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Dear Family/Ohana,

Each day brings

surprises ,
vulnerabilities,
challenges,
appreciation for those
who walk arm in arm
with us , encouraging
each other to go
farther in this journey.

You walk with us
during home visits;
in triumphs over
cancer;
in celebrations of
hope & births;
in therapy to walk
& speak;
in opening vistas
through education.

For this & more, we
give thanks to God &
each of you, our
brothers & sisters of
several
nations & many
US cities.

Mahalo nui, peace, &
blessings,

Charlotte & Daniel



Smiles: the Universal Language of Kindness

***"IF YOU CAN'T SMILE, DON'T GO
TO THE POOR, AS THEY ALREADY
HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS."***

(Mother Teresa of Calcutta)

Lots of smiles and happy voices
are the rule during our Day Camp
at Finca San Ignacio, every year
without fail. New children &

young adults
may arrive with
apprehension
about what the
"camp days" are
about, but with-
in a few minutes
of participative
music their fear
is dispersed
into joyful
relaxation and
discovery.



(B. Lee)

With 5 volunteers from Hawaii,
1 from Seattle, and 10-12 from
Villanueva, plus 3 teams of
musicians from neighboring villag-
es, and the Nutrition team
(headed by Juanita Pineda), each
of the 60 children and young
adults, plus their parents, felt
specially loved. Two of the "new"
treats this year were: face paint-
ing (a first time for almost every
child); and watching in awe as some
of the finca's parade horses went
through their paces at the open
corral close to our activities.



(B. Lee)

One of the new families at camp
this year included 2 young women and
their nephew from La Consulta. They
are all deaf, and rarely leave their vil-
lage which is at the border with the
town of Somotillo, in another "state".
They had never gone to school, and
seldom venture from their homes.
Through the camp personnel and new
friends, they were spell-bound as they
watched others with similar hearing
deficits, "chattering" away in sign lan-
guage! The freedom of communication!

Our follow-up challenge is to sup-
port the special education Professor,
and the Ministry of Education, in find-
ing a way to incorporate this family
and their future teachers into the
classes for Sign
Language. It can
be done!

(Photo: a home
visit to assess a
new child & to in-
vite the family to
Day Camp.)



(B. Lee)

TECNOLOGY FOR YOUTH IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

When we left the designated site for the new secondary school in La Carreta in August (2015), it was an open field with a few jicaro trees surviving on it. This year, we beheld the awesome reality of the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino: a sturdy, 6-classroom edifice with 140 youngsters learning from the standard curriculum!

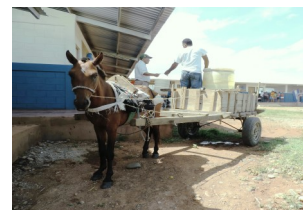


First Year Students with their Professors

Another 200 (in groups of 17-20) attend weekly computer technology classes, tutored by 2 energetic professors. Students in AM & PM sessions include: previous graduates of other regional secondary schools & students in the 2nd – 5th years of the Instituto, as well as the schools in Pajuil, Rincon de Garcia, & El Obraje.

Significance: A short history enables us to understand the significance of this leap into the future. Nicaragua has fostered the education of the people since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, yet it has taken the last 35 years to see a cultural change where rural families now envision their children as inheritors of the right & possibility of completing secondary education. (See: [www.unicef.org.ni/prensa/11\[2013\]](http://www.unicef.org.ni/prensa/11[2013]) & www.unicef.org.ni/programas/2/educacion/) Some limiting factors include: rural poverty, travel distances, & expectation that adolescents (or younger) contribute to the survival and care of the families. One of the strategies that the Ministry of Education (MinEd) is using to convince parents to allow their teens to attend daily classes (instead of the previous weekly schedule) is to offer free school lunches before the students return home at noon.

Access to Water: Clean water, hygiene, and drainage has also been a challenge in La Carreta. MinEd continues to seek cooperation of a non-governmental organization (NGO) with drilling capabilities to drill a well for the school. Meanwhile, the students bring drinking water from home, and parents pay a neighbor (with a well) to make bi-weekly deliveries of a barrel of water on a horse-drawn wagon. (See photo.) Access to water is even more crucial during these times of drought when the seasonal rains have been intermittent.



Rotary Partnerships & Others: The families, students, teachers, and MinEd thank the Rotary Clubs of Bellevue, WA & Chinandega for partnering with Somos Ohana Nicaragua to habilitate the sixth classroom with an adequate electrical system, heat resistant ceiling, windows, doors, & air-conditioning for the computer lab. Their gift will preserve the functioning of the 10 new computers donated by the Office of the President of Nicaragua, and 7 gently-used Mac laptop computers donated by the Bertschi School of Seattle, WA. Mahalo nui!



2017 Goal: Meanwhile, we are pursuing the goal of constructing the third pavilion for the school which will include: a teachers' room for consultation, preparation, & resource management; a functioning library; and a kitchen for cleaning and preparing the vegetables grown in the school gardens. Because of the continuing drought, normal plot farming is no longer feasible. Already, alternative methods are being practiced in other regions of Nicaragua, and the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino could be a leader for container farming in the Municipality of Villanueva. But first, a functioning well is needed!

Testimony to the Benefits of Marango

While in Nicaragua, we dedicate one day to visit with families who are affected by cancer. There's a meeting which provides a healthy meal & a forum where these families can support one another. (This special event is in addition to Somos Ohana Nicaragua's fund, thanks to your support, that assists cancer patients to travel to Managua for their medical treatments and physician visits.)

Last year, one of the attendees was a farmer: Juan Garcia, 65 years old, who was receiving chemotherapy for leukemia. During the meeting, Dan Flavin, who researched the benefits of the marango tree (called "moringa" on the internet, and "malunggay" by the Filipinos), presented a booklet and video about this "miraculous tree." It has numerous health benefits due to the high vitamin, mineral,



& protein content of the leaves, beans, flowers, and roots. Dan recommended that all the families should grow one (or more), especially to mitigate the scarcity of food during drought or because of illness. His presentation piqued the interest of Juan Garcia who was noticeably gaunt and pale, due to the side effects of chemotherapy. He had recently been given a young tree, but he had no idea of its health benefits.

This year, we visited Juan at home. He is in excellent health, & appears at least 10 years younger than his actual age! He attributed the change to his use of marango in the family's meals,



& to drinking 2 cups of marango tea daily. Although he still takes a maintenance dose of medication, he no longer experiences side effects. He also testifies that when he was nauseous due to treatments, he would take a handful of the little white flowers, grind them up with water, filter out the residual fibers, add some sugar, and drink the juice. Within 45 minutes, the nausea subsided. His testimony is very convincing, especially to other patients receiving chemotherapy!

Board Volunteer's Corner

by Jim (Jaime) Kahler

I am proud and honored to serve on the Board of Directors of Somos Ohana Nicaragua, recognized by the IRS as a public charity/non-profit. I have served for almost 10 years. It's a learning experience and a long-term commitment. The mission of the organization is to serve the educational and health-related needs of the people living in the Municipality of Villanueva, (state) of Chinandega. Members of the organization have been going to Nicaragua for 2-6 weeks annually since 1999.

The organization has practically no overhead or staff expenses. We pay only for office supplies and government & bank fees. There are no facility costs. The staff is all volunteer. All the money raised (through private donations and small fund raisers) goes to carefully budgeted programs within the overall goals of the organization.

There are 9 members on the Board, 8 of whom have been to Nicaragua as active volunteers. Other volunteers have gone frequently who are not board members. All volunteers pay their own air fare, as well as room & board with local families of the area we serve. In July, board members had the opportunity to show how functional & cooperative they can be. (See **Board members** on page 4)

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 Third Wing in La Carreta:

Your donation helps ~350 secondary students learn skills & values that will prepare them to build better futures. Gracias!

(Board members continued from p3) On July 7th, 2 board members met with the Mayor of Villanueva and the Delegate of MinEd to discuss the electrical system and lack of water at the new school. More power was needed due to the draw of the computers and the needed air-conditioning system. (The temperature in this area often exceeds 100 degrees F.) We were asked to spend \$1,800 for a transformer and installation fees; the Mayor's office would provide a concrete pole to complete the project. A meeting was called of the 4 board members present that evening to discuss the proposal. Lacking a quorum to justify the non-budget expense, I e-mailed the other 5 members to explain the situation & get approval; 4 were running a plant sale for SON, & the 5th member was in Alaska. We had until Monday, the 11th, to respond to the Mayor. By Sunday (July 10th), 4 had responded with approval!

That is how a Board should function. We spend more time working directly or indirectly towards the goals of Somos Ohana Nicaragua than we do sitting in meetings.



Left: Zaccagnini Family in NC.

Below: Flavin Family in WA.

"If these children care enough to help our ohana in Nicaragua, surely we can be creative, too!" (Anon.)



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