



“Wishing for a Million Friends”

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Dear Family/ Ohana,

In a family, we trust each other with our sorrows, concerns, & victories. We are inter-dependent: not only with our Nicaraguan partners, but also with each of you, our family of spiritual, moral, & financial support.

In deep gratitude, we offer this Newsletter to bring full circle the reciprocal nature of our mission of caring nurtured by love.

Blessings and peace be with you,

Charlotte & Daniel

That was the final song, as we celebrated the closing of the first-ever day camp for children and young adults with special needs in Villanueva, Nicaragua. From the heart, every child, parent, and volunteer belted it out, including in sign language, because that was the reality they lived during camp at Finca San Ignacio.

Laughter, squeals, and music could be heard throughout the 2 weeks that we received 40 children, each with a caregiver, in groups organized by age and abilities. Of the many special moments; let us share a few with you:

A United Team: While our team: physical therapist, RN, water therapist, & photographer prepared in Hawaii, the Nicaraguan team also prepared: a student PT, musicians, game

leaders, manual arts, sign language teacher, & Ministry of Education representative for children with special needs. From day one, there was harmony & cooperation: everyone poured out their energy and love for the children!

Fun Together vs. Isolation: Youngsters and their caregivers, who live in rural areas, are often isolated from others with similar needs. At camp, each received lots of attention and participated in every activity: swimming, music, games, manual arts, health education, and meals! Mothers & grandmothers were delighted to see their children having fun! They valued participating in the activities with their children and sharing ideas with other mothers. They felt refreshed at day's end! Asked if they would like the camp to happen again next year, the unanimous answer was: “Si!”



Diana Laham & Katarine Sanchez



Awards Ceremony, First Group

No one fell asleep during health education! A lively team demonstrated: how to use a toothbrush, which local trees and fruits are full of vitamins and minerals, and what empty calorie foods to avoid. It's amazing what you can learn at camp!

Photos & Champion Medals help all to remember. As not one family owned a camera, the final gift of a framed photo of each child was most appreciated. And to brighten the face of any participant, try hanging a champion medal around his or her neck!

When Can We Move Into Our Pre-School?

Thanks to the Whalen family, the men of La Esperanza started building their pre-school in late March, with the hope of moving the children and teacher into the facility by July. But they encountered problems: a new learning curve related to building with “plumbing” for the toilets, the wash basins, and utility sinks for mops. They now have the first cement septic tank in that area! The marvels of having a solar-powered water system (previously constructed with aid from Canada)!

La Esperanza — Pre-school



This is a project where Somos Ohana Nicaragua partnered with Amigos for Christ. The people benefited from the guidance of an engineer from Chinandega, who designed, directed and oversaw the progress as the community contributed the manual labor.

The next challenge is building a retaining wall to protect the school from run-off flowing from the street during the rainy season (May to December). Almost ready to move in, children and teacher!

Celebrating the Gift of Water: Rincon de Garcia

While Nicaragua is striated by rivers, potable water is hard to access. Last year, we featured a photo of the “Comite de Agua” of Rincon de Garcia as they were organizing their work teams. Many doubted that a well, located more than a mile from most homes, could actually provide them potable water, if they worked with the engineers (provided by our partners for this project: Amigos for Christ) to dig the ditches, and fit the miles of pipelines to the schools and to about 100 family homes. The first few months tested their faith, as the water at the first site was contaminated; the second site was on the side of a mountain that was mostly hard rock! It took until Christmas 2011, to reach an adequate water source. But by then, the burden of manual labor was lightened by brigades of young volunteers coming mostly from Georgia (home office of Amigos for Christ).

When we arrived in July, it was time to celebrate their victory. July 13th, the solar-powered pump was turned on, water flowed from every home spigot, and everybody cheered! What a blessing! No need to carry 9 (5-gallon) buckets from the river or well for home needs each day; we expect notable reductions in water-borne illnesses, and improved hygiene at home and at school. Thanks to the united effort of the community, donors, volunteers, and engineers!

Rincon de Garcia, July 13th



Supporting Education: More Bikes !

Generous donors made it possible to expand our program to help not only the students who travel to secondary school in Rincon de Garcia, but also to those attending classes in La Carreta, a regional secondary school north of Villanueva. Those who hike 2 hours over rocky terrain and streams to get there come from the villages of La Consulta & Rancho Pando. Altogether, we donated bikes to 30 youngsters. With their parents, they promised to attend classes regularly and to maintain their bikes until they graduate in 5 years.

Each student received the name of the donor who made their gift possible, and in return, wrote a letter expressing what a bike meant to him or her. Here are excerpts from one of the letters:

Dear Barbara,

I thank God and our brothers of good heart who offer us their love and friendship. You bring us teachings that help us gain new knowledge and learning. When you visit us from Hawaii, we realize that there is someone who loves us as much as our mother and father by their great affection. . .

I especially give thanks to our sister Barbara who has given me this beautiful gift to travel rapidly between the school and my home. Sincerely, Yonni



Yonni Andrade & mother, Alba Luz Garcia

HUNGRY FOR BOOKS!

When we arrived at our adopted schools, teachers were prepared with lists of needed texts and literature books. With funds from In His House of Restoration Church (Maui) & Manthala George, Jr. School (Brockton, MA), we were able to supply some of the requests from 2 high schools, 4 pre-schools, and 4 primary schools. Previously, we had not realized that the teachers' text books were antiquated, and how excited they were to receive updated texts with improved methodology consistent with their curriculum. Even more satisfying was seeing the children's faces as they devoured books they chose out of an array of inviting titles! Other than their notebooks, few have any books at home.

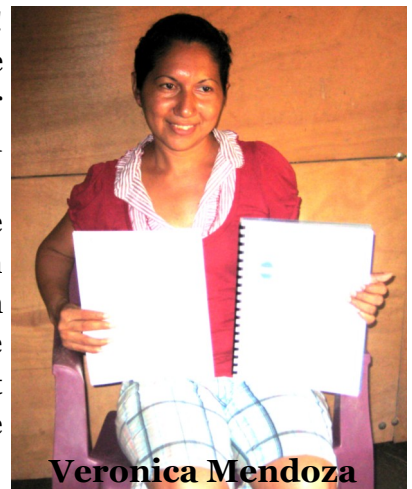


3rd Grade — Mina de Agua

FOCUSING ON OUR GRADUATE IN 2012

Victoria Mendoza is a young woman of faith, courage, and perseverance! Born the oldest daughter of a farmer's family with 6 brothers and a sister, she is the principal supporter and caregiver for 2 younger brothers and her sister who are disabled by a rare, inherited, neurological disease. Her mother and an older brother died 2 years ago.

With help from our scholarship fund, she persevered in her dream to become a teacher. She completed her dissertation and graduated with honors from the National Normal School in Chinandega. She is the pre-school teacher in her village of El Bonete; and she runs a small library out of her home where primary school children can come to do their homework and research, or just read for fun! An innovative concept! Looking ahead, she hopes to continue her studies for a licentiate in education. We're cheering for you, Veronica!



Veronica Mendoza

Somos Ohana Nicaragua

Charlotte & Daniel Flavin
Somos Ohana Nicaragua
69A Ulunui Place
Pukalani, HI 96768
Phone: 808 572 9898
Flav1@hawaiiintel.net

www.somosohananicaragua.org

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.*

Eat Pizza: 9/18/12! & Help Build a High School!

Every Sunday, 130 students from distant farming villages gather in La Carreta from 7AM to 4PM to complete their secondary education in 5 years. Most walk 1 to 2 hours from their communities because there is no bus service on these rural paths that are better suited to horses, if they have one.

The school in La Carreta serves as a primary school on week-days. The furnishings are geared to smaller students and smaller classes. But the secondary school students are eager to learn, and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to improve their lives and their communities. Would you help them?

We are negotiating with the mayor, families, & the Ministry of Education to build in a more centralized location, with the possibility of daily use of the school for adult education & secondary education.

**Flatbread Company in Paia
89 Hana Highway
September 18th, 5:00-10:00 PM
Silent Auction & Nic. Crafts
Part of the profit of each pizza
goes to Somos Ohana Nicaragua**



La Carreta - 5th Year Class and Teachers