Good News: PRONIC has hired a manager! An agronomist and has bought a truck! These are concrete necessary steps to move them out from under us and make them independent. They are now looking for an office. Jason is working hard with them to help them set up as a “real” business. (For those who are new: PRONIC is the grower-owned business we established in 1996 which markets organic crops for over 2,000 growers here in Nicaragua.)

More Good News: The sewing cooperative has land and much of its start-up money! This cooperative will sew organic clothing for export (there is no market for clothing in-country thanks to all the used clothing dumped on the country for sale). The cooperative, made up of women from Nueva Vida, has been meeting for months, readying themselves to move when there was money. And move they did...they picked out land, bought it, and have started the clearing. This is very exciting!

The loseta project (the prefab forms) has hired two more workers to help them keep up with the demand. The two new workers are women! The loseta project will probably share land with the sewing cooperative.

These are just two of the businesses we are working on in Nueva Vida, a hurricane resettlement community of 14,000 people. We are also working on latrines, gray water catch systems, houses and community organizing.

Good News Again! The construction of the health clinic is underway! But just so that we can’t have too much good news...the construction started with a brigade from Bucknell University (who are raising the funds for the clinic), then halted waiting on the government. The donated land was a dumping area for dirt so it needs to be graded to get to the hard foundation. The government promised to come and hasn’t. We’ve done all we could and now the people of Nueva Vida are taking matters into their own hands and going to the mayor himself. We are also trying to find a private grader we can afford.

We are happy to report that we have several opportunities pending: food for the volunteer workers while they build the clinic, and a grant to pay for the training of workers.

The temporary clinic is still going strong. Our only concern is that we have a place to move into before our time is up there. We have had two volunteer doctors, three nurses, and one dentist lately. We have about a fourth of the monthly costs of running the clinic pledged! We have held workshops in public health in Nueva Vida and continue with workshops in the rural communities. We have several health volunteering coming this summer that we plan to work hard!

Bad News...Yuck! Robberies are a nightly occurrence despite our watchperson. We have had to reach some difficult decisions and finally have had to heed the advice of our Nicaraguan staff and friends. We are getting two watchdogs, building a secure fence, and hiring a second person. It came to a head when after losing tools galore, medical odds and ends, tires, and auto parts our horse was stolen and slaughtered. She was the foil of our horse that was stolen two years ago and also slaughtered.

Our other bad news is that the processor for our crops is going bankrupt. We want to set up a microenterprise processing business in Nueva Vida because it is so hard to get organic crops processed correctly here and PRONIC is a guaranteed client, but there is no money and now...

Considering all the good news...this isn’t so bad.

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

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(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- or left-handed mug handle.)

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

Name and Address: ___________________________________________________________

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The Friends of CDCA, an organization designed to support the work of the CDCA, set goals for this coming year at their annual meeting.

- to continue to maintain the van that was purchased last year for the staff’s use when they come to the States to speak.
- to continue to raise funds for a volunteer dorm which will include a fence around the property.
- to set up a retirement fund for the staff (specifically encouraging gifts of stock).
- to involve more individuals in the work of the Friends of CDCA ($25 membership fee).

If you would like to help and/or become a member of the group, or if you would like to donate funds or investments to these goals, please let us know on the attached form or contact Bob Wells at 336-924-4477.

The Community is doing fine. We are all looking forward to seeing family and friends this year in our trips back to the States. Sarah is there now. Pat and Kathy return in the fall to the West Coast. The rest of us will go back in June during the school break.

Courtney and Daniel are doing well in school (thanks to all for the prayers and good energy sent their way). Joseph is looking forward to when he goes to school like a big boy. We have hosted many volunteers already this year. The summer is shaping up to be one long series of runs to and from the airport getting all the wonderful people coming to help!

Reflection...

Driving to take the kids to school, I noticed on the dirt road a little plant that had sprung up out of the dry, hard, dusty road. There it stood so proud with its one little yellow flower...covered with dust from the road. I wondered how long it would take to be squashed by a truck carrying cattle to be slaughtered or by a horse cart bearing chopped wood for cooking fires or by a little kid just needing something to smash to release some of the frustration poverty levies on people.

The poor in Nicaragua are a great deal like that little plant. They struggle, fight, and finally push up through the hardiness, the dryness and the dirt to stand firm and bloom. There they stand alone with their beautiful flower waiting...waiting...waiting for something that will inevitably come and smash them down.

That was a month ago...the little plant with the flower. I watch it every day I go past and wonder about how it has survived this long. The flower is long gone...hopefully to seed that blew to less harsh soil where it will germinate when the rains come again. The little plant did come up in a rut and we all avoid the rut as we come past. It is completely covered with dust now, yet there it stands. I watch it and give it a little cheer. It gives me hope.

It is very much like Nicaragua.

A Special Opportunity Now!

Thanks to a very generous and timely offer, all single donations received during the month of June 2000 will be matched up to $1,000 per gift! In other words, if you give $100, it will become a gift of $200, if your give $500, it will become $1,000!!!!!!

Please take advantage of this offer by sending in your contribution in June.

Matching Gift Challenge During June