

Volume 11
March - November
2020



Somos Ohana Nicaragua Newsletter



**Fifth year students and their teachers rehearse for their expected graduation on December 11th at the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino, in La Carreta, Municipality of Villanueva.
“Adelante, Chicos!
Hope of your nation!”**



The students of the Instituto Ruben Dario sacrifice their Saturdays to be able to get a high school equivalency education. They live at farther distances and labor during weekdays. They, too, will graduate on December 11th in La Carreta.

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Letter from the President and Board of Directors

Aloha! Dear Ohana and Friends

As we write, 2020 races to its final weeks. We hope this finds you and your extended families in good health, even though it has been a challenging year for most people. Know that you continue to be in our hearts and minds with deep gratitude for whom you each are, and the One whom we all are still becoming.

We are deeply grateful for your continued trust and generosity of all our Ohana during the past months which allowed us to continue our mission of helping the people of Villanueva, Nicaragua blossom in health and education. This Newsletter demonstrates how your kindness increases the ability of others to share their abilities and love.

With sincere gratitude, we wish you continued good health, and opportunities to enjoy your families, friends, neighbors, and those in need in creative ways during this holiday season; with blessings and virtual hugs to all,

Charlotte, and Members of our Board

School News—

Although COVID-19 kept us physically away from our Ohana in Nicaragua, we were able to keep in touch mostly through telephone calls, and e-mails. Even with distancing restrictions, the final stages of the construction of the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino in La Carreta continued.

The construction of the **fencing of the property** was completed in March. Although the school is surrounded by rural communities, fencing was obviously a need because neighboring animals were free to roam the area and delighted in consuming the garden's vegetables and fruits.



Last phase of the fencing: front gate



Photo of completed Auditorium



Students from Rincon Garcia



*“Beauty is in the face of the mother
as she hears her child speak
his first words!”*

The final phase of the **open-air** auditorium was completed November 21st, ready for the fifth year' students and their families to celebrate their graduation on **December 11th**. These students were the original group to enter the newly constructed classrooms in La Carreta with a **daily** curriculum, in February, 2016.

Other Celebrations for Education—

Bikes to lighten the journey: Gracias to the kindness and generosity of our donors, twenty-seven students from the most distant communities received bikes to enable their daily journeys to/from the secondary schools in La Carreta and Rincon de Garcia. They have been faithful to their promises to attend daily classes, except when the schools were closed when COVID pandemic began, and the Ministry of Education promulgated stringent regulations, then readjusted the schedule; and recently, when Hurricane ETA & Hurricane IOTA brought continuous rain for 2 weeks (often accompanied by high winds) in the Municipality of Villanueva.

Scholarship Students: Of the six students who are receiving scholarships (for university studies) from Somos Ohana Nicaragua, two will be graduating in a few weeks: Ofelia Elizabeth Montes Alvarado (shown at left with Alexander and his Mom) is receiving her license in Speech Therapy from the Universidad de Santa Paula in Curridabat, Costa Rica. Elizabeth will be returning to Nicaragua to serve the numerous children with these special needs. Karelin Estrada (shown at right with her husband and baby) will receive her license in Social Work from the Universidad Autonoma in Somotillo, Nicaragua.



“You learn to read so you can identify the reality in which you live, so that you can become a protagonist of history rather than a spectator.”

(Fernando Cardenal, 1984, first Minister of Education after the Sandinista Revolution)

Growing the schools' gardens: Like other communities, food is scarce at the end of the dry season (December-May) and children sometimes come to school without eating breakfast. This year, with the help of irrigation, several schools planted their own gardens; students participated in the planting, harvesting, and eating the fruits of their labor (shown at right are fifth year students harvesting plantains). In La Carreta, a neighbor was so impressed with the program, she volunteered to do the meal preparation for the school, so the teachers could use their time teaching from their planned curriculum.



A happy family now that Dad is in remission

Caring for the Health of the People—

Travel Fund for Patients with Cancer: Our close associate, Neptalia Escobar, RN (retired from her Public Health position in the Municipality of Villanueva, and now volunteers as the head of a Community Clinic in that area) reports that cancer patients, who are at high risk for infection with COVID, were carefully transported to Managua for their treatments, and back again to their homes in Villanueva. There are now 20 patients being actively treated for cancer; others are in remission. We have depended on the talents and integrity of “Tala” since our first “team” mission trip to Nicaragua in 1999. Again, times like this year, we know how valuable our trusted “ohana” (collaborators) are for their precise knowledge, assessments, integrity, and relationships within their

own communities, while we cannot be physically present with them.

The same can be said for the teachers, directors, and supervisors in the schools. Through their loving service, they bless all their students and families, and they bless us, and are deeply grateful to our donors.

Where Do We Go from Here? Planning for the next year (requests from schools, teachers, and community)—

In Rincon de Garcia: (We helped build their secondary school in 2008-9): the school needs another classroom because another organization gave them tablets to teach the students computer skills. That program displaced the half classroom that had served as the library and teachers' meeting room since 2009.

In La Carreta: Teachers would like to add: 1) an artisan oven to broaden the culinary skills of the students. Approximate: \$2,240; 2) a “gallinero” (a hen house) to improve their farming skills by raising chickens & ducks to increase the nutrition of school lunches. These skills enable students to transfer their knowledge to their homes.

Post high school education: We see an increase of students' interest in post high-school education: 5 students in La Carreta, and 2 students in Rincon de Garcia are asking for university scholarships for Health and Education careers. Price: \$500 per year /per student. (If a student is accepted into medical school, the cost is approximately \$500 per semester due to farther travel, and the added cost of personal protective equipment.)

Travel Fund for Patients with Cancer:

Travel Fund for Patients with Cancer: Price: \$900 per year, includes travel needs for all the patients, and a yearly luncheon in Villanueva, which also serves as a support group for new and long-term treatment patients.

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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 projects. *If you would like to participate in a mission experience, please contact Daniel and Charlotte.*

***Please Help Us with Our Next Projects: another classroom for Rincon de Garcia
and the artisinal oven for the Instituto Augusto C. Sandino in La Carreta***

Where Do We Go from Here? *(Continued from page 3)*

Hurricane Related Needs: Unlike the loss of more than a dozen human lives in other Departamentos (States) due to flooding and landslides, there were no human casualties from the hurricanes in the Villanueva area this season. However, most farmers in the area plant their corn, beans, and other grains in July-August, so they may harvest them during the month of December. This year, just as the grains were maturing, Hurricane ETA and IOTA brought heavy rains and winds which caused fungus and other diseases to destroy some of their crops, especially those that were planted close to the rivers' edges. Families counted on those crops for their basic nutrition, and any they could sell would pay for other family needs: clothing, school supplies, illness and family-related travel needs.

How You Can Help: The Board of Directors will meet in December to determine the priority of needs, and set a budget of available funds depending on those priorities. Because of COVID, we were unable to do normal fund-raising events this year. More than ever, we depend on the continuous generosity of our donors to bring loving care to those in need.

*Mil gracias, Mahalo nui, a deep, sincere Thank you to each special person.
We love you, and wish you good health, love, and hope for 2021!*

*"We created something I called education in poverty, which did not mean a poor education. The idea was to seize the opportunity as one of growth. The idea was that human beings, and specifically teachers, needed to grow despite the challenges they faced, and that creativity and initiative were not dependent on economic means alone."
(Fernando Cardenal, 1984, first Minister of Education after the Sandinista Revolution)*

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