



The Potter's School (TPS) is dedicated to providing the homeschool community with courses that combine a high-quality Bible-centered curriculum with effective feedback and evaluation. These courses are just part of the larger purpose of TPS, which is to strengthen and equip families in serving God together, and in raising children who love God, fear Him, and remember His works. Toward this end, TPS is involved in endeavors beyond the classroom that contribute to this purpose.

The Thailand & Laos trip is one of several foreign service trips TPS offers every year. This trip is approximately two weeks long, and has three primary components:

Develop Understanding of Buddhist Religion and Asian Culture. Laos is an underdeveloped country, with one of the few remaining communist governments and is culturally opposed and legally prohibitive of the Christian Gospel. Its rich history and culture date back to the 14th century, and include over 50 years under French rule, yet Laos remains years in the past in areas ranging from technology to human rights. Laotian culture is inextricably linked to Buddhism, animism, and ancestor worship, meaning that turning to Christianity is tantamount to denouncing one's heritage, family, and ethnicity. Those who choose to practice Christianity risk expulsion from their family and village — and even physical coercion and harm — to motivate their return to their ancestral and cultural beliefs. Lao religion and culture are representative of typical beliefs throughout rural SE Asia, so this trip provides a great opportunity to understand some of the challenges and joys of reaching the vast number of rural people throughout SE Asia. Explore this area of the world, rich in culture and history, and spend time among the people, experiencing life and faith in a third-world country where the inhabitants are largely un-reached with the Gospel.

Teach and Lead Children through a VBS-style Program. Families who choose to live and minister in this region of the world must surrender aspects of their freedom, along with many creature-comforts, to be effective in their ministries. These families rarely have the opportunity to gather together and share their joys and trials, hopes and fears, challenges and successes, and be encouraged, equipped, and enriched. The TPS team will help support these endeavors by providing the children's program for over 100 children in attendance, including leading the children in games, crafts, object lessons, and other activities.

Serve Alongside the Servants. The final component of this trip requires the team to enter into Laos; a country that, in many ways, feels like stepping back in time by 30 years. There the team will work with a few different organizations that are well-established in Laos and doing important work in that region.

I'm sold! So when do we leave? The approximate dates of the trip are 10/11/2016 to 10/26/2016.

Who can go? Students ages 14 and up, siblings, friends, parents, and teachers. All interested participants must apply and be accepted. We are happy to consider applications from alumni and college students on a case-by-case basis. Please keep in mind that students must have the maturity to follow the guidance and instruction of TPS leadership on any sensitive topics pertaining to our team or others in this closed country.

(Continued below.)

How does the travel work? Participants must have a valid passport and make their own flight reservations to and from the Washington, DC point of origin. We cannot allow a student to travel overseas unaccompanied to meet our group (families living overseas should contact us directly to discuss options). Participants will be required to arrive in DC the day before we depart for overseas. We will arrange all airport pickups, overnight housing, and meals in the DC area prior to departure and when we return.

How much money do I have to raise or donate to participate? For the Laos trip, the fundraising requirement is approximately \$2,200 per participant (this amount could vary up or down based on final costs). As part of this trip, plane tickets from the US, all food and lodging, all visas, and all ministry and touring costs are covered. The total balance for this trip is not due until December 2016, and at that time participants may request a payment plan, so there is plenty of time for participants to meet their fundraising goal.

How does raising funds and collecting donations work? We encourage participants to raise support from their church, family, and friends. TPS is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and can provide all donors with receipts for their tax-deductible donation. All trip participants will be provided with a template letter they can send to potential supporters detailing the trip, ministry, and support needs, as well as donation instructions.

What expenses should I expect to pay personally? The individual is responsible for any costs related to obtaining a valid passport, travel to and from the Washington, DC point-of-origin, luggage and travel necessities, elective vaccinations, and personal spending money. (Travel to and from the point-of-origin may be reimbursed if additional funds are raised.)

Are you an MK who's family is serving outside your passport country?

Take a look at our scholarship opportunity on page 3 of this document! You could receive a scholarship for up to half of the cost of your trip!

What can I expect during an average day on the trip? The team will be involved in lots of different things over the course of their time in Thailand and Laos, so there isn't really an "average" day. The trip will begin with 24 to 30 hours of plane travel to arrive in Thailand. Our first day will be set aside to prepare for the first week of ministry and acclimate to the 12-hour time change from US Eastern time. While running the children's program, each TPS participant will be assigned to a classroom of children, where they will execute a schedule of games, crafts, object lessons, dramatizations, and more. During the latter portion of the trip, the team will work alongside ministries in Laos, doing agricultural work, assisting with community outreach projects, aiding a local kindergarten, and more. In the evenings, the TPS team will have opportunities to participate in traditional cultural celebrations, observe daily life and activities, and spend time with families in the area. The team will also take a day to explore Vientiane, Laos to understand some of the history of this region and to expand their understanding of what God is doing in this part of the world and how they can be a part of praying for and supporting those in this region.



Questions or Concerns? We know that taking a trip like this is a big deal, and we expect you will have questions. If you're thinking of serving with us, we want to discuss these things with you, answer any questions you have, ease your concerns, and get to know you! We'd be glad to answer an email from you, or arrange a time to speak by phone. Just drop an email to LaosTrip@pottersschool.org.

How do I apply? All interested parties must apply and be accepted (including parents). You can find the application here: <http://www.pottersschool.org/laos-trip-application>. The application requires a reference, so you may want to get working on that soon, even if you're still trying to decide whether this trip is right for you. **Please note that the application is due by 11:59pm ET on 9/9/2016.** All applications should be submitted to LaosTrip@pottersschool.org.

We hope to hear from you and look forward to serving in Thailand & Laos with the team that God brings together!

*Ashley-Rose Dickey, Thomas Eshleman, and Lattany Lamons
Thailand & Laos Trip Leaders, The Potter's School*

Already serving on the field and unable to afford the TPS Thailand trip?

Read below for information on a unique scholarship opportunity!



Background

A generous donor has made it possible for us to offer a couple students a partial scholarship for the TPS Thailand & Laos trip. This scholarship is intended to make it possible for an MK to participate in the TPS Thailand & Laos trip who could not otherwise afford to participate in a TPS service trip. If you are interested in applying for this scholarship, please carefully read the criteria below to determine whether you qualify. If you meet all the qualifications, please follow the instructions for applying for the scholarship.

The amount of the scholarship is 50% of the student's fundraising goal for the trip (*scholarship valued at \$800-\$1,400, depending on which country a student will be traveling from*). The fundraising goal for students meeting the team in Thailand, thereby excluding airfare, must be discussed with the leadership (LaosTrip@pottersschool.org). In these cases, the scholarship will cover half of the participants' fundraising goal and half of their airfare from their country of residence.

Qualifications.

Applicant must be...

- Age 14 to 19 years old.
- A currently-enrolled TPS student in good standing.
- A MK serving with his/her family outside of their passport country in a support-based ministry.
- Unable to afford the cost of the trip, apart from a scholarship such as this one.
- Able to agree to the terms and conditions of the TPS Thailand & Laos application.

Application Process.

1. Write a 300-500 word essay discussing two things:
 - (A) How do you feel that this Thailand & Laos trip would enhance your relationship with God?
 - (B) As a MK who has already experienced a foreign country and culture, why does this trip interest you?
2. Complete the TPS Thailand & Laos application.
3. Submit both the essay and the application, along with your name and the country in which your family is serving, by the application deadline.
4. The student(s) chosen to receive this scholarship will be notified about a week later.

Fine Print.

If the student selected to receive this scholarship declines to participate in the Thailand & Laos trip, the scholarship is forfeited. This scholarship may not be applied to another TPS trip. This scholarship may not be transferred from the recipient to another student. The scholarship recipient is responsible for the remaining balance of the trip costs not covered by the scholarship, and may raise donations to cover the balance. Student recipients of the scholarship must still abide by the rules and regulations of the TPS Thailand & Laos trip. All of the typical rules and regulations applying to fundraising for TPS trips apply to the balance of the student's fundraising goal not covered by the scholarship.