



## JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY

*"You shall not oppress one another...  
...for I am the Lord your God." Lev. 25:17*

November 1994

**The Center for Development in Central America is a reality!** The caravan arrived at Rancho Masili on April 26, relatively all in one piece. Kathleen's mother says that the arrival of the caravan is proof that God wanted us here in Nicaragua. Father Miguel D'Escoto says, "I don't know that I believe in miracles . . . I just depend on them daily." So did the caravan.

Since our arrival we've been busy learning Spanish, adjusting to the tropical climate (heat, bugs, diseases), dancing the Nicaraguan four-step (taking one step forward and three steps backward), dealing with "third world" realities (no parts for cars, power outages, days with no water, and waiting, waiting, waiting), and getting to know people. Forming working relationships with the dairy coop next door (living with their economic desperation, with renting out their property for nightly meat slaughtering) continues to teach us understanding. Settling in, organizing, and putting the Center in good repair has also been a slow process, begun but not nearly completed.

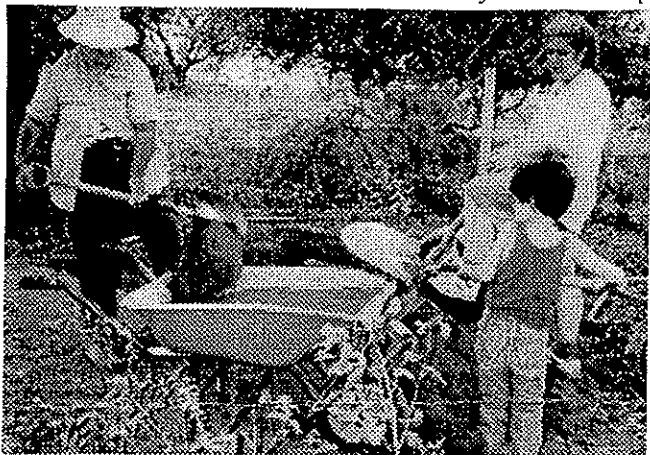
Resident volunteers are a large part of our life here. Our volunteers translate, teach English, teach us Spanish, do construction work, and share in the work around "the Ranch." Our volunteers (past and present) include: **Max Couchman** from Virginia, **Steven Shanafelt** from North Carolina, **Brian Van Hoy** from Indiana, **Ana Gordon** from Missouri, **Christy Ochoa** and **Justin Whitton** from Michigan, **Merrit Taylor** from Montana, and **Kayhan Ostovar** from North Carolina.

We have also had two short-term volunteers, **Pam Agner** and **Nora Laws**. They mostly worked in health clinics, seeing hundreds of patients and giving away hundreds of dollars of donated medicines in their short three weeks here (see p.5).

We have been able to start a surprising number of projects. (For a complete project update as of mid-fall see page 3.) But with funds as tight as they are, our Board is struggling just to keep us alive. Much of what has been accomplished thus far is what we can do with little or no money. For example:



Medical Clinic: Ana translates for Pam



Kathy, Cury, & Kathleen shovel dirt for Health Center

We teach English classes. Ciudad Sandino has 80% unemployment and English improves employment opportunities and betters education.

Pat fights *zompapos* (ants) and weeds daily. She succeeds to the point that she has delivered fresh produce from our garden to feeding centers for nutritionally at-risk children.

We have worked on the Health Center at Trinidad Central. Building strictly by hand is hard work!

We are working with community leaders to plan micro-enterprise projects when we have money to lend. A loan of \$500 to an applicant who has studied refrigeration would allow him to operate his own refrigeration/air conditioning repair center and be the sole supplier of ice cubes in Ciudad Sandino. Mike has worked very

hard to set up an organic sesame project, with planting scheduled for February. This project will hopefully bring in project money for the Center as well as cash income for a dozen families.

We have provided office support for many worthwhile organizations, transportation aid in emergencies, crisis money for special needs, and other odds and ends.

With a donation of \$300 we were able to help the Roberto Clemente neighborhood lay pipe to give 50 families access to potable water for the first time.

We've done all this with little funding. What we could do with more (and what needs to be done) is astounding. Please help.



Roberto Clemente family with new water

**We told stories** of people who stayed with us when we operated the shelters . Here are some stories of folks in Nicaragua.



**Juan, sharing his vision**

**Juan** has organized about 30 families of Trinidad Central into a communal cooperative that has legal status. Juan is so proud that they are one of only two general development cooperatives in Nicaragua (as opposed to agricultural cooperatives, transportation cooperatives, etc.). He is also very proud of the Health Center that has almost been completed at Trinidad Central to serve the whole outlying rural area south of Ciudad Sandino. He's an evangélico (Protestant) and takes his faith seriously and holds his faith joyfully close to his heart. He has prayed and prayed for rain, but no rain. He had total crop loss this summer. Juan then replanted on faith, and has told us that three manzanas are for us. With starvation lingering at their door, he still shares his little with us and others, and still gives thanks to God daily.

**César** works day-in and day-out to develop community organizations and leadership. He says he doesn't believe in religion but he believes in God. César understands that the *lucha* (struggle) is long and difficult, but as we work and struggle together we are bound to each other and to the people. When the trucks break for the third time in one day and we're walking, then at least we are in the *lucha*. César works for very little in the way of salary. Once he was given some extra money by friends

of ours, so he took that money and rented chairs for Trinidad Central and bought candy for their celebration, because the folks there had no money.

**Craig** is not a Nicaraguan, but a Scot who is bicycling from Chile to Alaska in support of programs for disabled children in "third-world" countries. He may cross over to Asia and bicycle back down the other side of the Pacific. Craig was stranded in Managua waiting for spare bike parts and asked if he could pitch his tent on our grounds. We took him in, and he promptly came down with dengue, a dangerous malaria-like fever carried by mosquitos that is epidemic in Managua just now. A week of high fever, chills, aches, a fiery rash, and general misery followed.

Even so we enjoyed his company and appreciated how he tried to pitch in, even from his sickbed.

**Matilda** works hard, as most Nicaraguan women do. She takes her meager resources and labors before sunrise to prepare meals for anyone who shows up to work on the Health Center. As soon as lunch is finished, she cleans up and starts on supper. Every day she does this, and always with a generous smile and a gracious word.

**Dr. Guerrero** operated on Daniel for free. Dr. Guerrero is a pediatric surgeon who lives in a tiny house, drives a pitiful car, and has a job but little income. He did two surgical procedures for no compensation at all. He asked favors and got other bills reduced so that the total came to about \$800. This was because our insurance refused to pay. Although \$800 was awful (due to no funds available), \$2000 would have prevented Daniel from receiving this needed operation.

These are just a few of the stories we know . . . just a few examples of the people and their kindness and their generosity. These people give so much, and they have so little. At Christmastime in the States, people are known for their generosity. Here, it is evident year-round.



**Mike, Brian, Peter, and César work on the truck...again.**



**Matilda, outside her kitchen, with her mother, daughter, and grandchildren**

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## PROJECT NEWS, AN UPDATE... Here's some of the work we have done so far:

**Potable Water for Roberto Clemente:** Some 50 additional families in the poorest neighborhood of Ciudad Sandino, now have access to running water. We helped with fundraising, transportation of materials, and coordination of efforts.

**Medical Clinics:** Several hundred people have received medical care, and donated medications were distributed by Nora and Pam (see article on page 5).

**Organic Sesame:** We have done planning/organizing work with local farmers and U.S. contacts so that Nicaraguans will be able to market certified organic sesame directly at good prices, rather than selling through an intermediary at reduced prices. Planting is scheduled to begin in February, at the beginning of the next growing season. All investors are appreciated!

**Trinidad Central Health Center:** With assistance from CDCA staff and volunteers, construction of a health center in a nearby rural district is well underway. The basic structure and roof are up, the septic system has been dug, and staffing by doctors has been committed.

**English Classes:** We are currently teaching 4 English classes, with 1 additional class in the planning stages. Classes meet one to three times per week. Knowledge of English increases employability here, and we receive many, many requests for instruction.

**Garden:** With help from our neighbors, we have planted a garden and have begun harvesting vegetables. Surplus produce is being given to feeding programs that serve malnourished children. The garden also lays the "groundwork" (pun intended!) for future demonstration projects in sustainable agriculture.

**Reforestation:** Tree seedlings have been planted and networking begun on a project to distribute them and educate families in caring for their own fruit and shade trees. Much of Nicaragua's timber has been cut for cooking firewood.

**Donated Supplies:** Thousands of dollars worth of medical, school, and recreational supplies have been collected in the U.S., transported to Nicaragua, and dispersed here to grassroots organizations.

**Emergency Assistance:** We regularly provide transportation, administrative, and translating assistance in medical emergencies and in support of partner organizations.

**Transportation:** Our bus has made several commercial runs, providing much-needed transportation, a few jobs, and a little income for us.

**Hospitality:** We have become a resting place for weary travelers, who frequently have stayed on as volunteers. Our supper table is always expanding to include coworkers, visitors, and overnight guests.

## Editorial...

I hate the heat. plus it's not supposed to be hot at this holiday season!

In the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was baptized by John, and God spoke as the Spirit descended like a dove. Presumably that is how Jesus knew he was called to his work.

My question is how do I know what I'm called to do? My mother says that God must have called us to Nicaragua because all the vehicles and drivers made it here, and alive. A friend says there must be joy involved.

I wonder.

The vehicles made it here, but are slowly dying and we have little money to fix them.

I hate the bugs. We have to deal with thousands of flies on a daily basis. We have an infestation of mice and they have fleas. We have mosquitos and I worry with each new bite whether the kids will get malaria or dengue (both diseases are now epidemic).

I hate the machismo and the politics.

I hate feeling lonely and isolated because I struggle with the language.

I hate being without water.

I hate listening to cattle dying and the hacking of the meat next door every night.

And mostly I hate seeing so much misery and feeling so helpless. I want to help, and there's no money for the projects.

So I wonder.

Jesus seemed to enjoy his calling. He didn't seem to feel isolated, but then, no one did understand his message very well (if at all), and his closest friends did leave him when they were most needed. He tried to elicit sharing and caring and succeeded, but then, his disciples didn't want to share his "right hand" and then fell asleep when caring was of the utmost importance.

He did seem to enjoy his calling, but then, I guess hanging on a cross wasn't a piece of cake.

I suppose Jesus felt lonely, isolated, and helpless, too.

And so I pray.

- Kathleen Murdock

**Nicaragua** was often in the news back in the 80's, when there was a war going on. The media, however, don't seem nearly as interested any more. We would like to share some of the reality that we're experiencing as we live here. The news is not good.

Violence is on the increase, from domestic abuse to armed conflict in the north-central mountains. People are starving to death. From May through August, Nicaragua suffered a severe drought which essentially wiped out the year's first expected harvest. Many people were afraid to plant for the second harvest, or simply lacked the seeds for planting, so recovery will be slow. Nicaragua's ecology is rapidly deteriorating; in fact, we have heard governmental estimates that if current trends are not reversed Nicaragua will become a desert in 50 years. The economy is in a shambles.

The statistics are grim enough. When the sociological trends take on the faces of our neighbors and friends, the reality is even grimmer. "Poverty" meant our nearest neighbor brought the body of his dead three-day-old daughter home on the bus, and she was laid out on a card table in the corner of their smoky little house while the coffin was being built. Another grieving friend oversaw the purchase of a coffin in his family and then nearly went to jail when the cousin who was supposed to pay for it backed out of his commitment. Doña Tomasa, seen at one of our medical clinics, was facing death for lack of medication costing 14 cents a day.

Advent, the time of waiting as we look forward to Christmas, is a dark time of year. The days are short and getting shorter. The response of the Church has been to light candles, and the darker the days become the more candles we light. There are brightly burning candles here in the darkness of Nicaragua as well.

**Hope** -- we have so many new friends who refuse to give up, who are dreaming of how things could be better and working to bring those dreams to life. **Joy** -- nobody we know here lets gloom spoil a celebration, whether it's a national or religious holiday, a birthday, or Sunday afternoon at the pool. **Peace** -- Juan is the one who reminds us to wait on God's time as we work to reduce the suffering. **Love** -- sharing and generosity are constant here. The rural areas outside of Ciudad Sandino were hit hard by the drought, but we never arrive at Matilda's house without her offering us a fruit drink and inviting us to stay for lunch. Again and again we "rich" North Americans have been told by our "poor" neighbors, "Anything I have that you need is yours."



The news from Nicaragua may not be good. But the Good News is alive and well here.

## Community News is back in the newsletter by popular demand.

For one brief shining moment the whole JHC was together at the end of July: **Jessica** had arrived from the Forsyth Drama Program and **Tiff** had not yet returned to Durham to the North Carolina School of Science and Math.

We have enjoyed visits from friends (Nora Laws, Nick & Nicole Trowell, Pam Agner, and Patty Wallace) and from family (Jessie Junkin McCall [**Sarah's** mother] and Thomas Earl Woodard [**Mike's** dad]).



Pat, Daniel, and Coury maneuver water to the garden

**Daniel** has turned two and has several Spanish words in his vocabulary. **Coury** has his own garden, loves the animals and bugs, but misses friends. **Jessica** has started at the Theater School in Managua and is working hard on her Independent Study High School 10th grade curriculum.

**Kathy** stays busy chasing down all the centavos, translating, and teaching English; **Pat** tending the garden, fighting the *zompopos* (a type of very hungry ant), and building community with our agriculturally-minded neighbors; **Sarah** with errands, e-mail (finally a way to get **Tiff** to write) and those troublesome Spanish verbs; **Mike** dealing with all the Nicaraguan men who only want to deal with "The Man"; and **Kathleen** with two English classes, fundraising, creative cooking, and mothering.



The JHC's work in Nicaragua is known as the Center for Development in Central America (CDCA). Contact us directly (by airmail) at:

c/o FUNDECI-Casa Ben Linder  
Barrio Mons. Lezcano  
de la estatua 3 c. al sur 1 1/2 arriba  
Managua, Nicaragua

Email address:  
jhc@uugate.uni.ni

# Report From the U.S.A. Board -

In September Pam Agner and Nora Laws traveled to Nicaragua as JHC Board Members and as health care professionals. For three weeks they provided medical clinics and dispensed medicines and medical supplies in Ciudad Sandina and in particular the barrio of Roberto Climente. Through generous donations of friends, family, churches and associates they were able to deliver about \$2000 worth of medicines and supplies.

Both Pam and Nora had been in Nicaragua in 1987 and found health care delivery to be quite different this trip. Before, all people had access to the health care system, but due to political and economic changes, health care is now available only to those who can afford it. Vicky, a three year old, with a history of seizures, was unable to get treatment because her family could not afford the diagnostic test for epilepsy necessary before a neurologist would treat her. The test, an EEG, cost 100 cordobas or \$15. Dona Tomasa, an elderly woman, came to a clinic in congestive heart failure. She could not afford the prescribed heart medication that would save her life. The cost of digoxin was 1 cordoba per pill, or \$.15 a day. Through the CDCA Vicky was able to get her test and the Phenobarbital that will control her seizures. Dona Tomasa is literally alive today because CDCA assisted her in getting her medication. CDCA will see that Vicky, Dona Tomasa and many others like them get their health care needs met.

In a country where people lack basic necessities for life, Pam and Nora were both struck with the Nicaraguans' wealth of spirit, faith and sense of community, and felt blessed.

## Financial Need is Urgent!

At the last Board of Directors meeting on Oct. 29, 1994, the desperate financial state of the JHC was apparent. The checking account holds \$1.79. The following bills need to be paid this month. In Nicaragua: Permanent residency cards \$800; Remaining customs fees \$800; Repair of vehicles \$500; Food and expenses for staff \$2,000 (sub-total: \$4,100). In the U.S. Bills for the repair of the rental properties: \$1,400; removal of an enormous dead tree required by the city \$1,000; liability insurance on rental properties \$600; and health insurance for the JHC staff for a month \$600 (sub-total: \$3,600). Total need for November: \$7,700.

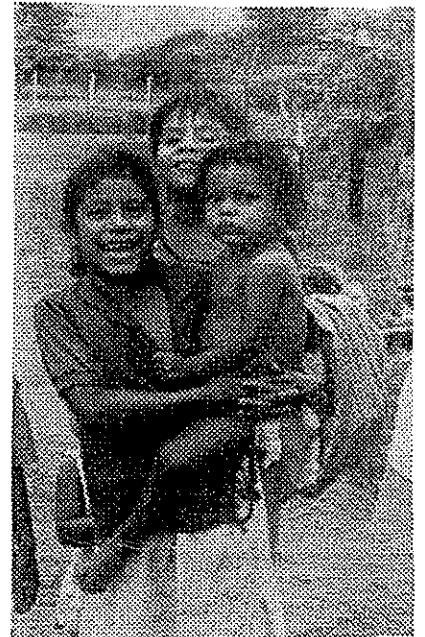
Please contribute whatever you are able to! Every gift will help. To schedule a showing of the CDCA video, or arrange a presentation by a Board member, call Linda Mashburn at 872-5927 or send a note in the enclosed envelope.

## How Much Good Can I Really Do?

- \* You can give of your time...(see back page).
- \* You can help change US policy & international money policies.
- \* You can give and/or pledge. We are desperate for funds to help get projects started and underway. What can your gift/pledge do?

- \$25 will provide 100 life-saving syringes for a health center
- \$50 will fill one truck with gasoline for transportation needs
- \$100 will cover room and board for a volunteer for one month
- \$500 will build 10 solar composting latrines for 20 families to share
- \$1200 (or a monthly pledge of \$100) will pay the electricity/rent for the Center for a year
- \$2000 (or a monthly pledge of \$167) will cover the expenses in Nicaragua for a full-time JHC staffperson for a year
- \$3500 will provide a community of 200 families with potable water
- \$5000 will get the organic sesame crop underway

- \* As you plan your holiday giving, please consider an alternative gift to the poor in Central America through a contribution to the Jubilee House Community in honor of family members or friends.



- 5 -

Yes! I want to support the JHC's Center for Development in Central America in the following ways:

\*\* I want to stay informed. Please make the corrections shown on my mailing label (see reverse side).

\*\* Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

\*\* For 1995, I pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ per [ ] month, [ ] quarter, [ ] year.

\*\* Alternative Giving. Please acknowledge my gifts to the following people with an attractive gift card to each:

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Given By: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Given By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please use additional paper for more names)



## In this work of mammoth proportions we need

all the help we can get. Some of the ways you can help in this exciting work:

- > Pray for us and our Board -- all of us have great fears and trepidations.
- > Share with us and/or our Board any funding ideas or help you might have or can give.
- > Plan speaking engagements for friends of CDCA to come and share the work with many.
- > Volunteer with our Board to give them much-needed help and encouragement. (If you have skills in appropriate technology, health care, or sustainable agriculture, then volunteer in Nicaragua.)
- > Plan a work crew to come to Nicaragua to work for 7-14 days or longer.
- > Look and see if you have any spare diesel buses in your backyard that you might be willing to give away (two diesel buses on a route could provide the living expenses for a staff of 12).
- > Give generously (see previous page).



Med volunteer team at work in Trinidad Central

## How can we begin to thank

all the people who have been instrumental in getting us down here and supporting us? But begin we must:

- \* To all the folks who helped pack us up



Using JHC donation to lay water pipe in Roberto Clemente



Waiting for water

while we were in North Carolina and after we left (apologies to you as well!).

\* To all the workers who helped repair the houses, do the yard sales, and fix the vehicles.

\* To all the people who have pledged and have given to CDCA to help this work get underway.

\* To all our volunteers here in Nicaragua and in the States who keep us going.

\* To the caravan drivers who took time, money, and sometimes "their lives in their hands".

\* And especially to all the Board members who have given and given and given of their time, money, and love to us. We say **THANK YOU!**

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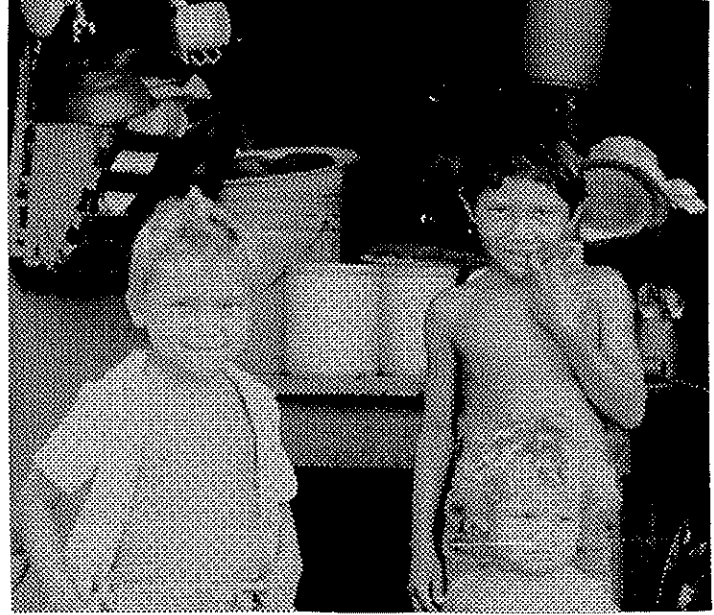
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