

LEARNING ENTERPRISES
HUNGARY/SLOVAKIA
VOLUNTEER ADDENDUM – SUMMER 2015



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*Please note all spelling and grammar is in American English. To help make this document UK friendly we have included British English words in brackets and an estimated conversion of all costs in GBP.

Disclaimer for Addendum

Your host village in this program country is somewhere that can benefit from a volunteer English teacher. You should expect to be the only LE volunteer in your village (though in some programs, we do send two volunteers to one location). This means that you may not have direct access to an American. It may not be a very well-developed community, and the ease of transportation infrastructures is not the same as you could expect in high functioning urban areas. Transportation varies country---to---country and village---to---village (consult the remaining portions of this addendum for info more specific to your host region), and most are connected by public bus routes. The frequency of the bus/train schedule will not be the same as in urban areas, and you should not rely on schedules or purchasing tickets via the internet. You will need to consult with your host family and PD when arranging transportation. Not all host families own cars or share vehicles with neighbors/relatives. All villages have phones and internet connections, and many but not all host families have internet in their homes. For families who have Internet connectivity, it may not be the same level/consistency as in developed, urban areas. Though an in-country cellphone will be mandatory (and bought during Orientation), volunteers who are very concerned with being in touch all the time might find that this may not be possible. Villages will have access to a medical clinic or hospital in the nearest larger city. Be prepared to live in a place with different social norms that may challenge and fascinate you. As a volunteer you need to be culturally sensitive and your host family may not have the same views as you. You should reach out to your Program Director or Director of Programming if you ever feel uncomfortable. Though some volunteers may know who their host family is pre-departure, others may not be assigned a host family until they arrive in-country.

Program Information:

Staff:



Sarah Jannarone is a student at Georgetown University where she studies American Studies and Education, Inquiry and Social Justice. Sarah currently lives in Washington D.C but hails from New Jersey. Previously a volunteer with Learning Enterprises, Sarah traveled to Hungary and Slovakia in the summer of 2014. She enjoyed teaching her students, attending Hungarian weddings, and exploring sunflower fields with her host family. Sarah also enjoyed sharing American culture and teaching her Slovak host family how to make s'mores. Sarah is very excited to serve with LE again as the Hungary/Slovakia Program Director and support the volunteers through their teaching experiences as they wonderfully serve their communities in Hungary and Slovakia!

As Program Director, Sarah will coordinate the group Orientation in Budapest, and the midpoint break in southern Slovakia. Sarah will be working with the volunteers as they prepare for the trip, as well as their acting in-country contact for the duration of the trip. Volunteers will be expected to check in weekly with Sarah via email or Facebook. Sarah will ensure that the program runs smoothly, all volunteers and family have updated information, and that volunteers maximize their experience.

Country Coordinators:

Zsofia Selmeczi, Hungary



Serving for her 2nd year as the LE Country Coordinator for LE, Zsofia works all year leading up to the trip to find host families and villages for our volunteers. Though not an easy task, as a project manager of the Association for the Villages of Zala County, Zsofia is well versed in her home region. Zsofia lives and works in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary and will be a great contact point for the volunteers. She is very passionate about bringing this learning opportunity to the region, and will assure that all volunteers are placed with the most welcoming and hospitable host families.

Szilvia Biro, Slovakia



Serving as the Country Coordinator last year, Szilvia will be returning to LE for her second year. Having studied British and American Studies in University, Szilvia is excited to learn more and discuss US current events with volunteers. Her village will be host to a volunteer during the trip. Szilvia will assist the group during mid-point break. She will also lead the team in their trip to a student festival of which she works directly with. Szilvia is very excited to be the serve as the Country Coordinator again and looks forward to meeting the 2015 volunteer team.

Program History

Adam Tolnay, the founder of Learning Enterprises, spent a semester of his sophomore year of college working in Hungary. Having judged during his trip that there was a demand for English instruction in the newly opened eastern bloc, he returned to the United States with the idea of starting an exchange program. The first volunteers arrived in Hungary in the summer of 1992. Five of Adam's friends from Harvard taught English in five villages in Hungary for a six-week period during their summer vacation. The exchange went well, and over the next two summers Adam expanded the program to include villages in the western part of Romania in 1993, with ten volunteers, and Slovakia in 1994, with 15 volunteers. Because of time constraints, Adam was forced to scale back the program, despite its success. In 1995, only five volunteers traveled to five villages in Hungary, and the length of the program shortened to four weeks. In 1996, it was seven. In 1997, it fell to two. In 1998, only four people taught abroad. But, since 1998, the program has grown and flourished, with 11 volunteers in the Hungary/Slovakia Program last year.

Program Summary

Duration: 6-7 weeks (4 days Orientation/ 3 weeks Hungary/ 3 weeks Slovakia)

2015 Program Dates:

- Arrival in Budapest: June 16th
- Orientation in Budapest: June 17th-21st
- Teaching begins (Hungary): June 22nd
- Midpoint Meeting: July 10th-12th
- Teaching begins (Slovakia): July 13th
- Instruction Ends: July 31st
- Volunteers depart: August 3rd

Orientation Details

Hungary/Slovakia orientation details will be relayed to teachers as the summer nears. In general, volunteers will stay in a fairly priced hostel in Budapest for four nights and have the chance to get know other volunteers, while exploring the city and learning more about Learning Enterprises' mission and their responsibilities to the program. The group will spend time conducting training sessions to better familiarize volunteers with different aspects of teaching (including lesson planning, sample lesson plans, and mock teaching sessions). They will have an opportunity to learn necessary Hungarian phrases and acclimate to the time zone. The Program Director will relay all pertinent information to volunteers in late April or early May.

Orientation Schedule:

Day 1, Tuesday:

Arrive in the beautiful city of Budapest

Check-in at the hostel

Spend some free time exploring the city

Meet your fellow volunteers for dinner and time to get to know each other

Day 2, Wednesday:

Orientation Sessions *

Sightseeing**

Free time

Day 3, Thursday:

Orientation Sessions *

Visit famous Hungarian bathhouses

Free time

Day 4, Friday:

Orientation Session*

Sightseeing

Free time

Day 5, Saturday:

Say good-bye to your fellow volunteers

Leave for your village

*Orientation sessions will include topics such as: Language and Culture, Host Family/Village Life, A Well-Rounded Lesson Plan, etc. ** There are so many sights to see while you explore Budapest!

Some options may include the Buda castle, Parliament, Museum of Terror, Margaret Island, spas, Gellert Hill, and information on sightseeing, I suggest a general guide book of Hungary and Slovakia. Note: schedule subject to change

Midpoint Break:

For midpoint break, volunteers will gather in Slovakia in an area chosen by the Slovakia Country Coordinator, which is reachable by train or bus from Hungary. Together, volunteers will travel from their first villages some time on the Friday of midpoint break after saying goodbye to their first host family. At midpoint break, volunteers will have the opportunity to share stories, teaching plans and other experiences from their first village, while being introduced to the Slovakian region in which they'll be teaching. The purpose of midpoint break is to reflect on experiences in the first village with other volunteers in order to improve teaching and experiences in the second village, as well as to get to know other volunteers more. On Sunday afternoon, volunteers will say goodbye to one another and depart to their second villages with their new host families.

Working with Fellow Volunteers

While you will not be teaching with another LE volunteer, it is essential for us to keep in touch and share lesson plans throughout our stay. Our Facebook group will be an invaluable resource to share teaching ideas and details about life in the village. Once in village, volunteers are expected to post on the Facebook group page or email Sarah at least once a week. In this update, I will ask you to write about a lesson plan that went exceptionally well or one that did not. By sharing lesson plans and experiences, the Facebook group will become a go to place for new lesson plan ideas.

Cell Phone Policy

Learning Enterprises *strongly suggests* that volunteers acquire and maintain a cell phone while in country. As a volunteer it is **your prerogative** to obtain and maintain such resources and **your responsibility** to communicate your contact information to your parents and to LE. Your Program Director can provide guidance about how and where to acquire a cell phone, and you will receive email notifications asking you to share your contact information with LE. We strongly encourage you to take these steps. Learning Enterprises is **not** responsible for knowing how to reach you at all times and/or communicating this information to your parents. The **ONLY** way for you to facilitate such communications is to acquire and maintain a cell/mobile phone and be diligent about sharing your contact information. An opportunity to acquire in-country cell phones will be provided during Orientation.

Village Information

You will teach in a village or small town. In Hungary, many volunteers are located around the city of Zalaegerszeg, three or four hours from Budapest. In Slovakia, most of the volunteers are placed in the southwest part of the country, about two hours from Bratislava, the capital. While you may not be too far from your fellow volunteers, you may not be able to visit because of limited transportation. Inside the village, you should be able to walk to where you teach, though some families provide bicycles for an added convenience.

Each volunteer will be placed with a host family. You may or may not have someone in your host family with English experience. Most host families will have moderate amenities, such as TV, landline phones, and showers. Internet is occasionally available inside your home, but in some cases you will go to a café in the village to check your email. However, you might not have air-conditioning and might have to share a room with a host sibling. Most host families treat volunteers as they do their own children and are warm, welcoming, and protective. Get ready for lots of food and hospitality! In your free time, you can walk through a sunflower field; enjoy a bike ride with your host siblings to their favorite spot, or get gelato with some teenagers in the village. You will spend two full weekends in your village, and we encourage you to spend as much time as possible in your host village. Typically on the weekends, your host family will take you on a day trip to see the surrounding landmarks. During the second weekend, you are free to travel or meet other volunteers in the larger cities, or remain in the village to explore more.

Teaching/Students

In your villages your teaching space will most likely be a room in the community center, town hall, or local school. Usually, you will have a blackboard and chalk at your disposal, but resources in each village differ. Extra supplies can be obtained during the orientation in Budapest, if you do not want to carry them from home. The amount of students that you will teach in each village ranges between 20 and 40. Your students may be between 5 and 45, with various levels of English. Often, you will have enough teenage and adult students to create a separate class for advanced speakers. Three hours of teaching each day is required, but most volunteers will teach about four hours. You will be expected to plan your own lessons for each class. Feel free to get creative and add in your own interests- the best lessons often involve races and games!

Schools in Hungary and Slovakia require that students study a foreign language, and the majority of students choose to take English. For many of your students, English is a tool that they hope to utilize in order to excel in both school and their future careers. While many students are excited to continue their studies, your English classes are during their summer vacation. Our goal is to encourage our students and make learning English enjoyable.

Sample Day

8:00 Wake Up, Breakfast With Family

9-10 First Class -- Beginners

10-10:30 Break

10:30-11:30 Second Class - Intermediate

11:30-12:30 Unwind and Evaluate Morning Lessons

12:30-Lunch

Afternoon: Free time to nap, play with your students, wash your clothes, etc.

4:30-6:00 Adult Class

6:30-Dinner

Evening: Plan next day's lesson, hang out with other volunteers and host family

Country Information

Weather & Climate

In the summer, Hungary's climate is hot, but the temperatures tend to dip in the evenings. The average temperature ranges between 81 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit; however, in hot spells, the temperature has been known to reach the low 100s. In the sun, the humidity can be especially noticeable. At night, the temperature can fall in to the 60s. Rain showers are fairly common and often appear rather quickly, so a raincoat is a must.

Food & Drink

Traditional Hungarian food is delicious but a bit on the heavy side. It is usually spicier and more flavorful than most of the food found in Eastern and Central Europe due to the liberal use of paprika, which appears in soups, salads, and meat dishes of all kinds. In Slovakia, your host mother will probably serve both Slovak and Hungarian traditional dishes. Lunch (the biggest meal of the day) and dinner with your host family will most likely consist of three courses: soup, main course, and dessert. The soup might be a mixture of meat and vegetables in a clear or tomato broth; alternately, it might be a sweet fruit soup with cinnamon flavoring. The main course will usually include meat, a side dish such as potatoes or rice, and vegetables (summer offers many fresh vegetables, but Hungarians are especially fond of what they term "salads," which refer to vegetables soaked in vinegar and flavored with salt, sugar, and paprika). The dessert is the best part of the meal, as the rich cakes and pastries are made with fresh ingredients. Breakfast also features a variety of food, and you might be surprised to find that

cheese, cold cuts, and raw vegetables often appear and are consumed at the breakfast table. Hungarians are passionate about their food and will want to feed you until you feel like you might burst. It is OK to let your host parents know in a respectful way when you have had too much to eat!

*****Vegetarian, kosher, and other dietary needs are difficult but not impossible to accommodate. Past host families have been very accommodating, but will ask you many questions about vegetarianism for it is uncommon to them.***

The tap water in both Hungary and Slovakia is perfectly safe to drink, although your host family might also buy bottled water (which comes in both carbonated and non-carbonated varieties).

Your host family will most likely offer you alcohol at some point; feel free to turn it down if you prefer not to drink. A good deal of the nightlife in the villages revolves around the local pubs (or *the* local pub); if you go, you will probably see some of your older students there. The official drinking age in Hungary is 18, but it is rarely if ever enforced in the villages.

Language

Hungarian (called *magyar* by Hungarians) has the reputation of being a fiendishly difficult language to learn, and non-native speakers will certainly agree. The language is a member of the Ugric subgroup of Finn-Ugric languages and is spoken by about 15 million people worldwide. It is distantly related to Finnish and Estonian and a bit more closely related to the Khanty and Mansi languages spoken by native peoples of Siberia.

Slovak, on the other hand, is much easier to learn, especially if you have had exposure to other Slavic languages such as Polish, Russian, or Ukrainian. Slovak is actually very closely related to Czech, and most Slovaks and Czechs understand each other perfectly. Try to pick up some basic words and sentences in Slovak while you're there, especially if you plan to travel either in Slovakia or in the Czech Republic. Unlike Russian and a number of other Slavic languages, both Slovak and Czech use the Latin alphabet.

While no one expects you to pick up a significant amount of Hungarian during orientation or the time you spend teaching in Hungary (or in Slovakia, where the villages with which we work are also mainly Hungarian), your host family will really appreciate it if you do make the effort to learn and use a few key words and phrases. You will find that Hungarians are very proud of their unique language and consider it one of the defining features of the Hungarian nation.

Most of the villages that Learning Enterprises sends volunteers in Slovakia lie within the area of the country that is populated mainly by Hungarians. Thus, your host family and the majority of your students will most likely identify themselves as Hungarian. If that is the case, they will also be bilingual (if not trilingual); they will be proficient in Slovak but they will speak mainly Hungarian with their family, friends, and others in the village.

One crucial thing to note in terms of the Hungarian language is name order. As is the case in a number of Asian cultures, Hungarians put the last name/family name first and the first name/given name last. Thus, if John Smith were Hungarian he would be known as Smith John.

German is a common second language choice for Hungarians, although English has become extremely widespread in the past decade. Many people will understand at least a few words – and they certainly understand hand gestures – so you will certainly be able to get around the country in general and the capital city in particular. During orientation, volunteers will participate in a session to learn about the language, including some basic phrases, and the unique culture of the region.

Culture/Religion

The Hungarian culture is very unique, and has strong roots within communities. The majority of Hungarians are Catholic, but your host family may have their own religious views. While many host families are practicing Catholics, others do not practice, or are not Catholic. You are almost always guaranteed a Catholic church in every village. If you wish to attend a local mass, try to follow what the locals do, as some churches have traditional gender-determined seating. However, for other religions, it may be a challenge to find weekly services. If you share your religious views with your host family, most will try to accommodate you in any way possible.

Potentially Uncomfortable Situations

Discrimination

Although some Hungarians and Slovak citizens still hold antiquated views on women, most have embraced modern (some would say western) conceptions of gender equality. Women are not likely to face any more problems traveling alone than their male counterparts. Minorities might encounter some prejudice (or rude stares, at the least), but most people will greet them with curiosity as opposed to hostility. Villages are certainly ready to receive volunteers of any racial or ethnic background. Homosexuality is slowly gaining acceptance (Budapest has made much more progress in this area than the rest of the country), but it is not uncommon to hear people speaking rudely of homosexual couples or using variations of the word “gay” to insult others (regardless of their sexual orientation). You are certainly welcome to discuss topics such as various forms of discrimination with your host family and/or students; however be aware that their views might not conform to your own.

Hungarians in Slovakia

Because of the area in which Learning Enterprises operates and the people with which it deals, the situation of Hungarian minorities in Slovakia is very important in most villages. Southern Slovakia has areas that are populated almost entirely by people who identify as “Hungarian” and feel insulted when others (mainly foreigners) carelessly refer to them as “Slovak.” To you, it might seem like an insignificant difference, but to them it is very important in terms of personal and communal identity. Relations between Hungarians and Slovaks in the

area are generally very good, and both cultures have borrowed (and continue to borrow) from each other.

Roma/Gypsies

“Roma” is the term by which the people known as “gypsies” are officially identified. This is partly due to the fact that Roma/gypsy leaders use the term themselves; it is also partly due to notions of political correctness. The Hungarian word for “gypsy” is cigány, which is pronounced something like “tsee-gahn” (the Slovak word is almost the same). The word can be considered an insult when someone uses it to label a person who is not of Roma/gypsy origin. However, many Roma/gypsies use the word themselves. The Roma/gypsy community in Slovakia is fairly large, although official estimates usually underreport the numbers. In Hungary, the Roma/gypsy community is one of the largest and certainly the best organized in Europe. While the fact that Roma/gypsies encounter discrimination in the country (and elsewhere in Europe) is indisputable, the situation is much more complex than that. Historically, Roma/gypsies have refused to integrate into European society and have maintained some beliefs and customs that are at odds with the majority groups. Thus, non-Roma/gypsies in Hungary and Slovakia still view the Roma/gypsies with suspicion and prejudice, especially because a large amount of pick-pocketing and petty theft is linked to them.

Guidelines for Living with a Host Family

The host families with which Learning Enterprises works are self-selecting and are excited to have foreign students live with them. They see it as an opportunity to learn about other countries and cultures as well as a chance to improve their own English skills (you will probably have host brothers or sisters – if not host parents! – who are studying the language).

- Be kind, considerate, and gracious. Your host family will accommodate you as best as they can, but also remember that you are a guest in their house.
- Make an effort to communicate with your host parents and host siblings, even if the language barrier prevents you from having long philosophical conversations. Gestures and facial expressions are universal and usually get the message across. Learn a few words in Hungarian and use them whenever you can. Your host family will greatly appreciate your attempts to understand their culture!
- Spend time with your host family. Although they will encourage you to get to know your students as well as your peers in the village, they will also want to get the chance to see you. Don't use your host family's house simply as the place where you eat and sleep.
- Follow the rules that your host family outlines for you (if they don't give you any, use common sense). Don't challenge your host parents if they tell you that you can't stay out past hour X or if you should avoid going to bar Y. Even if you think that something they tell you might be unreasonable (such as keeping your distance from certain people), understand that disregarding their advice shows utmost disrespect to them.

- Make sure that your host family knows about your plans ahead of time. If you accept a student's invitation to dinner at her/his house or plan to spend the weekend traveling, let your host family know.
- If you have serious conflicts with your host family, please contact your Program Director immediately!

Hungarian people are very warm and giving. One of the primary ways of giving, according to Hungarians, is through food, as it is one of the fundamental human necessities. Your host family will feed you well, and villagers will also welcome you for dinner. This hospitality may be a little extreme for some volunteers, such as when they have eaten lunch twice and are asked in to another family's house, where they will be offered food. It is always polite to try some of the dish, and thank the family for their hospitality. However, if you are full to the brim, feel free to explain to your host that you appreciate their hospitality and you are enjoying the food, however, you are full.

Also, while you are staying with your host family, your host siblings look forward to your company. Feel free to spend as much time with them as you like. However, it is alright to ask to have a little time on your own. One way to do this is to take a nap, and spend some time relaxing. Another way is to tell your host family that you would like to explore the village a little bit more, on your own. However, often host siblings want to show you around more, and will accompany you.

Excursions

Although you will spend at least one weekend with your host family (they are always delighted to have you with them and look forward to spending time with you!), you have a number of options for travel during or after your time in Hungary and Slovakia.

Small and Medium-Sized Cities in Hungary and Slovakia

Depending on the exact location of your village, there will be a number of small or medium-sized cities to explore within the region. Each one has a unique history and a number of interesting attractions (museums, fortresses, cathedrals, quirky shops and restaurants). Ask your host family for recommendations, or do some research on your own. A tour guide to Eastern Europe will also have suggestions.

Cities in southwestern Slovakia: Nové Zámky, Dunajská Streda, and Nitra

Cities in northwestern Hungary: Komárom, Győr, Sopron and Esztergom

Bratislava

Although Slovakia's capital city is not conventionally beautiful in the same way that Budapest and Prague are, it certainly has its charms. It is relatively small (with a population of 500,000) but has plenty to offer in terms of both history as well as contemporary culture. The international tourists who clog up other capitals in the region during the summer generally avoid Bratislava (their loss!), so it

features less touristy elements. Bratislava is easily reachable from all of the cities in southwestern Slovakia; buses (the recommended mode of transportation) and trains depart for the city daily.

Vienna

The Austrian capital is only 40 miles from Bratislava, but the easiest way to travel there from your village is often by train through Hungary. Nonetheless, regardless of how you get there, Vienna is certainly worth a weekend visit. Its vibrant cultural life ensures that all visitors have plenty to see and do there

Prague

The Czech capital is famous throughout Europe for its historic beauty (as many people will remind you, the city was one of the few capitals in the area that was not bombed during World War II, and thus its historic architecture has remained intact). Since the end of communism, Prague has become a favorite tourist destination for many Europeans, so you might find it extremely crowded during the weekends in July and August. The best way to reach it is to travel to Bratislava and then take a bus or train from there (a journey of 4-6 hours).

Preparing for Your Trip

Finding a Flight

Buy your ticket as early as possible, as prices tend to increase rapidly. Sharing information on cheap flights with your fellow volunteers is also helpful! Though there are probably as many sites as there are flights you can take, some good places to start looking for cheap student flights include:

kayak.com

studentuniverse.com

statravel.com

discountfares.com

ba.co.uk

virginatlatnic.co.uk

hotwire.com

Passports & Visas (if applicable)

Everyone must have a valid passport to travel. If you do not have a passport, start the process now. They may take a while to process. For most travel abroad, your passport must be valid for at least 3 months after your travels.

*For citizens of the US and UK, there is no travel visa needed for Hungary and Slovakia.

If you are not a US or UK citizen, please let us know ASAP, since you may need a visa to travel. Each volunteer is responsible for researching and obtaining their own visa. Learning Enterprises can supply any additional documents. Some places to start research include:

Continental Airlines online database tells you all documents required for traveling into any country with a passport from any country (<https://www.continental.com/web/enUS/apps/travel/passport/default.aspx>).

For European Programs, the following website tells you all the visas you need to enter any European country (<http://www.travelvisas.eu/>).

You should also be able to find most visa information on your consulate, ministry of foreign affairs, or embassy websites.

Health & Safety

Vaccinations

Even if there are no implications regarding special shots or vaccines for your region, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are up to date on all of your normal shots and vaccinations (measles/hep B/hep A/typhoid/rabies/etc.) It is important for volunteers to see a health care provider, according the CDC, 4-6 weeks before their trip in order to be administered appropriate vaccines. One of the easiest ways to obtain all your shots is to visit a travel clinic. Most universities have these in their health facility. You can also see your primary care doctor.

Prescription Medications

Bring all of your prescription medications for the summer. It will be difficult to obtain any refills. We suggest that you ask your physician to prescribe a dosage of antibiotics ahead of time. Not all doctors will comply, but try to explain that you will be going somewhere where pharmacies are not as easy to come by and where medicine brands may be unfamiliar. "Zithromax" is one, a common non-penicillin antibiotic that treats ear infections, strep throat, tonsillitis & other bacterial infections. While very few volunteers get sick within country, it is important to come prepared. Ask for an over the counter or prescription version of traveler's diarrhea meds. Cipro is one of the strongest and most common.

For additional information, consult the Center for Disease Control website (wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/) and State Department Travel website (state.travel.gov).

Hungary: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationHungary.aspx>

Slovakia: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationSlovakia.aspx>

Insurance

Learning Enterprises requires that all participants have valid insurance coverage that will cover them while in country. Check your existing plans (ask your parents or call your insurance company) and many of you will find that you already have international travel insurance - or at least an international coverage policy called "airlift", or "international evacuation coverage." Basically, this policy means that you are covered should something serious happen to you and you need to be flown either back to the US or to a nearby hospital facility in your volunteer region. If you do not have international coverage a good, temporary travel insurance is STA international student travelers insurance (www.statravel.com) or CISI international student travelers insurance, though feel free to shop around. Most importantly, we don't want to see anyone stuck in a situation where they have no way of covering medical treatment. Be smart - get an international insurance plan. Let us know if you have any problems and we'll be happy to provide whatever advice and answers we can.

However it is not uncommon to be in a medical situation where you cannot activate your insurance coverage at the time of treatment. Have an extra \$500-1000 (£250-500) available to you in a checking (current) account, or a credit card which you can put expenses on even if you don't have the money, in case of emergency. Often when you are treated for any illness or injury abroad, you cannot be reimbursed immediately with your insurance coverage. So what you can do is pay for these treatments yourself, always get a receipt, and then most insurance companies will reimburse you for the charges when you mail your receipt.

Communication

The easiest way to keep in touch with people is through email. Most local pubs have internet available free of charge. Some families may have internet connection in their home. If you want to call, international calling cards are the easiest. If you plan on purchasing a calling card, make sure to purchase enough minutes while you are in Budapest. In the closest large town in Slovakia, Komarno, as well as other small cities, it is difficult to find calling cards. Most host families will have landlines, which they may offer, and payphones are easily accessible.

Cell Phones

Learning Enterprises *strongly suggests* that volunteers acquire and maintain a cell phone while in country. As a volunteer it is **your prerogative** to obtain and maintain such resources and **your responsibility** to communicate your contact information to your parents and to LE. Your Program Director can provide guidance about how and where to acquire a cell phone, and you will receive email notifications asking you to share your contact information with LE. We strongly encourage you to take these steps. Learning Enterprises is **not** responsible for knowing how to reach you at all times and/or communicating this information to your parents. The **ONLY** way for you to facilitate such communications is to acquire and maintain a cell/mobile phone and be diligent about sharing your contact information.

Packing List

Clothes:

Let's Go has an excellent piece of advice: lay out only what you absolutely need, and then take half the clothes. Simplicity is key. Take the kinds of clothes that you would be comfortable wearing for days on end: basic pants, t-shirts, and shorts. Do not take anything fancy or anything that is not compact and easy to wash in a sink.

- The basics: a sweatshirt, five or six t-shirts, a couple pairs of shorts, and a pair of pants/trousers, socks, underwear, and pajamas.
- A pair of shoes to wear every day. Make sure that you have shoes that are sturdy and comfortable enough for sightseeing and walks around your village.
- A somewhat nice outfit (a button-down shirt to go with your pants for the guys, a skirt for the girls). You might have a formal occasion in the village. You do not need anything super dressy – anything nicer than a t-shirt will do. You also might want to take a pair of nicer shoes.
- A set of going out clothes.
- A light raincoat.
- A swimsuit
- Bring one towel for showering, and, if you are planning on significant beach/pool time, it might be nice to bring a beach towel as well.
- A pair of flip-flops.

Hygiene/Medical Items:

Keep in mind that most brands available at American pharmacy (like your local CVS or Walgreens) are also available in country, at least in the larger cities. Unless you have a very strong attachment to a specific kind of shampoo only sold at the salon near your grandmother's house, you do not have to (and should not) bring a supply of toiletries for the entire summer. Sample sizes will last you through orientation, and afterwards you can stock up at local stores; your host family will be able to tell you where you can shop.

- Toothbrush & toothpaste

- Razor & shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Shampoo, conditioner, soap.
- Hand sanitizer
- A roll of toilet paper or pack of tissues for public restrooms. (Do not assume that toilet paper will be there!)
- Feminine Products (Tampons can be hard to find)
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent!!!
- Glasses, contact lenses, contact lens solution (as well as a copy of your prescription)

You should also put together a basic first aid kit that includes the following:

- Aspirin/Advil/Tylenol
- Neosporin
- Band Aids
- Dayquil
- Tums
- Diarrhea or upset-stomach medication
- Allergy medication
- Prescription medications (see Health & Safety)

Teaching Material:

Paper is really the only material you can count on having. It is possible that your villages will have other supplies, but you should not count on it. We will take a trip to get basic teaching supplies in Budapest, but anything more specific to teaching will need to be brought from home (i.e Flash cards) Here is what we recommend:

- Notebook (for lesson plans and other notes)
- Index Cards: easy to pack and very versatile
- Tape
- Markers and/or crayons.

- Map of the world and/or the United States (UK) • Ball and/or Frisbee (or something else to throw). Do not bring a soccer ball (football); there will be at least one in every village!
- Something small to give away as prizes.
- Anything else from the local dollar store (the pound shop) or CVS that is fun, not bulky, and can be used in a lesson.
- Magazines from the U.S. (UK). Try to get „younger“ magazines with pictures of celebrities (Tiger Beat, Teen People, etc.). Of all the items on this list, you will probably get the most mileage out of these.
- Photos from home. These can be used in class and can be shared with people in the village and with your host family. (This is an essential- host family’s look forward to learning about where you are from!)
- Read over the teaching manual and see if any of the games/activities you would like to do require additional materials.

General Items

- A small, school-sized backpack: This is nice for carrying teaching supplies and when traveling.
- A small umbrella.
- A journal
- Gifts for your host families. (Remember that you have two host families!) Nothing shows gratitude better than a small gift, especially if it says something about who you are or where you are from. People LOVE stuff from the US (UK), especially if it is specific to your hometown or region, i.e. books with photographs, calendars, t-shirts, etc.
- (optional) Electronic voltage converter and plug (optional). If you want to operate anything electronic, you will need a converter. Outlets in Europe have a different style of plug and operate on a different voltage. Get one before you leave, as they are very hard to find once in Europe.
- (optional) A camera. You will want to record all of your wonderful memories from this summer! If you have a film camera, try to buy all your film in the States (UK). It is a lot cheaper, especially if you buy it in bulk. If you have a digital camera, make sure that your memory card has enough memory.
- (optional) A small travel pillow for traveling.
- (optional) A guidebook: The Lonely Planet, or Let’s Go are good options.
- (optional) A travel-sized dictionary/phrase book (if you can find one)

Documents

- Passport

- Student ID: Good for occasional discounts. If you have an ISIC (International Student Identity Card), bring it. If not, do not get it unless you have to. It is also possible to get one abroad if you find that you do indeed need one.
- Your Insurance Card
- Itineraries: Make sure to print all of your itineraries, especially the hostel information.
- Make sure that your parents have copies of all the documents that you plan to take with you (in case they're lost or stolen). You should also have copies for yourself that travel with you in case the originals are lost or stolen. It is especially important to travel with a copy of your passport. If you can scan them and email them to yourself, you will always have a copy easily accessible.

Things Not To Bring

DO NOT pack valuables. While danger of robbery exists in all countries, it can be particularly prevalent in poorer areas. Danger varies from country to country, but please do not bring anything on any LE program that you would be devastated to lose or damage. You should not bring expensive jewelry or valuable clothing. If you decide to bring a laptop, you should back up all your photos, work, and music before leaving.

Money and Banking

- Do not bring traveler's checks! They are hard to cash (especially if you are outside of major metropolitan areas), and most places will charge you exorbitant fees to cash them.
- The best way to get local currency is through ATMs. You may be charged a fee of \$1 to \$5 (~£2) per transaction, but the exchange rate is much better than what you would get from a currency exchange booth.
- Because of increased concerns of identity theft, many banks and credit card companies have begun to put a hold on ATM and credit cards, respectively, when they are used outside of their normal areas. Thus, alert your bank and credit card company of the dates you will be traveling and your destinations.
- It is a good idea to bring some cash as well (~\$100/ £50). This can be your emergency back up money. If you get in a pinch, most people are willing to take dollars (pounds) instead of the local currency. Make sure the bills (notes) are not torn, dirty, etc., or people won't take them. You might also want to buy a money belt from a travel store/agency in order to carry around some backup cash.
- Plan on spending at least \$200 (£ 75) at orientation.
- Hungary's currency is the Hungarian Forint. Slovakia adopted the Euro in 2009.

The current conversion rate (as of 10/16/13)

1 US \$ = 242.07 HUF

1 EUR = 307.6 HUF

1 GBP = 385.07 HUF

HUF- Hungarian Forint

EUR - Euro

GBP- Great Britain Pound

· For prices of everyday items in Hungary and Slovakia, visit:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/hungary/money-and-costs>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/slovakia/money-and-costs?a=costs>

Additionally, have \$500-1000 (£250-500) personal emergency funds available during program. If you don't have this kind of money, we encourage you to get a credit card for emergencies only. If you get caught in an emergency, it is better to have means to buy ticket out (and deal with the costs when you get home) than be stuck in country.

Additional Readings/Links

History:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Hungary

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Slovakia

Health: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Security Concerns:

<http://www.state.gov/>