



RHUMC: SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT INFORMATION FOR SUMMER 2023

What is Sierra Service Project (SSP)?

Sierra Service Project is an ecumenical Christian non-profit organization providing life-changing experiences through acts of service repairing homes in rural and urban communities. They invite middle school and high school youth and young adults to experience the profound power of serving people who have a culture and life experience different from their own.

In SSP's statement of theology they state that SSP: "We respond to God's invitation to open ourselves up to the possibility of a transformational experience. In community, we begin to recognize our dependence on God and inter-dependence with each other. As a community, we strive to grow being led by the Spirit. We choose to serve believing, that through our humble acts of love, we can learn about God's character and love for us. We seek to accept people, as they are from the moment they stand before us, as the first step toward relationship. We seek to remain open; an openness of hand and of heart that we might give, receive and understand."

Founded in 1975, Sierra Service Project was inspired by, and modeled after, Appalachian Service Project. Originally founded by several United Methodist Church ministers, SSP is now an independent non-profit organization. They maintain a close affiliation with the United Methodist Church, but also draw participants from a number of other denominations.

High School Trip (Youth entering 9th grade in the fall of 2023 - graduating seniors)

- Programming at SSP runs Sunday afternoon to Saturday morning.
- RHUMC is attending Week 7 in Del Norte County (formerly Smith River) in northern CA.
- **The team will depart July 29 in the early morning and return August 6.**
- The site is about a 13 hour drive from LA (We'll stay overnight near Sacramento).
- This is a "High school only" site. Other groups/churches may only bring high school aged youth.
- Projects include carpentry work, community revitalization work, and state park maintenance.
- All participants are required to submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination, boosters, AND a negative test**

Cost \$495 (\$200 deposit due ASAP, final payment \$295 due April 1, 2023.)

Scholarships are available through RHUMC, please complete an application by February 1, 2023.

Please contact Rev. Kristin Sutrave at Kristin@rhumc.org or 562-234-0161 with any questions or to register.

As of December 2022 RHUMC plans to send one high school team. A middle school team will only be offered if there is enough expressed interest. If you have a middle school aged youth who may want to attend SSP this summer, please contact Kristin@rhumc.org as soon as possible.

****Please review Sierra Service Project's "Guidelines for COVID-19 Safety" included on the back of this form.**

SSP's Medical Advisory Council's "Guidelines for COVID-19 Safety"

As part of SSP's commitment to improving the lives of those we serve and enriching the lives of our volunteers, SSP is taking steps to minimize the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus to our partner communities and among our volunteers and staff.

While federal, state, CDC, and local guidelines may change in the coming months, at this time SSP plans a **multilayered approach to COVID-19 safety**:

Before the SSP program, every volunteer (youth and adults) must:

- **At least 3 months prior to participating:** Complete **primary Covid vaccination series**
 - 2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna *OR* 1 dose of Johnson & Johnson
- **At least 2 weeks prior to participating (ages 12 and up):**
 - Obtain an **updated (bivalent) booster**
 - *Additional boosters are an added bonus!*
 - Provide **proof of vaccination** to SSP staff via participant forms
 - **Reduce exposure** to any potential positive cases as much as possible, especially within the 10 days leading up to the program. Any **known exposure** to a positive case within 10 days means the volunteer will need to **reschedule** for a later date.
- **Upon arrival:** Provide **proof of a negative Covid-19 test** from as close to arrival as possible. Either rapid antigen at-home (preferred) or PCR lab tests are acceptable.

During the program:

- Plan to remain in **cohorts** for high risk exposure activities (sleeping, traveling in vehicles).
- **Mask indoors** when not with cohort (including interactions with any community partners, other volunteer cohorts, and SSP staff).
 - Masks will not be required outdoors between volunteer cohorts, but are still encouraged
- **Test mid-week:** 48 hours after arrival everyone will test again. Cohorts will remain intact throughout the week, even after mid-week testing.
 - Monitor for *any* symptoms and test accordingly
- If a youth tests positive while at camp, they will be quarantined until a parent/guardian can arrange transportation home from the site.

After the program:

- Notify SSP of any positive cases in the volunteer group within 48 hours after leaving the program.

To ask a question about SSP's COVID-19 safety plans, you can email the Medical Advisory Council at MAC@SierraServiceProject.org.