



# Somos Ohana Nicaragua

Newsletter Volume 15

October 2024

## Greetings

Saludos, todos los amigos de Somos Ohana Nicaragua. Greetings to all our organization's friends. Here's the news about our recent activities on Maui and with our wonderful co-volunteers in the municipality of Villanueva, Chinandega Province, Nicaragua. ∞

## Former scholarship students' success story

Lener Josue Montalvan was one of Somos Ohana Nicaragua's scholarship students just a few years ago, studying to be a social studies teacher, and this summer we were delighted to learn that now he is sub-director of the Instituto Jose Dolores Estrada, a secondary school in Rincón de García, Municipality of Villanueva. His wife Arlen Mercado was also pursuing an RN degree as one of our scholarship awardees and is now working as a registered nurse in a rural clinic. We are very proud of their hard work and success and wanted to share their story with our friends and supporters.

We got to know Lener in the summer of 2017 when he volunteered to tutor students at our day camp for special needs youth in Villanueva. Lener is from the small rural town of San Ramon in the Villanueva Municipality. He applied for and received our bi-annual grant for area youth studying in fields of education or health care. In 2022 he graduated from the UNAN, or Nicaragua National Autonomous University, of the city of Leon, as an accredited teacher of Social Studies, keeping his scholarship all through his educational career.

We met Arlen when she was still in high school in San Ramon. Upon her graduation, we granted her a scholarship to study nursing, also at the Somotillo branch of the UNAN. Arlen also volunteered at day camp as she persisted with good grades and dedication to her career through marriage in 2019 and having a child, and she graduated as an RN in 2021. Arlen works at the public clinic in the small town of Rincon de Garcia. The couple has a 3-year-old daughter, Cristin Sahira.

At present Somos Ohana Nicaragua has 5 active becarios studying medicine, nursing, pharmacy and bio-analysis. We supplement, with \$250 per semester, the amazing full-tuition scholarships given by the Nicaraguan government to all qualifying entrants to the national university branches. These grants, which your donations fund, help with transportation, needed materials and other daily needs. The students receiving them report at the end of each semester to our coordinator, Mrs. Imelda Cadena, with their grades and documented volunteer hours. Grantees must give 20 hours of volunteer work each semester in their communities and can keep their scholarship grants throughout their college years as long as requirements are met.

Over the years, many additional young people have also benefitted from the scholarship, recently renamed the Somos Ohana Nicaragua Memorial Scholarship in Honor of Maura and Daniel Flavin, which our faithful supporters help us fund, and we are filled with gratefulness for your generosity that make a big difference in the lives of these students and their families. ∞





# Summer 2024 Trip Report

Working with our wonderful volunteers in Villanueva, our team of 7 from the US put on a fun two-day camp for special needs youth, as we have done for many years, hosted the annual luncheon for cancer patients, cancer survivors, and their family supporters, met with our current and some past scholarship students, and visited the schools we support on an ongoing basis. Seven computers were taken there and given to educators.



At the cancer patients' luncheon: Program Leader Tala Escobar (standing, rear) and volunteers Rhys and Charlotte Flavin, help serve.



Brigadista leader and cook Juanita Pineda gets help from the Flavin men, Alexander, Dominic and Jim.

The teachers and students at Instituto A. C. Sandino in La Carreta very effectively used our grant, sent this spring, to irrigate a large area of the school grounds and plant it with grains and vegetables. At our visit in July, we saw the good results – maiz, beans, papayas coming on, bananas flourishing, and we tasted elotes, or young corn, stewed in the school kitchen by students, who do the hoeing and harvesting.

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At Instituto A.C. Sandino in La Carreta, a group of the many students who help grow and harvest the bananas, papayas, beans and corn they are learning to grow.



Young corn ready to cook



Teacher Marvin Gonzales, 2 students and Director (Retired) Juanita Auxiliadora Herrera show a plentiful bean harvest.



Math teacher Oneyda supervises the cooking of elotes in cream.



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The 2024 volunteers traveling to Nicaragua included both John and James Flavin along with four of Daniel and Maura's grandchildren (Dominic, Rhys, Alexander and Charlotte), and myself, Mele Stokesberry. Volunteers provide their own air tickets and stay with families, paying a daily stipend for room and board. We visit annually for one to two weeks, and interested volunteers are always encouraged to contact us about going with the team. ☺



Camp activity stations: Arts and crafts



Sports play and a ball to take home



Fun and exercise in the pool



John "Juan" Flavin, Camp Leader Elizabeth Montes, Fabriela Salazar, Maggie Montes, Francis Mendez, Alexander Flavin, Dominic Flavin, Charlotte Flavin, Rhys Flavin and Jim "Jaime" Flavin.



## Whew! The last rummage sale is over!

Fund-raising is hard work, and sometimes you have to seek smarter ways to do it. Somos Ohana Nicaragua held a big yard sale on Oct. 5. It took a month to prepare for, and many, many people donated items, or worked, or both. However, we had more success, and we learned that relatively more money could be earned for the organization, by selling select items on social media outlets both before and after the big sale day. Consequently, we've decided to change course and ask our supporters to find donations of just a few saleable items that we can offer at any time during the year, on Marketplace or other sites online, and which will bring in more than they could at a one-day rummage sale. To donate items, please call/text Mele, 808-205-4067, or email [somosohananicaragua1@gmail.com](mailto:somosohananicaragua1@gmail.com). Muchísimas gracias and a big Mahalo! 🌀

## Our Current Scholarship Students



Francis M. Mendez, 4th year Nursing; Sandor Rios Peralta, 1st year Nursing; Heiling Garcia Rocha, 2nd year Pharmacy; and not pictured: Ely Dagely Mondragon Flores 4th year Bio Analysis.



Mayling K. Carrazo Aguilar, 2nd year, Medicine.

## Gracias to you

The faithful friends of Somos Ohana Nicaragua are our lifeline to continue the scholarships, the bikes for incoming students (February) with long commutes, the fruit nutritional supplements to pre-schoolers through 3rd graders, the transportation for the cancer patients to their treatments, and last but not least, the once-a-year fun at day camp for special needs youth. Please make a generous donation to help us keep up the wonderful programs started by Dan and Charlotte "Maura" Flavin. 🌀





Primary school Edmanuel Mongalo in El Platanal is one of 5 elementary schools where we provide a fruit supplement weekly for the younger kids.



El Platanal pre-schoolers are pictured here. Teachers text us pictures as "receipts" for this program, managed by Mrs. Tala Escobar, RN retired.

## Computers for educators & baby blankets and toys to Casa Materna



Juan Flavin and Marvin Gonzales at Institute August C. Sandino in La Carreta.



Our team with Director Ávaro Mondragón and Sub Director Lener Montalvan at Instituto José Dolores Estrada in Rincón de García

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The team delivered more baby blankets and wooden toys made by a friend in Seattle again this year to the Casa Materna where area women go to safely deliver and receive excellent care.



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All of us on the Somos Ohana Nicaragua board wish you much joy and many blessings for the holidays and the new year. ☺

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