

Company Profile

Founded by two Philadelphia foreign language teachers in 1969, Cultural Heritage Alliance is the nation's oldest educational tour operator with over four decades of experience serving American teachers and their students.

Year Established: 1969

Worldwide Offices:

CHA's World Headquarters is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the city's historic center, within walking distance of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. CHA's worldwide offices include our European Headquarters in London as well as offices in Paris, Rome, Madrid, Athens and Mexico City.

Company History:

In 1968, CHA's founder, a dedicated high school foreign language teacher from Philadelphia, participated in a tour organized by one of the few student travel companies in existence in the late 1960's. Dissatisfied with the quality of the tour, he returned from this trip convinced that he could improve upon the existing standard of student tours by using more professional, higher-quality services.

To achieve his goal, he launched the Italian Latin Studies Cultural Heritage Alliance along with his wife, another foreign language teacher, in 1969. Eighty students from his high school participated in a tour of Italy he carefully organized himself. The success of this first tour resulted in immediate interest and expansion. Renaming the company Cultural Heritage Alliance, educational tours to other

nations were introduced, and CHA opened European offices to control overseas services. The company's reputation quickly spread as an organization committed to a higher-quality educational tour. Proudly, CHA has grown to become one of the largest, most successful and respected companies of its kind in the U.S. In 2011, CHA celebrates its 42nd year in educational travel.

Business Philosophy:

■ CHA is the oldest American-owned educational tour operator in existence today. Unlike other travel companies in our field, we are not owned by nor are we a subsidiary of a foreign corporation. CHA owns all of its capital assets, which allows us to achieve the highest level of efficiency. CHA's European offices are owned by and are fully controlled by CHA.

■ CHA is truly a "hands-on" company. Family-owned and operated since 1969, we handle every aspect of our business ourselves—from marketing, sales, accounting, customer service and airline reservations to all facets of our overseas operation. Writing and designing our tour catalog; contracting with airlines, hotels and other suppliers; selecting tour directors and local guides and booking all overseas services are just a few of the tasks accomplished solely by CHA staff.

■ To maintain product integrity and the most affordable prices, CHA does not hire tour affiliates (outside tour operators) to handle the operations of our tours. Doing so would result in less control of our product as well as higher prices for our travelers.

■ CHA operates more efficiently by not having complex levels of management requiring large salaries and corporate perks. CHA believes that this type of management structure only places a burden on the company's ability to offer affordable prices. In addition, CHA has never employed U.S. local representatives whose services and commissions would result in increased prices for travelers.

■ CHA does not believe in using high-pressured sales tactics. We respect the intelligence of the

teachers we work with and market our tours based solely on their merits and our travelers' needs. CHA offers "price integrity." We price our tours fairly from the start rather than publishing higher prices with the notion that our group leaders will attempt to negotiate lower prices.

Outstanding Achievements:

■ CHA is the most successful educational tour operator in the U.S. Throughout its history, CHA has taken one million American students and teachers to Europe and other destinations worldwide, more than any other U.S.-owned company in our field. Our volume translates into greater buying power when negotiating with airlines, hotels and other suppliers.

■ CHA works with a wide variety of junior and senior high schools, colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Canada. Each academic year, CHA works with thousands of teachers from over 2,500 school districts.

■ CHA's most outstanding achievement is our unique ability to combine quality and affordability like no other company in our field. We "fill the gap" in the educational travel market by offering prices which compare to those of budget companies and quality equaling and often surpassing that of our higher-priced competitors. This combination of quality and value has become CHA's "formula for success."

■ Among CHA's trendsetting accomplishments is our insistence on using the highest quality services possible while still retaining excellent value. Since 1969, CHA has strived to improve tour services for our student travelers on every level, providing the richest sightseeing, professional tour directors, and three- and four-star hotel accommodations with private bath facilities in each room—services unheard of within the educational travel field until CHA made them standard features. As a result, other companies were compelled to upgrade services to keep pace with CHA's commitment to quality.

Financial Security:

■ Family-owned and operated throughout its history, CHA is a financially sound, responsible company with an impeccable record of payments to suppliers worldwide, an important factor when negotiating lower prices. The CHA name is respected and recognized throughout the world. Additionally, CHA has never believed in renting, leasing, or borrowing money. We have always worked “the old-fashioned way” without the burden of debts and interest payments.

■ CHA is proud to be a member of highly-respected organizations in our industry including the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the International Airlines Travel Agent Network (IATAN), the Better Business Bureau of Eastern PA (BBB), the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA), the International Association of Tour Managers (IATM), and the Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA).

■ All tour payments we receive from passengers are deposited into a special Escrow Account at Wachovia National Bank, one of the nation’s largest and most prestigious financial institutions. Funds from this account are used by CHA exclusively to cover tour-related expenses such as airline tickets, hotels, etc. Only profits earned in previous years are used to pay current operating expenses such as salaries, supplies and telephone costs.

■ CHA has earned the trust of the Airline Reporting Corporation (ARC) in Washington, D.C. by holding their maximum amount of Bond Coverage for the issuance of air tickets. CHA is authorized to issue millions of dollars of tickets on all American and international airlines.

■ All CHA travelers are protected by the finest Liability Insurance available in the field—up to ten million dollars in coverage—assuring you, your school, and your school board greater peace of mind. Additionally, all CHA travelers are automatically covered by up to \$400 in Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance. CHA also offers travelers an extensive optional insurance plan including medical, baggage and other travel assistance services.

Technology:

CHA is committed to the highest level of computerization and automation. Our extensive computer network has been custom-built to meet our company’s specific needs and links directly to our overseas offices, allowing our international office staff immediate access to our U.S. database. CHA is also equipped with Sabre, the travel industry’s premier computer airline reservations system. CHA’s website at www.cha-tours.com allows our clients quicker access to important information about CHA, a complete database of tours and prices, online enrollment and payment services, and online account access to balances, flights, hotels, and more.

Airlines:

All CHA tours include regularly-scheduled flights (not “charters”) on both American and international carriers of the highest quality such as Delta, Continental, United, Lufthansa, American, and Alitalia. Unlike some tour operators who use outside companies to make flight arrangements for their groups, CHA is a fully-licensed retail travel agency. Our in-house transportation department secures all airline arrangements for our passengers, thus assuring greater efficiency and flexibility.

Tour Directors:

CHA tour directors are the most experienced, professional and knowledgeable in the field of educational travel. Because they are native Europeans, they are able to present the countries visited in their proper perspectives. (In cities such as London, Paris and Madrid, many of our tour directors are also licensed as official local city guides, a fact which attests to their in-depth knowledge.)

CHA tour directors have been trained in all aspects of tour conducting. They have passed rigorous examination testing in such subjects as history, art, and geography; speak two or three foreign languages in addition to English; and are able to handle themselves effectively in emergencies. In addition to their extensive,

on-the-job experience, our tour directors have received specialized instruction by CHA to enable them to assist and serve our young travelers. A comparison of the Curriculum Vitae (or resumé) of our tour directors with those used by other student companies would surely attest to CHA’s overall superior experience, knowledge, and training in this area.

Hotels:

Since 1969, CHA’s hotels have set the standard in quality and value in the field of educational travel. Carefully selected by members of our overseas staff, CHA utilizes Superior Tourist Class (three-star) or First Class (four-star) hotels in well-located, safe neighborhoods. All hotel rooms feature private bath facilities. Many companies in our field attempt to justify their higher tour prices by claiming superior hotel quality. In reality, CHA hotels are equivalent and often superior to the hotels used by its higher-priced competitors.

Group Leader Benefits:

CHA offers group leaders an extensive collection of travel benefits in recognition of their recruiting efforts on behalf of CHA as well as to promote a greater knowledge of the countries to be visited on our tours. Combined with our excellent tours and affordable prices, our group leader incentives make CHA the smartest choice in educational travel for teachers and students. ■

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