



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS  CAPE TOWN 2018

Newsletter No. 5  
July 2018

Hello everyone,

Three weeks to go!

The last couple of weeks have been very busy—the folks at Amandla have been working non-stop to help us set up our projects. (*Thank you Scott and Taona and the rest of your team!*) I know that the lack of detailed information has at times been frustrating for some of you, especially those who've been on prior trips where project planning happened much earlier in the process. As mentioned previously, the change of leadership at the school district—where so many of our projects are centered—really dealt a blow to our timeline. And the Philippi schools are still on winter break (they return on July 17), so access to people and buildings has been touch-and-go. Nevertheless, things are starting to come together, and I am confident all will be well by the time we get to Cape Town.

This is perhaps our first example of some of the cultural differences between the US and South Africa. More than once it's been pointed out to me that while everyone in Philippi is excited at the prospect of our visit and enthusiastic about working with us, their attitude tends to lean more to "Tell them to come and we'll figure it out when they get here" rather than the American (and especially Yalie!) feeling of "We've got to nail down all the details ahead of time!"

As Zach Porterfield, co-lead of the Children's Health project, recently told some of the people on that team:

*One of the nuances of working in South Africa is that it is occasionally tricky to get concrete logistical details well in advance. I have run large-scale projects there for many years and things always do come together. It is almost a universal truth of working in South Africa that they pull things together in really remarkable ways, but it can happen by a process that is unfamiliar and sometimes a bit laissez faire for Yalies.*

So, I thank all of you for embracing this unfamiliar process. And remember—patience and flexibility will be our watchwords throughout the week!

## **A word about weather**

That word is...unpredictable. Remember, it's winter there. It can get cold (lows in the 40's). But it can also get warm (highs in the 70's). Sometimes on the same day. So, dress in layers. And be prepared for rain. The drought is not over, but it is now the rainy season and Cape Town has already had a number of massive downpours. Unlike some previous YASC trips to rural areas, mud shouldn't be that much of an issue in Philippi, but roads and pathways could become flooded. As your mother used to say: "Don't forget your galoshes" (or at least some shoes that can withstand getting wet).

## **Don't be turned away at the gate**

Step away from your phone or computer right now and go *make sure your passport hasn't expired* (and won't until at least 30 days after you plan to leave South Africa) and that you have *two blank pages* available for stamping.

If you're traveling with minors, you should have received a separate email from me regarding South Africa's special entry requirements for kids, especially those traveling with only one parent. *If you somehow got left off that distribution list, contact me immediately.*

## **Getting to the hotel**

For everyone arriving on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup>, we will have a bus available to take you from the airport to the hotel. The shuttle schedule will be circulated to you soon. We plan to run a number of shuttles that day, but because of the large number of flights people are taking, you might have to wait for a flight or two to come in after yours before the bus leaves. Anyone who doesn't want to wait for the bus is free to take a taxi or Uber to the hotel on your own (and at your own expense).

After you arrive and clear customs, look for our representatives from Spirit of Africa—Tour Manager Peter Veerapen and Assistant Tour Manager Sbusiso Nkosi—who will be holding a sign with the YASC logo on it. Peter and Sbusiso will be taking care of our group throughout our time in Cape Town. They will show you the way to the bus where you'll be able to stow your luggage until the bus leaves for the hotel. If you run into any problems, you can contact either one on their cell phones:

Peter: +27 271 6610  
Sbusiso: +27 73 999 2562

For everyone else who is arriving on a different day, it's up to you to make your own way to the hotel. Check-in time is 2:00 pm. The address and other information about the hotel can be found here: <https://www.vineyard.co.za/contact-us/>

## **A few packing tips**

Feel free to dress casually for the duration of our trip. On the last night we will have a closing celebration and some people like to dress up a bit for that. And don't forget to bring any costumes you might need for your Talent Show act!

All your meals and transportation have already been paid for, but you may want a little cash to spend on personal items, souvenirs, and the like. There is really no need to obtain South African rand before you arrive. There are ATMs at the airport and within walking distance of the hotel. Any additional expenses charged to your room at the hotel can be paid using a credit card.

The hotel does have a Fitness Center (actually a "Fitness Centre"), so bring your fitness gear (or "kit" if we're going to be linguistically consistent) if you'd like to work out on those mornings when jet lag gets you up well before breakfast.

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, you can purchase a SIM card for your phone if you'd like to have cell service while in Cape Town. The hotel also has wi-fi.

Otherwise, pack as you would for any international trip. And don't forget your passport!

## **What's happening!**

Finally, if you'd like to immerse yourself in what's going on in South Africa, Scott at Amandla recommends the Daily Maverick. You can check it out on-line at:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za>

or you can sign up for their daily email newsletter here:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/about/newsletter>

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Watch your in-box for airport shuttle details and more in the coming weeks.

See you soon.

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