

Our organic agricultural project is booming! We are expanding monthly. Most of these are sesame growers, but not all: we also have honey and *pitahaya*.

Karla, our agronomist, makes visits to fields to talk to growers. Unfortunately, she doesn't know how to drive so we and volunteers chauffeur her. She goes to cooperatives and holds four trainings a year at each cooperative on organic farming techniques. She, César, and Mike spend hours keeping up with certification paperwork. (Good news! We were certified again!).

Jeremy, Connie, and Rachel from *Once Again Nut Butter* came and talked face-to-face with the growers. This is such an empowering tool for the growers. (We also had fun with them!)

This year we are growing organic soy beans. This is to demonstrate crop rotation. We are learning more and more. Our Masters degrees really didn't prepare us for this!



Karla examines San Rafael sesame



Blanca Rosa in new classroom

In June we had a volunteer delegation come to help. They worked on the Las Parcelas school and (along with three other clinics) held health clinics in the completed and partially equipped Las Parcelas health center! The school is looking great and one classroom now can be used. Health Promoter trainings continue. Both groups put together a surprise *despedida* ("going away party") for Pat before she left for the US. Six more women have undergone tubal ligations. One woman who was scheduled for surgery and very excited (no wonder, too - she was 25 years old with seven children!), didn't come. We fear her husband wouldn't allow it. Another woman with six children came to a sharing group with the June delegation and shared that her husband would not allow her to get a tubal ligation. She felt inspired by the volunteers and went home and put her foot down. She was one of the six women. Not only has the sterilization program enabled women to care better for their existing children, but a women's support group has also grown out of it. Pat and Michelle Collins, a recent volunteer, have helped four women organize the group. They make finger puppets (materials donated on Pat's last speaking tour) and learn how they can help each other and other women. We'll keep you posted on their progress.



Woman's support group organizers

Our thanks are so deep and go to so many. We are a small organization and your gifts and support are treasured. When I write thank you letters, I'm always filled with wonder at the generosity of folks and I feel a connection with so many. Ex-



Toby, Mike & the Chevy upon CDCA arrival

amples are: the Kathleen (my name) who sends regular gifts and the Murdock (no relation to me) who also regularly supports us; the Greg, who writes encouraging letters with his gift, and the Steve, who was one of our first pledges; the Toby, who raised money, bought, and drove a Chevy diesel truck to us, and the January '97 delegation, who raised enough funds that we could purchase a 4x4 Land Cruiser; the Billie, who has supported the JHC for years, and the Margaret, who prays for us; the Pam, who gives and gives, and the Jim, who works and works; the Nancy, who collects medicines, and the Karen, who collects clothes; the Friends meetings; the Catholic Worker Houses; the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and UCC churches who keep us close; the coop business in Atlanta, the small business in California, and the Once Again Nut Butter in NY; the people we know and the people we don't know. It just amazes us and fills us with warmth and profound gratefulness. Thank you.



June delegation's initial ride to the comarcas

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, you may request *Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto*, our unique and versatile cookbook. For a minimum gift of \$50, a hand-thrown pottery mug especially designed for the CDCA; please specify right-handed or left-handed handle.)
- Yes, please send me a cookbook.
 Yes, I would like a mug []Right []Left.



- Enclosed please find my tax-deductible gift, for the Center, of \$ _____.

- Please contact me about the Angel Tree project.

Please add me to your mailing list, or correct my address label as follows: (Mail to JHC/CDCA, 2425 Spicewood Dr, Winston Salem NC 27106-9768)

Name and Address: _____

Phone / Fax / Email address: _____

We are sending a letter of special request for funding to help us pay off two emergency, short-term loans for securing the Center's facilities. These funds will help stabilize the cooperative we live on and will make our situation here more secure. If you receive this letter, please give it special consideration and if you don't receive it, but want to give to this critical need, please give and earmark your check "Center". Thank you.



Kathy and Pat are in Minnesota on a speaking tour. While on the tour they will have gotten to visit with their mother and friends.

Sarah, Mike, Kathleen, Coury, Daniel, and Joseph actually got away for three days. They went to the beach and had a wonderful, restful time. First real vacation in four years!

The community has been thankful for visits from many friends. The kids loved having their good friends, Nick and Nicole Trowell, here. Brian VanHoy and Ema Miller, past volunteers, have come and filled us with joy.

NEWS BULLETIN

The doctor's strike has ended, but the situation is precarious. Since our last newsletter, the nurses and other health caregivers joined the strike. Doctors were jailed and beaten. The strike did end but not to anyone's complete satisfaction.

On the east coast of Nicaragua and in the mountains, indigenous people are arming themselves and attacking select sites. President Arnaldo Alemán has many businesses in these areas and is allowing foreign investors into the area. These are rain forests, fishing, shrimping, and mining areas. Alemán and investors are raping the land and oppressing the indigenous. Many think war is on the horizon.

NEWS BULLETIN



The CDCA is in particular need of:

- > Funds to secure our long-term use of the Center (see article).
- > People/groups/churches to host an Angel Tree (briefly angel trees are Christmas trees filled with brightly painted, handmade, wooden ornaments from here which are then sold as alternative Christmas gifts). We have angels, stars, crosses, and (new!) three different Magi/kings. If you are interested, mark and send in the rip-off sheet and we'll get back to you.
- > Prayers, thoughts, and love.

Reflection

For some of us, moving to Nicaragua was going to be a chance for us to be friends and on equal terms with the poor. When we ran the shelters, as much as we came to care for the guests, they knew and we knew that we carried the power. It's worse here.

Because many of our friends are employees, we still hold the power. Because we hold the strings to



San Rafael child

the purse, we have the power and because that purse is corporation money, we have to be accountable. We have a good friend here, Gloria. Her husband drowned one-and-a-half years ago. She and her daughters have gone from one thing to another trying to make ends meet and stay in school. We want to put her girls through the university (about \$75 a month) but César, Winston, etc. also want to go and we can't afford it. We want to give them money but thousands of others we know and care for are worse off. We do what we think we can. It's



Gloria and family, 1996

horrible for them and painful to us. It's a bind. Jesus told us to give and here we are deciding "what's most 'legitimate'". Jesus told us to be servants and here we are deciding who gets and who doesn't. Jesus told us to love unconditionally, and here we are making and making and making choices!! Who are we? The ones with the power. Have mercy.

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