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Somos Ohana Nicaragua Newsletter



Students and teachers at the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino, Villanueva, in La Carreta, Municipality of Villanueva, waiting for the official opening of the third wing. The current number of students is 160.

Dear Family and Friends,

As we celebrate 20 years of Solidarity with our Ohana in Nicaragua, we are very aware that we have not done this alone. Everyone who reads this knows that you have had a kind hand, a gentle heart, and open spirit to feel the connection between who you/we are and the people we see, know, love, and embrace life with in many villages, towns, and cities in Nicaragua.

Many of you have traveled the journey with us since day one and are still faithful companions in the journey. For those who are newer to the journey, thank you equally; we could not continue without you. We are grateful to God for each precious person, and pray that you are blessed with long life, surrounded by loving family and friends, always. Come! Sing, Dance and Be Glad with us! With deep aloha and profound gratitude,

Charlotte and Dan



Serving refreshments at opening ceremony



Discovering new treasures in the Library



Professor Luvy initiating wood stove

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Our scholarship student, Elizabeth assesses Mr. Centeno's ability to swallow

Villanueva has a Speech Therapist!

In December 2019, Ofelia "Elizabeth" Montes Alvarado, our scholarship student, will receive her Licenciante in Speech Therapy from the Universidad Santa Paula in Curridabat, Costa Rica, and she will return to serve the people of the region of Villanueva, Depto.de Chinandega. She is the first native-born Speech Therapist of that region!

In July, she received permission to do one week of her Practicum with us in Villanueva. We visited 20 families with children and/or adults with special needs involving speech, communication, and other challenges which affect their ability to speak, eat, and communicate with others. What a pleasure to witness her competence and compassion in relating to each person and their family!



A special day for our children, parents, and counselors at Day Camp, 2019

As the "frosting on the cake," we held a one day camp at the Finca San Ignacio with the families we visited during the previous week.

With music, swimming, art, sports, and food, it was a celebration of joy for everyone!



Josue's first experience in the pool!

Cancer Support Group & Fund for Treatment-related Travel

We look forward to seeing our friends who are recovering from cancer, or who are still actively receiving cancer treatments. This year for the first time, a set of twins arrived wearing masks to prevent inhaling any bacteria or virus that might have serious consequences for them. They are only ten years old, recently diagnosed with leukemia and are on chemo therapy treatment. Older students who have completed their treatments were there to encourage the younger ones that there is life after chemotherapy, and they have returned to their classrooms.



Sharing the challenges of cancer



Cancer recovery: Two women giving back to the cancer group

Cancer Survivors Are an Inspiration

Two recovering cancer patients, who received a small grant last year to start a bakery in the distant village of Obraje, returned this year with gifts of bread and a small cake to share with the group.

Delicious! The following weekend we took the head teacher of the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino to observe the women preparing the dough, letting it rise while Victoria's husband prepared the oven. We watched as the fresh, aromatic, artisan bread was removed from the oven and prepared for customers who, alerted by the aroma, started arriving! Now, the artisan oven is on the Wish List for the kitchen of the Instituto in La Carreta!



Artisan oven is on the Wish List



*"I can brush my teeth!"
El Platanal Pre-school*



*"Dancing their way through
learning," La Pacaira Pre-school*

Encouraging a Vision of Continuing Their Education in Secondary School

While most children in rural communities attend primary school (through 6th Grade), not all follow through to secondary school, (7th Grade through 11th). We have supported the building and improving the educational experience in the regional secondary schools in Rincon de Garcia and la Carreta. We also see value in visiting some of the "feeder schools" each year, encouraging the teachers with didactic materials, and the students with books (in Spanish), soccer balls, pencils, pens, notebooks, back packs, and other useful items. One of the blessings of volunteers who travel with us is that we can bring more "gifts" (as mentioned above) as well as donated laptops, baseballs, and toothbrushes and toothpaste samples from our supporter dentists.

One Generation Taking Care of the Next

This year we are encouraging the teachers and students who have completed secondary school and are studying in the National University to return to their primary schools to encourage the next generation to value their education and to imagine what possibilities their education can open for them in the future. It is a process that the whole community could participate in.

Visiting the families and schools helps us to understand the challenges each child has to face to continue his/her education through secondary school. Even when a parent, or both parents, have jobs with a regular income, the cost of living in Nicaragua continues to increase, making it difficult to provide even basic needs. It is even more challenging if the father is a subsistence farmer because of the change in weather patterns.



"Play Ball!" San Ramon II

More School News

After Elizabeth returned to Costa Rica, we immersed ourselves in completing the construction of the third wing of the Instituto which had begun after Christmas 2018. The basic classrooms and the Computer Lab that had been completed in 2016 have been in continuous use. The third wing was needed to embrace an expansive educational experience with the library, a kitchen/cafeteria for serving breakfast to students who travel long distances, and meals utilizing the vegetables that the students were producing in the school gardens. A teachers' room would provide a private space for teachers to plan and consult on student matters, and if necessary, provide a quiet space for a student (or teacher) who might be experiencing a health problem. Without an immediate emergency service response system, and families who live in distant communities, it is necessary to have a dedicated space to serve as an "infirmary" at a school which serves more than 160 students. So, the construction team shifted into high gear, and under the master builder, Antonio Morales, worked full days, and some evenings to complete the third wing by July 29th, the scheduled "Inauguration Day!" Amid short speeches, poems, native dances, the school was blessed, the ribbon was cut, and students and guests were served refreshments of artisan bread, prepared by the women's coop of the Delicias Bakery in El Obraje, with iced moringa tea, the specialty of Juanita Pineda!



*"Fresh bread for sale!" Sharing a
commitment in El Obraje*



Somos Ohana Nicaragua

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Somos Ohana Nicaragua Needs YOU and Your Talents!

While some fluency in Spanish is necessary for those who wish to teach English, Science, Art, or Health, or to assist in the Day Camp, basic Spanish is adequate for assisting with the school gardens, and with building the auditorium, or putting up the security fence. *If you would like to participate in a mission experience, please contact Daniel and Charlotte.*

Help Us with Our Next Project: the Auditorium and Fencing for the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino in La Carreta

***“When we begin to believe that there is greater joy in working
with and for others, rather than just for ourselves,
then our society will truly become a place of celebration.”***

– Jean Vanier, Founder L’Arche Communities

**Your donation helps more than 160 secondary students learn skills
and values that will prepare them to build better futures. Gracias!**



*These women were delighted with
the unexpected gifts!*

News in Brief: Villanueva’s Casa Materna

A kind and creative donor in Seattle sent us a dozen colorful cotton receiving blankets she prepared for the mothers who give birth in the small hospital in the town of Villanueva, where they are attended by the physician on call, or their chosen midwife. These women typically had been followed by the public health doctors and nurses in their rural communities. Within two weeks of the baby’s expected birth, they are invited to live at the “Casa Materna” (a comfortable shelter for expectant mothers across the street from the hospital in Villanueva) where they are assessed each day for normal signs of labor, or for any difficulties that would suggest better outcomes in a full maternity hospital in Chinandega (an hour’s trip by ambulance).

***All donations are tax deductible and are needed to continue all our projects.
Thank you for your interest, good will, and generosity!***