

DownLine Foreign Missions

Support Raising Guidelines

While the financial aspect of support raising is very important, it is also important to keep in mind that the ultimate objective is not just to raise money. This is why we ask each team member to raise support knowing that supporters can be involved in one or more of the following functions: prayer support, encouragement and financial contributions. Some support team members will do all three. Please don't overlook the importance of having a support team that will keep you before the Lord in prayer. Find two or three prayer warriors who will agree to pray regularly.

Experienced fundraisers will tell you that people give to those they know. You will find that potential contributors are happy to have the opportunity to invest in someone they know personally who is doing Kingdom work. Remember in allowing others to share in this experience they are participating in what God is doing around the world!

Step #1- Prepare the Team List

Prayerfully prepare a list of 25 to 100 names of people who you feel God would want on your team. Remember to consider friends, co-workers and family members. Due to the large response of DL students going on mission, support letters may not be sent to others in the DL class. You may send to non-DownLine students only. Please be diligent to comply with this rule.

Step #2- Write the letter

It is very important that you write your own letter. Although samples are provided, you know the people you are sending to and your personality and style should be evident in the letter. People prefer to read a personal letter. A form letter is deterrent for a support team. Statistics show that most people spend less than 5 SECONDS looking at typed mail - so in your letter you have to get your point across quickly, yet thoroughly. People need to be able to look at your letter and quickly know what you are doing and asking of them. Even if you are able to provide for your own trip costs, a letter asking for prayer support should still be sent out.

Include the following information in your letter:

1. Information about the country and culture where you are going
2. Information about DownLine.
3. Provide a description of what the team will be doing. Answer the question, "Why is the team going?" The purpose of DownLine's international trip is to start disciple-making movements around the world.
4. State the reason you will be involved in the project. Answer the question, "Why do you want to be involved in this project?" All DownLine students going on trips are asked to teach at least one lesson on the disciple-making process. These lessons will be given to you as we prepare.
5. Ask the recipient to be a team member with you on this project.
6. Tell the recipient of the letter how you desire their involvement- as a prayer warrior, financial sponsor or both.
7. Mention the cost of the project for each team member, but do not recommend a certain amount because you want the Lord to determine how much each one will give.
8. Provide an explanation stating how money can be given. Money can be given in one of two primary ways:
 - They can send checks made out to DownLine Ministries. DownLine Ministries is a 501(c)3 non-profit so all gifts are tax deductible. A note on check can say the name of the trip, but not your name – this prevents it from being tax deductible. They need to include your name on a separate sheet. Checks can be given or sent directly to you; or to the address below (see #9)
 - Or supporters can give online at www.DownLineministries.com. Please make sure they know to donate to the International Fund – they type in both the trip and your name when giving online.

9. Include a support response form along with a self-addressed envelope. Checks are to be mailed to either you or to:
- DownLine Ministries
Attention: International
PO Box 770296
Memphis, TN 38177

Step #3- Send the letter

Send the letter, response slip, and a self-addressed envelope to the potential supporters by the date set by the team leader (see step #5).

Step #4- Expect results & pray

As prayer warriors and you faithfully pray, expect God to provide. Not everyone will raise their total need by writing letters. It may require personal phone calls and visits.

Step #5- Payment schedule

A payment schedule is needed because it provides DownLine with funds as they are needed for the cost of the trip. It is a standard by which you can judge how well support raising is progressing, and it helps to keep procrastinators motivated and on track.

Support schedule (for specific trips a more specific schedule may be provided):

- \$250 – due immediately – this secures your spot on the trip
- Letter sent to potential contributors as soon as possible – please do not wait
- Please make sure 100% of your funds are in at least two weeks prior to leaving
- Thank you letters to supporters (see step #6)
- Follow-up with supporters completed with-in three weeks of return (see step #8)

All payments and contributions should be turned in to DownLine offices or to Steve Winstead. Please turn checks in to DownLine with in two weeks of receiving them.

Step #6- Thank you letters

Keep an accurate record of supporters and the donated amount. As you receive responses from the contributors, please write a short thank you note immediately. Please email DownLine (admin@downlineministries.com) to find out who has given online. In the note you can include:

- Prayer requests (many trips have a team prayer list)
- You may also want to include departure information in this response letter. Before boarding the plane we will gather with everyone who has come to send us off and say a prayer. Invite them to be a part of this special time.
- Include for your prayer team the information to keep up with your trip at www.DownLineinternational.blogspot.com. Some trips may not have blog updates because there is not computer access.

Step #7- While you are away

Do not promise any communication while you are away. However, if there is an opportunity you may want to send supporters a postcard or an email.

Step #8- Follow-up

Following the trip, you need to send a letter to all supporters reporting what happened on the trip, how God moved, and specifically relate how the trip affected you personally. There is nothing more disappointing than to support someone and then never hear from him or her again. You are encouraged to have all follow-up completed within 3 weeks of returning from the project. By sharing your experiences and blessings with your support team you make them participants in the experience!

Also, you may want to invite key contributors to lunch or dinner where you will share your trip experiences. Some trips will have a team dinner where you can invite your contributors to hear from the entire team. On many trips we create DVD's which can be shared with contributors.