

Center for Development in Central America



May 1996



Shrimp farming has become a huge business in Nicaragua. Shrimp farms are springing up in the mouths of rivers at the ocean's edge. One of our microenterprise loans is to a small cooperative of seven men trying to get their feet wet (as it were) in this enormous business.

Our loan to them was for the purchase of a pump for the three pilas (shrimp beds) that they are digging. These men live in a lean-to on the beach and are digging the pilas by hand (the smallest of which is two acres). They are seeding the pilas, feeding the shrimp, keeping predator birds and fish away, and harvesting the shrimp *all manually*.

Unfortunately, what they are having to compete with are international businesses that come in with millions of dollars, huge machinery, and access to large land areas. It makes the cooperative's success very difficult and may kill the shrimp population like it has in many countries. Like most international businesses that invest vast

sums of money, they are greedy and will do anything to turn huge profits quickly and so they destroy environments.

It's a hard road to hoe...or a hard pila to dig...but these men are working hard and are trying to make a living for their families. We grew up thinking that if you worked hard and remained true, you would succeed. These men are working hard and are remaining true to the environment, but will they succeed?

We are grateful for all the help we have received from you over the past two years. Yup! We've been here for 2 years now!!! It doesn't seem possible. Why? For some of us time has flown by because it has been wonderful. For others of us we have actually survived the first two years! All of us are grateful for your support (volunteer, financial, and prayer) that has enabled us to make it.

In looking back over the last two years we often feel we haven't accomplished very much, but many of you in the US and many here in Nicaragua assure us we have accomplished a great deal. We think our feelings of inadequacy come from seeing the enormous need that is here. "If we just had _____ we could do so much more" strikes us often. We want to do more and with your help we can. We are looking at our third year coming up and with your help these goals are what we would like to accomplish:

- enable the community of Los Andes to get **potable water**
- expand the **organic sesame project** to more land and more cooperatives (including obtaining our own organic certification)
- expand the **reforestation project**
- enable Gabriel Cardenal cooperative to build a **micro-processing plant for milk**
- promote the use of **solar dehydrating/composting latrine** and **energy-efficient cook stove** (Habitat for Humanity has asked us to do a workshop on these)
- write a **manual** for the above mentioned latrine (one is currently available for the stove)
- build a **wind generator**
- continue and expand **health care worker trainings** and incorporate **natural medicines** in the trainings
- continue and expand health clinics
- firmly establish the **People's Pharmacy** as opposed to currently having medicines only when donations exist
- expand our **microenterprise fund**
- increase the number of small businesses in the microenterprise project
- provide **more technical assistance** to those involved in the microenterprise loan fund
- continue the **English classes**
- expand connections with other groups involved in work here
- continue to respond to requests from the communities as they arise
- increase our **US base of support** (volunteer, financial, medicines, items of use, etc.)
- continue to inform US people of realities here and how



Friends of

Center for Development in Central America



they can help

- increase the pitiful salaries we pay the Nica staff and create salaries for those of us working here
- work closely with the Friends of CDCA, a new US organization designed to support the work here through volunteer help, acquiring needed items/medicines, raising funds (\$25 membership), recruiting volunteers for here, etc.

Whew! Will YOU help?

Community News: Sarah and Jessica are currently in the US speaking about the CDCA. Many, many thanks to all who have offered them hospitality, speaking engagements, and help along the way. They will be seeing Tiff who is finishing his freshman year at Cornell. Jessica will stay on to attend the Forsyth Summer Enrichment program in drama.

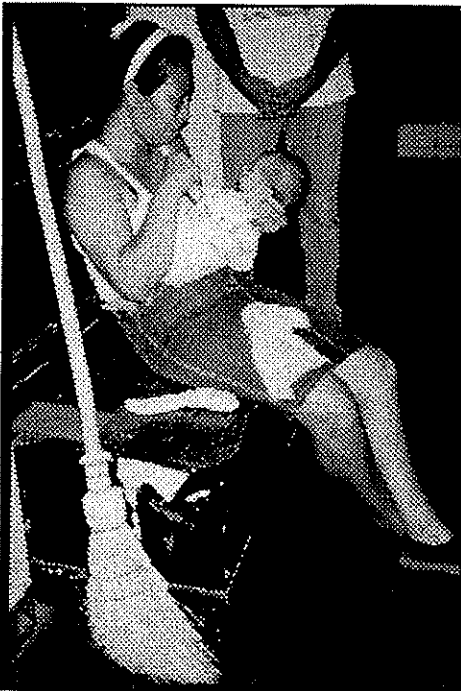
Those of us who are back at home have enjoyed a visit from Mike's father, Thomas Earl, and Beth, who used to live in community with us when she was a little girl. We sure did love to see them come and hated to see them go.

Mike has been busy with the new sesame crop and organizing with César all the community development work we have been doing. Kathleen has been working on grants as well as trying to balance the mothering of three with all the other work. Pat sure has helped Kathleen and Mike with the care of the children and is busy putting in a garden now that the rains are on their way (hopefully). Kathy continues with English and is



the proud parent of a 1995 financial report (the labor was long, but the baby healthy!). She continues to labor over books when she's not translating.

For the children...well, all are growing like weeds in the rainy season! Coury (7 years old) goes to an enrichment program two mornings a week, dance class one morning a week, and home schooling. Daniel (3 1/2) manages to get more dirt on him than Pigpen in Charlie Brown! Both brothers love Joseph (4 months) who will be glad to be through with vaccinations!



Reflection.....

Since Joseph Philip has been born I receive three questions:

Is the baby a boy or a girl?

How old is he?

Is he Nicaraguan?

This last question is the one that always amazes me and my answer always tickles people here. (Joseph has dual citizenship.) Yes, he is a Nicaraguan. That answer pleases our friends here, the folks we work with, and total strangers. Joseph is "Filipito" here.

I think the reason that his citizenship pleases folks is many fold: I opted to have a child here instead of running back to "better" medical care; making him a Nicaraguan says we love this country, too; and he is one of them so in turn, we become part of them, too.

It's odd that a baby can make such a breakthrough for us, isn't it? But then upon reflection... for those of us who are Christians, we believe in one such baby who made that breakthrough for humanity on behalf of God. So maybe it isn't so odd after all.

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

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