



Roots of Change Source de développement

Newsletter / La circulaire

March 2013 mars

A partnership
for hope in
Nicaragua

Un partenariat
pour
l'espérance
au Nicaragua

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Breaking Down the Cycle of Poverty

Every year a significant portion of your donations to the Roots of Change Foundation is directed toward poverty relief in Nicaragua. Sometimes emergency funds are allocated for humanitarian aid – responding to crises in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Routinely the support takes the form of development aid – devising and delivering programs designed to overcome the underlying socioeconomic

conditions characteristic of a life of poverty.

In this issue we feature stories about how Roots of Change / FUNDACCO provide humanitarian aid to families and individuals who face a critical need for food, water, clothing and shelter. Also featured are stories about longer term projects in which the partner Foundations assist communities to help them learn to work cooperatively to break the cycle of poverty

and dependence. Following Father Denis' example, these programs are all delivered with compassion, patience and love.



Edgard Lang residents enjoy the weekly hot lunches provided by FUNDACCO

Building Homes, Preserving Dignity

FUNDACCO routinely receives requests for help to repair and build houses for families living without the basic necessities of water and sanitation, and suffering the compounding stress of overcrowding.

As an extended family grows to include new spouses and children, the shortage of space and privacy often leads to crisis. Most families cannot get decent housing because their low income

challenge, FUNDACCO has responded to the need by developing a cooperative program that helps families get into their own homes and also helps the community both now and in the future.



Luis Mora (centre), Father Denis (right) and construction workers discuss progress at the site of Sugey's new house

is used entirely for basic food and clothing. In addition, they cannot get credit since they have no capital or property to use as collateral for a loan.

The cost of building a new home can be as high as \$45,000 – significant for an organization like FUNDACCO with a \$200,000 annual budget. Despite this

In 2012 a new house was built under this program for the Velazquez Martinez family in Ciudad Sandino. This family of eight adults and three children desperately needed relief from overcrowding in a 5.5 x 8 meter house. After reviewing their living conditions and assessing the impact for the community, FUNDACCO decided to build a new house for the homeowner's daughter Sugey, her husband and their three children. (cont. page 2)

Building Homes, Preserving Dignity (cont.)



Sugey (centre) with her mother and her children

The biggest challenge for the family was to buy land and secure legal title. They met this requirement with financial assistance from FUNDACCO. The family participated in the construction of their new home, assisting in the purchase of materials, taking care of materials and tools during construction, and offering suggestions on design changes to better meet their needs.

The 9 x 8.5 meter house was built by local tradesmen over six weeks in December and January. Their new home provides the young family basic services of

shelter, electricity, potable water, toilet, septic tank, drain and sink – all of which contribute to improved health and an atmosphere of emotional stability for both adults and children.

The Velaquez Martinez family is sincerely grateful for the help of the Foundation and all the people who participated in this project. Sugey, her husband and children have realized their dream of more space, more privacy and a greatly improved quality of life. Sugey's mother and siblings are equally grateful to have more space and more privacy in the original family home. The entire family thanks God for the generosity and cooperation

of the donors and facilitators whose belief in a just society has made the construction of a new home possible.

In 2013 FUNDACCO will build a second house under this program for another family in dire need of new housing to relieve their poverty and improve their quality of life.

The FUNDACCO program also helps families re-roof their homes. There are many applications for new rooftops where the traditional zinc roofing has aged to the point of saturating the occupants during winter rains.

Lenten Message from Father Denis

Naaman was a gifted Syrian commander with intellectual and disciplinary qualities and a capacity to give authoritative orders. He had a healthy sense of his own importance. His family and friends loved him, and so did his King.

But he had leprosy. He knew the moral and social exclusion that would ensue. He was thankful for the suggestion from a Hebrew slave girl to visit the prophet from Samaria. He obtained a letter of representation from his King and selected the servants who would accompany him. He brought a wagonload of gifts of gold and silver and an array of ten festal robes.

He was not prepared for what followed. First, the King of Samaria refused his letter of representation, accusing him of coming with false pretense. Secondly, Elisha

the prophet did not come out to welcome him, but rather sent a messenger who said that he should go and bathe in the river Jordan seven times. Naaman got angry and would not submit to such demeaning attention.

His servants spoke to him with humility, which is the language of the heart. Naaman listened, then proceeded to bathe seven times in the river Jordan. Instantly, his flesh became clean once more like the flesh of a little child.

“Returning to Elisha with his whole escort, [Naaman] went in and stood before him. ‘Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel’ ” (cf 2 Kings 5:15).

It is fascinating to see the role that the poor servants played as instruments of grace in leading Naaman to visit the prophet and trust in his word.

Oh, to have the heart and soul of a ‘Renewed Naaman’ – to go beyond our self-importance and become ‘oh so poor’ as to joyfully receive the reward that comes with humbly receiving the gift of the Savior’s Word.

Jesus says to us, “Come, you whom my Father has blessed... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me” (Mat 25:34-36 ff).

FUNDACCO, our partner organization in Nicaragua, is a nonprofit charity founded in 2007 to develop and deliver humanitarian projects.

www.fundacco.org



A young farmer prepares to irrigate a cornfield at the San Benito Agricultural Cooperative

Miriam Sanchez – A leader dedicated to improving her community

This issue we profile Miriam Yasmina Pastrana Sánchez, a community liaison officer in Cinco Pinos. As is the case for many scholarship recipients, Miriam is giving back to her village by using her skills and education to serve as a leader in community development projects.

From her humble start as a child selling vegetables on the streets of Cinco Pinos, Miriam Sanchez took seriously her responsibility to help feed her family and look after others. The family of five sisters and two brothers were supported by only their mother. Despite the difficulties, Miriam describes her family as united, Christian, cheerful and having great faith in God.

It was with the arrival of Canadian delegations in 2009 that Miriam became involved with FUNDACCO. She was one of 12 young people in Cinco Pinos to receive a scholarship. Miriam began her university studies in business administration while her sister, also a scholarship recipient, studied agroecology.

At monthly student support meetings, FUNDACCO representatives encouraged



Miriam (standing on lower step) and fellow scholarship recipients from Cinco Pinos

the young people to organize a credit union in their village to help finance local economic development projects. Initially the students viewed it as a daunting task, but came to understand the benefits of investing locally in their community. By the end of 2009, eight of the 12 students were saving the monthly minimum of 20 cordobas. It did not take long for them to save the minimum needed to establish the credit union.

In April 2011, Miriam was among the initial investors who received mandatory training from INFOCOOP, the Cooperative Development Institute of Nicaragua, to acquire the skills needed to establish and operate the credit union. Upon completion, the investors were accredited as legal partners of the cooperative. The founding partners continue to develop their expertise through annual meetings with the partners of two other FUNDACCO-supported cooperatives; they exchange ideas on economic development and compare approaches to challenges.

Miriam respects FUNDACCO as an organization that recognizes the value that each member brings to the cooperative. She is a firm believer in locals working cooperatively to improve the quality of life of a community.

Miriam was named president of the Cinco Pinos Cooperative Savings and Credit Union. She says she finds it challenging to maintain a consistent focus on the long-term goal while striving to achieve each successive step in expanding the cooperative. Her determination, however, outweighs any hesitation – she is very proud of the success of the cooperative's partners in navigating the legal system to obtain legal status for the cooperative.

The main benefit of having a credit

union in the community is being able to provide low interest loans (4%) to qualified applicants. Miriam says this is a great responsibility, not only to the members, but to society itself.

Every day there are new challenges; Miriam looks for ways to help people save money and get affordable loans. As President, she is responsible for maintaining transparency, overseeing transactions and managing the daily business of the cooperative. She also reports on the cooperative's financial status at monthly member meetings which are intended to promote trust, cooperation and solidarity.

At the invitation of Father Denis and FUNDACCO workers, more people have joined the cooperative and this has contributed to its growth. Since most people earn small incomes and some do not have a job at all, it is often very difficult for them to set aside money from what little they have, but they are still learning to manage their money.

Miriam is pleased to begin her career in business administration by serving as President of the Cinco Pinos Cooperative. She has gained much knowledge and experience. She looks forward to the time when the cooperative can get its own office in order to provide better service to members and a more comfortable place to hold the meetings for this growing cooperative of 21 members.

Miriam says her goal is to work harder at her job as President and each day to be a better person.



Miriam (left) and her sister Ilsa enjoy a joke with Raymonde Schile



Miriam Sanchez

San Benito Sewing Workshop - Finding the right start-up model

In 2008 FUNDACCO started working with the people of San Benito, a village about 35 km northeast of Managua. The near-term goal of establishing an agricultural cooperative was integrated with long-term goals to strengthen the residents' capabilities and empower them to take charge of their community's economic development and improve living conditions for their families.



Juana is the supervisor in the JDH Workshop

These early efforts to empower the community inspired a local man to act on his own dream of establishing a tailoring shop in the village. Like many other residents he had worked in the maquilas (factories) in Managua where conditions were harsh and undignified. His dream was to provide fair employment within the community with wider benefits for all.

FUNDACCO provided assistance from the beginning. With a single Canadian donation of \$10,000

the initial industrial sewing machines, setup and equipment were purchased and local women hired. However, after only a year the young entrepreneur quit the project for personal reasons. FUNDACCO then took over the operation and organized a group from the San Benito cooperative – three women and two men – to work as sewers. They named the business JDH Dressmaking Workshop in honor of Father Joseph Denis Hebert.

There were many challenges – lengthy training time, adapting production to meet orders, improving workmanship, keeping the sewers motivated, and balancing expenses with revenues. Early in 2012 four of the sewers found other work, leaving one dedicated sewer who recruited two people from the community and continued the operation on an interim basis.

In July 2012 the workshop restarted with four women supported by a \$200 weekly order from FUNDACCO to help stabilize the operation so the women could improve their skills and efficiency. There were more personnel changes as the workshop dealt with growing pains.

Typically, the sewers work six days a week, eight hours a day. Sometimes they work overtime to meet production requirements. They are paid by the piece because the workshop does not yet generate enough

income to pay them a salary.

As of February 2013 there were three sewers – two women and a young man saving for college. They sew school uniforms, which are in high demand, as well as shorts, skirts, blouses, handbags, and totes. They are challenged to keep their costs down to compete with other sewers in the region. For the time being, the operation is sustained by sales in the San Benito market and by a weekly order from FUNDACCO.

The immediate objective is to increase production to become competitive with garment producers in the region. The sewers are taking courses on tailoring and on marketing and business organization. Upon completion they plan to register with MYPIME, a government program for medium and small businesses, and then work toward a business license. Their plan is to hire two or three more experienced sewers, acquire machines to improve quality and efficiency, and work with MYPIME to find new markets.

This group faces the same challenges as the earlier groups of sewers, but this time they have a subsidy to supplement their small earnings in the difficult start-up phase. The motivation is strong – two of the three sewers are the main income earners for their families. In addition, the income from the shop benefits 14 people in three families. A long-term goal is to increase the beneficiaries to at least seven or eight families.



Shorts purchased by FUNDACCO are distributed to needy children



Flor supports her family by sewing shorts, skirts, blouses, handbags, and totes in the JDH Sewing Workshop

Travel to Nicaragua

The next Alberta-based adult delegation to Nicaragua is scheduled for November 2013. If you are interested in traveling with this delegation and learning more about the people and communities served by Roots of Change, please contact Jocelyne at 780 903-7984 or send a message to [Jocelyne.durocher\[at\]rootsofchange.ca](mailto:Jocelyne.durocher[at]rootsofchange.ca).

A Renewed Call to Help the Poor

Pope Francis I. An Argentinian who exudes humility and simplicity, calling on the Church to become the poor servant of her people. Elected March 13, 2013 and officially installed March 19th, Feast of St. Joseph. Ad multos años!!!

Levée de fonds par Club d'Amitié



Germaine Lehodey et Jeannine de Moissac présentent un cheque à John Schile après la vente de pâtisseries de Noël

Après une conférence donnée par Lionel Blais au Club d'amitié de St.Thomas d'Aquin géré par Germaine et Michel Lehodey, les membres du Club de l'amitié ont choisi d'appuyer les projets du Nicaragua par des levées de fonds et par des dons. Le Club de l'amitié a pour but de rassembler les aînés de la paroisse autour de différentes activités ou conférences spirituel, et autres.

Lionel Blais et sa femme Laurianne étaient allés au Nicaragua avec une délégation d'adultes en mars 2012 et il a partagé ses souvenirs avec ce groupe.

En décembre 2012 les membres du club ont organisé une vente de pâtisseries de Noël avec les élèves de Dennis Ralston de l'École Père Lacombe. (Cette activité intergénérationnel crée

des liens entre les jeunes et les aînés.) Avec cette vente et des dons, le Club de l'amitié a remis un chèque de 500,00\$ à John et Raymonde Schile, membres du comité de Source de développement lors de la vente d'objets du Nicaragua à la Cité Francophone.

Merci au membres du Club de l'amitié et aux élèves de M. Dennis Ralston pour ce généreux don.

Organize a Family or Group Fun-raising Event



From auctioning heirlooms to organizing a hockey tournament, hosting a dinner to performing a concert, Roots of Change donors are coming up with creative ways of spreading the word about the Foundation's work and encouraging friends and relatives to become donors.

What type of activity raises the spirits and stimulates the generosity of your family and friends? If you would like to book a speaker or representative to attend your special fun-raiser, contact Raymonde Schile at 780-459-8680 or email raymonde.schile[at]rootsofchange.ca .

Willberto and Eduardo Pinera, father and son, inspect the crop with FUNDACCO reps Harold Álvares and Luis Bravo in San Benito

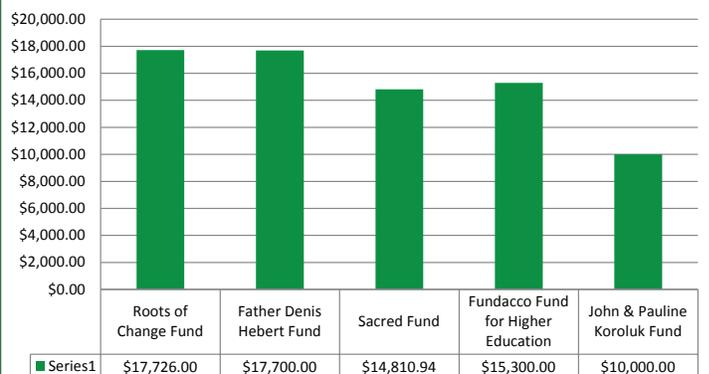


You can help to reduce costs and save a tree by signing up for the electronic version of this newsletter. To sign up send a message to mail[at]rootsofchange.ca.

Merci -Thank you for your support

- Les contributeurs de la soirée bénéfice à l'École Maurice Lavallée (EML) et aux élèves de l'École Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc pour les dons soutenant la délégation EML à Cinco Pinos en mars.
- All contributors to the fundraiser for the Olds delegation to Achuapa in April.
- RJ Nelson Family Trust for supporting the sewing co-operative and a water well drilling enterprise, among other projects.
- Select Rentals, Kofc St. Peter's Council 11004, Father Bonner Columbus Club, Pembina Plumbing & Heating, Alphacom Consultants, Holy Family CWL.
- Durocher family for their 2012 family campaign in support of a 5-year scholarship and the San Raphael Clinic.

Roots of Change Planned Giving Program Investments to Dec. 31 2012 - \$75,536.94



More information at <http://rootsofchange.ca/PlannedGiving.html>

Thanks from a grateful scholarship recipient

I like to express that I feel very happy for this chance that I have received to study which means a lot for me.

My best experience has been to finish the first year in my career which gave me more enthusiasm to keep going and moving forward. In my time off I study and also help my parents in the house [...] They continue to support me and encourage me to move forward through the right path and to ask for God's [guidance] and wisdom every day.

My expectations for this coming year are to continue with my classes and to become one of the best students,

always working hard and with God's help and yours as well. I want to achieve my main goal and obtain my degree in Social Sciences.

From the bottom of my heart thank you, because you gave me the chance to become a professional and I promise you that you will receive a great result from my life as a student [...]

Regards on my behalf and my family who are very thankful [...] for this chance that you are giving me.

Kenia
Cinco Pinos

Calendar April - June 2013

- Apr 7 Board meeting
- Apr 19-29 Olds delegation to Nicaragua
- June 8 Fundraiser at Holy Family Parish Hall, St. Albert
- June 16 Annual General Meeting
Edmonton

Report on CRA Audit

The Board is pleased to report that the outcome of the Foundation's first audit by Canada Revenue Agency in December 2012 was very positive. The Foundation received a high rating and commendation from CRA for its business practices and the procedures used to monitor and track projects in Nicaragua. It was gratifying to receive this acknowledgement from the CRA on the integrity of our organization's financial records and general operations.

Your family or organization can support the Roots of Change Foundation by hosting a speaker. Representatives are available to give short or long presentations to all groups. Please contact Raymonde Schile at 780-459-8680 to discuss your group's needs and schedule a presentation.



The community celebrates during the Children's Christmas party in December 2012



Trainees lead the children's program

Please help by supporting this ministry of hope



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The goal for our 2013 campaign is \$200,000 and the estimated cost of this publication is \$2000 (printing and mailing costs combined).



Online and monthly donations can now be made by credit card through CanadaHelps.org

I would like to contribute the sum of \$ _____ to help the poor of Nicaragua.

Name _____

Address _____

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Canada Revenue Agency: <http://www.cra.gc.ca/charities.html>