

Casa Campesina (Country House) in Latacunga, Ecuador.

1. The Country House in Latacunga

The *Country House* is located in the center of the small town of Latacunga (60,000 inhabitants), on the Ecuadorian Andes, in the area of La Sierra (a high plateau between two mountain ranges), at 2,800 meters, with a constant climate during the whole year.

The first goal of the House is to host peasants, aborigines, and poor people in the night, who would otherwise spend the night in the open air. Around 45 people are being hosted per night. They are offered a snack before going to bed, and we pray with them. They are also given specific instructions about the regulations in the House.

During the day medical assistance is provided, as well as dentistry, medical check-ups and legal counseling to the poor living both in the countryside as well as those living in the same town.

The building is a four-story one. There's a huge hall downstairs that can hold around 250 people as well as a warehouse. On the first floor the medical hall is located, a waiting room, the diner, the kitchen, restrooms, laboratories for medical check-ups, an office for the lawyer and a waiting room. On the second floor the rooms for men are located (for 20 to 30 people), in addition to the room for the night guard, restrooms, the director's office, dentistry, the women's room (20 positions) and a classroom. On the last floor-attic there are rooms for the people who take part in the courses, as well as for the volunteers who work in the House. These rooms can hold up to 30 people per night. There is also a small room where the Marianist Fraternity of Latacunga gets together.

2. The Marianist Community

The Society of Mary (Marianists) has initiated this work, has built the house and directs it. The House is a property of the Diocese, which the very same Marianist brothers respond to. They are, therefore, the first and last responsible for the activities in the House before the Diocese, and before the society in Latacunga. The Marianist community is currently made up of two Brothers and two Priests, Spanish and Italian, who reside in the *Country House*.

3. The Volunteers

We wish for the volunteers to be people moved by a real evangelic spirit who are willing to offer a period of their lives to service of the poorest, aware that they will get much more than what they will give. These volunteers, preferably with a Marianist background, will be associated with the Marianist Community in Latacunga and will respond to them.

The Marianist Community will provide volunteers with accommodations in the Country House, and also food if necessary, and will be legally liable for the volunteers if necessary during their stay in Ecuador. The travel expenses, personal expenses and medical insurance will be covered by the volunteers.

The responsibilities of the volunteers mainly consist in assisting and organizing the different activities in the Country House, and to cooperate with the staff in the House, according to the volunteer's skills and capacities. In this sense it is essential to handle elementary to intermediate Spanish speaking skills in the case of foreign volunteers.

The term of service as a volunteer should preferably last a year, although the volunteer is to be willing to accept a shorter period, depending on the circumstances.

Previous Connections

The Marianists working in Ecuador respond to the Marianist Region of Colombia and Ecuador of the Society of Mary.

Prospective volunteers, or the organization sponsoring them, should contact the Regional Superior and the Marianists in Latacunga. If prospective volunteers are *Lay Marianists* (members of the MLC), they should also contact the Coordinator of the *Marianist International Volunteers* Program.

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