

## Professional Fellows Scheme

### **SUMMARY**

The Professional Fellows Scheme is a volunteer opportunity to come to live in Leon, Nicaragua and contribute to the work of a local non-profit or social organization. Professional Fellows will receive a small stipend from PGL, enough to live on.

PGL already has a successful scheme of Summer Fellows, who come to live in Leon for 8 weeks. To compliment this, we are starting a new scheme of **Professional Fellows**. Professional Fellows (PFs) need to have three essential attributes:

- 1/ Good Spanish
- 2/ Willingness to come to Nicaragua for a substantial period of time
- 3/ A specific skill of value to our partners.

English is useful but not essential.

We also hope that after your placement in Nicaragua you will support the PGL activities back in the USA in some way.

PGL will do two things to enable the scheme to work. Firstly, we will invest financial resources to give a minimum support package to the PF. Secondly, we will invest time and understanding to ensure a good job description and a counterpart system with the local organization.

### **PRIORITY APPLICANTS**

PGL will screen applicants and choose those who are most appropriate to the needs of our partners and who meet the three criteria above. Priority will be given as follows -

- 1<sup>st</sup> - to anyone from the Gettysburg area
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - if not from Gettysburg, then at least from Pennsylvania or the N.E. of the USA region, e.g. Baltimore, Washington area
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – if not from the PGL region, then people from another town which is twinned with Leon, e.g. from Minnesota or New Haven, or Oxford (in the UK)
- If not from any of the above areas, then a good candidate, who will benefit the work of our partners, from any country.

### **PARTNERS -**

PGL supports five partners in Leon, each with a small amount of funding and also with technical support. The PF scheme is part of the technical support we wish to offer the partners. The five partner organizations we work with at present are as follows. (More details can be found on our PGL website,

and four of the partners (not Talolinga) also have either a website or a Facebook page of their own. Google them for more background information).

**CIMAC** – An environmental education center in the heart of Leon town.

**La Base** – an organization that supports cooperatives with small loans and technical support

**Las Tias** – a long-established community organization, that provides educational, social, psychological & vocational support to at-risk youth

**Xuchialt Arts Centre** – a voluntary group of teachers who provide art and dance classes to local youth

**Talolinga rural community** – is a farming community where PGL is supporting efforts to improve agricultural production and incomes

The above are the five priority partners that PGL supports at present. We do also work with some other local partners where we might consider placing a PF if they have relevant and appropriate skills. These include a Weaving Cooperative, a school for deaf children, and local primary and secondary schools.

### WHAT DO WE OFFER

- PGL will support the PF with the cost of a homestay in Sutiaba, a suburb of Leon. This is \$200 a month. This price will cover the costs of your accommodation including breakfast and dinner. The PF pays all their other costs (flight, vaccinations, medical insurance and other in-country costs). The concept is 'cost-sharing'.
- PGL will also invest time in setting up a good and valuable placement where your skills will be well-used.
- We will provide advice on immigration formalities (relatively simple for most people)
- We will provide one week of induction.
- We can also provide some (limited) support during your placement, e.g. advice, access to internet coverage in our office, access to our library, occasional outings or visits to other projects, opportunities to take part in development debates, occasional cultural activities.
- We will facilitate a mid-placement review and an end-of-placement evaluation.
- PGL is **not** responsible for your health insurance, health care or immigration formalities

### EXAMPLES OF WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The Professional Fellows scheme will complement the Summer Fellows, by coming for longer and with a specific technical skill that will benefit the partner's organization or the people of Leon. Here are some examples of the sort of people we will consider for PFs:

- **A VET OR AGRONOMIST**, who would provide training and assistance to our agricultural extensionists in Talolinga village. They need to be able to live in an isolated rural community, and be physically fit. They will visit neighboring communities and provide animal health services (always with our local extensionists). They will be able to informally train our extensionists in pricing, purchasing, small business development. i.e. the aim is not to provide a veterinary

service for six months (for example) but to work with our people to develop a sustainable local service. Three to five months might be sufficient for this task.

- An **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST / ENVIRONMENTALIST**, to provide Technical Support to further develop CIMAC. CIMAC has a lot of potential but is understaffed and has few resources. The leadership is over-stretched. This position would suit someone with marketing skills, lots of enthusiasm, able to get new ideas up and running. Here are just some ideas for new activities that would complement the current main work of the center (showing around groups of school students) – a marketing outreach to tourists in Leon who would pay to come and visit ; begin to open at the week-ends so that more people can visit; open a plant nursery to sell plants and make some funds; sell organic fertilizer; research donor funds and apply for a grant to open a butterfly farm ; improve the orchidarium; make links with other environmental centers in other cities and overseas. If you are interested in this post we have a whole job-description written. It would need a long-term commitment, 8 months to one year, lots of patience, lots of enthusiasm. It does not necessarily need someone full-time, so this task could be done in conjunction with another placement.
- **COMPUTER-FIXER**. Many of our partners and local colleges have various broken computers, printers that don't print, hard-drives that need new software, laptops that don't connect to the internet. We need someone very practical with very good technical skills able to repair, mend, and fix computers. It is not about programming or high-level systems work, it is very hands-on, able to work with organizations with very low budgets and also lack of knowledge. One to two months might be sufficient for this task.
- **CARPENTER and small business advisor**
- **HAIRDRESSER or beauty stylist and small business advisor.**

Our partner Las Tias provides vocational training to teenagers on Saturday mornings. They have a carpentry shop and a small hairdresser's salon. There is a potential to use these spaces more during the week, and to earn some income for Las Tias, and provide a little paid employment. We need someone who can both teach the technical skills to young people, but who can also design a way of opening the space for small businesses that will make a profit. Would need a commitment of 6 months to a year.

- **TEACHER OF THE DEAF**

A trained Teacher of the Deaf, or Sign-language interpreter or audiologist would be extremely helpful to work in the small School for the Deaf in Leon and in the 'Special School' where children of all disabilities go to school together. A knowledge of American Sign Language, or Nicaraguan Sign Language is essential. (unfortunately, British Sign Language is relatively useless). An ability to work with analogue hearing aids or pre-programable hearing aids is useful – not with cochlear implants. You would do some hands-on teaching work with children, or in the homes of preschoolers, but more importantly you would mentor local teachers. You would do some teacher training, with the UNAN, the biggest university in Leon. You would visit different schools where deaf children are struggling alone and in isolation. This is an extremely interesting role because you can also visit other projects around the country that work

with deaf people, as long as you are willing to travel on public transport. This role needs a significant ability to withstand set-backs and lack of progress. The deaf education system in Nicaragua is under-funded and has low-priority, all the (few) projects are small and struggling against numerous impediments. You have to be resilient and not think you are going to change the world. One-year commitment needed and the ability and interest to quickly learn Nicaraguan Sign-language. In this role you would benefit from the induction and support of a British Teacher of the Deaf who is already here and who works closely with PGL.

- **FUNDRAISER (TO WORK WITH A VARIETY OF ORGANISATIONS)**

Do you have experience successfully writing grant proposals (or bids)? You would work with a variety of our partners above, and help them identify opportunities to gain funding for their work. This might be through income-generating activities or from public events in the local community. Most likely it would be by researching grant-opportunities (in the USA or elsewhere). You would help the partners design realistic budgets and to write funding proposals. i.e. you would help the partners 'projectise' their work, break down their activities into parts that could be 'sold' to donors. You would emphasize the importance of 'evidence' and quantifiable targets, and would help promote their good work through communications materials. Most importantly you would research donors and help the partners identify sources of funds. You would both deliver a training program for local NGOs on how to raise funds, and you would accompany the partners in their efforts. This would be an especially interesting placement because you would work with a variety of partners not just one. You would need to have a lot of patience and perseverance. A time commitment of one year would be ideal.

- **OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

We have other openings available with other partners. For example, La Base work with a variety of cooperatives (bee-keeping; taxi coop; jams and marmalades; shrimps) some of which have technical skill-needs and many of which could benefit from small-business training, marketing advice, financial and organizational development training. Contact us for more details.

- **COMMUNICATIONS WORK**

For all of our partners we may ask you to help occasionally with funding applications to trusts and foundations, and we ask that you contribute occasional articles, blogs, photos or short videos (depending on your skills). These communications pieces are placed either on PGL platforms or the partners platforms, such as Facebook, blogs, websites etc. They help to publicize the good work that our partners are doing.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

In the first instance write to [Coordinador.Programas@gettysburg-leon.org](mailto:Coordinador.Programas@gettysburg-leon.org) in English or Spanish with your expression of interest. Attach your CV (resume) and in your cover letter make sure to cover the following points:

- Your level of Spanish
- Your time-frame and how many months you have available
- What you can offer to Nicaraguan social organizations

- Have you been to Nicaragua before (or elsewhere in Latin America)
- Confirm you understand the financial offer PGL is able to provide (as above)
- Confirm your level of fitness and you understand the need for health insurance.

It is expected that the PFs will be professionals with significant career experience. Not students. If they live in Gettysburg or Pennsylvania that is an advantage but is not essential.

After receiving your initial letter, we will consider what openings we have available at present and send you a fuller list of opportunities.

Project Gettysburg-Leon,

Sutiaba, Leon

Date: September 2017

.....