

Expeditions Information for Parents

Hello parents! We are excited that your son or daughter is considering taking part in expeditions with Chi Alpha this year! We firmly believe that this is one of the best things a college student can do with his or her spring break or summer. Through expeditions, we believe that students are given a rare opportunity to develop leadership skills, cultivate natural abilities, and deepen character traits that will become part of the foundation of who they will be for a lifetime.

We want you to be informed about the logistics and goals of our expeditions. We encourage you to explore the information in this document and contact us with any questions or concerns that you may have.

About Chi Alpha

Chi Alpha is a Christian organization on secular university campuses that was founded in 1953. Currently Chi Alpha is on more than 300 campuses throughout the U.S. and around the world. Learn more about Chi Alpha as a national movement at www.chialpha.com.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." Our movement of campus ministries finds its identity in this passage. We believe that God longs to have each and every person reconciled to Himself, and that the way that re-connection happens is through the representation of his people. Each of us who takes on the identity of "Christian" becomes Christ's ambassador – or christou apostoloi in Greek, which we shorten to the first letters "Chi" and "Alpha" or XA. Our name is our constant reminder that each of us has an integral part to play in reconciling the world to God.

Fairmont State University Chi Alpha has been reaching students on Fairmont State's campus for over 23 years. Our mission is to reconcile students to Christ, equipping them through Spirit-filled communities of prayer, worship, fellowship, discipleship and mission to transform the university, the marketplace and the world. We believe that Jesus' style of discipleship, sharing life with his disciples, still transforms lives today. Over the years, we have repeatedly seen expeditions to be a significant milestone in students' lives and encourage all of our students to serve on at least one expeditions team in their time in our ministry. Learn more about Fairmont State Chi Alpha at www.fsuxa.com.

Why Missions?

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus told his disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." This tells us that as disciples of Jesus we have a role to play in God's global mission. Reconciliation is at the center of God's heart for the world. We are called to fulfill this mandate to spread the

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Gospel and share Christ's love with others both here in the U.S. and overseas. Fairmont State Chi Alpha strives to raise up students and leaders who will be the hands and feet of Christ as they serve the broken, unloved, and lost of our world.

Through expeditions, your student will undoubtedly gain a greater understanding for God's heart to reach the lost—something that is inherent in our beliefs as Christians. Your son or daughter will learn how to rely on God, explore their spirit of adventure, practice compassion, and discover their own skills, talents, strengths, and weaknesses.

Trip Leadership

Fairmont State Chi Alpha staff take special care when determining who will lead each expedition. We look at a variety of factors, such as leadership experience and team size, when pairing a leader with a specific trip. Each trip will be led by an experienced Chi Alpha staff member or intern, all of them having expedition experience and training. Our staff has a combined 40 years worth of trip experience to draw on when preparing for and leading these trips.

Each leader is communicating with their local hosts on how to best lead and take care of students in that specific area. Other responsibilities of the leader include various administrative operations, including scheduling, logistics, teaching, training, and discipling the entire group of students placed on their trip. Their goal is to provide a quality and effective expeditions experience for each student.

Safety

Be assured, your student's safety is our priority both stateside and overseas. Common sense precautions will be taken with every student in every trip location. In addition, each location has its own policies that help to provide for your son or daughter's safety. Each team leader will make every effort to plan and react to changing situations when they arise. Before a location is even selected as a destination, it is evaluated for political stability, recent and previous history, as well as any national issues that may have the potential to escalate.

It is also the highest concern of those we will be working with that our team is provided for and taken care of. It is our conviction to serve with organizations, long-term workers, and churches that we know, and it's our delight to work with friends on the field that we can trust. As their guests and helpers, they arrange for maximum security necessary for the activities and locations. These hosts have given their lives to serve near and abroad and have gone to great lengths to learn any helpful cultural or timely information pertaining to the safety of their own lives and work, which includes us when we are there.

Whether in America or abroad, each area has its dangers. With that reality, we keep in mind these potential dangers as we choose and move forward with expeditions locations and activities. In the past, we have chosen to cease progress on certain trips when local conditions were deemed by the hosts as unsafe for a trip at the time, and

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we are ready and willing to make the same decision if necessary. A decision such as this would immediately be shared with your student, along with any relevant information that they would need to know in light of a cancellation. In addition,

Finances

Every budget is created according to the specific expenses that will incur on each trip. Your student's budget will cover expenses such as travel, lodging, food, activities, and any other necessary costs for each particular trip.

We believe God equips us for the work He's asked us to do, and a budget is part of that work. We believe that God will provide the financial resources necessary for your student to raise a full budget.

Support raising is the process of gathering voluntary contributions of money or other resources, by requesting donations from individuals, churches, businesses, and charitable foundations. Our students will learn how to do this in a Biblical manner through writing letters, making phone calls, and following up with potential supporters. Once your student has been placed on an expedition team, he or she will receive guidance and training in how to support raise to reach their full budget.

Financial donations to an expedition are tax deductible. Your student will receive cards that allow donors to supply their email addresses that will allow them to receive year end giving statements to include on their taxes. IRS exceptions to this are students giving toward their own trips and parents giving toward their dependent's trip.

Communication

Team leaders will notify or have students notify parents/guardians upon certain occasions, e.g. arrival and departure. The communication method during each trip will be decided closer to trip departure (although most locations will have wifi). However, please keep in mind that communication will be somewhat limited as it will be necessary for students to remain focused and present with their team during their expedition.

Additional Questions

We sincerely hope that this packet of information has eased your mind and helped you to better understand the expedition that your child is considering. We believe that the opinion and support of you, as the parent, is an integral part of your student's experience with us. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your student's expedition leader. We are excited to see what Jesus does in and through your student during their spring break or summer expedition!

Blessings,

Fairmont State Chi Alpha staff & intern team