



Off the Mat Into The World

Global Seva Challenge 2011 South Africa Bare Witness Tour

February 5-19, 2011

Itinerary

Day 1 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5: Depart for South Africa

Today your South African volunteering adventure begins as you depart your hometown and fly to Cape Town.

DAY 2 – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6: Arrive in South Africa

Welcome to Cape Town, a city of stark contrasts. Cape Town is arguably one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is home to stunning beaches, majestic mountains and inspiring scenery, as well as some of the most expensive property in the country.

However its beauty hides a somewhat darker side as over 30% of the population in Cape Town lives below the poverty line – this means they manage to survive on less than \$1.50 per day. Most of these people live in peripheral areas of the city in unsanitary conditions with little access to basic services. Whilst the government is generally trying to address these issues, they are fighting an uphill battle as more and more people from even poorer rural areas migrate to the city in search of work, thus putting increasing pressure on the government's ability to

provide services. Unemployment is estimated to be at over 40% across the greater Cape Town area.

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to our accommodations. Most flights from the U.S. and Canada arrive in Cape Town in the evening so a light dinner will be provided.

DAY 3 – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7: Orientation: Historical and Current issues followed by work in the Townships

Begin the day with a gentle yoga session, followed by breakfast. In the morning, you'll hear local experts present on topical and social issues affecting poverty stricken communities around Cape Town. Hearing the history and relevant local circumstances will help you to understand and engage more fully in your volunteer projects. In the afternoon you will experience the townships firsthand and visit child headed families surviving in the toughest of conditions. Food will be distributed as well as bakery items from the Off the Mat Bakery. Dinner will be at a local restaurant followed by evening reflection and debriefing.

DAY 4 – TUESDAY , FEBRUARY, 8: A visit to the past

After a morning yoga session and a good breakfast, you will travel to Robben Island and the notorious prison – home to former President Nelson Mandela for 17 years. The island provides an insight into South Africa's Apartheid history as well as a glimpse into the future especially concerning racial reconciliation. The prison guides are all ex-political prisoners of the island and will share their experiences of prison life during Apartheid as they guide you around. Dinner will be at a local South African family.

DAY 5 – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9: YouthAIDS

After your morning yoga session and breakfast, you will spend your day at YouthAIDS South Africa. YouthAIDS is an HIV/AIDS education and prevention initiative that raises much needed funding for HIV AIDS awareness programmes across the globe. YouthAIDS programmes offer creative interventions that are appropriate to the specific health needs and cultural settings of each country in which it works.

The group will be hosted by Peer Educators and will observe Interpersonal Communication discussion. This will give a broad overview of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how it affects the youth and how the youth are responding to the challenge. We will be part of a street campaign showing cases how YouthAIDS reaches youth that are out of school and how they mobilize community members to get tested for HIV.

Dinner will be at an Indian restaurant followed by some time for debriefing and reflection.

DAY 6 – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10: YouthAIDS

After your morning yoga session and breakfast, you will spend a second day at YouthAIDS South Africa. The group will observe and participate in a clinic talk campaign targeting sexually active youth particularly females. We will travel to the YouthAIDS door to door condom distribution campaign site. Individuals will be paired with the Peer Educators then go door to door distributing condoms and IEC information.

We will be able to observe YouthAIDS radio talk show at radio Zibonele, Khayelista. A debriefing session with their team will occur at the end of the day. A picnic dinner will be outside at the world renowned Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

DAY 7 – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11: Earthchild Project and Home-Stay

After a leisure morning of yoga and breakfast, you will be transferred to a home-stay accommodations, where you will stay in pairs with a family in their home in the township for two nights. This is a fantastic way to experience true South African township culture and enjoy the warm hospitality and community spirit of township life.

In the afternoon we will work with Earthchild Project and visit one of their schools and participate in the Children's Yoga Club. They also have a large organic vegetable garden and worm farms which are maintained by the children. The group will have fun spending time gardening and worm farming with the kids. We will be accompanied by other local yogis.

The evening will be spent enjoying our time with our home-stay families.

DAYS 8 - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12: Volunteering and Homestays

On Saturday morning you will make a brief stop at location in the township where Linawo Children's Home was previously housed. Linawo Children's Home takes care of abandoned, neglected and orphaned children on a permanent basis.

We will then travel to the newly purchased home supported by OTM funds from all of you. The highlight will be taking the children on a day outing, including shopping for an outfit for each child, and then to the beach and/or park. It will help them to appreciate the joys of being out and about and having fun.

We will enjoy our last night staying with our local family.

DAY 9 – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13: A truly local day!!

During apartheid times the church played a very important role in township communities, providing support and hope to many people suffering from the ill effects of prejudicial apartheid policies. Missionary schools provided centres of education for township children. As a result, the majority of community members in the townships profess to be Christian and church is an essential part of township culture. To experience this aspect of township life, you will begin the

day with a vibrant multi cultural, multi racial church service within the Cape townships and get to meet more local South Africans. After lunch, depart for the famous African curio market to browse and shop for unique African items. After checking back into your hotel accommodation you will spend the evening and dinner at the hotel followed by group reflection time.



DAY 10 – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14: Exploration of Cape Town

Spend the day experiencing the beautiful outdoors. After a morning yoga session you'll be exploring and/or hiking the mountains that surround the city and end up on top of Table Mountain. There'll also be time to relax on the white beaches and end the day with a beautiful African sunset from one of the best vantage points in the City. You will have the evening at leisure to explore the V & A Waterfront (South Africa's number one attraction) and enjoy a relaxed dinner overlooking the harbour before returning to the hotel.

DAY 4 and 5 – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8 and Wednesday, February 9: GOLD (Generations of Leaders Discovered) Peer Education

After yoga for these two morning you will transfer to a local site to work with youth to work with an organization called GOLD.

The GOLD Peer Education Development Agency plays a key role in transforming poverty stricken communities through long term adolescent peer education. This uses the influence that young people have with their peers to encourage youths to make informed choices and develop health-enhancing social behaviour. GOLD's mission is to support viable community organizations in the sustainable roll out of quality youth peer education programs, empowering youth peer leaders to become positive role models and agents of community change.

Why?

- Poor and inadequately resourced schools and communities in South Africa, Zambia and Botswana are being burdened with the growing impact of HIV/AIDS and orphanhood.

- For example, young girls are dropping out of school to care for HIV infected siblings and parents; one out of four teachers is HIV infected resulting in increasing teacher absenteeism and turnover; and, students are struggling with the emotional challenges of losing parents and caregivers resulting in chronic absenteeism at school as well as deteriorating academic performance and literacy. Poverty is being perpetuated.

Tuesday and Wednesday will be spent assisting the peer educators in setting up or implementing one of their projects. You will likely participate in activities such as setting up a food tent and/or painting a service center. The specifics of these two days will be communicated closer to the time, once the peer educators have confirmed their projects. The Off the Mat team would be able to interact with the peer educators and see them in action, transforming their communities. Dinner on Tuesday will be with a local South African family and on Wednesday, our last night, we will enjoy an African themed restaurant.

DAY 14 – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18: Departure day

After yoga and packing your things, there will be some free time to do some last minute sightseeing or shopping. The group will then share a final lunch together before the flight back home. Alternatively, you can join an option overnight Safari.

DAY 15 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19: Arrive Home

Today you will arrive home after what will hopefully have been a truly rewarding and enjoyable trip to South Africa.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION: FEBRUARY 18-19: Overnight Safari

Extend your trip to include an overnight safari. . After the last morning yoga session, you will be transferred to a nearby nature reserve where you can spend some time in the countryside amongst the beautiful Cape mountain scenery and experience Africa's wild animals up close and personal. You will be taken on guided safaris in an open game viewing vehicle. Guided nature walks and/or game viewing on horseback are also available when you stay overnight. Experience the bright stars of the African night sky and fall asleep to the sounds of roaring lions and other night noises of the African bush. All meals are included. On Saturday, you'll be transferred back to Cape Town where you will catch your flight back to the USA, arriving home on Sunday, February 20.

This trip is in conjunction with Off the Mat Into the World, a non-profit under Engage Network. The hosts are renowned yogis, Seane Corn and Suzanne Sterling, along with Sally Bassett from Peace through Yoga. Each participant must raise \$20,000 to go on the trip. Proceeds will help build a children's home, a bakery, and numerous programs for AIDS. The fundraising also pays for the air and ground arrangements for the participant.

For more information, go to www.offthematintotheworld.org