

Travel to Zimbabwe and Take a Short Hiatus from Life in the USA?

Ancient Ways is a small grassroots nonprofit, located in Lacombe, Oregon, which is dedicated to helping the people of Zimbabwe. Historically, we have provided services in two separate areas: "Nhimbe for Progress" in Mhondoro and "Jangano" in the Dewedzo Mountains, directly reaching over 2,200 residents annually, including thousands of children since 2000, as well as assisting the NGO Tamuka in Harare. Indirectly, we have touched countless others. Our current focus is on the children of Nhimbe for Progress and the construction of wells for the extended families in Mhondoro. We operate a preschool with about 75 children and a Monthly Care program for over 300 maturing girls. We are very skilled at making a large impact with few resources.

Currently we are looking for a volunteer to travel to Zimbabwe with our Executive Director. We need someone who:

- Has video and picture taking skills, so that we can film our projects, in order to make our upcoming fundraising appeals more effective. Also, has your own equipment and skills beyond camera filming.
- Is flexible! Our living conditions will be far from luxurious. We live in a rural setting without running water and electricity. This includes a bed in a thatched hut with cement walls and floor, so actually somewhat modern. We hire a woman who helps with the cooking and laundry so we can focus on the work of the day.
- Is able to volunteer your time. Due to recent generous donations you would be sponsored for the Zimbabwe flight. Once on the ground we host you and cover almost everything (e.g. transport, food, lodging, translation). You would pay for any special dietary requirements, personal purchases, a small pre-trip donation towards some foods we pack to take, and your personal tip for the month-long laundry services.
- Can live out of one suitcase to take your personal supplies. We pay for the 2nd suitcase to take project supplies.
- Can live without your phone, email and internet as a constant companion. Minimal network is available occasionally, with availability deferring to the project's priority.
- Really has a heart for Africa, and making a difference in the lives of people you will never meet. The ripple of our love, actions, and efforts are felt by thousands of people long after we leave.

Dates: The E.D. is leaving on 11-11-19 and will return 12-12-19. This is a 4-week trip. If you have only 3 weeks available, we can discuss that possibility, so please apply anyway.

Purpose of trip: We will focus on the preschool, the maturing girl's monthly care, general village health, working with craftspeople who sell us their wares, creating order in our rural library, and our W.A.T.E.R! (wells and toilets everyone's right!) project. These areas need fresh film to capture the story!

- **Preschool** - We plan to collaborate with an NGO who will be providing a well bucket drip-line workshop for our residents at our preschool to make watering easier in the garden, which provides the fresh food to the children. This will increase the garden's prosperity so it will eventually be able to grow more food to sell, helping make the preschool more sustainable. It will be graduation time for most of the oldest children who will be moving onto 1st grade so

there will be a big celebration with the surrounding villages' preschool parents. We are known for having a model preschool in Zimbabwe.

- **[Mhandara Monthly Care](#)** - The story begins in town where our 4-person team operates the tiny-scale manufacturing of reusable washable pads (these have an expected minimum 3-year life). The process starts with purchasing fabrics, buckets for soaking, soap, and underwear from the capital city's shops. The pads are sewn and packaged then delivered to the villages, where another team in the rural area distributes to new girls. Girls are attending weekly meetings as well as 3-day camps three times a year, so we will attend whatever we can, and provide discussion opportunities of the intimate and dynamic topics for a maturing girl. We courageously share about absolutely everything (within cultural parameters)!
- **[Village Health](#)** – A health forum creates a way to engage villagers in awareness of how disease is passed and avoided, as well as exploring ideas for reducing daily stress. We also strive to empower them with knowledge about modern concerns such as non-organic approaches, the antidote of permaculture, and for example, giving attention to details of labels. A demonstration of handwashing is used with [the Glitter Bug technique](#) and prizes are given to increase participation. The E.D. also will offer alternative health care to villagers in need.
- **Craftspeople** – We provide an income generating opportunity to anyone who has skills, while also giving us a way to reach out to people once back in the states. There are a variety of products brought to us to evaluate for marketing, but also we encourage the women to organize so they can fill pre-orders from the states. We loan them money to purchase supplies and give them ideas to improve the quality, increasing sales ability. For instance, we began an embroidery block project many years ago and it continues! [Here is an example](#) of how our women's textile work is not just feeding their children or paying school fees, but inspiring many people here in the states too.
- **[Library](#)** – Our library has over 2,500 books in both Shona and English, and is loved by all, but has little organization. The goal is to find an inexpensive and simple way to create order in a sustainable way. Hopefully we can find 5 colors of tape in town for the book's binding, so they can color-code the basic educational levels.
- **[W.A.T.E.R!](#)** – Nearly 135 wells have been built as of year-end 2019. Interviews with villagers will help us understand more about the plight of homes without a pure water well.

Duties of the volunteer:

Be part of a team that remains fluid from arrival to departure, being relaxed and supportive of the whole, above everything else.

- Many people do not have watches but observe the sun for time, and yet we set meeting times and stay positive.
- Due to the agrarian nature of the village residents and it being summer planting season, we adapt to their farming requirements.
- We wake and sleep with the sun to some degree.
- We have many deadlines. For example, we go to town for supplies once a week (like cooler ice, fresh fruits, vegetables and project materials), and need to be ready for the convenience of a small amount of internet time, by preparing reports and footage ahead of time, often using flashlights and candles with spare evening time.

Desirable skills and abilities:

- Use of word, excel, etc. are highly useful. Other computer expertise is extremely valuable.

- Good photo taking and video recording skills are needed – really knowing the various settings on the camera or phone to adjust to a full spectrum lighting requirements, from bright days with dark skin contrasts to candle lit huts. Wind reduction, etc. brings finesse to the final product. No film editing is required, although some may be welcomed. Ancient Ways will work with the raw footage to develop end products. Use of the film for your personal purposes would be assumed to be unacceptable, so permission for any film reproduction would need to be requested from Ancient Ways and Nhimbe for Progress participants.
- Basic self-reliance of having international travel and/or camping experience, but not so independent in word or action to put the project or anyone in jeopardy. For instance, exchanging money on the parallel market is illegal, although done by most people, and possessing or using marijuana, open homosexuality, or tweeting anti-political ideas will land a person in jail, no matter what the nationality. American tourists are generally treated with utmost respect and absolute care so we are quite safe to be there, but we must be familiar with their laws. You are fully supported by the E.D. and our hosts there (who translate for us) to acclimatize to the new situation and learn the best way to be part of the team.
- What we undertake to accomplish is tremendous and your contribution while there is huge! Know that we are extremely grateful. Know that daily we will be relinquishing expectations and attachment to the outcome, and holding positive expectancy watching the flow unfold perfectly. Being a person that is self-aware and self-content adds joy to the moment even when things don't go as planned, so it's a continual practice for us all.
- Another culture's fabric and economic hardships provide many rivers to cross. Go knowing that we all hold paradigms dear from our US entrapment and some may need to dissolve to function productively...we just continue to live and learn.
- Be able to enjoy the adventure while focusing on work, e.g.: 1) the spontaneity of music playing and people (you included) suddenly dancing, 2) exploring another language by courteously learning and engaging in the common traditional greetings, and 3) discovering another culture through how their heart demonstrates action in their daily lives, in which you have been generously included, even when it doesn't match your expectations.

Specific duties will vary but generally, simply being a fairly constant assistant and friend to the E.D., and occasionally assisting in the kitchen hut (e.g. occasionally packing a lunch for a long day or bringing water from the well), so that we keep all the wheels moving. We are known for accomplishing much in a short time. Helping to track details as well as support visioning and management are all important. It's all about being able to work together. The [Nguni Bantu term "Ubuntu"](#) explains it well.

Being a Tourist: We typically don't go to tourist attractions. We spend our time with the villagers in their homes learning about their lifestyles and so, you will have unusual opportunities to meet genuine people facing real life circumstances (prepare your heart). We normally can spend a day visiting a touristy place, and if desired, we can throw ourselves a departure party (they don't have extra money to provide food and drink for guests but love to gather, feast, and share music, dance and friendship).

Deadline for responding: There is no date by which to reply, but writing or calling sooner offers more preparation time for everyone involved – the team there and the team here.

Please feel free to contact Jaiaen Beck at gogreen@ancient-ways.org and read more about us <https://ancient-ways.org/> or chat with her at 541-259-HOPE. **Thank you for sharing this with anyone you know!**