



# COMMUNITY OF BLESSING

Information Packet

## WELCOME!

We are so glad you are interested in joining a COB Medical Team. The following pages will give you a lot of information to guide you through the decision process.

### What is Community of Blessing?

COB was started by Dr. Ken Filbeck in 2007 with just health checks and a rude system for making glasses with wires and lenses. Over the years the ministry has grown to include dentistry and a more robust vision care system. Today the COB Clinics include health exams with pharmacy, dental care, and vision exams stations.

COB Foreign teams partner with students, staff and missionaries from **Lanna Theological Center** to run three days of medical clinics in rural villages. Our clinics are mobile, which means we can pack up, go, and set up in a different village each day if necessary. We can also set up just about anywhere. We don't always know what situation we will enter at a given village. But we are structured to adjust, adapt and serve.

### Who can Join a COB Team?

The immediate answer is "Anyone!" We have positions for both medical professionals and non-medical volunteers. For professional positions, we accept all levels of training.

### What skills are needed?

For medical health exams, COB welcomes all levels of healthcare, including EMTs, nurses, PAs, NPs, MDs, and students from these fields.

For dental, COB welcomes all levels, including dental assistants, hygienists, dentists, and students in the process of becoming one of the above.

Vision requires no formal training at all. We will train you in how to examine your eyes and determine the right prescription. We provide both distance and reading glasses.

### How many people can go on a team?

A COB team can range from 9 to 15 members. Teams are made up from these station requirements.

Health exam providers ..... 2-4 positions available

Pharmacy..... 1-2 position available

Dental..... 2-7 positions available

Vision ..... 2-4 positions available

### What is the Cost?

The cost is divided into two parts:

1. Clinic Fees .....\$725
2. Plane Ticket.....\$1,300----1,700



## **Paying for the Clinic Fees:**

We provide several options for paying the Clinic Fees. All funds are directed to Christian Mission to the Orient (C.M.O.), which is the parent organization of COB. Donations to the COB team are tax-deductible.

Volunteers can pay their fees through Stripe, the online donation system, or send a personal check made out to C.M.O. The address is P.O. Box 488 Bedford, TX 76094. Please include COB-(Month) in the memo line.

Volunteers may choose to fundraise for the trip. COB uses a management system called Managed Missions. Once your application is approved, you will be able to set up your profile page. You will receive a unique URL that can be shared with friends, family, and your church to announce your plans. Your profile page will include a donation button for people to contribute to your trip via Stripe. As people donate to your trip, you will be able to track the amount of money donated.

## **Paying for the plane ticket:**

Most volunteers cover their own plane tickets. CMO/COB can assist you in purchasing the ticket using funds raised through the management system.

Below is information if you decide to purchase your own ticket.

Your destination is Chiang Mai, Thailand. International flights flying into Chiang Mai include:

Eva, China, Qatar, and Korean Airlines.

You can route your trip through Bangkok if necessary, and I can offer some tips if that becomes the best route for you to take.

When looking for flights, please note the route, the number of stops, the number of hours for the trip. Also, before buying a ticket, be sure to check the details of the return flight. The cheaper airlines will often add a long layover on the return flight.

Please be aware that traveling from the USA to Thailand will cause you to lose a day. So, if you need to be in Chiang Mai on a Wednesday, you should plan to leave on Monday. Make sure to check arrival times before purchasing your ticket.



Figure 1A: Healthcare worker with patient

## **Do I need Vaccines?**

There are NO vaccines required. However, we do recommend you have the Hepatitis vaccine.

Please note that the CDC often lists several vaccines as necessary for entry into Thailand. These recommendations are frequently based on faulty statistics. Please check with me before you purchase those vaccines.

You will not need malaria medicine as it is a rare occurrence here. However, we do recommend you pack some mosquito spray!

## **Do I need a Visa?**

NO, not technically. Thailand does require everyone to fill out a Digital Arrival Card at least 72 hours prior to arrival. Here is the link: <https://tdac.immigration.go.th/arrival-card/#/home>

\*\*\*Check your Passport!\*\* Your passport must be valid more than 6 months from date of travel!

## **Can I charge my phone?**

YES. The Electrical Current in Thailand is 220 volts. All technology chargers are dual-voltage. You may need a plug adapter.

## **What about other electrical items?**

Things like hair dryers and curling irons need to be dual-voltage to work here. Thailand uses 220 and not the US 110.

What's the weather like?

January -February Teams: This time is considered the cold season. The temps range from high 80's during the day to mid-70's at night. There is not much rain during the cold season.

May Teams: May sits between the hot season and the rainy season. Each year is different as to whether the rains start early or late. Basically, you can count on the temperatures being in the high 90's with very high humidity.

By July, the rains have started. The temperatures drop low to mid 90's . The weather is humid, but the daily rain gives some relief.



## How should I dress?

The key word is Modesty!

Do not bring shorts, muscle T-shirt and for the women do not bring low-cut shirts.

Plan to wear lightweight clothes. Long shorts are acceptable for men. Women may wear capris. Blue jeans are fine. Bring shoes that support walking but can be easily removed before entering buildings. Medical scrubs are great. We will provide one scrub top for you. We advise you to bring a lightweight t-shirt or undershirt to wear under the scrubs.



## What about Accommodations?

We will arrange for hotels for the team. We ask every member of the team stay together in the reserved hotel.

## How about Laundry?

The Hotel in the City (Chiang Mai) will have a laundry service. We can arrange to take everyone to a laundromat after returning from the village.

## How about Internet Service?

There will be internet service at LTC and at the motel.

We cannot guarantee that the service will be steady when we are in the villages.

## How about Money?

You can bring cash to exchange or use your ATM to withdraw funds from your bank account in the US. Each ATM withdrawal will be charged a \$6.50 fee plus any additional charges your bank applies. You will need cash for most purchases at local stores and at the Night Bazaar.

Be sure to set your travel notifications on your ATM and Credit Cards for Thailand.

Thai money is called Baht. Exchange rates have remained steady through 2023 at about 32 Baht to the US dollar.

Cooking at LTC's outside kitchen



## What if I get sick while in Thailand?

COB will purchase travel insurance for the period you are with us in Thailand. Basic medical care is still cheap here. City hospitals and doctors are good and trustworthy. And COB's Medical Leader is an ER doctor.

## Where will we be going?



Lanna Theological Center is located in a suburb of Chaing Mai. This will be home base. It is where you will meet your Thai Team, have training and get organized for clinics.

For each team we partner with local leaders who are doing ministry among the poor and marginalized who are scattered along the boarder regions of Myanmar and Laos (Green area on map)

These areas have multiple different ethnic groups mingled close together. While we may hold the clinic in a village of a specific people group, villagers from the area are always invited to come. Therefore, in any one clinic we will often see multiple people groups.

## What is the typical Schedule?

Day 1:	Arrival. Most flights arrive in the morning. Korean arrives late at night. The first day activities will depend on when the team members all arrive
Day 2:	Training and Organizing and Getting to know the Thai Team. We will end the day with a time of worship together. We will end early as Jet Lag will be strong.
Day 3	We will wrap up in the morning. Pack up and leave for the village after lunch.
Day, 4, 5, 6.	We will do THREE days of clinics on site in various villages. The number of villages we will go to depends on our host. Sometimes we are in one village for the 3 days serving people from multiple villages. Other times we do three different villages. After the last village, we will drive back to LTC. (however, this depends on how far we have traveled)
Day 7	Back at LTC. Do inventory, catch up on laundry, debrief. Go to the famous Chiang Mai Night Bazaar for Dinner, Shopping and Thai massages. (dinner is member's responsibility)
Day 8	If you wish to stay, COB will schedule a day of sightseeing and fun ending up at Night Bazaar again.
Day 9	Return home.

## How do I apply?

You email Carmen Filbeck at [cfilbeck@impactlanna.org](mailto:cfilbeck@impactlanna.org) and introduce yourself. Carmen will then send you the link to the application. Once you submit your application, Carmen will send you an approval email. At that point, you can set up your profile on the Managed Missions website and start letting friends and family know about your opportunity.

More questions? Please email Carmen at [cfilbeck@impactlanna.org](mailto:cfilbeck@impactlanna.org)