

Participant Guide

BAJA CALIFORNIA & PUERTO PEÑASCO, MEXICO



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Amor Ministries

Est. 1980

Our Story

When Amor Ministries began, many of the poorest families were sending their children away to orphanages because they could not provide for them. Orphanages were filling up with children whose parents loved them but lacked the resources to take care of their general needs. Amor's Founders, Scott & Gayla Congdon, decided to offer an alternative; provide adequate housing to keep families together.



The Families



Amor partners with the local community of pastors in Mexico, called the Ministry Planning Board. The pastors will nominate the family, present them to the board to decide on them receiving a home. Our Baja pastors are pictured.

The pastors live and work in the communities we build in so they know the need better than we ever could. After the home is built, the pastor is there to follow up with the family and continue a relationship with them.

Where We Serve

We serve in the Baja California area and Puerto Peñasco (across the Arizona border). Baja California includes:

- Tijuana (open year-round)
- Tecate* (open for a few weeks in spring)
- Rosarito* (open for a few weeks in summer)

We place our groups to build where there is the greatest need, but also do our best to meet a group's needs and requests.

**These camps will not be open for the foreseeable future.*



The Building Process



We generally recommend 15-25 people per single worksite in order to complete the home in about 3-4 workdays. However, it's up to your group on how many people you put on a worksite and how many days you work.

We offer support on the worksite along with all building materials delivered and ready for your crew. You can choose to add-on tool rentals or bring your own. We do not allow power tools on any of our worksites.

Camp

- Our camps are open spaces of gravel and dirt.
- Our camp caretakers, people hired by Amor, are in camp 24 hours/day to prevent unauthorized entry into and departure from the camps.
- Each group is given a designated area to camp—do not enter into another group's area without invitation.
- Each camp will have an Amor Store where you can purchase snacks, merch, and toiletries. USD and credit/debit cards accepted.
- Hacienda Camp pictured.



Bathrooms & Showers



- A bathroom is called a baño (bahn-yo) and it resembles an outhouse. They are cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Amor camps use bucket showers with separate, enclosed structures, marked “boys” and “girls”.
- Water is provided in water barrels just outside the showers. Bring your own shower apparatus like a camping solar shower or a bucket. **Keep your shower apparatus in your campsite, not near the enclosed shower structures. If you leave it near the showers, expect that it will be used or taken by someone else.**
- A swimsuit is required in the showers. Please exercise modesty while walking from campsites to the showers.
- Shower facility in Puerto Penasco pictured.

Worksites

- The worksite is the family's property that we've been invited into. Please respect their area and do not invite other community members, neighbors or children onto the worksite.
- Your Amor rep will work alongside your group; they will help make decisions, show more effective ways of working, and generally assist in any way possible.
- A t-shirt, long pants, and a pair of closed-toed shoes are the minimum dress code requirement.
- The work day may begin no earlier than 8:00am and must conclude 1 hour before sunset or no later than 5:30pm.
- No power tools are allowed on the worksite. A battery-powered drill for the door is acceptable.



How Families are Selected

- Amor works alongside a team of pastors and community leaders who nominate families in their communities to receive a home.
- The only requirement for a family to receive an Amor home is that they own the property or are making payments to own it.
- Amor then assigns groups based upon need—you may not receive a family you requested (like one with children) but we appreciate your willingness to help anyone in need.
- Families are notified via Amor and the pastors that they'll be receiving a home.
- Pictured: a woman learning that she's been selected to receive a home.



Interacting w/ the Family

- The Mexican family may not be present or as interactive as you may like. We ask that you respect their boundaries. Remember that this is their space that we've been invited into.
- On the other hand, we encourage you to interact with the family if they are present and invite them to participate in your building.
- ¡Hola! Don't be afraid to try Spanish with the family. Learning a few phrases can be a great way to connect.
- Please do not give monetary gifts to the families; it can create issues for the family and ministry (as it's not fair that all families do not receive similar gifts). If you'd like to give monetarily, we recommend donating to our Food Bank bucket in the Amor Store. This goes to help fund the pastor's ministry to families through supplying food.



Contacting the Family

- Many families will want to connect with you after your trip (whether that be through Facebook, sharing email, phone numbers, etc.).
- Communication is great but we discourage conversation about giving money, bringing donations in the future, and setting expectations.
- It's important to remember that we want to support the pastors and their ministry to the family. We don't want our interaction or communication to interfere with the pastor's continued relationship with the family.



Security Information

If you've been on trips with us before, you may have experienced a police presence on your worksite. This is part of our ongoing relationship with the Office of Public Safety in Mexico, and it is planned. This presence is routine and nothing to be concerned about. Additionally, the police may visit our camp from time to time, which is also normal and part of our procedures.

On the same note, you may notice the National Guard stationed at the school near the entrance of our camp. This is entirely normal, as they frequently move around the city. We kindly ask that participants refrain from taking photos of any officers.

You can read more about our safety protocols in the *Safety Procedures* document [found on our website](#).

Safety Information

Due to our proximity to the US/Mexico border, if there is an injury or illness, we recommend seeking medical attention in the US. An Amor rep will take the participant in an Amor vehicle. If possible or necessary (like if the injured party is a minor), a support person may go with the Amor rep.

If you must be taken to the US for medical attention, you may be released when it is too late to safely return to our camp. You will need to secure lodging in San Diego if this happens. Amor will help get you back to our camp the following day.

Amor provides first-aid kits on site and in our camp. We are happy to provide items you would commonly find in a first-aid kit like band-aids or ibuprofen. We recommend bringing allergy medicine and eye drops if you're susceptible to allergies as our camp is dusty.

The most common issue we encounter is dehydration and heat-related sickness. We recommend every participant to take frequent water breaks and stay hydrated. We provide purified drinking water in our camp and worksites. It's important to not drink the water that is used for hand washing and showers.

We recommend purchasing liability and travel insurance. Companies like Volunteer Card offer this for as little as \$30/person.

Personal Packing List

ITEM	HAVE	PACKED
ONLINE PARTICIPATION FORM COMPLETED (no need to print)		
PASSPORT OR PASSPORT CARD		
Sleeping bag, blanket, & pillow		
Foam or air mattress and/or cot		
Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, brush, soap, deodorant)		
Towel(s) & wash cloth		
Flashlight, headlamp, or lantern		
Water bottle or canteen		
Camp chair		
Sunglasses & hat		
Sunscreen & lip balm		
Insect repellent		
Work gloves (two pairs)		
Work shoes (closed-toed)		
Work clothes (no tank tops, dresses, shorts, capris; must be long pants)		
Bathing suit & cover for showers		
Camp/warm clothes for evenings		
Ear plugs for sleeping in camp		
Hand wipes/sanitizer		
Camp shoes		
Solar shower & shower shoes		
Jacket & sweatshirt		
Rain gear		
Spending money (US cash or credit card for the Amor Store)		
Bible, journal, pen		
Kleenex, handwipes, sanitizer, first aid items		
Personal tool belt (a simple canvas one from Home Depot is helpful)		
Camp games (i.e. cards, soccer ball)		

Do not bring: alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco products, fireworks, firearms, large knives, electronic games, blow dryers, curling irons, power tools or valuables.

Contact your group leader to find out if you need to bring tools or other camping gear.

CAMP RULES

QUIET HOURS ARE FROM 10pm to 6am. Be respectful. Please have campfires and pre-bed bathroom trips completed by 9:45 to be back in your camp area and quiet by 10pm. No generators are to be used during quiet hours.

NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL (smoking must be done by your campfire only, vaping is illegal)

NO PETS NO DRONES

DO NOT EXCEED 4MPH IN CAMP

NO BONFIRES (no fires over 3 feet high)

NO FIREWORKS

NO RIDING IN THE BACK OF TRUCKS OR ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF A MOVING VEHICLE

DO NOT PLAY WITH OR TOUCH ANY ANIMALS

VISITORS IN CAMP: All visitors in camp must be approved by your Amor Trip Coordinator or Amor Field Rep. All visitors must fill out a participation form prior to entering Amor's camp. As the Trip Coordinator, you assume responsibility for any visitors.

For your safety, please notify an Amor rep where you are at all times. All groups must be in camp by sundown. The camp gate is locked at 10pm. If for some reason you are not returning until after 10pm, you must inform an Amor rep.

Stay in the Amor camp as demarcated by the fence. The surrounding area is the private property of others and we are not permitted to enter.

Notify an Amor rep immediately if you see something/someone out of the ordinary.

Showers: Swimsuits are required. 2.5 gallons of water per person per day. Do not use this water to brush your teeth. Please cover up when walking to and from the showers.

Baños: In camp, please use the toilet paper provided. Lock doors during use.

Trash: Please bag and tie all trash and put in the designated area. Burn paper products only.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, contact an Amor rep immediately. (i.e. theft, injury, accident)

NO POWER TOOLS! The only exception to this rule is a battery-powered drill for the door.

Be off the worksites by 5:30pm during daylight savings time (after early March) and by 4pm after daylight savings time (after early November).

DO NOT PLAY WITH ANIMALS! If someone is bitten, apply necessary first aid and contact an Amor rep immediately. If it is safe, keep track of where the animal goes.

NO SMOKING OR VAPING on the worksite.

Follow all posted speed limits and do not exceed 15 mph in the communities you are building.

Each person should drink around 2 gallons each day. If you have a dehydrated group member, have them drink small amounts of water slowly, put them in the shade and contact an Amor rep. The first signs of dehydration are normally headaches and nausea.

Be aware of yourself and those around you while working with tools and lumber. Take your time and work smart.

Wear gloves when handling cement. Protect your skin from chemical burns.

You must wear long pants on the worksite. If you are not, you will be asked to return to camp to put long pants on.

LOCK YOUR VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES. Park as close to your worksite as possible. Do not leave bags or valuables lying in plain view.

Utilize the buddy system on the worksite. Notify your group leader if you want to leave the site.

VISITORS: All visitors must be approved by your Amor Trip Coordinator or Amor Field Rep. Prior to coming onto the build site, all visitors must fill out a participation form. Do not invite community members to join on the worksite.

WORKSITE RULES

AMOR'S EMERGENCY LINE: 001-619-662-1200 X 2

