



Somos Ohana Nicaragua

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Dear Family/ Ohana,

The time we share with our Ohana in Nicaragua we count as *blessings* for all the team. One of our goals is to help individuals & families prosper in their own nation. The outpouring of cooperation for the Day Camp, & witness of leaders working with their communities for the future of education & health care signify *hope becoming reality* .

On the other hand, the severe drought resulted in a failed harvest. Then, the final days of August brought rains, & renewed hope for a harvest before 2015. Mil gracias & blessings to all, Charlotte & Dan

What do you do if you can't swim?

Sing & Dance! Two days before our Day Camp started, the caretaker at the Finca San Ignacio sadly reported that the pool was not available because of the drought. The initial disappointment was alleviated by the outpouring of support from the Martinez Family Quartet, the Angel Flores Students' Band, & the Rancho Pando Folkloric Dance Group. Marching, singing, and dancing was interspersed with sports, manual arts, health education, and a poetry workshop; and delicious lunches & snacks! In addition, we celebrated several birthdays with special cakes, piñatas, or "colored egg hunts" for the smaller children.

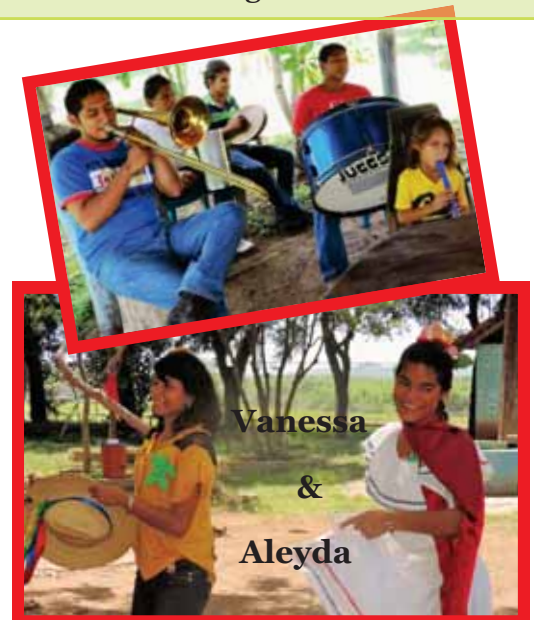
Because many older children with special needs don't go to school, we hoped the poetry workshop would give them an opportunity to express their feelings in a new way. Younger children drew pictures,

while others dictated their thoughts to a volunteer who wrote for them. Below is Israelito's poem, as dictated to his volunteer, Miguel:

*There are 3 dogs in our house:
Playing with the dogs,
they nibble at me!
I play with the "chocoyito",
giving it little kisses.*

*The dogs shoo away the chickens;
at night, I hear the dogs barking."*

Israelito is 9 years old. He lives with his family at the entrance to a main highway where there is a bus stop. Because he is blind, his "abuelo" (grandfather) brings him to camp on their old horse. There is no school for the blind close by, so he recently started classes in the small school of La Platanal. While the Ministry of Education promotes inclusive education for all its citizens, preparing enough teachers for others like Israelito is a persistent challenge.



A New Era for Secondary Education in Villanueva



Ready & Excited about New Learning!

Although the secondary school in Rincon de Garcia introduced 2 computers to their students since 2012, the larger Instituto Nacional de Villanueva, with 800 students, has never had computers for student classes. That changed this year, with a donation of 10 (used) Mac laptop computers donated by the Bertschi School in Seattle, and 7 more (used) Dell laptops from a private donor. Excitement was high as the students thought of the possibilities opening up in front of them!

While we in the U.S. may take computers in schools for granted, they are precious jewels to students in Nicaragua. When we left, Director Carlos Meza was busy accommodating a classroom for the computer lab, and re-arranging the class schedules. Gracias, donors!

Cancer Patients Support One Another

Since 2001, we have provided a Travel Fund for cancer patients who must travel to Managua for their treatments and follow-up care. (The trip takes 4-6 hours by bus each way.)

A year later, we began offering an annual luncheon with supportive care because many of the patients felt isolated in distant communities. Last year, 3 young people died due to childhood cancers, and that affected other young adults who are living with leukemia, even if they are in remission. Having the opportunity to talk with each other in a safe environment helps the healing process, as well as validating their efforts to live a normal life.



Elly, writing her story



Luis and Milagro

Taking a Step to Alleviate an Effect of Drought in the Future



Farmers of Mayocunda

When volunteer John Powley packed his bags for Nicaragua in July, he brought 2# of drought resistant *Leucaena Leucocephala* seeds to help the farmers increase the sources of nutrition for their cattle. It was good timing, as the small ranchers he met in Mayocunda, Rancho Pando, & other villages were acutely concerned about food and water for their families & animals. They were already digging wells into the dry river beds to access sufficient water for the immediate needs of their families & animals. John's only instructions were: 1) Wait until the rains are re-established; 2) Plant the seeds about 4" apart, in a straight line; 3) Protect the young shoots from ruminant animals; and 4) Wait a year before you allow the cattle to graze. Now that the rains have returned, the hope for next year is to preserve the health of their herds, and in effect, their families.

SPOTLIGHT ON A GRADUATING HERO:



Eddy

In December, our scholarship student, Eddy Bellorine Espinosa, will graduate with a degree in Computer Systems Engineering. At his first consult with Jim Kahler (volunteer PT) in 2007, Eddy, who was afflicted by cerebral palsy in infancy, complained of his inability to manipulate a pencil to write words. At that time, he was completing his last year of secondary school, and that disability greatly frustrated him. Jim asked if he could do a simple tapping motion with his index fingers: he **could!** That was the beginning of his awakening to the possibilities of a career in computer technology!

That same week, Kerry and Jackie (2 volunteer students from the University of Massachusetts & Holy Cross College) taught him the basics of computer use, and he was on his way. Along the years, he had to overcome many more challenges at the university: physical, social, educational, and economical; but he faced them all with faith, equanimity, and a “never-give-up” attitude. Congratulations, Eddy! We’re proud of you!

Plans for La Carreta Secondary School Move Ahead, Slowly

Not unlike municipalities in the U.S., plans for the secondary school in La Carreta are “simmering” a long time before becoming a reality. We had expected to start construction of the 6 classroom school during this mission trip (June-August), but upon arrival, the legal process of transferring the deeds to the Ministry of Education was not yet completed. Because the present water source outside the land is not adequate during times of drought, the Office of Mayor Juan Gomez is counting on their Federal Government to drill a well nearby, and to add pipelines to the land dedicated to the secondary school. Only then can Somos Ohana Nicaragua start construction, working with our partners: Amigos for Christ, and the affected communities.

Our updated plan is to build 2 pavilions (the basic 6 classrooms with bathrooms) in 2015. Each pavilion with 3 classrooms will cost approximately \$54,000. We only have enough for 1 pavilion at present. If you understand the value of an education beyond 6th grade (primary school), please help us make this dream become a reality for 172+ students who now are squeezed into a nearby primary school on Sundays. One of the hard lessons of the long drought they experienced this year is that not all the population of rural areas can survive on farming alone, even in the best of times. Completing the secondary level of education, including learning to use computers, opens up more employment opportunities in related businesses, and serves as basic preparation for university studies.



Assembly of Secondary Students on Sunday

**Plan,
Pray,
&
Work.**



Meeting of Community Leaders

on the Land

Somos Ohana Nicaragua

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Somos Ohana Nicaragua is an all volunteer organization called to cooperate with groups or individuals seeking to improve their lives. *If you would like to become involved as a volunteer, please write us at Flav1@hawaiiintel.net, or call 808-572-9898.*

Help us Build the School in La Carreta:

Join us for Lunch @ Cary & Eddie's Hideaway: \$20

November 8, 2014



La Consulta School

Your gifts will help the next generation of children from La Consulta & Rancho Pando learn in a school with a variety of training & instructional resources. Your donation makes a difference. Mil gracias!

The Hideaway in Kahului
500 N. Puunene Ave.
November 8th, 11:30 AM-2:30PM
Silent Auction & Nic. Crafts
Part of the profit goes to Somos Ohana Nicaragua for the school.



Students from Rancho Pando

For \$20 tickets, call 572-9898, or 573-5471