

Main Springs

THE JANADA L. BATCHELOR FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN



Student Handbook

2024

Dear Friends,

We are so glad that you are joining us for this once-in-a-lifetime experience in Tanzania! We know that you will walk away from this trip with a new perspective on the world and some of the most meaningful and valuable relationships with our girls, students, and staff that you have ever experienced.

Without question, the Mainsprings experience is rewarding, but it can also prove to be challenging - intellectually, physically, and spiritually. We want you to be fully immersed in the Tanzanian culture and daily life at Mainsprings. We will do our best to make sure that you have an unforgettable experience, but we also need your help to make this possible.

The work can be hard, the living conditions are primitive, the food is sometimes foreign, but the memories and relationships will last a lifetime. You will be working next to and getting to know people from radically different backgrounds, but you will be part of a common goal: helping Mainsprings achieve its mission of alleviating rural poverty. The “working together” process is extremely important, as we are not working in Tanzania to simply implement our American ideas and processes. Mainsprings is an organization primarily run by Tanzanians for Tanzanians, and we believe this is central to our success and long-term sustainability.

We hope you will leave your mark on our campus, but we also hope our campus will leave its mark on you. Through your work at Mainsprings and conversations with our staff, we hope you will recognize your role as a global citizen – and the responsibility to others that comes along with it.

This Student Handbook is designed to educate you, the volunteer, and your families, about Mainsprings and the experience ahead of you. We hope that it can answer many of your questions and alleviate any stress you might be feeling, while helping you to appropriately prepare for this trip. If you have any further questions about this guide or your trip, please do not hesitate to contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Kate Alao, at kate@mainsprings.org or 918-706-2268 ext 1. We hope you are excited about your trip, and we are looking forward to working together to make a difference.

Thank You,



Chris Gates, Founder and CEO

Mainsprings Background

Founder, Chris Gates, dreamed of living in Tanzania as an exotic animal veterinarian in the Serengeti National Wildlife Park, at the age of 5. He made his grandmother, Janada L. Batchelor, promise that when he turned 16 she would take him to Tanzania on a safari. When it was almost time to go, she announced that he would first have to volunteer at a boys' home near the Serengeti. He was reluctant, but agreed in order to take his dream safari.



Chris fell in love with Tanzania -- its people, animals, culture, and land. He began volunteering at the Tanzanian Children's Rescue Center (TCRC), a center for street boys, during his high school summers. He noticed during his time that there was not much being done to help girls and felt called to provide these girls with a safe, loving home where they could become empowered, educated, contributing members of society.

Chris started Mainsprings before his freshman year at New York University and was able to oversee operations and development of the center while at college. Starting in 2007, with only seven girls in one house, Mainsprings now has two campuses. The flagship campus in Kitongo has grown into a 70-acre center and the second campus in Kahunda flourishes as well with its girls' home and primary school. Mainsprings takes a comprehensive approach to alleviating extreme rural poverty by primary, secondary, and vocational education for hundreds of boys and girls, refuge for more than 50 girls ages 3-19, access to quality healthcare, and economic development through agriculture. Mainsprings now employs more than 120 people, the vast majority of them are Tanzanian.



Mainsprings' Mission

MAINSPRINGS strives to end generational poverty in rural Tanzania. That's why we provide transformative education, training in restorative agriculture and caring supports, like refuge for abandoned and vulnerable girls and healthcare, to children and families in the communities we serve.

The Campus

Mainsprings' main campus is in the Mwanza Region, which is in the northwestern part of the country - we have a spectacular view of Lake Victoria, Africa's largest freshwater lake. Mwanza is the second largest city in Tanzania. The Mainsprings campus is located about 30

miles east of Mwanza city.

What to Expect

Our campus is located in rural Tanzania. There is running water and regular, though limited, electricity, but these commodities should not be taken for granted. Chaperones will have access to phone and internet in our office as needed, but students will not. Students should not expect to communicate regularly with friends and family in the U.S. while on campus.

**If you need to reach your volunteer because of an emergency at home, please call 918-706-2268 or email kate@mainsprings.org and Mainsprings staff members will get you in touch with your volunteer as soon as possible.*



During the day volunteers will help with a variety of activities on our campus including helping on our farm, assisting with meals in our school cafeteria, tutoring students, and spending time with our residential girls, as well as experiencing a variety of cultural activities on campus and in the nearby village of Kitongo. Your trip leaders will be able to share more with you about the schedule.

Many of your meals will be eaten with the Mainsprings residential girls and often consist of rice, vegetables and beans. You will be given a continental breakfast each morning and more

American style cuisine at the Director's Dinner, but please be aware that many of your meals will be traditional Tanzanian dishes. You may want to bring some high protein snacks like beef jerky, peanut butter crackers, or energy bars.

Volunteers stay in the Guest House. The rooms will be separated by gender and will consist of bunk beds. Sheets will be provided, but make sure to bring your own towel. There is a large communal restroom that has separated toilet stalls and shower stalls for privacy. There is a small kitchen for basic needs and drinking water is provided. Each volunteer will be given a mosquito net for sleeping.



Health in Tanzania

Since information is always changing about health and disease prevention in Tanzania, we encourage you to read the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/tanzania.aspx>. There, you will find up-to-date information on vaccinations, malaria prophylaxis, and other important health considerations while traveling. **Mainsprings requires all guests to bring a malaria prophylaxis for their stay in Tanzania.**

Volunteers will be provided filtered water. Please do not drink from the tap. All Mainsprings staff and the families who host Village Night have been trained in proper food and water safety.

Medical Emergencies and Travel Insurance

Mainsprings has a comprehensive foreign travel accident and sickness insurance policy through WorldSource, which is a member of AIG. While you are free to add your own personal policy, this policy is part of Mainsprings' fees and applies to each volunteer. Mainsprings will follow your school's protocol for contacting parents or guardians in case of an emergency.



Safety

The Mainsprings campus is extremely safe. We monitor any State Department recommendations that apply to Tanzania, and has a relationship with the U.S. Embassy there. We have campus security on staff monitoring the campus 24/7. We have a clinic on campus staffed by a full time nurse. The nearest hospital is in Mwanza, about an hour away. We do ask volunteers to be mindful of any valuables (and to bring as few as possible) and we provide a safe for any valuables and passports to be stored while on campus.

Cultural Sensitivities

Mainsprings operates in East Africa, where cultural standards and social morays are very conservative. Volunteers should be sensitive to the ways that their behavior may be understood and perceived differently by different peoples with different customs.

Dress:

Mainsprings values and respects the community where we work. Therefore, our standards for dress and appearance try to include sensitivity to the cultural values of Tanzania, which are much more modest and conservative than volunteers may be accustomed to following in America. Volunteer must adhere to the dress code outlined below while on campus.

Men

Working on Mainsprings' campus can be very physically demanding, therefore T-shirts and knee-length shorts are appropriate. Traditionally, men in East Africa do not wear short pants, therefore when male volunteers leave campus, they should wear long pants (denim or khakis). Tank tops are prohibited.

Women

In Tanzanian culture, women dress very conservatively. Females are encouraged to cover up and not show too much skin. Traditionally, women do not wear pants in Tanzanian society. Although the practice is beginning to relax, female volunteers should wear long skirts or dresses while on campus or representing Mainsprings off campus. Pants can be worn in your residence or during recreational visits to the city. All skirts and dresses must cover the knees, when sitting. No thigh or upper leg should be exposed. ****An exception to this dress code is during sports where loose pants or long shorts (basketball style) may be worn to participate.

Tank tops with at least a 1.5-inch strap are acceptable, as long as they are not low-cut or revealing. Spaghetti straps and any tops or dresses exposing cleavage are prohibited. Backless tops are not acceptable. Backs below the shoulder blades should be covered. Please make sure your garments are not see-through or the material is not so thin that undergarments are visible.

Even though the dress for females may seem sexist, it is important to recognize this as a very important aspect of Tanzanian culture and must be respected.

Religion:

We request that, despite your own personal beliefs, you respect that Mainsprings' residential girls, students, and many of the villagers in the surrounding area are Christian. Their faith is an extremely important part of their culture. We ask that you be tolerant and respectful of other people's beliefs and views, even if they differ from your own.

Village Night:

If your group participates in Village Night, please be extremely considerate of the families hosting you. When you are welcomed into the home of a Kitongo villager, it is important that you eat anything given to you. These families are extremely gracious to host our volunteers, and it would be considered extremely rude if you did not try to eat as much as you can.

MAINSPRINGS Policies**Cigarettes & Drugs:**

Use of cigarettes (including e-cigarettes), tobacco products, illegal drugs, or abuse of prescription drugs will not be tolerated, while you are volunteering with Mainsprings. Individuals found to be using or in possession of cigarettes will be disciplined, including the possibility of being sent home. Those found using or in possession of illegal drugs will be sent home immediately. If a volunteer is asked to leave, the individual and/or their family will be responsible for fees associated with returning home early.

Alcohol:

Volunteers who are part of a high school group (chaperone or student) may not consume alcohol on Mainsprings' campus, regardless of age.

Electronics:

We strongly discourage you from bringing personal electronics other than cell phones (for travel purposes) and cameras. All other equipment you bring at your own risk, and should remain in your room while you are on campus. Mainsprings is not liable for the loss or damage of your personal electronic equipment. We do not allow volunteers to carry personal electronics with them (other than cameras) because they distract from the experience on our campus and flaunt affluence in an area of extreme poverty. Cell phones should not be used by students outside the guest house at any time.

Profanity/Language:

Volunteers should be mindful that we are working with children in a very conservative

environment, where many people know English. Mainsprings and its staff do not tolerate the use of profanity. Furthermore, there are several taboo conversations including: sex, alcohol, and drugs. Recognizing the histories of many of the girls in our care, there should be no sexualized language or cat-calling at any time.

Relationships:

Mainsprings staff are contractually prohibited from engaging in any sort of romantic encounter or relationship with Mainsprings guests or volunteers. Please respect this expectation. Additionally, being respectful of the culture, please refrain from public displays of affection between volunteers in romantic relationships in front of Mainsprings girls and Tanzanian staff.

Gift-Giving:

Since Mainsprings is one big family, we do everything together. Please do not give any gifts to one child. This creates favoritism and jealousy. However, if you would like to bring donations, please talk with your trip leaders about group possibilities. They will have our most up to date list of needs.

Guest House Rules

1. No Mainsprings children or Mainsprings local staff members (with the exception of the housekeeper) are allowed in the guest house. Children should remain on the porch, when visiting.



2. The rooms are separated by gender for a reason, so please keep it that way.

3. Food should be kept in airtight containers and in the kitchen for sanitary purposes.

4. All electronics must stay inside your room with the exception of cameras.

5. Be respectful of other people's belongings and do not borrow them without their permission.

6. No illegal drugs or alcohol.

Packing Guide for Tanzania

ESSENTIALS

- Passport (valid for at least six months after departure)
- Copy of Passport (also leave a copy or electronic copy with someone in the U.S)
- Malaria Prophylaxis
- Bring a carry-on bag with enough essentials for 2-3 days in case your baggage is lost. This can happen, so avoid disappointment, and be prepared! Lost baggage is typically delivered within a few days.
- Money for baggage fees, souvenirs, snacks and food at Papa's café.

NOTE: All US currency should be new bills in good condition issued after 2016.

CLOTHING

Girls should never wear pants or shorts while on campus, unless they are under a kanga or skirt. Modesty is imperative. The skirt should cover the knees and tops should have a wide shoulder and **SHOULD NOT** be revealing or low cut. Please, no see-through clothing. Girls, if you plan on participating in any athletic activities, please bring a pair of athletic shorts that cover your knees. You can wear these under a kanga or skirt and still move comfortably. Please be considerate and mindful of the rural Tanzanian culture as you pack, and don't bring any expensive or flashy clothing.

- 7-10 pairs underwear
- 1 regular bra, 3-4 sports bras (girls)
- 3-4 pairs of socks
- 3-4 skirts or kangas (girls)
- 2 pairs jeans/work pants (guys)
- 1 pair long shorts or loose pants
- 4-5 shirts (no spaghetti straps or deep v-necks)
- Comfortable sandals or flip flops
- Athletic shoes
- Work gloves (optional)
- Hat and/or bandana
- Hoodie or Pullover
- Light long sleeve shirt
- Light rain jacket



- Pajamas (Pants are fine)

SERENGETI

Most groups will go on a safari in the Serengeti. This is a tourist destination and dress is less strict (please be mindful of African culture and standards of modesty). However, you'll most likely want to cover up to prevent sunburn and mosquito bites. You might want to avoid blue and black, because those colors attract Tse Tse flies which can carry various tropical diseases.

TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
 - Shampoo and soap
 - Insect Repellent (at least 30% deet)
 - Tampons or sanitary napkins
 - Hand sanitizer/hand wipes
 - Sunscreen
 - Deodorant
 - Towels/washcloths
- Note: please try to use unscented and eco-friendly products

OTHER ITEMS

- Camera and batteries
- Wristwatch (you may be used to telling time on your cell phone, but it may not be accessible)
- Flashlight/headlamp (solar is recommended)
- Water bottle
- Journal
- Books
- Sunglasses
- Day bag (sling purse, backpack, or bag)
- Extra glasses or contacts (if needed)

Weight Restrictions

In addition, all international airlines have different limits on the weight of your checked baggage. Look online, at the carriers' website, to avoid paying additional fees for overweight baggage. For all Tanzanian domestic flights, the weight limit for checked baggage is different than international air carriers. Be prepared to pay a fee for excess weight (it can be upwards of \$100). You can pay in US dollars or Tanzanian shillings.

Emergency contact

In case of an emergency in which you need to reach your student, please contact

Kate Alao, Volunteer Coordinator

Office: (918) 706-2268

Email: kate@mainsprings.org

Complete your Mainsprings Forms

To complete your Mainsprings Trip forms and liability waiver, please visit

<https://www.jotform.com/dbooren/mainspringsschooltripform>

If you are under 18, you will need a parent to complete the forms with you. Additionally, you will be asked to upload a copy of your passport. We advise that you print a copy of your forms before submitting, but we can also provide a copy for you at any time upon request.