lifeline children's services

Bienvenidos!!

Welcome to the Colombia Vacation Program, hosted by Lifeline Children's Services, Inc. and Here I Am Orphan Ministries! We are so excited that you are considering being a host family to a child from Colombia for two weeks. Please know we are truly grateful for your desire to share the love of Christ with a child during this time!

Before you get started, there are a few things we would like to be sure you are prepared for. If you have any questions about the information included below, please be sure to contact someone at Lifeline as soon as possible.

The steps for the "Journey of Hope- Colombia 2018" vacation program are:

- Apply online (www.lifelinechild.org/kids-camp) to become a Host Family through Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.
    - Fill out Lifeline Adoption Application: Click Colombia Hosting as your program
    - Application will be reviewed and approved if all program requirements can be met
- Once your application has been approved, your family will be contacted immediately by the Colombia Program Coordinator to welcome you to the Vacation Program, send you a process manual, and to get you connected with both your home study social worker in Texas as well as with Here I Am Orphan Ministries
    - Your home study social worker will be responsible to contract with Lifeline Children's Services, Inc. to conduct your home study, assist in your education process, and to approve you to host a child from Colombia.
    - Here I Am Orphan Ministries will be the host for the "Journey of Hope- Colombia 2017" vacation program. They will work with you to ensure you are prepared for all logistics preparing for your child's arrival to Texas and will communicate the itinerary of events with your family during this time.
        - For more information on HAIOM, please visit their website: www.orphanministries.com
    - Your home study will also need to be approved by no later than **May 1, 2017.**
    - It will then need to be translated and submitted to Colombia by **May 9, 2017**.
        - They will review the home study and approve you for the vacation program.
- During the home study process, you will review children's files to determine which child/ children you wish to host.
    - Once you review the information in the child's file with your Lifeline case worker and/or the HIAOM team, you will write a letter of intent to host that specific child.
    - Colombia will review your letter of intent. Should all requirements be met and there be no questions, Colombia will approve the match. Please remember they can come back and ask clarifying questions during the Home Study or Letter of Intent process.
- Once you are matched with your host child, you will be connected with HIAOM to plan all logistics

A few frequently asked questions in regards to the Colombia Vacation Program are:

- *What days will the child be with us?* June 9-27, 2018

- *Who are the children?* There will be 30 children traveling to Texas for the vacation program. They will be 11 years old and older. They do not have to have a pre-identified medical needs. Their age may be their need. Most will be individual children, but there will be a few sibling groups of 2-3 children traveling, too.

- *Do I get to speak with the child before they arrive?* YES!! The children selected by Colombia to travel will go to a camp two weeks before they arrive to your home. During this time, you will send photos and letters to the child you are hosting to help their psychologist prepare them for their time there. You will have 2 Skype sessions before the children to arrive.

- *What is required of us before they travel, during, and after?* You will be asked to send photos and skype with the child before they travel. When in Texas, you will be requested to spend time with the child – giving them a cultural experience. You will also be requested to attend a few events during the two weeks. After the child leaves, you will be requested to determine whether or not your family will pursue adoption.

- *What is a chaperone? Why will they need to stay with us?* The chaperone will be a psychologist or social worker from Colombia. Their role is observe and support the children and families. Each child will be assigned one chaperone, and that chaperone will need to stay with you for 2-3 nights. You are not expected to entertain the chaperone during this time, but you will need to provide meals and a place to stay.

- *What exactly are the costs to be a host family?* The Lifeline application fee will be waived for the Vacation Program. Your family will need to pay $1,000 for the mini home study evaluation and application (this is paid directly to the home study agency), and you need to pay for any additional out of pocket expenses to the home study requirements (total: $390, includes: education, clearances, and translations).

- *Am I responsible for medical costs? Or anything else?* You will not be responsible for medical care while the child is in country. However, you are welcome to work with HIAOM to assist in any way if you would like. Your main responsibilities will be covering all food and entertainment for the child while he/she is in your home.

- *Can I travel with the child we host?* Yes, you may travel. However, you need to include days, plans, times in the Home Study

- *Do I have to adopt the child?* No, hosting the child is not a commitment to adopt the child. However, we request that you seriously take into consideration either being an adoptive family or an advocate for an adoptive family for the child.

- *What happens if my family wishes to adopt the child we have hosted?* You will need to visit www.lifelinechild.org to review the Colombia adoption process and guidelines. You can submit a letter of intent to adopt the child 15 days after he/she returns back to Colombia. This will lock their file for your family. You will then need to apply to Lifeline's Colombia Adoption program right away, pay agency fees, and work on your immigration and dossier paperwork as quickly as possible.

If you would like to pursue adoption of the child you wish to host, please be sure to review the adoption process facts to be sure you can meet these requirements. Additional information is listed below in regards to the steps of an international adoption process from Colombia. Your family can also visit Lifeline's Colombia Adoption website for more information (www.lifelinechild.org/country/colombia/).

We understand that you may have questions as a result of all this information. If you have any questions about "Journey of Hope-Colombia 2017" vacation program or about international adoption in general, please contact Beth Stanley (beth.perez@lifelinechild.org) or Meredith Crawford (Meredith.crawford@lifelinechild.org) or by calling 205.972.8382. We look forward to hearing from you soon! We are so excited to serve you in this journey and to partner with HIAOM to do so. May the Lord bless you and keep you. We are here for you if you need anything.

Sincerely,
Beth Perez, LGSW
Latin America Program Director
Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.

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Colombia Hosting & Adoption Requirements

PROGRAM INFORMATION	DETAILS	NOTES
HOST/ ADOPTIVE FAMILY REQUIREMENTS		
Parent's Ages	25+ years old (both)	Both parents must petition
Marriage	Minimum of 2 years married	Must have dated and been married for a minimum of 3 years total though
Divorce	Permitted; No more than 3 divorces per applicant	Current marriage must show stability
Single Parent Ages	25+ years old	Applicants 40+ may be requested to adopt older children or children with medical needs by ICBF
Age Difference between Parents and Children	Must be a 15 year difference between the youngest parent and oldest child	
# of children already in the home	No limit but must be able to show ability to care for additional children	Must meet USCIS poverty guidelines
Financial State	Families must show they can adequately provide for children; must meet USCIS poverty guidelines	Employment letters required
Criminal History	Criminal History will be reviewed on a case by case basis	*Police Records required *No indicated past child abuse & neglect registries or sexual assaults will be considered
Medical and Psychological Health	Applicants must show they are physically and mentally fit to parent; cancer history must be at least 5 years in remission; mild anxiety & depression diagnoses can be considered for evaluation; ICBF must see a parent is psychologically fit to be approved	*Lab work, medical, and psychological reports required for home study and dossier process. *May need counselor's letter of recommendation if treated in the past or currently for emotional or psychological needs
CHILDREN OF COLOMBIA		
Youngest age of children eligible to be adopted	For Colombian Heritage Families: - 6 months and older* For International Families: - 18-24 months	*Must state willingness to adopt a child between 0-59 months *Exceptions will be made by ICBF for Colombian-heritage families
Sibling groups able to be adopted	Yes, with and without pre-identified medical special needs ("MSN")	*2+ siblings: - one 10+, one 9- (w/o MSN) - 0-10 yo (with MSN); youngest sibling group (0-5 yo) *3+ siblings: all ages, with or without medical special needs.
Children with and without medical special needs	Yes, one child between 0 – 10 years 11 months will have a medical special need if being adopted by international family	*Child 10+ may not have medical need *Exceptions will be made by ICBF for Colombian-heritage families

	ADOPTION PROCESS FACTS	
Number of Trips to Colombia	1 trip: 3-7 weeks	*Both parents must be present for first 1-2 weeks. Length of time depends on region and orphanage
Post Adoption Reports	At 6, 12, 18 and 24 months	From date of adoption decree
Average Time of Completion	1 – 2.5 years estimated	Can be much less time if pursuing waiting child

IMPORTANT NOTE: *A host family for the Colombian Vacation Program ("Journey of Hope") must meet the program requirements of the Colombian Adoption Program (as listed above). These requirements are from the central authority of Colombia, ICBF.* ***However, very often waivers can be granted to families from ICBF should you not meet all these requirements****. If you have any questions about whether or not you can meet the requirements, please do not hesitate to call and ask.*

Should you decide to apply for the hosting program, please visit our website for more information or to fill out the application (www.lifelinechild.org/kids-camp).

Lifeline Colombia Adoption Program Steps:

Main Steps	Lifeline Adoption Process:	Notes
Apply with Lifeline	Pick country	No transfer fee if change mind
	Apply	Application online www.lifelinechild.org
	Meet Lifeline Program Coordinator	
	• Welcome Call	Within a day of approval
	• Orientation Interview	Within a few weeks of approval
Home Study	Home Study Process: (3-4 months)	With Lifeline or other Home Study Agency
Immigration (600A or 800A)	Immigration –800A (60 -90 days average)	Will need new set of fingerprints for USCIS (biometric fingerprint appointment will be issued by USCIS)
Dossier	Dossier - specific process for each country (2-3 months average to compile)	NOTE: This process will happen concurrently with the Immigration process. Some documents (FBI clearances, employment letters, and more can be used again for this stage).
	Submit dossier to representative for translation (approximately 2-4 weeks)	
Approval	Submit dossier to central authority for review and approval (depends on country)	**Colombia**: 2-3 months average Note: Can be 2-4 weeks if you are pursuing a waiting child
	Receive country's response , provide your response, and wait for final approval	Once the dossier has been submitted, the central authority may request more information or additional documents
Matching	Receive Referral (depending on country, can vary from 2 months to 3+ years)	**Colombia**: 2-18 months Note: Can be 2-4 weeks if you are pursuing a waiting child
Immigration (800)	Immigration Approval – 800 DS260/ Article 5 Approval	3-4 weeks on average 1-2 weeks on average
Travel	Travel to country	**Colombia:** 3-7 weeks
Finalize Adoption	Finalize adoption/guardianship occurs in country	
Post Adoption	Follow-up services (Post Adoptions Meetings)	