

The Kings World Trust for Children Volunteer Booklet

KWTC BACKGROUND

Welcome to the Kings World Trust for Children. The Trust was established in 1993 as a UK based non-profit. Since then it has expanded to include three children's villages, a non-government school called The Kings English School, a medical outreach program, and community programs in a village affected by the December 2004 tsunami. The Trust is happy to welcome up to 50 overseas volunteers into the community each year.

The Kings World Trust children's complex is located about 25 miles north of Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari), the southern tip of India. It developed alongside the village of Chinnammalpuram, which has roughly 250 inhabitants, mainly Christians. Tamil is the local language spoken, which is confined mostly to the state of Tamil Nadu. It is a very poor rice growing rural area. The nearest small town, Valioor (or Valiyur) is about six miles away and Tirunelveli, the district capital, is about an hour's drive. The nearest International Airport is Trivandrum International Airport in Kerala, three hours away by road.

The Kings World Trust children's villages are homes for orphaned, homeless and very poor children. The Trust was established in 1993 in Chinnammalpuram and has expanded rapidly. At present there are around 200 boys and girls from Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths. The villages are not institutions or schools; they are real homes for children who have seldom known love, care and security in their lives. Please respect their home and try to fit in with them rather than expecting them to fit in with you. They are there for a lifetime and you are passing through. Please try not to impose American values and customs on our Indian children.

There is a formal caste (class) system in India. It will not be evident amongst our children but as adults, it will affect their careers, their social status and whom they can marry. Try to learn and understand the system as it dictates customs and behavior in all walks of life. You should also avoid judging Indian behavior and actions by American standards and values; you are in a new country and a new culture.

Be sensitive to local customs and traditions even if they seem strange to you. For example, in Church and on some buses, the men and boys sit on one side and women and girls on the other. If you are invited to dine in someone's house it will be unusual for your hostess to eat with you but she will serve you at the table. Most people eat with their fingers- using the right hand only.

VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers come to India for periods of one to six months and support the Indian staff by teaching the children and working on the Trust's other programs and projects.
- Selection takes place in the US by the US Trustees. All volunteers must complete an application form, provide references and a police check (if required) and attend an interview with the Volunteers coordinator for briefing and evaluation.
- Upon arrival at the Trust in India, all volunteers will receive a full briefing by the Director and familiarization with the Trust. Volunteers will be given a program of work, which will be based on the needs of the Trust and the individual skills of the volunteer.
- Normal program activities can include but are not limited to:
 - Teaching English to the Trust's children and in schools attended by the Trust children including The Kings English School
 - Organizing and coaching sports and games
 - Assisting with Drama, Music and Art
 - Working in the Trust's farm or workshops
 - Assisting with building, maintenance and garden work
 - Outings & visits
 - Medical duties
 - Utilization of volunteers' personal skills

Volunteers live in the Trust's Guest House called Haslemere House at Chinnammalpuram. There are also volunteer/visitor rooms in Kings Field and Kings Haven.

The routine in the children's village follows a simple daily pattern: The Church loudspeakers play religious music from 4:30 to 5:15 in the morning. The children get up between 5:30 and 6:00. They wash, dress, eat and leave for school at 7:45. They return by 5:00, play games until prayers and assembly at 6:15. Supper is at 7:00. Every evening from 7:45-8:45, there are English lessons from volunteers, computer classes and dance practices. Homework lasts until 9:00 and all are in bed by 9:30. On Sundays, Church is at 9:00 for all except two cottages, who have a trip in rotation. On the days when there is no school the next day, the children are permitted to watch TV.

Visitor and Volunteer meals are cooked and served in Haslemere House, and are different from what the children eat, with many 'Western' comforts. Breakfast is at 7:45, lunch at 1:00 and supper is at 7:00. Tea or coffee is available during the day. There is a set weekly menu.

We request a minimum weekly donation of \$20 (or the rupee equivalent) to cover the cost of meals, the housekeeper's salary and to go towards the cost of tv, beds, chairs, tables and other amenities. The money should be paid weekly in advance and signed into the housekeeping account book by you. On departure, you may wish to give a small donation to the housekeeper. Rs 300 should be fine, or a week's boarding costs, depending on your length of stay. Laundry and ironing can be done for you at your expense, although most volunteers find it easier to do laundry with soap and a bucket in their own bathroom, as the pounding can be hard on delicate cottons and linens. Details are available from the Director.

Volunteers are at all times answerable to the Trust Director and his management staff.

- The Trust has hosted over 200 volunteers since the first children's village opened at Chinnammalpuram in 1995.

VISAS & TRAVEL

If planning a short stay, the visitor should apply for a Tourist Visa which is available through the Indian High Commissioner at the consulate or through a travel agent. In New York City, the Indian Embassy is located at 64th Street and 5th Avenue. Same day issue is available, but expect long lines and bring something to read!

Volunteers working for the Trust require a W Type Visas which can only be obtained by the Trust from the Indian High Commission.

The nearest airport is Trivandrum International, which is about three hours drive away in the State of Kerala. The Trust Staff can only meet you at Trivandrum. Jet Airways and Air India fly there as well as Sri Lankan Air, Kingfisher and a few others. If you are flying into another Indian city, please arrange either a connecting flight to Trivandrum or we will help you navigate the train. (Note: This is only recommended if the volunteer is coming from Chennai/ Madras. Bombay and Delhi are really too far for a train journey to be your introduction to India)

MEDICAL

- It is important to contact your primary care physician prior to your trip to make sure you are up to date with vaccines and injections. It is wise to arrange this at least **2 months before departure**. That way, you can stock up on prescriptions as they are harder to come by in India. This is particularly useful with prescriptions like anti – malarial pills that need to be taken regularly.

- The Trust has medical staff available and has access to local hospitals and Western medicine.

- Good English speaking Doctors (male & female) are available in Valioor only 7kms away. You will have to pay for any treatment or medication.

- Bring a first aid kit and an emergency sterile kit of syringes and needles. You may need this when traveling as the sanitary conditions of hospitals and clinics are not always ideal.

- Women should bring adequate sanitary products with them as they are difficult to obtain locally.

Do NOT drink water unless you know it has been boiled and filtered except if you buy recognized branded bottled water that has not been tampered with. This is widely available in tourist areas. The water in Haslemere House and the other volunteer quarters has been boiled and filtered as it is in all the Trust locations.

Eating out in India is a bit of a lottery except in big towns or tourist resorts (and even there, it is a good idea to double check that juices are fresh and made with filtered water!). It is suggested that volunteers only eat vegetarian meals if they find themselves in eating houses of dubious pedigree. Meat can be suspect and it is not worth taking the risk. As vegetarianism is extensively practiced in India, you will always find a non-meat option. Expect to eat some meals with your hands. If this makes you uncomfortable, carrying a spoon with you is an option as it is difficult to eat rice and gravy with your hands.

Bathrooms in Volunteer quarters are Western style. This is not the case in most houses or public bathrooms. You should DEFINITELY carry toilet tissue with you wherever you go as it is almost never available outside the volunteer house. There is no need to bring toilet tissue with you over to the country, but a few portable baggies of napkins, “wet ones” or similar wipes are a good idea. Take your own first aid kit and a sterile kit with your syringes and needles when you are traveling far away from the Trust. Also, take your medical and sterile kit with you when visiting a doctor in case an injection is necessary. There are good doctors available locally and all good drugs are manufactured in India. If you need special drugs or medicine let us know the US brand name and we will find out the corresponding Indian name and will let you know whether it is available.

INSURANCE

Ensure that you purchase a good international insurance policy before you leave the US and check the small print! The policy should include adequate cover for sickness and accident plus repatriation to the US. Baggage and personal items should also be insured.

DRESS

Indian people in rural areas dress modestly and volunteers and visitor should dress sensibly in accordance with local customs. Women in rural India DO NOT wear shorts or trousers and always have their shoulders covered. Men wear a shirt (almost always with a collar) and trousers or a lungi or doti.

When in the children’s village or working in the Trust, suitable Western clothing may be worn. Women may wear loose fitting trousers covering the knee for these occasions, but should be prepared to wear skirts or dresses (again, covering the knee) while teaching or when leaving the Trust.

Outside the Trust, women should wear a calf length skirt and a blouse with short or half sleeves. Keep in mind that it gets incredibly hot and humid in South India, so a long-sleeve cotton shirt is usually unbearable. Men should wear trousers and a shirt, usually a button down short sleeve shirt and lightweight trousers. As there is now a pool at the Kings English School, bathing suits may be worn while swimming, but women are advised to bring a one-piece and swim shorts if desired (I found that I was much more

comfortable wearing running shorts over my one piece suit especially when Indian teachers are at the pool in their sarees!)

If you go to any tourist areas in Kerala, any suitable Western beachwear is acceptable, although it is tasteful to keep it modest.

The Trust has its own tailor, and skirts, trousers and shirts can be made very cheaply. There is also a uniform available for teaching- a full length wrap skirt or trousers and blouse or shirt. In addition, there are many stores in Valioor which can be pointed out to you upon arrival that sell cheap Indian clothing. It was pretty easy to pick up a few casual outfits and leave them there for other volunteers passing through. Sarees are usually purchased by volunteers for special occasions although married Indian women wear them daily.

Basic Packing List (clothing only)

Depending on how long you stay, modify your packing. The less, the better. There are clothes available locally and there are many (cheap) Indian articles that you may wish to take back with you. Make sure you have room! An extra collapsible duffle isn't a bad idea.

For Ladies:

- 2-3 calf length skirts
- 2-3 short sleeve t-shirts (modest with higher necks or collars)
- 2 long or 3/4 sleeve shirts (collars or high necks)
- two tank tops (for lounging/ beach trips)
- 1-2 pair calf length trousers (for sports/ yoga or lounging)
- A one piece bathing suit (+ one two piece for beach trips)
- one pair swimming/ athletic shorts
- 6-7 pairs underwear
- 2-3 bras/ jog bras
- waterproof shell
- sleeping clothes
- thin sweater or fleece (probably only necessary in winter depending on itinerary after the Trust. The north is cold in the winter)

For Men:

- 2-3 pairs of trousers
- 2-3 short sleeve collared shirts
- 2 t-shirts
- 1 long sleeve collared shirt
- 1 pair shorts
- swim trunks
- Underwear
- Waterproof shell
- Thin sweater or fleece

CONDUCT

All volunteers and visitors are requested to behave sensibly and to set a responsible example to the children in the care of the Trust and the local community. People will judge all volunteers by the irresponsible or bad behavior of a few.

~~king~~ Please do not smoke in front of the children. It should be confined to your own room.

- ~~Drinking~~ Drinking alcohol is not socially acceptable in rural India. If you wish to do so, please confine it to the volunteer quarters or your own room. Note that women are not typically allowed to buy alcohol from local liquor stores.

- ~~The~~ use of drugs is a criminal offense and can attract very lengthy prison sentences.

COMMUNICATIONS

~~Trust~~ can be contacted by telephone, fax and email. There is some mobile coverage available in the local areas. Indian sim cards and top up minutes are available in town and work with phones with sim cards. Check with your wireless carrier if your phone is capable of changing a sim card. Otherwise, mobile phones are available for purchase for usual rates (~ \$50 to \$100).

Address:

The Kings World Trust for Children (India)
1/383 Pudhur (near Valioor)
Achampadu (PO)
Tirunelveli District
Tamil Nadu- 627117
SOUTH INDIA

Kings World Trust for Children (UK)
7 Deepdene, Haslemere, Surrey
GU27 IRE, UK

Kings World (USA) Inc
125, Washington Place,
Apt. 3B, New York,
NY, 10014
Tel : 408 834-9031

E-mail : kwtcusa@gmail.com

Website:

www.kingschildren.org

Fax:

(within India): 04637-287367
(from the US) +914637-287637

Telephone

| | <u>Within India</u> | <u>From US</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Office/Chinnammalpuram | 04637-287167 | +914637-287167 |
| Kings Field | 04637-287366 | +914637-287366 |
| Kings Haven | 04637- 272574 | +914637- 272574 |
| Kings Kovalam | 0471-2487041 | +91471-2487041 |
| Director's House | 04637-287166 | +914637-287166 |
| Managing Trustee's House | 04637-287299 | +914637-287299 |

EXPENSES

- All volunteers are requested to fundraise a minimum of \$600 before going to India. Please note that this is only a minimum. If you are capable of raising more, please do so!
- All volunteers and visitors pay for their own flights and travel to India and any internal travel and expenses when not on Trust business. This includes visas and medical insurance and usually transportation at the end of the stay back to the airport.
- All volunteers and visitors pay the rupee equivalent of \$20 a week for food, accommodation and facilities provided in the volunteer quarters and guest accommodations. There will also be a reasonable charge, at cost, for internet, phone calls and fax if they are made from KWTCI facilities.
- Donations given to support the children in the care of the Trust are not used to support volunteers or visitors.

GENERAL POINTS

Volunteer House

Please take six paperback books and at least two videos with you and leave them behind in the volunteer house when you go. We have built up a small library in Haslemere House for volunteers and visitors and it always needs improving! As a note: most "classics" are already there- bring something original! There is a VCR in the volunteer quarters but no dvd player (yet!).

It might be a good idea to bring a deck of cards or a chess set to share with the children in the evenings or on the weekends. Nothing fancy or expensive; stick to simple

timeless games like chess, Parcheesi and snakes and ladders. A tennis ball or rubber ball is not a bad idea either.

We have our own tailors on site and it is very cheap to have clothes made locally. Take a shirt, skirt or trousers and they can copy them exactly. There is a good selection of textiles and fabrics in local shops. Do dress sensibly and in keeping with the Indian people of your own age. Ladies should avoid showing knees and shoulders at all times, even inside the Trust, although nice t-shirts without low necklines are acceptable. Men should avoid shorts outside except for seaside trips or picnics. A pair of sandals should suffice in terms of footwear, although make sure they are comfortable and give enough support for walking.

Please do not give money or presents to any of the Trust's children, their families or to the Trust staff without permission from the Director.

Younger children do not normally enter the volunteer quarters unless it is a special occasion and with the permission of the Director or a Trustee. Children may not be taken on external outings or trips without prior agreements.

Please remember that all local people will see you as representatives of the Trust and of your country at all times and therefore anything you do or say will be seen as coming with the full authority of the Trust Management. The organization maintains a low profile and local relationships are sometimes very sensitive. Please do not do or say anything that may cause offense or bring unnecessary or unwanted attention to the Trust.

Please do not offer support or money to any local religious, political, cultural or charitable organizations without the consulting the Director. It could undermine the impartiality of the Trust.

Please do not give money or attention to children or groups of children you do not know, for whatever reason, especially if you do not speak their language. It may cause embarrassing and complex repercussions for both you and the Trust.

Male volunteers are warned about the dangers of talking to or attempting to date young Indian ladies. It is not the custom and could put you in physical danger from their relatives.

Please do not become involved in or interfere with Trust's management, administration, discipline or child-care unless you are invited to do so by the Director or a Trustee. Volunteers and visitors work in support of the Indian management.

If you leave the children's village for any purpose please inform the Director where you are going and whom you will be seeing. This is for safety reasons.

Make sure that you purchase a comprehensive insurance policy for your overseas travel with good cover for sickness and accident plus repatriation clauses. This cannot be emphasized enough!

Make sure that you have a good time! The children enjoy having visitors stay especially if they play a full part in the life of the children's villages. Take the opportunity to visit local towns, temples, beaches and historic sites- there is a wealth of new places waiting to be discovered! Add new places and suggestions to the "Visitors Interest Book". Also take opportunities when the staff and teachers associated with the Trust offer their hospitality. Some of the best experiences happen away from the typical western tourist spots.

SUMMARY OF DOs & DON'Ts FOR VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS:

DO:

- Be friendly and approachable with the children, staff and the Indian Trustees
- Try to learn a few words of Tamil, the local language, and respect the local culture and customs.
- Remove your shoes when you enter a house or place of worship
- Dress sensibly in accordance with the style of local people
- Beware on roads – there is no accepted traffic law – anything goes
- Talk to people in simple, unidiomatic English or you may be misunderstood
- Be aware that people are religious, sensitive, jealous and highly suspicious
- Pay weekly subsistence in advance to the housekeeper
- Tell the director where you are going and who you are seeing

DO NOT:

- Judge Indian behavior and actions by American or western values or try to impose western values and customs on the Trust's Indian children.
- Interfere or comment on management, discipline or childcare matters.
- Touch, handle or pass food with your LEFT hand. Always use your RIGHT hand.
- Ladies- wear shorts, short skirts or revealing skimpy clothing.
- Men- attempt to date or be familiar with local young women.
- Encourage the Trust children to enter Haslemere House.
- Arrange outings for children without prior agreement.
- Give money or support to local religious, political or cultural charities
- Give money or presents to the Trust children, families or staff without the Director's agreement.
- Give money or attention to children or child groups outside the Trust.

We welcome you into our community in India. Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to answer them.