Hurricane reconstruction has become top priority for the CDCA. When the resettlement camp of Nueva Vida (New Life) settled a kilometer down the road from us, we started our relief work with them as a good neighborly gesture. Now, as other organizations have pulled out to go back to their former work, we feel that it is our responsibility to take up the slack.

Here is our good news: We just received money to hire two community organizers to work in the community and by the time you read this they will be in place and working for one year to try to form these piecemeal neighborhoods into a working community.

It looks like we will receive approval from US AID for materials for 400 shelters (this means zinc roofing pieces and four posts). We sink the posts in concrete in the ground, level them, hammer the roof on them and then wrap them with plastic. These are temporary shelters, but it will get everyone a roof over their heads. This US AID assistance is in addition to funds received from the Moravian Church of Managua to build 26 shelters.

We have received approval to work with the Rotarians to build concrete houses in Nueva Vida. Additional money has been received for this project, and we will begin the construction process soon.

We also received money from the Bucknell University delegation for the start of construction of a health center for Nueva Vida and Ciudad Sandino. Mike and César have succeeded in getting verbal agreement from the mayor’s office for donated land and utility hook-ups, and support from the Ministry of Health for getting donated medicines and equipment into the country duty-free. This clinic will not only have a doctor and medicines but hopefully it will be a teaching clinic, as well, for Nicaraguan doctors.

We are exploring the possibility of starting two microenterprise projects in Nueva Vida (these people have no jobs and now gangs are arising and fighting for turf). One will be a project of making the concrete forms in Nueva Vida for all the prefab housing going up there. The second will be a clothing industry designed to hire women.

All are great plans and all need your help. Of course!

The sesame crop was destroyed almost completely in Hurricane Mitch. We have been helping growers replant and salvage what they could. Our buyer has been more than generous to help us through this difficult time.

The destruction of the crop was devastating to the growers. 1998 was going to be a great year for sesame! It was going to be a year for the growers to get ahead a bit, but...

We have been doing what we can: making loans, giving technical advice, sending Maestro (our mechanic) around to help with machinery if they have any, and assuring folks to keep on having faith that we will get through all this. So far, thankfully, no one has lost his/her land.

We have sold two containers of sesame and one container of honey (a container is 48,000 pounds). Crops are going into the ground now. Some are being harvested. We, like all growers, are hoping for a good rainy season, but not a soggy one.

Volunteers are coming to help in the hurricane reconstruction. We have had many volunteers so far. In the first quarter of the year we have had four delegations and five individual volunteers. This summer we have scheduled as many as three delegations, eight short-term individuals, and four long-term volunteers (one month or longer).

These volunteers help with construction, medical consultations and other health issues, activities for children, and administrative work. They bring donations with them and they return to their homes with a new understanding of life here.

Our sister preschool program has grown! We have four preschools and one high school. We are opening the program to other intercultural exchanges. We have a Friends Meeting that helps to support the Women’s Support Group. We would like to find health groups to help support training of the health promoters. Getting people connected is a good way to not only build relationships but also build understanding.

Yes! I want to help 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/left-handed mug handle.)

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

☐ Enclosed please find $_________ specifically for Hurricane Reconstruction.

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

☐ Enclosed please find $_________ for duplicate slides ($65 for Spring set, $40 for Preschool set, including shipping).

Please correct my contact information as follows:

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

Name and Address: _____________________________________________________________

Phone/fax/email: ________________________________________________________________
Sarah is speaking in the States as I write this newsletter and she will get it all "printed" up to go to the printer. She will be there for her mother's 80th birthday party and for Tiff's graduation from Cornell University! She will also see Jessica, who is going to work as a nanny this summer for that family's first great-grandchild.

Kathy completed her 5th decade in February and Coury finished his first! Pat is working on renewing her NC Social Work certification. She always submits interesting work seeing that it is from Nicaragua and not the US. Daniel has taken to reading and entertains us with books. Joseph is three now. Neither Mike nor Cesar has killed a bureaucrat yet! We think that is pretty good considering what they have had to put up with lately.

Kathleen, as well as all of us, has enjoyed the visits of old friends and the making of new friends. We have had lots and lots of people to come and work here.

Thanks:
We have much to be thankful for and we have many that we are grateful for:

Volunteers (delegations and individuals both here in Nicaragua and people working hard in the States like...)
- Our newsletter collators at Carolina Village.
- All the people who hosted and aided Sarah from Florida to Massachusetts!
- All the people who have given and given in response to our newsletters and the hurricane.
Our list could fill up this entire newsletter, so we will just say... Thank You for all the support and care coming this way.

Needs:
There are many needs because of the hurricane. We adopted a large budget (for us) in 1999 trying to reasonably address some of these needs and we need your help in meeting that budget. We have kept administrative costs as low as we can (we did raise some of our Nicaraguan staff salaries) and we have included in-kind expenses and receipts in this budget, something we have not done in the past. You can help by:
- Filling out the form and giving to the work.
- Pledging to the work.
- Helping to spread the word about our work (a West Coast tour is being planned for the fall starting in October, and duplicate slide sets from the Spring tour are available).

Unrest in Nicaragua:
The last few weeks have been tumultuous. Students have demonstrated for the government to release the constitutionally guaranteed 6% of the budget for higher education. One student was killed and others injured. Nueva Vida residents have protested the mayor's declaring that all the houses and land donated to these destitute residents will now cost them 14,000 cordobas and they have no option of going home instead. Drivers of public buses and taxis are protesting (fairly violently) the fact that even though the price of diesel has dropped worldwide, here it has risen. The government says raise the price of the fares. The owners say no. The charges for the houses have been reversed. The 6% supposedly has been given. As this is written there is still unrest in the streets.

Reflection:
Rain, what a gift from above! We sometimes curse it in the winter months when it rains and rains and the days are so gray and dreary. We sometimes fear it when the water pours and pours and rivers swell and mud slides. Yet when the months have been dry and dusty, when that first good rain falls it is a gift from the heavens. The soil soaks it up like a baby sucking at its mama's breast, hungrily and intensely. Ah! And it smells so good!

It rained the other night here. The first good rain in five months! I wanted to just close my eyes and feel the goodness pour out of the skies, yet I thought of all those people in Nueva Vida living under black plastic still, of the mud that will be created, and of new breeding ground for mosquitoes and cholera. Not only did the first good rain bring mud and disease; it brought fear. Many who had survived the hurricane heard the downpour and were afraid of mudslides and flooding all over again.

Why? It is because there is no infrastructure to support this people or to cope with the waters. A Bucknell University delegation, that came to help with hurricane relief, brought t-shirts that quoted World Hunger: Twelve Myths, "Natural disasters are not the cause. They are the final blow." (Frances Moore Lappe, et al.). It is the poverty here that is the major killer. The hurricane was only the weapon.

And now the rains are here, will the misery increase?