

The future of the CDCA's land is still in question. To give a little background, in January we were served papers to vacate our land. Yelba Carvajal, a woman with a history of dubious land deals, is claiming that she owns our land. We were called to attend a mediation hearing and she was not willing to "give" on any point. Yelba has lots of money and uses it to get what she wants...we figured what we had was international pull.

So we asked many of you to write emails to the First Lady, Rosario Murillo, to ask for her to intervene on behalf of us and the cooperatives. Over 1,000 emails flooded in! Through Rosario we were able to gain the support of the Nicaraguan Attorney General...THANK YOU!

For the last month we have been at a standstill...the suit has not been dropped nor has it moved forward. The papers are in process. Meanwhile, Yelba has filed a second lawsuit against us. One progressive step towards avoiding corruption is that the Attorney General asked the judge to have official standing in the case. We are keeping this as public as we can, because behind closed doors we figure she will win. Please check our blog for regular updates: jhc-cdca-land-news.blogspot.com.



The Spinning Plant Cooperative (Genesis) received a loan from Winds of Peace. The loan serves three purposes:

1. To help the worker receive some cash (an *ayuda* or "aid") to buy food;
2. To help them learn about payrolls (they create a payroll and submit it to Winds of Peace weekly and then they receive the funds); and
3. To insure that **all** the workers buy into the cooperative (for every 4

hours of labor each worker has to put in 2 additional hours toward the buy-in...of a total of 10 hours per week that has to be worked towards the buy-in to get the *ayuda* for the 20 hours of labor).

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth granted \$17,000 mainly for training in the early stage of production. Genesis is planning to have the building walled in by October and the finishing touches by December. The cooperative is spending \$9,500 to have the land leveled before the rains begin – we are hoping that we can get more money for them so they don't run out of financing before the electricity has to be installed.

Josh, a long-term volunteer and anthropologist, is helping the cooperative with their website. He has been very active in the beginning stages of Genesis.

The cotton crop was wonderful – 60,000 pounds! Now to get it fluffy and not all prickly we have to gin the cotton.

The experimental ginning plant, that we are using, needed a baler – we purchased one. Now it needs to be installed to the tune of \$18,000 and we are loaning them the money. Hopefully we will have free ginning for the next 2-3 years as they pay back the costs.

After processing the cotton, we have two buyers who are interested but waiting on fair trade certification. Unlike coffee that has a worldwide price for crops that are fair trade certified, **cotton** is priced country-by-country...so we are working in conjunction with the fair trade organization to establish the price for Nicaragua. This is Nicaragua's first cotton crop eligible for fair trade certification.



Organic cotton bagged & ready for baling

While all this is happening, the growers are waiting and waiting for their money and despite all our efforts these problems drag on and on.



Raul, leaving for a site visit

Raul, our agronomist, spoke in Brazil the week of March 30th at the annual meeting of the Latin American Organic Exchange. He did two presentations: one on organic cotton and the other on sustainable business models.

The El Porvenir coffee cooperative's water pump broke. What did this mean in the dry season with no rain until May? 50,000 baby coffee plants were dying and people literally had to **quit working** because they had **no water** to re-hydrate themselves. We helped them locate and buy the piece to get it working again after 5 days.

We are grateful for our bio-diesel project because diesel is now over \$4.00/gal here! Most of the donated used cooking oil from Once Again Nut Butter is gone and with the world wide cooking oil shortage we are not sure what the future will hold for making bio-diesel.

In the Health Clinic the island of file cabinets is almost complete. This was a **huge** task! Our filing cabinets were ripping apart literally. Now all the filing cabinets are **handmade** with strong scrap metal.



filing cabinet island

North Anderson Community Church (Presbyterian) from SC began the arduous task of pulling inactive files and moving files into new drawers. The **Boston College (BC)** nurses completed the task. A **delegation** from **Bucknell University** (Lewisburg, PA) assembled the island and began painting it.

The BC nurses taught educational workshops for the health promoters of Nueva Vida as well as attending patients. The nurses also received two grants to buy equipment, supplies, and medicines for the clinic. We are getting **some long-wished-for items**.



BC nurses with clinic staff



JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY
 "You shall not oppress one another for I am the Lord your God."
 —Lev. 25:17

Community News... Sarah, at the time of this writing, is finishing up her speaking tour. It was not as financially successful as her previous years but she did make some valuable contacts. Maybe more importantly, she was able to spend time with family as grandmother, mother, and sister.

Pat and Kathy took time to help their mother move into another retirement center in Florida. **Becca's** mother came to meet her new granddaughter, **Orla**, and to see **Eibhlín, Paul**, and – of course – **Becca**.

Emily, former volunteer and staff of the CDCA, moved back to Nicaragua and has been teaching **Daniel** and **Joseph** part-time, much to the relief of **Kathleen** and **Mike**. We are looking for someone* to take her place because she has been offered a full-time position in another NGO. The other position we are looking for is a Volunteer Coordinator...**Coury** continues to act as our coordinator* as well as filling out college entrance applications.

***If you would like to come volunteer without the per diem fee, contact us for the position of teacher or volunteer coordinator at volunteers@jhc-cdca.org**



Joseph, Emily, And Daniel in class

Reflection: Josh, mentioned above, has been here for almost a year now. Josh has the **unique** ability to know when to help, when to just observe, and when to leave us alone as a family or as a community. When complimented on this ability, he laughed and said, "I'm an anthropologist."



Josh teaching a co-op member computer skills

This approach to our work and our lives is refreshing and gives words to what we try to do in our work. We walk that fine line of when to jump in and help, when to observe only, and when to step back.

I think we are doing a much better job with **Genesis** than we did with the **Fair Trade Zone** (the Women's Sewing Cooperative). We help some but not too much; we observe so we can pinpoint successes and problems; and we leave them alone to make choices, often times different than the ones we would have made.

This approach requires respect and humility. You must respect the ones you serve to make their own choices **and** you have to have the humility to realize your own place. This approach could make drastic changes for the good...

Imagine what could happen if worldwide, governments sent anthropologists with this philosophy as ambassadors or as directors of aid programs.

Imagine what could happen if home and abroad, non-profits (NGOs) approached their service with this approach. Imagine what could happen if personally, we respected the ones we serve and greeted them with humility. Just imagine...

-Kathleen

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