



Mustard Seed Communities

CARING FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

Margaret reports on this year's missionary trip to Nicaragua.

From August 14 to 21, I traveled again to Nicaragua with a missionary group of 10 from St. Paul the Apostle R. C. Church.

The orphanage for abandoned and disabled babies at Hogar Belén-Managua now has an additional location for children and babies at Hogar Belén-Diriamba where 3 acres have been purchased. With the completion of several new buildings there, twelve children have been moved to their new home in Diriamba, giving room for new babies and children at Hogar Belén-Managua. A total of 24 babies and children are being cared for at present with plans for 70 when Diriamba is completed.

We saw many changes since last year: A wall surrounding the entire property in Diriamba has been completed; the laundry facility which we laid the foundation for last year is up and running as well as a guard house, two new cottages for the children and the beginnings of a play area. The mission house now has been painted a bright yellow and blue, a covered porch and screens have been added. What a difference those screens made!

This year our work consisted of helping with construction on the new administration building, a two story structure. Due to be completed in October, the cottage now being used as an office will then be available to house Omar, the oldest resident of Hogar Belén. He, and many other children, will never be able to live independently and these cottages will be their permanent homes. We hauled cinder blocks, painted steel beams, made rebar, mixed cement and dug a ditch for water pipes. And we inventoried all the clothing and supplies you gave to us for the children, dividing it up as needed. There is no waste. What cannot be used is sold and the money helps to continue the work of caring for these least among us.

We also spent much time with these children and discovered their progress, too. Jason, who was unable to stand last year, is now able to take some steps independently. Moises has moved in with a family and awaits adoption. Becker and Tatia have grown taller. Elvira is out of her casts. Antonio has both legs in casts following corrective surgery. Maria Clare is the youngest and newest arrival. All the children who are able go to school. Bryan attends a school for the deaf. Others are in special needs schools. The children are afflicted with many disabilities. Mental illness, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, mental retardation, HIV, Aids, epilepsy and parasites are some of their many challenges.

Thanks to the generosity of our friends and relatives who have so graciously given to us these children are receiving therapy, education, medical care, food, clothing and

shelter. They are lovingly cared for and nurtured in clean and safe environments, so different from the harsh poverty to which they would otherwise be destined.

We visited la Chureca, the city dump in Managua. Here in the dump 1100 children and 2800 adults survive on the scraps they scavenge when the dump trucks arrive each day. They forage for these goods with each other, with animals and with vultures. From this they make shelters, find clothing, gather food and collect things to sell. Mustard Seed Communities started Christ in the Garbage Ministries (CIGM) with a sewing center outside of la Chureca to educate and provide skills to men and women living there to help them become self-supporting. Through the generosity of your donations this has been expanded from sewing skills and weaving to include pastry making and literacy. We visited the center and purchased some of their handiwork, with 60% of the proceeds going to the worker and 40% going to the support of the center.

The mission, armed with your donations, has built a school for the children and a medical center, all mission supported, at la Chureca. These help to provide some education and medical assistance to the residents of the dump. Unfortunately the Nicaraguan government has just recently required the medical center to also provide services to the outlying communities, seriously impacting the use of their limited resources. We were able to make a monetary donation with your funds and also provide many bushels of food packages, each containing multiple meals, meals that were already being distributed to the folks while we were there.

On Sunday, the second day of our trip, we took as many children as were able to church at Catedral de Santo Domingo in Managua and afterwards treated them to pizza. Each day begins with breakfast at 7 a.m. Each evening the missionaries gather together after dinner for reflection, sharing and prayer. Playing games, reading and just relaxing with each other ends our days.

Thursday, day 6, is a free day and the missionary group is treated to a day of touring the beautiful country of Nicaragua. This year we watched tamale-making and got to taste them (fantastic!), had many fruits from roadside fruit stands (awesome!), went out on a lake where there are over 400 islands, saw monkeys, met a family who makes pottery and watched a vase being created, visited a resort for a swim, and went to Masaya for a show of native dance and song.

On the 7th day we provided a party for the staff and their families at Hogar Belén-Diriamba after visiting la Chureca and the children at Hogar Belén-Managua. The party lasted until quite late and then we began preparations to leave by 4 a.m. for the airport and our trip home.

If you would like to join with us next year please contact me at mmbrower1@yahoo.com for further information.

It is never too late and no amount is too small if you would like to make a contribution to this worthy cause. Donating through this website is simple, fast and totally secure. It is also the most efficient way to support my fundraising efforts and it is tax deductible.

If you prefer to contribute by check instead make it payable to: "Mustard Seed Guild" and in the memo section use the code: 1008NYSPAMN and mail it to my home

address. If you don't have my address you can contact me directly at mmbrower1@yahoo.com and I will provide it to you.

Many thanks for your support -- and don't forget to forward this to anyone you think may be interested.

With love, gratitude and prayers for each of you,

Margaret

P.S. If you would like to donate needed items here is a list for you. Just contact me by e-mail for delivery or pick-up:

children and adult clothing (for the tropical weather), belts, notebooks, coloring books, pens, pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, paper clips, printer paper, office supplies, envelopes, notepads, Post-its, tape, folders, manila envelopes, bath soaps, body wash, body lotion, toilet paper, baby powder, baby oil, latex gloves, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant (roll-on), hair accessories, brushes, combs, tooth brushes, children's underwear boys and girls ages 2-19, vitamins, protein supplements, educational toys, medicine: cold, cough, flu, runny nose, allergy, diarrhea, and chest congestion, peptic relief, pain relief, band aids, rubbing alcohol, adult diapers, children's and adult shoes, baby wipes, cotton swabs, mosquito nets.

What your donation can provide:

\$1 three meals for one child

\$5 pampers

 baby aspirin

 children's cold medicine

\$10 school supplies

 gas to transport children to school or hospital

\$20 orthopedic shoes for one child

 school fees for one child for one month

\$50 prescription medicine for one child for a month

\$100 one month of on-site physical therapy services

\$250 therapeutic floor mats for the new physical therapy room and play areas

\$500 sealant and paint for the new roof of the chapel

\$1000 essential piece of physical therapy equipment

\$2,000 approximate cost to rewire/repair dangerously outmoded and faulty electrical system

\$4000 approximate monthly operation budget to run Mustard Seed Communities in Nicaragua.

Background article
Mustard Seed Communities - Nicaragua



In 2006 Mustard Seed Communities (MSC) Nicaragua purchased a plot of land approximately 3 acres in area. The property is located on the outskirts of the city of Diriamba some 24 miles southeast of Managua. MSC Nicaragua is constructing a home for children with disabilities at this location.

A survey taken by the government of Nicaragua in 2003 estimated the number of children with disabilities to be over 85,000. Many of these children may be abandoned by their parents or given up to the state. They will require care. Some of these children with disabilities will find a home at the Diriamba Children's Home. When it is completed, the Home will provide loving care to 60 children.

Providing a home to care for children with physical and mental disabilities is a complex task. The children at our Diriamba Home will receive health care, education and spiritual care. In addition to providing child care, we will staff, operate and maintain the home. Most of the children who are more independent at Diriamba Children's Home will live in a cottage style setting. There will be 6 to 8 children in one cottage. There will also be a dorm-style setting for those who need more care and attention.