

NAMIBIA

IMMERSION

experience **mission**





What is **IMMERSION?**

IMMERSION is an opportunity for young adults (age 18-30) to step outside of the normal cadence of their lives in order to gain a broader picture of: 1) the world around you, 2) the way God works in that world, and 3) the value of relationships and quality service alongside people whose lives are just as valuable as your own.

Simply put, **IMMERSION** is about focusing on the “how we do it” of international ministry and service rather than just “what we do.” Our central focus is on the importance of **authentic relationships** as the keystone to healthy ministry, and engaging in what it means to truly “love our neighbor” as people of privilege in the 21st century.

Teams spend their time equally split between service opportunities, cultural immersion in the community, and relationship building with community partners and host families. This means there is plenty of space to give your time and attention to others—a necessary part of doing missions well—prioritizing people over the simply seeking out projects to complete.

EM AFRICA *Staff*



Namibia IMMERSION teams serve in Swakopmund and Rehoboth, Namibia alongside local partners, with training and support from EM Africa Directors, **Hein & Helene van Wyk** (with team member and grankids above), and EM Africa support staff, **Danieko & Megan van Wyk** (above right).

The van Wyk's are native Namibians who have lived and served in South Africa for more than 20 years, holding dual citizenship. They have been working with Experience Mission since 2011, since the very beginning of the IMMERSION program, and now also lead trips for two-week mission teams in South Africa and Namibia.



Over the years, Hein and Helene have made incredible partnerships all over Southern Africa.



VOLUNTEER Opportunities

IMMERSSION teams coming to Namibia will serve in one of the two following communities, to be determined by EM Africa staff closer to the start of the trip.

Rehoboth, Namibia

Ministry here may look different from team to team, but it could include working in local schools, partnering with the local church, investing in getting to know host families, and serving at a community center.

Swakopmund, Namibia

Groups here serve alongside a local church by getting involved in their youth ministry and helping fill volunteer spots on Sunday mornings during church services. Teams also serve at a “baby house,” similar to a daycare/preschool, helping their small staff team care for the children, play, and help around the facility. Teams will

also be heavily involved in the local craft market. The market ministry is not structured, but rather takes initiative on the team’s part to find where they want to get plugged in and build relationships.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

In both Swakopmund and Rehoboth, your team will volunteer **Monday through Friday**, with weekends used for debriefing and downtime to relax and be together as a team.

You may or may not attend a weekly church service on Sundays. This will be determined by the EM Africa staff as they solidify your specific trip itinerary.

**Schedule subject to change*





SAFETY

Measures

Safety is a huge priority for the IMMERSION program! We are up to date on all potential **safety concerns** in the countries where teams volunteer and would never send a team to a location where we have active concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Experience Mission local staff and partners are **experienced residents** or welcome guests in the communities you are serving in, and they communicate to all team members the **safest way** to move about during their time on the program. Regular communication is also established between partners, team leaders, and EM U.S. Staff, allowing for quick responses to any emergencies should they arise.

For medical issues, IMMERSION team leaders are **CPR/ First Aid** certified, and carry **trauma medical kits** equipped to deal with a wide range of injuries and ailments.

In the case of a larger emergency, EM staff members will **support team members** by helping them communicate with home and making sure they get to a place to receive care.

Often, local **medical clinics** are a short distance from where team members are staying. However, outside of big cities, large hospitals can often be several hours away by vehicle. Team members would not be left to do this on their own.

To ensure medical care is readily accessible, EM secures **travel medical/ evacuation insurance** for all team members. Participants are also required to come with a **Personal Emergency Fund**—a debit or credit card with \$1,500 available and \$300 of reserve cash—in case they were to have a medical issue requiring upfront payment or need to **travel home** from the program unexpectedly. This amount may seem high, but it's

purely a precaution. Most team members do not touch their emergency funds while on the trip.

Preventatively, during initial training, all team members are encouraged to enroll with **STEP** (Safe Traveler Enrollment Program) through the U.S. State Department. This allows team members and staff to receive official travel alerts if there is an issue in the region including political protests, civil unrest, increased crime, weather alerts, natural disasters, terrorism, or specific threats for foreign travelers.

An **emergency phone line** is also available to all emergency contacts.



HOUSING & Accommodations

In **Rehoboth**, teams stay with local host families. All families are vetted by the local church partner and EM Africa staff. Depending on each team's size and the host family accommodations, participants may be in a host home with another team member or by themselves.

In **Swakopmund**, the team stays together at a local church, where you will prepare your own meals. A fun, unique part of this community is that your main mode of transportation will be bicycles! *(provided by EM Africa)*

