

RWANDA YOUTH MISSION: July 7 – 18, 2025

North Shore United Methodist Church will sponsor a youth mission from July 7 – 18, 2025 to the *Art with a Mission* orphanage in Kigali, Rwanda. Palesa Ramohlouane is leading the mission team which will consist of approximately 15 volunteers including teens and several adults.

Travel to Rwanda: Please note that the US State Department assesses travel to Rwanda as **safe**, advising travelers only to exercise normal precautions.

Art with a Mission was started in 2008 by Mukotanyi Mussa, himself an orphan, who found in his artwork the strength and hope that enabled him to survive the hardships of his childhood. Mussa's goal for the 50 orphans and street children who have a safe and caring home at *Art with a Mission* is that they will discover their talents and improve their lives through art.

NSUMC first learned about *Art with a Mission* in 2022, and since then our youth have enthusiastically embraced fundraising to support their Rwandan peers in need. The funds raised have assisted with basic needs in addition to art supplies and other educational necessities.

Palesa envisioned something greater for NSUMC's relationship with Mussa and *Art with a Mission* – an opportunity for the church youth to meet their Rwandan peers, and to carry with them donations not only for producing artwork but also to provide clothing, routine first aid and health care. The youth would live, work, eat and play together, develop friendships possibly for life, and greatly benefit from experiencing a culture vastly different from their own. The idea for the Rwanda Youth Mission was born.

Since Fall of 2023, Palesa has met monthly via Zoom with Mussa and his two colleagues to develop plans for the mission.

Mission Details

Mission Fee: \$2000. The fee covers all expenses of the mission-- roundtrip airfare, travel insurance for the group, accommodations in Kigali, all meals and snacks, local travel in Kigali, a cot for sleeping, & materials for mission projects. **Please note.** Fundraising & donations will provide “scholarships” for participants based upon need. Scholarship details will be provided at a later date.

The fee does not cover meals or snacks on the two travel days (July 7 & July 18), or individual purchases of souvenirs.

Airfare: We expect the airfare to/from Kigali to be between \$1600-\$1800.

Accommodations in Rigali. Although the orphanage will be the daily “headquarters” for most of the activities and projects, there is not sufficient space for the team to sleep there. Several options are available and one will be selected after a site visit early in 2025.

Meals/Food in Rigali: Noncedo Mlandu will be chief planner, shopper, and cook. Mission participants will assist with preparation as appropriate and will share in cleanup tasks. We will purchase bottled water for the team's hydration and teeth brushing, etc.

Projects and Activities: Several joint art projects are planned including a mural. A gardening project is also planned. Youths will learn songs, games, dances and languages from each other. We anticipate that activities will develop spontaneously and informally as the youths get to know each other.

Community Service Credit. Mission participants will receive Community Service credit that will count toward the credit needed for high school graduation.

TRAVEL INFORMATION (Passport Info & Immunizations, etc.)

Requirements for Entry into Rwanda:

- U.S. passports must be valid for six months after the date of entry into Rwanda.
- Obtain a 30-day Rwandan tourist visa through the Rwandan Embassy in New York City. Travelers can apply for a Rwanda e-visa online without visiting the Embassy. The fee is \$69. An e-visa, which is an electronic document permit, can be obtained within a couple of days. Print it yourself. Google *Rwanda visa* to start the process.

No immunizations are required for travelers entering Rwanda from the United States. Certain boosters/vaccines are recommended. Check with your primary doctor.

Specific Passport Information for youths

Apply for a Child Under 16

- Both parents or guardians must approve that we can issue a passport to a child, and go with the child to apply in person.
- If one or both parents or guardians cannot apply with their child, you will need to show us more documents.
- You cannot renew your child's passport using Form DS-82.
- Passports for children under age 16 are only valid for 5 years.

Apply as a 16 or 17 Year Old

- Most applicants who are age 16-17 must apply in person using Form DS-11.
- Passports for applicants 16 and older are valid for 10 years.
- You must show that one legal parent or guardian is aware you are applying.

HEALTH

Use CDC-recommended mosquito repellents and sleep under insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets. An **anti-malarial** drug to prevent malaria is recommended for all travelers even for short stays. We will follow the CDC guidelines on [Choosing a Drug to Prevent Malaria](#).

COVID-19 Information

At present, CDC regulations do not require proof of vaccination of US citizens entering Rwanda. Closer to the time of our travel in July 2025, we will check the CDC guidelines and Rwanda Immigration regulations regarding Covid. PCR and/or antigen tests are available in Rwanda and so are vaccines.

Medical Insurance: Make sure your health insurance plan provides coverage overseas. Most care providers overseas only accept cash payments. For our group we will purchase a supplementary travel assurance with benefits for medical emergency.

Prescription medication.

Always carry your prescription medication in original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription. The U.S. Embassy maintains a [list of doctors and hospitals](#). We do not endorse or recommend any specific medical provider or clinic.

Health Facilities in General:

- Adequate health facilities are available in Kigali. We have information about Clinics and pharmacies that are located near the orphanage.
- English is widely spoken in Rwanda, especially in Kigali.

Other Useful Information for traveling to Rwanda.

Photography: Don't take photographs of individuals without asking permission. Photographing military sites, government buildings, airports, and public monuments is strictly prohibited.

Currency: The Rwandan franc (RWF) is the official currency, though U.S. dollars may also be used. Most vendors and banks will only accept U.S. bills printed after 2009, and exchange bureaus and hotels may refuse bills smaller than \$100.

Plastic shopping and grocery bags are banned and may be confiscated upon arrival.

We will provide more information about Rwanda history, culture, and customs to the all team members who will be traveling to Rwanda.

U.S. Embassy Kigali

30 KG 7 Avenue
Kigali, Rwanda

Telephone: +250-252-596-400-7000 (Monday through Thursday, 8:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)

Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +250-252-596-400, and dial 1

Fax: +250-252-596-591

Emails:American Citizen Services: ACSKigali@state.gov

We will follow these state department suggestions:

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive Alerts and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Follow the Department of State on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Review the [Country Security Report](#) for Rwanda.
- Prepare a contingency plan for emergency situations. Review the [Traveler's Checklist](#).
- Visit the CDC page for the latest [Travel Health Information](#) related to your travel.

..