

December 1, 2011

Dear Bement alums, and especially alums from La Suiza,

Last March, we had a very successful Bement alumni trip to La Suiza. We have just received permission from the orphanage to return again this year, and I met with Mr. Fusto today, so I'm now in gear with the planning. I have heard various positive rumblings from students, and now is the time to see if you are serious. How committed are you to returning to La Suiza? There are always challenges in taking on a responsibility like this, but you have learned from personal experience that there are rewards too. Some things to think about:

- We have chosen the second week in March 2011 as the most reasonable time for the trip. We will plan on going March 10 and returning March 16 or 17, but you will be notified about final dates and times when we make our airline reservations.
- We will ask you to submit a paragraph (8-10 sentences) about why you would like to return to La Suiza. I think this formalizes the process and commits you to think about it. Nothing about this process should be taken lightly, as we are really committing ourselves to continuing a Bement tradition and taking on service to another community- which we all know in reality is more of a service to ourselves. However, all our relationships benefit from being handled with the greatest respect for ourselves and others. If you want to seriously consider this trip, please send your paragraph to me at [ctfiller@gmail.com](mailto:ctfiller@gmail.com) by December 10. Include the reasons you'd like to go on this trip and what you foresee as your biggest challenges on this trip.
- In that light, we will ask you, even though you are older, to be willing to stick to the same guidelines you agreed to as a Bement student. That means hours at the orphanage, no changes in school rules. This may seem harsh and unrealistic to you, but above all, we must be sure that Bement will be welcome to return to the orphanage and we don't set inconsistent standards.
- Our ninth grade trip cost \$450 because of your fundraising and school support. This trip would necessarily cost more. I'm planning for \$1100 if you pay a deposit of \$600. by December 20. The balance will be due January 20, 2012. This will cover all expenses except your personal spending money, including airfare from JFK, all transportation in the Dominican Republic, and the food/room donation to the orphanage.
- If you don't make a decision by December 20, the expenses may go up, so plan on \$1200 if you pay the total amount by January 1 instead of our early bird special. Airfare is the rate determining step here.

- Please make out checks to Bement School and sent to Bement- Alumnae trip to the Dominican Republic c/o Colleen Filler. If your parents are in a position to donate money for alumnae who may not be able to afford the trip, please contact me. We would be most grateful for that support.
- You can respond to me personally at my email – [ctfiller@gmail.com](mailto:ctfiller@gmail.com)
- You will be responsible for making sure that your shots are in order and that you have your malaria medication. I just checked the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website (easy to google). Tetanus shots are good for 7-10 years and you should all have had them in seventh grade- but check. The hepatitis A shot has two parts and should be good for 2 or 5 years, depending which one you had. Your other vaccinations (MMR, DPT, Poliovirus) should meet the recommendations, and you are responsible for having any of your personal medications- and your health insurance- in order. It's all a little scary now with the cholera in Haiti in the news. Students who went last year are more familiar with tragic worries, as we traveled just after the earthquake. We will, obviously, take every precaution we can reasonably take.

I do hope you're as excited as I am about the prospect about returning to the orphanage. Start thinking of activities- I do hope we can field some teams! But the most important thing is to think of the joyous times of being there, sharing time with those special kids. It's bound to be more complicated as you're older and know more, but we think that one week continuing these relationships is worth the effort. I hope to hear from you and look forward to this very special reunion.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Teasdale Filler