



What Happens Now?

Step 1

We will wait for you to respond to the email providing us with:

1. An up to date Curriculum Vitae/Resume which should contain your current and past level of experience of working with children with congenital and acquired heart disease.
2. A copy of your professional license or your professional identification number for online verification of practice.
3. A scanned copy of your passport (Photo page)
4. Details of any foreign languages that you speak or read and write.
5. Departure airport for travel.
6. Dates that you will be free to travel in the next 12 months. (Please check the website when choosing your dates so that we can match you to a trip)

Once we have received your documents the Cardiac Alliance clinician responsible for your specialty will review them. There may be some additional clarification required on your experience or references may be asked for. After we have reviewed your documents we will write back to you.

You will be placed on the active volunteer list if your level of experience is suitable for a Cardiac Alliance project. Cardiac Alliance is an educational charity and we assist hospitals to build cardiac surgery programs. This means that you will need to be able to support and teach a peer from the local team to do the work necessary rather than just always doing it yourself. We will also require that you can adapt to the local team's practices and be ready to provide an evidence base to change clinical practice when necessary. It can be very difficult for the local team to accept change, even though they have asked us to come and help so a degree of diplomacy will also be an asset - forming good working relationships with the local team will be essential to the success of every Cardiac Alliance project.

STEP 2

After you're your documents have been reviewed we will place you on the active volunteer list. When we are building a team for a mission trip we take several factors into account:

1. We like to have a mix of team members from those who have travelled with us before, and those who are new to Cardiac Alliance, and an appropriate mix of experience and skills - this may be dictated by the particular needs of the center, or the case-mix we are expecting to do at that center.

2. Repeat volunteers to a same center are sometimes prioritised as this helps continuity and builds on the work already done (providing they, and you, had a good and effective experience). We do understand that many staff like to "see the world" and travel to different sites, however, the local team will usually ask "when are you coming again" and they are flattered when you want to visit again. The local team will benefit from at least part of the Cardiac Alliance team being able to provide consistency and you will be more effective on a second visit to the same site. Returning as a volunteer to the same site over several years will allow you to see the growth in the local team that we all strive for.

3. As a general rule we like to mix teams and usually do not put teams together where 100% of the team is from a single center, or even from the same country - we feel that this facilitates compromise and adaptation and encourages a dialogue about clinical decisions which improves the learning experience for the local team. It will also aid in finding solutions to the problems you may face, together with the local team, which are based on the resources and expertise available to you in the environment you will be working in. You will find that you will also learn a lot about how things are done in different places as we often have volunteers from 7 different countries on the same team.


4. Language skills appropriate to the center visited – Communication with the local team is improved by taking volunteers who speak the language of the site we are visiting. We are often provided with translators to assist in the teaching however, any level of local language ability is always appreciated; it improves our effectiveness, and is greeted with enthusiasm and gratitude by most centers. This does not mean we expect you all to be able to do this, but we will try to take at least one or two team members with such skills.

5. Volunteer location and cost of airline ticket- often our budget for travel is quite tight so choosing volunteers whose flight will cost the least is a necessary concession we have to make. Occasionally visa eligibility for the country visited (or transited through) - has to be considered as well though these are problems that we are generally able to overcome with enough time and if we know about them in advance.



We will write back to you at this stage to confirm we have received and reviewed your documents. In the unlikely event that we decide not to accept you as a volunteer we will write back to you and let you know why. We will then have you on the active volunteer list and we may allocate you to a trip at this point, or not, depending on our current schedule, we try to plan the volunteer allocation 3-6 months in advance of the trip. You may receive emails when you have been placed on the active volunteer list if looking for additional volunteers for a particular trip at short notice and if you can go please email us back.

Step 3

You will be allocated to a trip and we will write to you to reconfirm your availability. Each mission trip is 2 weeks long and we prefer to take volunteers who can commit to the whole time as it will provide the right level of cover in the clinical areas and this helps you bond as



a volunteer team when you all arrive and leave together. You will receive the site specific information about 1 month before you depart and this will tell you a little bit about the hospital and country that you are going to. Sometimes you will receive a patient list and a list of requested supplies at this point to and you will be given contact email addresses for the other team members too. Cardiac Alliance will pay for your flight and accommodation and we ask that you check and pay for any visa requirements that may be necessary for you to enter the host country.