Agriculture/farming is more stressful than most people can imagine: too much rain, too little rain. The work is labor-intensive... seriously intensive. If the crops survive but the markets are flooded, then prices are low and all that work was for little return. Add to that: in Nicaragua our farmers also have to deal with volcanoes erupting, changing soil composition, ash in the air damaging growing crops, and then there are the all-too-frequent tropical storms or hurricanes with high winds. It is nerve-racking.

It helps to have buyers who are committed to the growers and to COPROEXNIC, the organic cooperative. These buyers help the co-op problem-solve, but as COPROEXNIC grows, it is crucial that they become more self-sufficient.

As one step towards becoming more independent, COPROEXNIC moved into its own space out of our office! COPROEXNIC rented a house across the street from the CDCA property with ample parking, three rooms (instead of the one), and two porches. They are excited to have their own place after 20 years.

Peanuts have been planted and sesame is being planted. It has been extremely dry for the second year in a row, meaning many farmers lost the crops they planted in May. Last year the sesame plant processed 29 containers of sesame both organic and conventional. As I write, the plant is closed temporarily with four unprocessed loads still waiting for buyers. The plant is scheduled to reopen in September to get ready for the new crops.

Organic sesame prices fell dramatically this year as the markets were flooded with cheap “organic” sesame from dubious sources. Low prices have left COPROEXNIC in a financial bind as they bought sesame at higher prices and then had to sell at lower prices. Add to that: COPROEXNIC is still waiting for payment on already-delivered loads.

Their-Bucks Coffee buyers are working with the El Porvenir cooperative to help them investigate and then correct the problems that may be causing the taste of their coffee to differ from what it was three years ago. Factors may include a change in the soil composition, because they are nestled between two volcanoes which have been active; climate change; new plants vs. established plants; or a host of other things.

Good news in the Nueva Vida Clinic: We have a half-time ob/gyn! Dr. Gulnara Martinez has begun doing PAPs, overseeing the care of our pregnant mothers, and helping us to identify other areas that will improve the care of our women patients. She is also putting our gynecological equipment to use: in July, one-third of the PAP results came back abnormal, and Gulnara has done colposcopies and biopsies on all of them. We received a gift for her salary with a commitment for 5 years. She will enhance the care we can provide immensely.

We are working on finishing a clean room so that our orthopedist and Gulnara can use it to do minor surgeries. In June the Sanford High School (DE) group helped us finish the warehouse for medical equipment, which freed up an interior space that is being converted into the clean room.

We have enabled eight women to get mammograms through another organization, which involves a convoluted process. Our future third clinic building, which is awaiting funding, will include an x-ray room and we hope to get a mammogram machine... a critical need for the women of Ciudad Sandino.

Mario Baldeoseda, our lab technician of eight years, retired. We have a new technician, Massiel Jarquin, who did her practicum with Mario in our lab. We are looking forward to working with her.
In May, the public health education graduate program of East Tennessee State University did a diabetes study for us to investigate the prevalence of diabetes in Nueva Vida. They worked hand-in-hand with our health promoters, doing a door-to-door survey, in-home blood glucose testing, and handed out information on how to prevent diabetes and the dangers of not treating diabetes.

In July we had the services of two dentists, Dirk and Heather, who worked in the clinic, able to do difficult extraction using the newly installed suction unit, while Heather’s mother, Linda, a cardiology nurse, did EKGs for our patients. They also went to El Porvenir to provide the only dental care of 2015 for the cooperative.

During that same week we hosted a class of first and second year naturopathic medicine students from the U.S. and Canada through the organization Natural Doctors International. They spent time shadowing our docs, working in the clinic and doing home visits. Impressed with our doctors, one commented, “Jorge is such an incredible doctor, he goes into his patient consults with his heart open.”

In Public health: Our new mother’s and lactation group has grown to 32 women and is now meeting separately from the pregnant mother’s group of 28 women. During August Jean Sinead, Paul’s sister from New Zealand and a midwife, did home visits with many of these mothers. We also said goodbye to Courtney Roberts, who worked closely with Jessenia, our health promoter, especially developing ways to address the needs of our HIV positive patients.

The group of preteen and teen girls, Las Lobas (She-Wolves) has really taken off lately. We sent the oldest, Rosa, to the Youth Leadership Academy for a weekend with 80 other young leaders. She had never been far from home and has become a leader in Lobas since her return. Young women learning to be leaders… how glorious!

All the Lobas went to Nagarote (about 40 minutes away) to meet other girls in a program sponsored by NicaPhoto. The meeting was so successful that the Lobas were invited to participate in an eight week online class there. They will be partnered with girls in the U.S. to research the problem of scarcity of electricity and invent a solution which they will print in 3-D. This will be in addition to their weekly meetings through the clinic.
The Community is sad because of the loss of two parents of our clan members. In memory of these loved ones, we dedicate this newsletter:

**JILL FLOERKE**

Jill Floerke, Kathy and Pat’s mother, fell in March and broke her hip. After surgery, hospitalization and rehab, she moved to Nicaragua to be with Pat and Kathy. Two weeks after being in Nicaragua her health began to fail and she died peacefully in the car with Sarah, while waiting for Kathy to arrange some tests for her in a hospital on May 26th. She was 90 years old.

**BOB MURDOCK**

Bob Murdock, Kathleen’s father, also fell and broke his hip in May. After surgery, hospitalization, and more than a month of rehab he became non-responsive, was admitted into the hospital in S.C. and died peacefully on July 29th. He was 85 years old.

Jill was a retired editor of the *Christian Century*. She was a Quaker, a feminist and activist in the gay/lesbian movement and the civil rights movement. She loved sports, cats and dogs. She came to Nicaragua once in 2009 to see where her daughters worked and lived. She was proud of the daughters she raised practically single-handedly. On June 2nd the Community remembered Jill in a service with friends at the CDCA.

Bob was a retired Presbyterian pastor of more than 40 years. He, too, was active in the civil rights movement on a local level. His congregation was the first Associate Reformed Presbyterian church to integrate since the Civil War. In their 60s he and his wife Peggy went to the People’s Republic of China to teach English in two universities. His first trip to Nicaragua was when his youngest grandchild, Joseph, was born. After that, he and Peggy came almost every year to see their grandchildren, their daughter, and the community. The Nicaraguan staff loved his attempts to communicate with them (always in English) and his antics.

Both Jill and Bob are missed terribly.

On a happier note:

Paul, Becca, Eibhlín, and Orla enjoyed having Paul’s sister, Jean and her family visiting for the month of August from New Zealand.

Joseph has started Bennington College in Vermont. We wish him great fun and success.

Mike and Kathleen had a vacation in Italy with good friends, Nora and Becky. While there, they visited with Juliane, who had been a volunteer with the JHC when in N.C. running shelters before coming to Nicaragua.

At the end of June, Mike, Kathleen, and Daniel went to California to see Coury perform as Che in *Evita*. Three days into the trip, Kathleen ended up in UC Davis Hospital. After surgeries, blood clots, nine days in ICU... a total of **two weeks in the hospital**... Kathleen is now recovering in California. She and Mike have had tremendous support from Tiff and Coury, dear friends, and the medical people associated with UC Davis. (They did get to see Coury’s very last performance.)

As I write, Sarah is planning a September speaking trip to Texas. She will visit briefly with her children, as well as with Mike and Kathleen. (To see speaking schedule: [http://jhc-edca.org/how-to-help/upcoming-speaking-opportunities/](http://jhc-edca.org/how-to-help/upcoming-speaking-opportunities/)

Becca, too, is planning a speaking trip. She will be gone in October and will be in Washington and Oregon. (See above link)

The Community has been extremely short-staffed and over-worked due to all these tragedies, complications, and speaking tours. Please keep all of us in your thoughts and prayers.

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**MANIC MONDAY CAMPAIGN**

In an effort to raise the funds to cover the operating costs of the Nueva Vida Clinic, we started a Manic Monday campaign. Nicaraguan volunteer, Pablo Gonzalez, made a great video showing what Mondays are like at the clinic. U.S. volunteer, Jim Trowell, created a logo for the clinic.

In a month the campaign raised $28,300 from 78 people!!!

It was a different kind of campaign than we have ever done before.

Becca and Sarah did all the digital part: the crowdfunding online, text-to-give and mobile phone text updates – while Pat wrote paper letters. They wrote emails, blogs, texts, and multiple posts each day on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. AND they did all this while the CDCA was short-staffed. Hats off to them and you who so generously gave!

*to see video: [https://youtu.be/A5g7gXmtHw](https://youtu.be/A5g7gXmtHw)
REFLECTION:

I have witnessed first-hand the medical wonders of the wealthy United States and am deeply, deeply grateful. These wonders – no doubt – saved my life to the tune of a hospital bill of $489,467.22.

I had wonderful medical staff… doctors, nurses, techs, and residents who treated Mike and me with respect and care. I never felt like another burden or problem to be solved with any of them.

I know Nicaraguan doctors, nurses, techs, and medical students, and they too care about their patients but are hindered by working in a poor, poor country. They carry their patients as huge burdens and problems to be solved because the medical staff is handicapped by the realities of poverty.

At UC Davis, whenever the aides rolled me in for CT scans, or the techs did ultrasounds on really spiffy machines, or an x-ray in my own hospital room with a portable machine, or when my veins kept collapsing and a tech made me look like Ironman as she installed a PIC line… all those times I thought, “Wow! Jorge (our radiologist) would go ape over all this!” I am aware that much of my salvation came from really, really cool diagnostic equipment that enabled the docs to know how to proceed. And THIS is what Nicaragua does not have.

Nicaragua has good and bad doctors just like the U.S. but it does not have all the bells and whistles that alert and show the doctors what they need to see. The Nicaraguan constitution provides for health care for all its citizens, but the nation does not have the money to provide what is needed… let alone close to half a million dollars to save one person like me.

Just over two weeks after I left the hospital, my Daddy died. They had moved him back to the hospital after being in rehab. The cardiologist told my family that his kidneys were shutting down. Hospice was called in to help him die, but before they moved him, he died.

Less than two weeks later we learned that my brother’s cancer has returned and is wide-spread. My dear, sweet brother is going to go to Duke, also a great hospital, to see what kind of treatment he can receive.

While all this was and is going on with me and my family, Rogelio (our construction genius) found out that his mother was dying of liver cancer. No treatment for her was available in this poor country. No Hospice for her to ease her pain and ease the feeling of helplessness for the family as they watched her painfully waste away. Her own granddaughter, a nurse, came to administer morphine, and Danelia cared for her day and night until she passed away in Rogelio’s arms just two weeks after her diagnosis.

I understand these feelings of helplessness that families and Nicaraguan doctors feel, because our clinic can do only so much. We can’t afford a physical therapist to help people about their patients but are hindered by working in a poor, poor country. They carry their patients as huge burdens and problems to be solved because the medical staff is handicapped by the realities of poverty.

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I understand these feelings of helplessness that families and Nicaraguan doctors feel, because our clinic can do only so much. We can’t afford a physical therapist to help people with rehab. There is no Hospice in Nicaragua. We just try to focus on preventive care and keeping the worst from happening. And when it does, we do what we can, such as providing equipment like orthopedic beds to ease suffering, or pain medication, but only available in pill form that many cannot swallow.

Like the government, we have a very limited budget. We cannot provide thousands of dollars of treatment to one patient. If we did, we would have to close our doors and help no one.

It’s not fair. It is simply not fair that with all the medical breakthroughs, gifted medical people, and wealth in this world of ours that the poor still suffer… that our poor brothers and sisters suffer. It is just not fair at all.

-Kathleen

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 _______.

For a minimum gift of $35.00, you may request Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto, our unique and versatile cookbook
☐ I would like to receive a cookbook

For a minimum gift of $100.00, two items from Slightly Twisted Spoons;
email to SlightlyTwistedSpoons@jhc-cdca.org
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☐ please send instead of paper ☐ please also send a paper copy

Please note: you can also give online via https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/jhc-cdca or scan here:

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

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