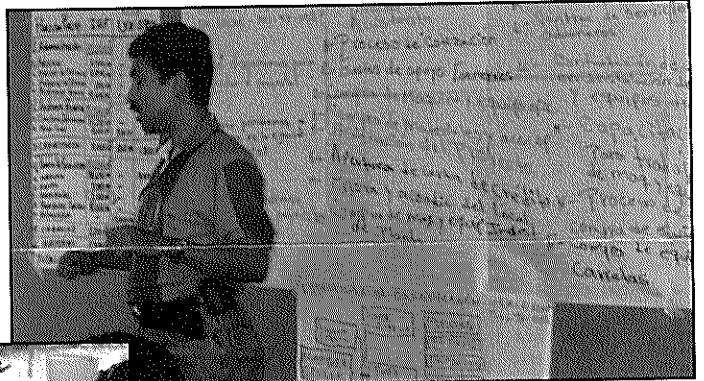




We have great news! By the time you read this:

The first container of sesame (44,000 pounds of those itty, bitty seeds) will be in the buyer's warehouse. Whoopee! The rest of the crop will be more touch and go due to the current drought here. The sesame project has grown to over 1400 growers. We help the growers get up-front money for planting, get certification as organic, process and ship the seed, and find a buyer. Sesame usually grows well here. It needs less rain than most crops. It is an excellent cash crop to provide farmers some money. In-country marketing is difficult because Nicaragua is such a poor country.

Diary cooperatives meeting and learning

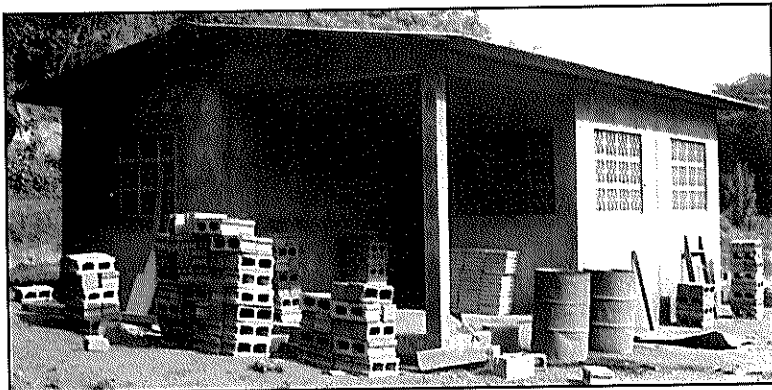


The dairy project (the micro milk processing plant operated by five dairy cooperatives) will be underway. It is approved by the Inter-American Foundation (\$90,000), all agreements are signed, and we're waiting for the money. This project has taken more than two years to bring about.

The money will go to the five cooperatives (not us) and will be in the form of a loan which will be repaid into a community bank for more microenterprise businesses. The plant will pasteurize the milk, bag it, and refrigerate it while going to market. The plant should supply Ciudad Sandino (population approximately 100,000) with fresh, safe milk. One big dairy business is already threatening the stores who will be buying the milk. While our sesame buyer (Once Again Nut Butter) shows us that capitalism can include compassion, the big dairy proves the norm of the all-consuming greediness of big business.

Two health center dedications will have been held. We built one center in Las Parcelas with many volunteers. We worked with

Bridges to Communities to build the second center in Los Filos. Both communities are remote and agriculturally based. Both health centers have solar dehydrating/composting latrines. Both centers will have a doctor from the Rainbow Foundation seeing patients. The fruition of these projects has been long in coming and has required long hours of labor. We are tickled to see them happen!

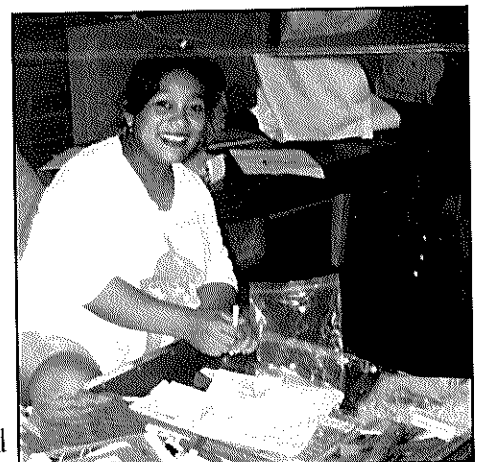


Las Parcelas Health Center

They are the *poorest* of centers. They have little to nothing. Yet these centers share their resources.

We were approached 1 1/2 years ago for a sister preschool project. We felt that we had no smoothly running preschool at that time, but now we are pleased to be able to offer this opportunity. If you are involved with a preschool and want the children, teachers, and parents to become involved long distance with a Third World preschool, then please contact us. We envision an exchanging of art, letters, maybe photos, and a chance for U.S. kids to share with Nicaraguan kids.

Connie sorting preschool supplies



We continue health trainings for lay workers whose goal is to foster better health care in their communities. We help them develop a sense of camaraderie with each other and appreciation for their work. We accomplish this by doing fun events with them. Pat has taken them to carnivals (the ferris wheel had four seat-buckets and was hand-pushed... fast) and hosted pool parties here. For people whose life is hard, fun is appreciated and remembered.

The voluntary sterilization program continues. Six more women had tubal ligations this fall. People in the U.S. ask us about this program. Let us be clear: this program is a response by us to women and men who approach *us* for a way to end the hard-fought battle of birth control. Birth control is hard to manage for the poor: The cost is on-going and ever-growing. Now even the concept of birth control is threatened here. The Roman Catholic Church's hierarchy is calling for an end to government subsidies. Family planning is nigh unto impossible. The people who have gone through our program are grateful and relieved. It's just another small way of giving hope.

A delegation from the Wesley Foundation at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC, is coming right after Christmas. They will be working on the construction of a school in Las Parcelas, which is about 1½ hours drive from here, but about 10 miles northwest of us as the crow flies. We are looking forward to their group of 12.

Oh, so little space and so much to say! This is the most common feeling we have when approaching our single page newsletter. With our winter issue, we are luxuriating in two whole pages; therefore, we want to introduce you to two people we have come to know, Blanca and Juan in Las Parcelas.

Juan is the community leader. He's dedicated and commands the respect of the community. He is successful in getting people out to work on the health center month after month. He works closely with the mayor of Mateare, the political district in which Las Parcelas lies. Juan is proud of his community's leadership committee, and works to involve everyone.

Blanca cooks for the CDCA workers and volunteers. She is generous to all of us who come there. She remembers little things like who doesn't like sugar in their coffee and she hikes through the woods to show off their cave with its little spring to visitors.

Juan and Blanca have a house full of children from young to grown. They have little, but share freely. They, along with many, have suffered from the drought.

El Niño brought dry winds during five months of our "rainy season". The climate here is normally dry from November to May. When we say "dry", we mean DRY (no rain, zilch, nothing!), but from May to October we are supposed to have lots of rain. This year? Only a little.

Juan and Blanca say, "We're lucky we have enough dew moisture to grow fruit and a few vegetables." What else is there to say? No straw to make brooms to sell for a little money. No beans for protein. No rice for carbohydrates. "We're lucky..."

In the mountains, NGO's (non-governmental [non-profit] organizations) have petitioned the president to declare the areas disasters, in order to appeal for international disaster relief. President Alemán says, "No, the NGO's just want to get their hands on the relief aid." This is just one more example of the response this government makes to its people.

Juan and Blanca, with César's help, have petitioned for food relief. Nothing. But they hope. Amazing people. Amazing people.

Juan and Bianca with volunteers



Reflection....

It's a hot day already and it's not even 8:00 AM. The palms are blowing. The birds are chirping. It's dry and dusty. Maestro is revving engines. Mike and César are trying to explain something to each other. It doesn't feel at all like Christmas.

Yet... maybe it should. No one really knows when Jesus was born, but odds are good it was hot and dry, and it had birds chirping, traffic noises blaring, and many folks trying to explain something to someone else. There were no fir trees, snow, glass ornaments, strings of lights, wrapped packages, santas, or shopping malls. There was poverty, dirt floor shacks, bare-footed dirty children, and a government abusive towards the people.

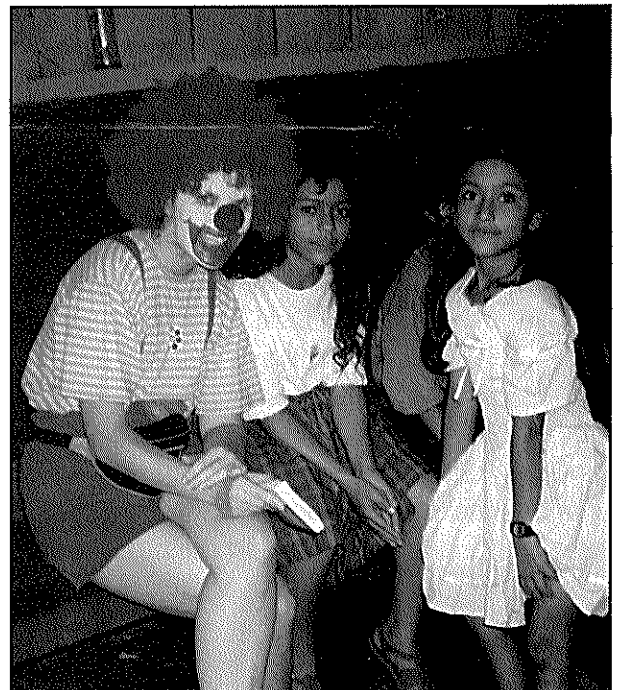
Upon reflecting, it's beginning to feel *a lot* like Christmas.

I'm not one to poo-poo holidays. People of all races, cultures, and beliefs take days to celebrate. I think, actually, the poor need it more than the rich. For the lives of the poor are filled with work and boredom. Survival is hard work... always has been. For the poor, there are no weekend jaunts, entertainment, or parties. Food, when there is some, is the same and void of spices.

The poor *need* to celebrate. They *need* to splurge on foods, clothes, and party. They *need* variety, spice, and fun. And so celebrations are in order... Purisima, Hanukkah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, New Year, China New Year, and the list goes on and on.

Christmas is *our* celebration time. We celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus was poor and understood the need for celebrations. He went to parties, weddings, laughed, and... I suspect... rejoiced in joy. *His* yoke is light, he said.

So celebrate! Add that spice to your life, join your loved ones, give those gifts, sing, dance, laugh. This is the time. And remember your poor neighbors around the world who will celebrate, too.



Let us introduce you to the CDCA staff:

César Fajardo, with Mike, is in charge of community organizing, the sesame, the dairy, and the Nicaraguan staff. He's very dedicated and extremely competent. He is our teacher. He and Karla have four beautiful children. Their youngest, Carlito, has some health problems.

Henry Carcache, "Maestro", is our mechanic par excellence. He is a genius when it comes to engines. He tried his hand at a shrimp farm which was then destroyed by a hurricane. He is a grandfather and is gentle.

Josue Jaime, "Cabeza", is our agriculture worker and does whatever needs doing. Cabeza is 17 years old. We pay for him to go to school, and he, in turn, studies hard. He is a sweet young man.

Connie Hernández is the preschool teacher for the Roberto Clemente preschool. She trains the volunteers who teach there. She's a good teacher. Her wages are paid through special donations. Right this minute, she is absolutely huge with a baby on the way, and she's so little herself!

Magdalena Gutierrez is new here. She's our hospitality person. Azucena quit due to health problems. Magdalena does special things for the staff like make desserts and pop popcorn when we have it. She and Cabeza dance a mean *marimba* for special occasions.

Rogelio Caldera is also new. He worked with us on construction projects. We decided it was more beneficial for all of us if we put him on salary. He can do *anything* construction-wise *and* does it well. He is a perfectionist.

Winston Avendaño is our newest staff member. He comes every weekday afternoon to play with the children. His job is to teach them Spanish through play. He is 19 years old. He takes a computer repair class on Saturdays. He is an artist, and with his brother painted the oil paintings that Pat and Kathy sold on their last speaking tour.

Briefly, about the U.S. staff members, **Mike** and César work together on most of the projects. They coordinate most of the community development work of the CDCA. **Kathy** is our translator and bookkeeper. **Sarah** is our appropriate tech person, our pretty-it-upper (she takes my scrawls and makes a gorgeous document from them), photographer, and logistics person. **Pat** is the health trainings coordinator, sterilization coordinator, and preschool consortium representative. **Kathleen** works on PR materials, grant requests, reports, and does most of the correspondence. Most of us work as volunteers without salary.

That is the way it breaks down. Then there are all of the times when we all jump into crises together.

One side note to the above staff listing. We have Geronimo, who apprentices Maestro; "Pelona", who works some with Cabeza; "Shagi", who works with Rogelio; and whoever else shows up to work with someone here!



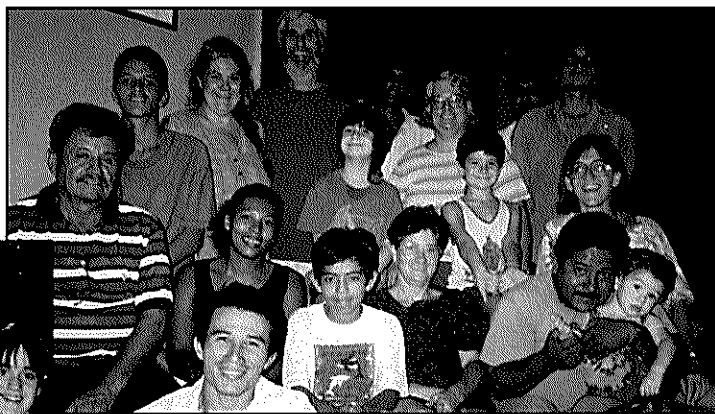
Sarah is working on her early 1998

She is targeting college and university campuses in the east, and of course wants to return to churches, family, and friends who have welcomed her before. Contact us if you want her to come and have not yet heard from her.

Pat and **Kathy** have returned from their fall speaking tour in the Midwest. They visited friends and Friends. They are grateful for all the new friends they made, and enjoyed being back in cold weather again.

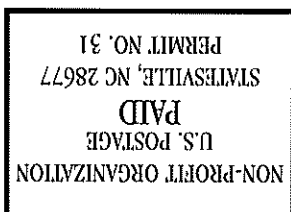
Mike is pulling out his guitar more and filling our lives with music again. **Kathleen** is extremely frustrated at trying to balance motherhood and CDCA work and rewriting her play. **Coury**, **Daniel**, and **Joseph** are learning Spanish rapidly with Winston. They all hoot and holler in the yard, racing on bikes up and down the dirt road out front. They, as well as the rest of us, are looking forward to **Tiff** and **Jessica's** trip home over Christmas.

speaking tour (Feb/Mar).



Address Correction Requested

Center for Development in Central America
Jubilee House Community, Inc.
2425 Spicewood Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27106-9768
phone: 910/922-4794
e-mail: jhc@sdmnic.org.ni



Thanks...

As we begin to reflect on 1997, we are overwhelmed by the goodness of all of you. We are grateful for you who bother to read this thing instead of just tossing it. We give special thanks...

- Linda Mashburn, who has actually mailed almost every newsletter since we've been down here; and the Hendersonville volunteers who collated this issue.
- for all the volunteers who came down to help this year: delegations and individuals. They not only worked hard but they spread laughter, music, and joy.

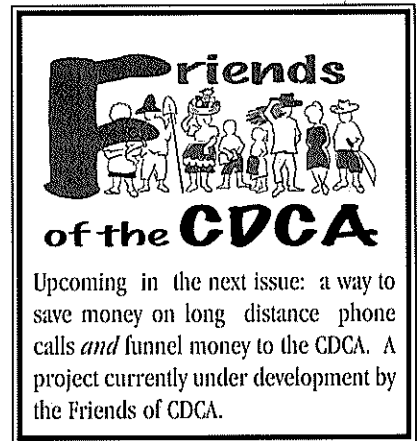


- for all the U.S.-based volunteers, especially the Friends of CDCA. They scrounge, support, work, and spread the news.

- for all who support the work through your pledges, gifts, notes, and prayers.

- for all who hosted the various ones of us when we returned to the States to speak, most recently Kathy and Pat.

To all of you we give our most excellent thanks!



and Needs...

As we begin 1998, we would like for you to consider making CDCA one of your designated organizations for gifts. When we go back to the States, we are amazed each time at the abundance that exists in the U.S.

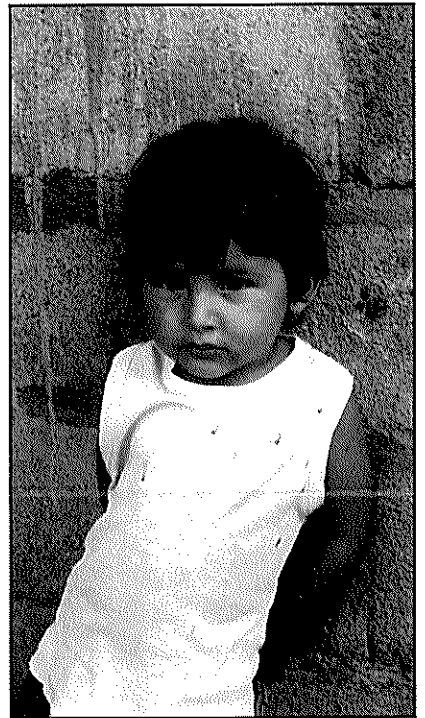
Many U.S. citizens would think nothing of spending \$100 on a weekend away... or even an evening's entertainment! \$100 here is a "decent" month's wage. The minimum wage here is 300 cordobas *a month* (about \$31.00).

A painless way to double your gift is to check to see if your employer will match your gift, and then doing whatever they require to sign up for the program. We have a few givers who do this, and wow! Instantaneously... poof!... it's doubled. If you're interested, check with your employer, and let us know if you need any further information from us.

To pledge to CDCA would mean higher wages for our Nicaraguan staff, more water projects, construction projects, more sesame growers and cooperatives working together, and just more hope. For example, if five U.S. doctors would pledge \$100 per month each, we could hire a doctor here to staff a clinic and buy some medicine for the clinic. If ten additional people would pledge \$50 per month each, we could increase all of our current Nicaraguan staff's wages. If ten additional people pledge \$25 per month each, we could pay the cooperative's

electric bill which provides all the water and light services, our commitment to them in exchange for the use of their ranch house: our home, office, and center.

A little by U.S. standards makes a big difference here. Are you up for making a difference?



Well, we've done it! We've put all those little bar codes on the top of your name label. Why? It means we get a much reduced rate at the post office **and** your newsletter gets to you much more quickly. Oh! The computer age has hit again!

(Please Note: If your label does not have a 9-digit zipcode listed on it, it means that the post office computers don't quite like the way your address reads. If you can send us an improved address format, it will save us money!)

As you plan your holiday giving, please consider an Alternative Gift to the poor in Central America through a contribution to the Center for Development in Central America in honor of family members or friends. We will be happy to acknowledge your gift to them with an appropriate card. Please enclose a note listing each recipient's name/address, and the way you wish each card signed

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

- Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ See attached Alternative Gift list

(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/left-handed mug handle.)

- Yes, please send me the cookbook.. Yes, I would like a mug. Right-handed. Left-handed.

- I pledge \$ _____ monthly, quarterly, annually, for 1998.

- Enclosed is \$25.00 for membership in the Friends of CDCA, our U.S. support group.

- Please send me information on: sister preschool projects microenterprise loan fund.

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

Please correct my contact information as follows:

(Mail to CDCA, 2425 Spicewood Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106-9768)

Name and address: _____

Phone/fax/Email address: _____

