



Somos Ohana Nicaragua

Newsletter Volume 14

October 2023

Charlotte Flavin - In Memoriam



It is with great sadness we announce the passing of our wonderful friend and our organization's leader Charlotte Flavin on June 21, 2023. She and her husband Daniel Flavin, co-founders of Somos Ohana Nicaragua, started going to Nicaragua in 1998 after the devastating Hurricane Mitch. They worked in cooperation and compassionate solidarity over 25 years with people there who were inspired to help their communities but lacked access to resources. When Maura wasn't in Nicaragua, she was on the phone talking with the scholarship students, the teachers who recommended them, the nurse who handled transportation help to the cancer patients for getting to their urban treatment centers, the vendor of bicycles for kids with long walking commutes to their regional high school, 2 of which the

organization built, the engineer who added the auditorium, new classrooms and fencing to the schools, the doctor who contacted the families with special-needs children for the summer camp, the teachers who coordinated help for school nutrition, and more, much more. Maura was a can-do person, all the way.

The board of Somos Ohana Nicaragua, in concert with Maura's family and our wonderful volunteers in Nicaragua and Hawaii, will do our best to keep the organization going, always inspired by Maura Flavin's shining example of a confident, selfless and compassionate leader. ∞

Our Scholarship Students

We have renamed our Scholarship program "The Maura and Daniel Flavin Memorial Scholarship." Our grants are for studies in health or education and require good grades and community service. Currently we have 5 "becarios" who receive a grant of \$250 for books, fees and transportation each semester. Tuition in state university is free in Nicaragua for qualifying students. Mrs. Imelda Cadena administers the program as our representative in Villanueva. ∞



(L-R) Mele Stokesberry, James Flavin, Heiling Moises Argenal, Veterinary studies; Mayling Carrazo, Medicine; Francis Mendez, Nursing; Gabriela Salazar, Medicine.

Annual camp brings fun and fellowship

Somos Ohana Nicaragua’s annual day camp for kids and young adults with special needs was held in July and provided a day of friendship, music, arts and crafts, a delicious meal and swimming! for a total of 23 youth. Our team from Maui and Seattle was joined by our wonderful, indispensable volunteers from Villanueva at the ranch of a generous local property owner. Each camper comes for one day with his or her family member.



Camp organizer and leader, and super volunteer, Elizabeth Montes speaks to volunteers and campers.



John Flavin and a young camper. John volunteers at the camp annually, and this year brought daughters Rhys and Charlotte.



Gabriela Salazar, Maggie Montes and Doña Candida Betanco Reyes hold a poster celebrating the good works of Dan & Maura Flavin.



Volunteer from Oahu, Hawaii, J.J. Tavares and a camper enjoy the swimming pool.



John Flavin helps blind camper Israel Espinoza enjoy a rare chance to go swimming.



Super-volunteers Rosa Delma Sanchez and Juan Ramon help campers at the arts & crafts table.

Bugs are eating the ceiling!

We saw a bad situation when our team visited the Enmanuel Mongalo primary school in El Platanal this summer: a plague of large, black insects swarming on and eating ceiling panels and the wood of the doors, ceiling and roof. They were even dropping on the kids. We had gone there on the request of the Ministry of Education's Villanueva delegate who hoped we could help. Working with the school's director and the engineer who has built classrooms and an auditorium for us before, Somos Ohana Nicaragua has embarked on replacing the bug-eaten doors and changing out the old, wooden roof beams for steel. A fresh coat of paint inside and out will follow. ☺



Some of the damage from insects that have infested the ceiling panels and wood structures at the primary school in El Platanal.



Work to renovate and improve the building that houses grade 5 and the pre-school kids started on September 26, 2023.

A lady whose life is in giving to others

Doña Tala (Neptalia Espinosa Escobar) is a long-time volunteer working with Somos Ohana Nicaragua. A nurse now retired, she has long advised us and connected us to the community's needs. She is now the organizer and mainstay of two programs we support: the transportation to urban treatment centers for cancer patients and the school supplemental nutrition program. Doña Tala keeps meticulously detailed accounts of the money she

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Doña Tala holds part of her records for the administration of Somos Ohana Nicaragua's transportation program for cancer patients.



Candida Betanco Reyes of the Health Brigadistas speaks to the gathering of cancer patients and their family members at the annual luncheon sponsored by Somos Ohana Nicaragua.



Mary Santa Maria, Tala Escobar and Mele Stokesberry at Tala's home, August 2023.

Doña Talacontinued from page 3

administers for us for both programs, and she oversees the buying of the fruit which is picked up weekly by teachers from the 5 primary schools where the children are receiving a mid-morning fruit snack. (Photos this page.) We appreciate and love this lady who is a treasure for Somos Ohana Nicaragua and her community. ∞



Villanueva’s Casa Materna

A kind and creative donor in Seattle has made dozens of colorful cotton receiving blankets 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). Medical care is free and provided by the government in Nicaragua. ∞



Head Nurse Ilda and James Flavin, pictured when the team delivered the lovely donated baby receiving blankets. James holds a poster honoring his late mom, a gift delivered to many friends and volunteers in Villanueva.

Did you know we do all this on a ‘shoestring’?

It has been a difficult year so far. We lost president Maura Flavin, then Maui was hit with catastrophic fires, destroying homes in Lahaina and Upcountry Maui and many lives in the town of Lahaina. Despite this, our board of 9 volunteer members is committed to continuing all our projects in the municipality of Villanueva, Dept. of Chinandega, Nicaragua. We hope that you will continue to stand with us and not forget Nicaragua’s needs.

You are who is doing this work. *You* are our lifeline to continue the scholarships, the bikes for incoming students (February) with long commutes, the school repairs, the fruit snacks for the little kids, the transportation for the cancer patients, the once-a-year fun at camp. Please make a generous donation to help us keep up the wonderful programs started by Dan and Charlotte “Maura” Flavin. ♡

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Sewing teacher Oneyda (center, blue shirt) and students and teachers of the high school at La Carreta receive donated fabrics sent by Adrianna Flavin, who taught sewing in Villanueva and brought new and donated sewing machines last summer.



Incoming new students at the high school in Rincón de García with their new bikes and thank-you posters written to the bikes' donors. Promoting good attendance, Somos Ohana Nicaragua buys a new bike, costing about \$135 USD, for kids with long walking commutes to 2 rural high schools.



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“With deep gratitude for your faithful love and kindness during these many years.” -Maura Flavin, 2022

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