavilion one evening after dinner and allow team members to shop. This will help supplement the families’ income, and it is a fun way for your team members to purchase souvenirs.
- ◆ Stop in Progreso on your way home. This is a border town where team members can purchase traditional Mexican souvenirs. If you do this, you will cross the border at Brownsville rather than McAllen. Please let a B.W.B.T. board member know if you would like to do this so that arrangements can be made.
- ◆ Bring sidewalk chalk, jacks, hula hoops, marbles, bubble, etc., to spend fellowship time playing with the children in the village in the evenings.

