"Enabling people to help themselves" is one of our slogans here at CDCA... empowerment. In the news following we illustrate how we try to empower folks, not just help.

The sesame project has grown nationwide and is spreading into other organic crops: honey, pitahaya (a cactus fruit), pineapple, coffee. We are working with 1400 growers all over the western side of Nicaragua. We have a buyer lined up committed to buy three to four containers of sesame (144,000 - 192,000 pounds).

The buyer, Jeremy Thaler of Once Again Nut Butter, came to Nicaragua to negotiate directly with the growers. We organized meetings and took him around so that he got a realistic idea of the needs of the growers and the growers began to understand the needs of the buyer.

Another step has been helping the growers to organize themselves into a business. We are discovering more and more farmers wanting to become a part of this new enterprise. Why? Well... we provide some upfront money for planting. We help growers find fair prices. We give them control as we teach business skills. We are hopefully empowering the farmers.

The dairy project that we've been working on for two years is again on a front burner. Funding may actually happen for this micro-processing plant for milk. The foundation we'd approached before changed its policies and required basically a whole new work-up. Using us as an organizing tool, the cooperatives put the paperwork together (not an easy task for campesinos who rise at 4:00 AM to work all day in the fields). We organized, guided, translated, typed, provided transportation and were the conduit between Washington and Ciudad Sandino, but we did NOT do the work. We taught and enabled the cooperatives to do it... giving them the control and responsibility. Keep your fingers crossed!

Six more women have been surgically sterilized. This program is designed to enable women and men, who have decided they want no more children, to actually be able to practice birth control. Birth control is expensive and unavailable to the poor. When and if a person decides their family is big enough, we provide the funds in the form of a loan and the logistical support for the surgery... again, giving them control over their own lives.

The health center in Las Parcelas is almost finished thanks to Highland Presbyterian Church in Maryville, TN. Twenty-two volunteers from Maryville came down here in June bringing supplies and money for the building materials. They dug and moved tons of earth and worked to make this health center a reality.

The community of Las Parcelas is in a remote area. The group lived with families or in tents, played, worked, handed out eyeglasses and medicines, and grew to love the community. The feeling was mutual.

In July eight more folks came, this time from North Carolina and Georgia. They worked on the health center some but mostly did health clinics there and in four other areas, treating 233 patients. Their clinics were enlivened with clowning, music, and juggling.

This health center, as with all of our projects, grew out of a community

- continued on back

Yes! I want to help in some way to support the work of the Center for Development in Central America.

☐ Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution of $____
(For a minimum gift of $25.00, you may request Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto, our unique and versatile cookbook. For a minimum gift of $50.00, a hand-thrown pottery mug especially designed for the CDCA; please specify right-handed or left-handed mug handle.)
☐ Yes, please send me a copy of the cookbook.
☐ Yes, I would like a mug. [ ] Right-handed. [ ] Left-handed.

☐ Enclosed is $25.00 for membership in the Friends of CDCA. This is for:
☐ Membership annual renewal. ☐ Joining as a new member of this U.S. support group.

☐ Please contact me about opportunities as a volunteer in ☐ the U.S., ☐ in Nicaragua.

☐ Please contact me about the Angel Tree project.

Please add me to your mailing list, or correct my address label as follows: (Mail to the address on this newsletter label).

Name and Address:

Phone / Fax / Email address:
discernment process. It, as with all of our projects, requires community participation and leadership. The center has to be their center.

In Los Filos, 15 energy-efficient/wood-burning cook stoves are being used by families living in new houses. The Habitat-style housing project is funded by the Rainbow Foundation and they encouraged the use of our stoves in the houses.

We did a demonstration with the families to see if they wanted the stoves. After seeing one in action the families agreed. Now each family has built their own stove - women, men and children working together. Because they built their own stove they understand the principles and can "trouble shoot" problems. It has been exciting!

A health center in Los Filos is almost completed. We worked with the community to recruit an organization, Bridges to Community, to bring funds and groups in to build the center. Our solar composting/dehydrating latrine is being built there (and in Las Parcelas) with us overseeing the work. As with all our work, we try to stay connected with the needs of the community and keep them in control.

Kathy and Pat are currently working on their fall speaking tour. They are headed for Wisconsin and Illinois in October and November. If you want to hear and see the program, contact us and we'll send a schedule.

Sarah is now organizing her "spring" tour. If you are on the East Coast and want her to come show slides and speak, contact us right away. She's aiming for February - March 1998.

All of us (except Kathy) recently visited the States. We enjoyed being with friends and family as well as doing business. Pat led a workshop at the Friends National Gathering.

Kathleen and Mike made contacts with funding sources.

Courney is now in third grade; Daniel in kindergarten; and Joseph in diapers! Tiff is a junior at Cornell University and Jessica a first-year student at Ithaca College. It's nice to have them in the same city.

Many thanks to:
- All of you in the States who hosted us, guided us from one spot to another, and came to hear our "dog & pony" show and gave your support to this work.
- the Friends of CDCA with their hard, faithful work and for the wonderful, fun annual meeting.
- those of you who continually support us with pledges, gifts, donations, prayers, and love.

What do we need?
- Of course we need funds to operate! (What an understatement!) We also need:
- an electric typewriter for filling out forms.
- a laptop, diesel cement mixer for speeding up construction work during delegations.
- a good 4x4 diesel truck.
- speaking engagements for Sarah (see above).
- folks to sponsor an Angel Tree (see box).

What is an "Angel Tree"? The concept is to counter the commercialization of Christmas by decorating a Christmas tree with wooden Nicaraguan ornaments and then selling the ornaments as alternative Christmas gifts. This year, three shapes of ornaments are available: Angel, Cross, and Star of David. If you would like to aid the people of Nicaragua and bring some sense to Christmas by sponsoring a tree in your church, civic group, or school group, then please indicate your interest on the return form and we'll contact you with more information. Thanks!

Reflection...

We went to see the Chinese acrobats from Taiwan ... twice. We got cheap seats (about $1.00 apiece) and the performers were great! I mean, great! Courty and I were awed -- I was awed by what they could do with their bodies.

While we were watching these incredible people fling, balance, and support themselves, our new friends in Las Parcelas and in other areas were trying to figure out what they were going to do about food. This year's first crop failed due to the drought we had here in May, June, and July.

How do I balance that part of my life? I want to enjoy gifts that we are able to enjoy and yet I know as I do others suffer ... not people "out there," but people I know and care about. I'm not an acrobat. Jesus called me not to be an acrobat and balance, but called me to love. - Kathleen

Address Correction Requested