

Dear new staff member,

Greetings! All of us at Dalat are delighted to know you will be joining us shortly and we are remembering to uphold you in prayer through these days of transition. You are a direct answer to our prayers for God's choice of people to become part of the Dalat Staff and we are anxious to welcome you. We want to give you a few ideas of what it will be like at Dalat, and to help you plan for your time here.

What to Pack

In most cases, you can get what you need here. Some prices may be higher, but many will be lower and it will save you the cost and effort of shipping. You may want to consult the school's website for articles on "What to Bring" and "Packing a Crate" (www.dalat.orgmoving.html). These articles are written with the idea of helping people decide what to pack if they are shipping, and helping you know what is available if you don't ship. They are for your information only, not to tell you what to bring.

Language and Location

Penang has three distinct cultures -- Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Many locals understand English as well as their own language so communication is not difficult. Most of us do not know Bahasa Malay (the national language).

Penang Island is a fairly small island about 15 miles north to south and about 10 miles east to west. We are 6 degrees north of the equator and at sea level so it is hot and humid year 'round (getting up to 90 or 95 degrees during the day and down to 75 or 80 degrees at night). When it rains you would think that Heaven's gates have been opened, but we also have a few months that are so dry the grass will turn brown. We are surrounded by the beauty of this tropical resort island.

Your Arrival

Every summer more than half of our staff take an eight-week summer vacation in their home country. That has made a big difference in the break-time activities at Dalat in that fewer folks are around. But some one will be at the airport to greet you and to introduce you to your new home when you arrive. Please ensure we know your itinerary with your flight number and arrival time. If you want to fax it to us, the number is -- 011-60-4-890-2141. My e-mail address is: director@dalat.org

Once you arrive, The Welcoming Committee will help you set up your home, take you on shopping trips, and help you settle in. They will provide you with an array of information from doctor's phone numbers to where to eat. Feel free to contact Trix De Leeuw (tdeleeuw@dalat.org) with any questions you may have after reading this letter.

House Help

Our family schedules here are stretched (especially if coaching and extra-curricular activities are involved). Most teachers hire an "amah" to help with the housework (washing and ironing clothes, washing dishes, washing floors and windows) and to care for their pre-schoolers while they teach. In the dorm, there's an amah that cleans the apartment twice a week. Some dorm parents hire an amah to help watch their kids during their "on" duty hours and help out in the house.

School Year and Holidays

We do not take all the American holidays such as Labor Day or Thanksgiving. We feel that every holiday we take is one more day the boarding kids are away from their families. We take only those holidays that are required nationally.

We do have a long Christmas break (about 6 weeks) and our summer break is 9 weeks long. We run basically the same school year as in the U.S. -- first semester runs from August until December and second semester runs from January to June.

What the School Provides

You don't have to worry about the large furnishings for your home. We will supply accommodation for you that is modestly furnished. The kitchen will be equipped with a stove and refrigerator, your dining room will have a table, chairs and hutch, your living room will have a couch set, and your bedrooms will have beds, dressers, and wardrobes. A washing machine will also be provided.

What you will have to provide will be the dishes, flatware (locally purchased options range from inexpensive to expensive), pots and pans, curtains (you can have these made for you quite inexpensively), and a variety of other household needs.

Electricity and Appliances

Malaysia operates on 240 volt, 50-cycle electricity. Therefore, most of your electrical devices will not work out here unless you use a transformer. Although transformers are available here, we recommend that you purchase your small appliances in Malaysia.

TV's, VCR's and stereos can all be purchased here for reasonable prices. TV's from North America will not work for Malaysian TV -- we use different signals (PAL instead of NTSC).

Driving in Malaysia

It would be helpful to get your International Driver's licenses (AAA). If you have an option on the starting date for your license, have it start after your

arrival in Malaysia. Having an international license will make it easier to get a Malaysian license once you arrive in Penang.

Medication, Doctors, etc.

Some drugs and medications are not available here, but others are available and much cheaper -- it all depends on what you're looking for. You would do well to contact us about specific medications you'll need and we'll let you know if you should bring it with you.

Orthodontic work is much cheaper here and we have good dentists. If you're thinking about getting braces before you come, don't. And don't worry about the medical doctors or hospitals -- the hospitals aren't quite like North America, but they are very good with excellent care and fine doctors. We have some of the best medical facilities in SE Asia.

When you and your children receive your immunizations remember that although some diseases are not prevalent in Malaysia, you will be in close proximity with children whose parents live in Indonesia, Cambodia, and other such places. Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, and Chicken Pox vaccinations are highly recommended.

Important!

Bring in your luggage a copy of your diploma, professional certification, marriage and birth certificates, health records for children to enroll in school, children's school transcripts, and receipts for travel and school-mandated expenses. You will need this paperwork almost immediately.

Tax Information

Malaysia requires that you establish in-country residency every year you work here. The requirement is that you stay in country for either of two sets of predetermined time periods (July 1 - December 31 or January 1 - June 30). During either one of those time periods you may not be out of country for more than two weeks. If you plan to return to your home country (at your own expense) during the summer vacation after your first year, you need to realize you won't be able to leave Penang before July 1. If you do, you will have to pay a high tax fine.

Finally . . .

Hopefully the enclosed lists do not totally overwhelm you. I know there is no way anyone could possibly take into account all of these suggestions, but hopefully they will give you some direction. Tastes differ so you might find some differences with the letter after you get here.

It's exciting to watch and see how the Lord is going to manifest Himself and supply you with all you need -- to your amazement and to His glory. We are praying for you as you meet the responsibilities of moving, of saying good-bye to

your families for a while, and of anticipating this marvelous ministry.

Blessings on you,

Karl Steinkamp
Director