

## **SPANISH NOT REQUIRED BUT VERY HELPFUL**

Most of our volunteers don't speak Spanish and still have a great experience, however Spanish is the language of Ecuador, and while we don't require volunteers to know Spanish (i.e. Spanish is not required in order to apply or serve), the more Spanish you know, the more you'll be able to interact with the children and orphanage workers, and the easier of a time you'll have in adjusting and making a difference.

Before your departure, we strongly urge you to improve your Spanish by taking a semester of college Spanish, having a tutor or by studying on your own (*regardless, you should study the Spanish Manual we provide you with*). Your effectiveness will be much better if you speak the language somewhat.

Volunteers who are leaving consistently write in their advice comments to future volunteers to learn as much Spanish as you can before going down and while down there, because a language barrier can be frustrating to try and work around, so please heed their advice and ours and make the effort to learn as much Spanish as you possibly can to prepare yourself better.

After your arrival in Ecuador, we encourage you to take Spanish classes (at your own cost) to improve your effectiveness to communicate and interact, though this is not required. An hour of instruction might cost between \$3.50 and \$5.00 (depending on whether the class is multiple students or one-on-one).

### **For those who really want to learn Spanish or improve their Spanish...**

For those who really want to learn Spanish or improve their Spanish, it's very possible and practical but completely up to you based on how much effort you put into it and how much desire you have. There are constantly opportunities available to speak Spanish and listen to Spanish spoken (talking to the children, talking to the workers, talking to the market merchants, in stores, in restaurants, with the Project Directors, etc.).

It can be particularly helpful to practice your Spanish by talking to children. Many people are embarrassed to speak with adults as they are afraid they may make mistakes, yet they worry far less when talking with children.

Some volunteers have gone down with hardly any class experience but have come back almost fluent while others have gone down and returned learning far less—it was entirely dependent upon how much they wanted to learn Spanish and the effort they put into it.

So if you love children and want to serve in orphanages but also want to improve your Spanish, you can, the opportunities are there!