

The Fair Trade Zone (the women's sewing cooperative) is expanding their line to organic cotton baby clothes: little onesies and caps. This is harder than you think. Fitting the patterns on the cloth to reduce waste takes patience and skill, using scraps of cloth to decorate the onesies and caps is labor intensive, and snaps! Finding the right snaps and transporting them down and putting them on . . . all of this is new.

Becca was gone for two months with the birth (see Community). We had volunteers helping to fill in the gap, but we are thrilled to have her back, especially with babe in tow.

Becca has completed a booklet on the [Fair Trade Zone](http://FairTradeZone@jhc-cdca.org) and its history, *Give It Your All*. She is now working on translating it into Spanish. If you would like a copy, just let us know at FairTradeZone@jhc-cdca.org. Funding for the book was provided by the Department for International Development, an agency of the British government.



The Spinning Plant's funding is falling into place! Using round numbers: with a budget of approximately \$1.9 million, the Inter-American Development Bank is granting \$175,000 and loaning \$565,000; Inter-Church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), The Netherlands, is guaranteeing half of the above loan and granting €20,000; and another branch of ICCO, OikoCredit, is looking at loaning \$600,000 plus. The JHC-CDCA and the Fair Trade Zone will be putting up \$320,000 in land value, sweat equity, and



production costs. With all of that we will be lacking approximately \$200,000 to complete the budget, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) is trying to find that money for us.

The spinning plant will take locally grown organic cotton and spin it into yarn to be knitted into cloth in Costa Rica. This will make our garments three-fourths of the way to a completely Fair Trade garment. A 100% Fair Trade garment doesn't exist in the mass market currently.

The Concrete Construction Materials Cooperative has created light-weight, sturdy blocks. We are building a partial wall for a second story on the International Training Facility with the new blocks.

We are working with the former mayor of Ciudad Sandino to help us with marketing the construction materials. If he can help the co-op get contracts, then the workers can stay busy and profitable.

The Health Clinic opened 1,305 new patient charts in 2005. Our care gets better and better, and in 2006 we are hoping for at least two goals to be reached: hiring a dentist (the room is ready) as well as getting instruments and equipment *and* getting additional lab equipment for more thorough blood testing.

Pat has been using our volunteers with her women's support group that continues to grow. The volunteers provide childcare and participate in the group. She also sees children with learning disabilities in her counseling program and has used two teachers who are with us now, Shannon and Maya, who provide tutoring for the children and continuing education training for Pat.



Fair Trade Zone English class

Our volunteers have been doing interesting work. Matt is living at El Porvenir, the coffee cooperative,



and teaching English. Several volunteers have witnessed the trial of a *campesino* trying to keep his land. Emily M., Shannon, and Maya teach English to a class of the Fair Trade Zone. Emily H., Eric, and Alexandra work in the office, focusing on the business aspects of the cooperatives. Eric continues to coordinate delegations and volunteers. Speaking of which . . .

Bucknell University (Lewisburg, PA) brought 26 folks in January. They worked mainly on the new wing of the clinic, laying floor tile and building cabinets.

North Anderson Community Church, Presbyterian (Anderson, SC) brought 11 down to help us organize in the clinic (a yearly chore) and finish part of the clinic's wall. Both delegations brought loads of medicine.



The whole Community rejoiced in the birth of Eibhlín Isabel Mohally Renk, first daughter of Becca and Paul, on 11 December 2005, at our place. Becca and Paul did great during the labor and birth. Everybody fights over being able to hold and rock Eibhlín [*ave-LEEN*].



We all enjoyed visits at Christmas from Tiff, Jessica, and Waxor (Jessica's boyfriend, actually – fiancé). We also rejoiced at the announcement of Jessica and Waxor's wedding to take place this October.



We enjoyed too the visit of Kathleen's parents, Bob and Peggy (who handles all contributions in Rock Hill SC).

We are asking your prayers so a good friend battling cancer, Risher Brabham, can be well enough to come back in June. This is his and our dream.

We now offer an electronic version of our quarterly newsletters. We currently have 1,033 people receiving it by email, 11% of our mailing. It's great! The text is the same, and the pictures are in *color*. It costs us nothing but time. Also it does not use paper or energy in printing.

So if you have the capability of receiving the newsletter by email and don't pass your paper copy around, try it! Send a message to e-newsletter@jhc-cdca.org and let us know. Please make sure to tell us your name and paper address in your email, and

remember to keep your email address updated!

Reflection...

In preparation for our year-end report and Sarah's spring slide show, I looked up statistics in the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI) rating pages. The United Nations' HDI rates nations in regards to overall quality of life: health care, education, human rights, political freedom, women's rights, environmental pollution, poverty, etc. The list is long. In 2005, Nicaragua moved up from 118th to 112th out of 177 nations. Hooray!!

BUT when looking up the percentage of population living in poverty – well, here are comparative results between Nicaragua, the U.S., and the only western hemispheric countries rated below Nicaragua:

Which means, as far as I can tell, even though political persecution, crime, illiteracy, lack of health care, and disrespect for human rights are worse in those other countries than they are here in Nicaragua – and they are – Nicaraguans are still the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere.

% of population living on under \$1.00 per day	% of population living on under \$2.00 per day	HDI
45.1% Nicaragua	79.9% Nicaragua	112th
20.7% Honduras	44.0% Honduras	116th
16.0% Guatemala	37.4% Guatemala	117 th
25.9% Haiti	63.1% Haiti	153rd
0% USA	0% USA	10th



What is hard to imagine is that all those percentages have faces, names, hopes and dreams.

All those percentages are loved by someone and most of those percentages are women and children.

Poverty is persecution. Poverty is criminal. Poverty forgets rights. Poverty is terrorism. As Gandhi once said, "Poverty is the worst form of violence."

Why? Because it is slow . . . terrifying . . . constant . . . and breeds helplessness. Really poor people concentrate on survival by whatever means. They find little joy. And the least little thing knocks them down: parasites kill malnourished children; a sick day from work can mean hunger for the whole family; a pregnancy can mean sorrow while a death can mean hope.

It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day struggles and crises and forget why we do what we do.

It's also easy to think of percentages as numbers, not faces.

But Gandhi said, "...recall the face of the poorest and most helpless whom you may have seen and ask if the next step you contemplate will be of any use to them. Will it restore them to control over their own life and destiny?"

Let us all remember.

- Kathleen

Yes! I want to help support the work of the Center for Development in Central America, either through a donation in the mail or given online...

If you would like to remember the people who are the percentages, and also a loved one on a special occasion, you can give a gift in their honor and we will acknowledge it with a card. We know it is early, but if you would like to support other mothers in your own mother's name for Mothers' Day, let us know and we'll send an appropriate card closer to Mothers' Day.

Give your tax-deductible contribution (with designation if desired) online via [Network for Good](#).

[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, our hand-thrown mug. Please specify right-handed or left-handed. Allow 6 weeks for delivery.]

Please send an email to e-newsletter@jhc-cdca.org listing any alternative gift requests, with the names, and addresses to which you would like cards sent.

Please send an email to e-newsletter@jhc-cdca.org listing any cookbook or mug requests (specifying left-handed or right-handed mug, please).

Mail written requests and checks to:

CDCA, c/o Peggy Murdock, 352 Carly Ln, Rock Hill, SC 29732-7750.

Please include your correct name and paper address information, as well as your email address for the e-newsletter to avoid duplications!

