

## Trip Costs

Once students are accepted to travel, they will be asked how much of the total trip cost their family can contribute. Families should take into account anticipated contributions from immediate and extended family, friends, and community members, as well as any other fundraising in which a student may engage on their own. See the next page for sample appeal letters which can be revised for personal use. Once a family contribution amount is determined, a student may apply to the Take Flight fundraising pool for financial aid. As you discern your contribution, please keep in mind that we would like to reserve the money in the fundraising pool for families who truly need it.

Trip costs per traveler as of September 2011

Airfare (PHL to MGA)	\$917
Shuttle to and from PHL	\$20
Travel Insurance	\$54
Tourist card (required)	\$10
Departure fee	\$32
Transportation in Nicaragua	\$87
Lodging	\$116
Meals	\$160
Activity fees	\$80
Gratuities	\$24
<b>Total trip cost per traveler</b> (does not include personal expenses)	<b>\$1,500</b>

The cost of a US Passport is	\$105
Meal at airport (\$15 each for departure and return)	\$30
Money for gifts/souvenirs	\$100 or less
Printed photo album	\$20

## Financing the trip

In order to assist in financing your trip, some suggestions and sample solicitation letters follow.

### **Create your own fundraiser:**

— Babysit, cat-sit, sell popcorn and lemonade. Be creative!

### **Write a letter to family and friends:**

- Tell them why you're going and what you hope to accomplish.
- Organize the letter to show them you are serious.
- Make it as personal as possible.
- Time your letters to correspond with holidays or birthdays; instead of presents, ask that each recipient make a contribution to your trip.
- You may use the "Sample letter to family and friends" on the next pages as a template.
- A blank Take Flight/ICS letterhead is attached. You may copy it and print your sponsorship letters on it.
- Include a copy of the page 1 of this package with your letter so your recipient can read about Take Flight.
- Make sure to include an envelope addressed to ICS to make it easier for recipients to send in their contributions. ICS address is: Independence Charter School, 1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146
- Make sure to write thank you notes and share a bit of your journal and photographs with all of your sponsors when you return.

### **Write a letter to a business or organization in your community:**

- Make the letter personal; use "Dear" and names if you know them (if not, use "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam").
- Include specifics of your itinerary.
- Include WHY you want to travel.
- Present the letter in person; it adds a personal touch, and people are more likely to donate (dress appropriately).
- You may use the "Sample letter to community business or organization" on the next pages as a template.
- A blank Take Flight/ICS letterhead is attached. You may copy it and print your sponsorship letter son it.
- Include a copy of page 1 of this package with your letter so your recipient can read about Take Flight.
- Make sure to include an envelope addressed to ICS to make it easier for recipients to send in their contributions. ICS address is: Independence Charter School, 1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146
- Make sure to write thank you notes and share a bit of your journal and photographs with all of your sponsors when you return.



## Sample letter to family and friends

February 1, 2011

Dear Aunt Nancy:

I was recently accepted to participate in Take Flight, a scholarship travel program at Independence Charter School. A small group of 7th graders will travel to Nicaragua in April and I am proud to say that I will be one of them. During this 7-day trip we'll be exploring education equality. We'll visit with local students from two different schools in Managua and do a service project with them. We'll also visit a cloud forest and volcanic lake!

In order to be accepted to travel, I had to write an essay and attend an interview at my school. I am honored to have been selected. I am excited to share my experience with my peers, family, and friends when I return. This educational experience will increase my understanding of the world and give me the opportunity to learn firsthand about new places and cultures. Such knowledge will help me become the best citizen I can be.

I am currently asking my family and friends for financial sponsorship to help me with the cost of the trip, and I hope I can count on your support. The total cost of my trip is \$1,500, which includes airfare, accommodations, meals, and educational activities. I am asking [number] people to donate [\$amount] to help me pay for my trip. Is it possible for you to assist me by making a contribution? I plan to share my experience with friends and family when I return by presenting selections from my journal and photographs.

Travel contributions are due March 1, 2012. Checks may be made payable to Independence Charter School with [your name] noted in the memo line and forwarded to ICS in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. Your generous contribution will enable me to share in this wonderful opportunity. Thank you in advance for your gracious consideration and support.

Sincerely yours,





## Sample letter to local business or organization

Date  
Potential Sponsor Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a 7th-grade student at Independence Charter School in Philadelphia. I recently applied and was accepted to participate in Take Flight, a scholarship travel program at my school. A small group of 7th graders from my school will travel to Nicaragua in April and I am proud to say that I will be one of them. During this 7-day trip we'll be exploring education equality. We'll visit with local students from two different schools in Managua and do a service project with them. We'll also visit a cloud forest and volcanic lake!

The Take Flight application consisted of an essay and an interview and I am honored to have been selected. I am looking forward to broadening my perspective of the world. As you know, economics, health, communications, and technology are global fields today. More and more, nations are working together to solve problems. It's a real opportunity for me to see how people in another country live and learn.

I am currently seeking financial sponsors to help me with the cost of this trip, and hope I can count on your support. The cost of the trip is \$1,500 which includes all transportation, accommodations, meals, and educational activities. I am asking [number] contributors to each donate [\$amount] to help me pay for my trip. Is it possible for you to assist me by making a contribution? Any amount would be appreciated. I plan to share selections from my journal and photographs with contributors upon my return.

All trip contributions are due March 1, 2012. Checks may be made payable to Independence Charter School with [your name] noted in the memo line and forwarded to ICS in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. Please feel free to contact me at [phone number] if you need more information.

Your generous contribution would enable me to share in this wonderful opportunity. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely yours,





*“The journey of a thousand miles  
begins with a single step.”—Chinese Proverb*



1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146 | phone: 215.238.8000 | fax: 215.238.1998



## Contribution Work Sheet and Financial Aid Request Form

To be completed by accepted travelers

**2012 Nicaragua trip cost is \$1,500.** Please estimate your contribution amounts and sources below. If your Total Anticipated Contribution is less than \$1,500, you may request the balance from the fundraising pool. ICS must receive all contributions by March 1, 2012. As you discern your family's contribution, please keep in mind that we would like to reserve the money in our fundraising pool for families who truly need it.

Traveler's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email address \_\_\_\_\_

	Amount	Source
Individual Fundraising:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Contributions from family members:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Contributions from friends and neighbors:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Contributions from community members:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Total anticipated contribution:	_____	
Amount requested from fundraising pool:	_____	

## Other Information

**Passports:** All travelers must have a passport. If you are selected to travel, you must apply for your passport before January 26, 2012 in order to allow 6 weeks for processing. On December 1, 2011, ICS will host a Passport Night. A U.S. passport agent will come to ICS and process applications between 4 and 7 PM. If you do not attend Passport Night at ICS, you will need to apply for a passport on your own. Detailed information about obtaining a passport can be found at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first\\_830.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html). Childrens' passports are good for 5 years. In order to use a passport, travel must take place at least six months before it expires. A passport which will expire within six months of travel will not be accepted.

**Travel Insurance:** ICS will select a comprehensive travel policy and each traveler's parent or guardian will receive a copy of the policy. Comprehensive travel insurance covers trip cancellation, missed connections, delays, baggage loss, medical expenses for accidents and illnesses, as well as medical transportation. Each traveler must have comprehensive travel insurance.

**Releases/Waivers:** If a student is accepted to travel, parents/guardians must read the U.S. Department of State's list of risks involved with travel to Nicaragua at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_985.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_985.html) and sign the attached "Waiver/Release/Permission" form as a condition of their participation. In addition to the attached waiver, there will be releases associated with minors traveling abroad and authorization for medical treatment while in Nicaragua which will require signatures. Upon acceptance to travel, you will receive all the necessary paperwork.

**Vaccinations:** If your student is accepted to travel, we will ask for confirmation that all routine childhood vaccinations are up to date. This includes MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) and DPT (diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus). Students will also need to be vaccinated against Hepatitis A.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can a parent or guardian accompany a student on this trip?**

This trip is for students and teachers only. Part of this learning experience is traveling independently from parents in a safe, supportive group.

### **My child's grandparents live abroad and my child has traveled to see them. Will this international travel experience place him at a disadvantage in the Take Flight application process?**

It depends entirely on who applies to travel. Compared to a student who has never traveled internationally, your child is at a disadvantage. Compared to someone who has traveled to two or more international destinations, your child has an advantage. ICS citizenship and the application essay are also factors in evaluating applications.

### **Travelers to Nicaragua will miss two days of school. Will these be recorded as absences?**

No. Because these days will be spent traveling with ICS for educational purposes, they are not considered absences.

### **How safe is Nicaragua?**

The Global Peace Index 2010 ranks Nicaragua as the second safest country in Central America. U.S. State Department warns travelers about street crime, especially when traveling in taxis or buses. For this reason, all transportation for Take Flight is provided by private mini-bus, with a known and trusted driver. Our hotel is located in safe neighborhood just outside of Managua.

### **Will I be able to communicate with my child while they are in Nicaragua?**

Teachers Kate and Lacey will have a cell phone which you may call in the event of an emergency. A good way to know what your student is doing is to read the Take Flight travel blog. Students will post to the blog every evening and you may leave comments on the blog at any time.



## Waiver, Release, and Permission

This agreement is on behalf of myself, my spouse (or other legal guardian, if any), and my/our Child.

My/our Child will participate in the Take Flight Scholarship Travel Program to and from Nicaragua on or about March 28, 2010 to April 4, 2010 (the "Trip"). In consideration for the investment of time and resources of Independence Charter School in the planning and support for my/our Child's participation in the Trip, we agree to the following:

We waive and discharge **Independence Charter School, 1600 Lombard Associates L.P., 1600 Lombard GP LLC, Worlds of Opportunity Foundation,** and any individuals, chaperones (including, but not limited to, **Kate Dean** and **Lacey Boland**) from all liability arising from the Trip, whether caused by negligence or otherwise. In other words, we give up any and all rights to sue or make any claims against these individuals and entities with respect to the Trip. We understand that we would not have been required to sign this waiver and release had we undertaken to plan and organize this trip on our own.

We understand that accidents resulting in property damage, serious bodily injury or death can occur during the Trip, as a result of negligence or otherwise.

We are aware of and assume the risks involved in my/our Child's participation in the Trip. We have read and understand all of the risks stated in the document issued by the U.S. Department of State, entitled "Nicaragua Country Specific Information" at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_985.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_985.html). We assume the risks associated with my/our Child's travel to, from, and in Nicaragua.

We are also aware of and assume the risks arising from participation in the scheduled and unscheduled activities of the Trip, including the zip line activity, and the boat trip on a crater lake. We have reviewed the proposed itinerary and the description of activities, and assume the risk of all of the proposed activities. Prior to the trip, we will also conduct our own research about the risks of visiting Nicaragua.

Prior to the trip, we will ensure that my/our Child has a passport that is valid for at least six months after arrival. If my/our Child is not a United States citizen, I/we will promptly contact the Nicaraguan Embassy (1627 New Hampshire Avenue Northwest, Washington D.C. - (202) 939-6570) to determine the visa requirements and will obtain the same, if necessary, prior to the Trip. If my/our Child is a Nicaraguan citizen or dual-citizen, we will promptly obtain from the Consulate or Embassy of Nicaragua the necessary travel authorization and will provide the same to Independence Charter School prior to the Trip.

We hereby give permission for my/our Child to participate in all aspects of the Trip including, but not limited to, all activities listed in the proposed itinerary. We understand that there may be changes to the proposed itinerary.

On rare occasions, we understand that an emergency requiring hospitalization and/or surgery may develop. In the event of sickness or injury of my/our Child, we authorize the school’s representative to secure whatever treatment is necessary, including the administration of an anesthetic and surgery.

This agreement may only be terminated by written agreement of all parties. We agree that this waiver is binding on all heirs and assigns.

(If the Child is a member of a multiple parent/guardian household or is a member of two households, all parents/guardians must sign this agreement. If the Child is a member of only a one parent/guardian household, please write “none” above the second signature line.)

Name of Child (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent or Guardian (PRINT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent or Guardian (PRINT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date