

IPA-Copán

Adopt-a-School Program in Copán, Honduras

Frequently Asked Questions



What is “Adopt-a-School”?

Adopt-a-School is a program offered by a group of Rotary Clubs in the Skagit Valley area of Washington State. Individuals, service clubs, church groups and others sponsor a Mayan village school in Copán, Honduras. Sponsors provide the funding for school supplies, backpacks and uniforms for every student in the school. Sponsors receive letters, photos and reports from their school, and are welcome to visit.

Why is Adopt-a-School necessary?

Honduras is the poorest mainland nation in Central America. The Mayan people of the Copán region survive on \$1 to \$2 per day, much of it earned during the coffee harvest. Few families can afford school uniforms and supplies. As a result, many children do not attend school, or they attend without notebooks and other basic tools for learning. The government usually provides school buildings and teachers, but parents are expected to provide everything else.

Which schools are in the program?

We select schools based on need. Every school in the program is a primary school (usually grades 1 through 6) in a Mayan village in the mountains surrounding the town of Copán Ruinas. These villages are known as *aldeas*. Some have kindergartens, but virtually none have schools for 7th grade and beyond.



Typical village school with one classroom for 56 students in all six primary grades

How are the schools organized?

A small *aldea* will typically have a one-room primary school, with a single teacher responsible for 25 to 50 students in all six grades. Larger villages might have two or three classrooms, each with its own teacher.

What results does the program achieve?

We believe every child deserves a decent education. Providing school supplies means that more children attend school, and every student learns a great deal more. Educated adults make more informed decisions, have better life skills, have smaller and healthier families, and contribute more to the development of their communities. Education is also the primary tool for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Many organizations have scholarship programs for individual students in Latin America. With our Adopt-a-School program, donating a similar amount effectively provides scholarships *for an entire school*. Your sponsorship will improve many lives.

What supplies are provided to each school?

Each year, we provide every student with the supplies they need, such as notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, crayons, glue, scissors, a ruler, a backpack and a uniform. Uniforms consist of a white shirt and a blue skirt or pants. The teachers receive whiteboard markers, dictionaries, paper and other aids.

Why is it important to provide uniforms?

The government requires students to wear uniforms at school. Although this is not strictly enforced in the *aldeas*, a uniform is often the only decent clothing a child possesses. It will be worn at church and community events.

When are supplies delivered?

Supplies are personally delivered to every student twice per year: at the start of the school year (about February 10) and the start of the third term (about July 10). By delivering twice per year, we can build stronger relationships with the students and monitor their progress.

Can I choose the school I sponsor?

Yes, we will help you select a school whose size matches your budget. You might also have a preference about the school's location.

What connections will I have with my school?

We welcome sponsors who would like to develop relationships with their adopted schools.

At least once per year, you will receive a report from the teacher, with letters or art from students, and photos of the school and students. When we visit schools, we deliver any letters and photos received from you. We offer a free translation service for correspondence.

If you come to Copán Ruinas, we will gladly arrange for you to visit your school, including a translator if needed. The best time to do this is when we make deliveries. You can also visit the world-famous Copán archaeological park, a major center of the ancient Mayan civilization.

What does it cost to sponsor a school?

The current cost of supplies is just \$20 per student, for an entire year. Most schools have between 25 and 60 students, so the cost of sponsoring a school is generally between \$500 and \$1,200 per year. A few schools are larger, with up to 130 students.

Can I participate in the program with smaller donations?

Yes, we gladly accept half sponsorships, in which case your school will have two sponsors.

We also welcome one-time donations of any amount. These are used to purchase supplies for schools waiting for sponsors.

Do I have to make a long-term commitment?

We ask that you pledge to sponsor your school for at least three years. Of course we understand that circumstances can change, and that you might need to end the relationship with your school.

Who administers the program and delivers supplies to schools?

Program funding is managed by the International Project Alliance (IPA), a group of Rotary clubs in Skagit and surrounding counties in Washington State. Our partner in Honduras is the Rotary Club of Copán Ruinas. They purchase and deliver the supplies.

Our partnership is known as "IPA-Copán", and we support many different development projects in the region.

What percentage of donations is actually used to buy supplies?

100% of every donation is used to buy supplies. Shopping, deliveries, translations and program administration are performed by volunteers who cover their own expenses.

Where do you buy the supplies?

We purchase school supplies from wholesalers in Honduras, where prices are much lower than in the U.S. and high shipping costs can be avoided. Buying in Honduras also means more jobs and income for Hondurans.

When do I need to send my donation?

We accept donations any time before we purchase supplies in November, for delivery the following February and July.

Are my donations tax-deductible?

Yes, donations are sent to a 501(c)(3) charitable organization registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

How do I get started?

If you are interested in sponsoring a school, please contact the program's administrator:

Martin Howard
Adopt-a-School Administrator
International Project Alliance

Email: mchoward@wavecable.com

To make a one-time donation, please make your check payable to "Burlington Rotary Foundation IPA Account" and write "Adopt-a-School" on the memo line. Mail your check to: IPA Account, c/o Bernadette Halliday, 1621 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham WA 98225.

Thank you!



Young students from the Mirasol Rio Negro aldea