Happy New Year! May it be filled with more goodness than sorrow.

COPROEXNIC, the organic agriculture cooperative consisting of about 3,000 small scale farmers, has good news and not-so good news…

GOOD NEWS! Together with COPROEXNIC and buyers, we have begun the preliminary work on starting a tahini production line. Making tahini here using organic sesame will add value to sesame for Nicaraguan farmers, create jobs, reduce shipping costs, and limit the risks of shipping raw sesame. Yay!

More good news… Once Again Nut Butter visited the sesame plant and met with the COPROEXNIC board of directors. We had technical visits from one of the oldest organic food companies in Europe, Rapunzel, AND a potential peanut buyer from Panama.

With the growing interest from various markets, we will be expanding peanut planting. Though 2016 peanut yields were lower than expected, the quality of the peanuts appears to be much higher than in previous years.

In addition to their organic certification, the El Porvenir coffee cooperative received Bird Friendly certification. This means that they have found a third buyer for their coffee. This group and Building New Hope will buy their uncommitted coffee. If they have 10,000 pounds of first quality coffee, Their-Bucks Coffee will buy it. Their-Bucks is working to help them improve their coffee quality and operate better as a cooperative. They hired a consultant with Winds of Peace. In the past, Their-Bucks has given all their profits from the sale of El Porvenir’s coffee back to El Porvenir.

In addition to the coffee from El Porvenir, Their-Bucks is hoping to buy 18,000 pounds of coffee from four other cooperatives, one of which has won the Cup of Excellence four times!

The not-so good news… though the sesame plant is currently processing sesame, we are still waiting on the renewal of the lease.
for 2017. The Nicaraguan government owns the plant and the 2016 lease ran out on the 2nd of January. The government assures us that the delay on the lease is due to paperwork and bureaucracy and we should not worry, BUT…

With no lease, all financing is frozen until it is granted. What does that mean? COPROEXNIC does not have enough money to buy harvested crops from its farmers…which means…

Farmers are selling their sesame to others at lower costs now just to have money to feed their families, leaving COPROEXNIC short on sesame needed to fill the contracts with our buyers.

Farmers need money to provide basic needs for their families. Buyers need to know that contracts will be filled. As of now, our buyers have stood by COPROEXNIC because they are ethical people who care about the farmers, but we know it is risky for them. We have included a list of our buyers; please, please support them and let them know you appreciate their loyalty to the poor.

Now the bad news… climate change is hitting Nicaragua hard. Coffee is suffering because of higher temperatures…each month’s temperature is that month’s hottest in Nicaragua’s recorded history. Recently there has been speculation that Nicaragua will have another El Niño starting in August. It was only in 2014-2015 that Nicaragua experienced the most severe drought in 32 years… and now we are looking at another drought?!

A major UN report estimated that by 2030, 122 MILLION more people will be living in extreme poverty. Many leaders around the world work to end extreme poverty, defined as “a condition characterized by the severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information”. But as they work, climate change is moving more people into that bracket. Hardest hit are small scale farmers impacted by the ever-growing temperatures and extreme weather (i.e. storms, droughts, and flooding).

The Nueva Vida Clinic (New Life Clinic) has been busy with the start-up of the new year. The need for more space to better accommodate all the programs and services is growing.

The third building continues to be erected but we lack the funds to finish it. We fell short of our Raise the Roof campaign goal in November. Fortunately the Bucknell delegation (Lewisburg, PA) in January and our current delegation (Lopez Island, WA) have put up more walls, so we see progress on the third clinic building.
Our lay health promoter program is increasingly more active. The training room that is waiting to be finished in the third building will help us better teach and organize them. Our many support groups for pregnant women, new mothers, mothers with toddlers, teen girls, LGBT folks, parents with asthmatic children, and boys could use the space for activities and privacy.

With the new space, we could offer limited services to the elderly to stimulate their minds, do some physical therapy with them, and help them better understand the long list of medications they take. Right now the elderly mainly sit at home in poverty.

Our radiologist needs more space so he can expand his services to include mammograms and x-rays. We have a part-time driver, Chico, who was diagnosed with lung cancer and told there was nothing to be done… but he received three different diagnoses, no x-ray or written pathology report, leaving him and his family confused. If we had x-ray capabilities, our radiologist, Jorge, would have explained clearly what he saw and treated him with kindness.

One of our staff received news she had stage 4 breast cancer. Jorge did an ultrasound and our ob/gyn, Gulinara, assured her that she did not have cancer, but she had to wait two weeks for mammogram confirmation that she indeed did not. If we had the capabilities to do mammograms, she would not have endured two weeks of worry.

In April, we are expecting ten dentists and other medical providers to serve in Nueva Vida for a week. Without the third building our doctors will work under tarps and we will put the volunteers into any available spaces to work on children’s teeth. If we had the new building, it would be tight, but there would be space.

What we really need to finish the building is funding. We need $25,000 to finish the training center portion or $50,000 to finish the whole building including the x-ray room.

We are at a loss on how to raise the needed funds and meet the 2017 budget of the clinic. If you have any ideas or are willing to do fundraisers let us know by writing Kathleen@jhc-cdca.org. Please, our Nicaraguan patients and volunteers need this facility.

For a specific donation of $500 or more we will put up a tile in the finished building with your name or the name of someone you care about on it.

Home visits by medical staff and volunteers continue to expand offering better services to patients in their living spaces. Hélène, a Belgian nurse volunteer, is meeting with diabetic patients whose sugar is not under control to help them plan and explore ways to gain control.
We welcomed Daniel to our staff as Volunteer Supervisor. His responsibilities are to manage the ever-growing paperwork with the government over exonerations and licenses of volunteer doctors, nurses, and dentists; supervise the Volunteer Coordinator and the delegations; and help free up our time and energy to get our work done.

We welcomed Autumn as our Volunteer Coordinator. Ten days into her stay here she broke her foot and has been out of commission, but is doing better. Our orthopedist, Luis, has been treating her while Grace, a superb volunteer, cares for Autumn above and beyond her clinic duties.

We are exploring ways to adjust to the increasing number of delegations and work as we grow older. There will be changes and we will keep you abreast of the changes we have made. One such change: Kathleen, who directs the general operations of the clinic, turned over the day-to-day operations and staff management to our Clinic Administrator, Josefa, who does the job so very, very well.

JHCommunity:

We enjoyed having Sarah’s brother, Bill, and his children and grandchildren here for the week of Thanksgiving.

The Community had a full holiday from the 15th December – 2nd January. We close the CDCA to give the staff vacation… in fact, most of the country closes.

We witnessed and celebrated Daniel and Claudia’s church wedding with the whole family (including Daniel’s grandmother, Peggy) and Community here. We welcomed the new grandson, Anthony, to Nicaragua for his first visit.

In January, we enjoyed friends, Nora and Becky, who helped in many ways. We enjoyed Becca’s parents, Nancy and Tom, visiting for two weeks. Lots and lots of visitors.
REFLECTION:

Our dear, sweet Maggie Fisher, died at 93 years of age. She was a Sister of Nazareth, an activist, a teacher, our friend, and one who loved the Nicaraguan people. About six years ago, Maggie wrote to me after returning to her convent, that she was spending her time praying for the world.

She could not see or walk much anymore, so she prayed. She prayed with a passion for her Sisters in India, her friends and family, the nation, the poor, the world, and us. AND she sent her small checks of support to this work.

She died in January. She had been sick for a month, but she quit – I think – mostly because she was overwhelmed with the future and could not pray that hard anymore. One of her Sisters agreed with me.

We are looking at a scary future. We have people in high places who think that science is a belief system that one can choose or not choose to believe in. Choosing not to “believe” in facts today, means that by 2030, as I mentioned above – 122 MILLION additional people will be living in extreme poverty due to climate change.

Who are these additional people? Not the wealthy. Not the powerful. No, not those who have it easy today. Those who will be moving into extreme poverty are those who struggle and labor TODAY more than any of those who choose “to not believe in climate change” have EVER worked in their lives.

We now have people in high places who think that torture is okay... and they call themselves Christian. Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek and to pray for our enemies and do good to those who hate us, but now torture is on the table and nuclear war? (Matt. 5:39, 43-48)

In a country called the Melting Pot, a nation almost exclusively comprised of immigrants including the current First Lady, we are now wanting to shun immigrants and refugees because they are brown or of a different religion?

In July when Mama and I visited Maggie, she told me about how the then governor of Indiana, now Vice President, blocked a Syrian family coming into his state. In response, the Archbishop offered sanctuary to this family fleeing terrorism. These leaders of our government are professed Christians and are banning hospitality!

Jesus taught us to love and to welcome the stranger. Hospitality was a bedrock of survival for the Israelites, Arabs/nomads, and Jesus. (Matt 25:38)

We are living in a time when fear is promoted...fear of those different...not different because they have way too much money, mind you...but fear of people of different accents, dress, color, and religion.

Let me reiterate...we live in a time when FEAR IS PROMOTED.

In the Christian Scriptures, we learn that it is LOVE that casts out all fear...not walls, not bans, not hateful words, not lists of people different
from us…LOVE. (I John 4:18)

We are living in a time when not only fear is promoted, but hatred and meanness as well, by people claiming to be Christians!

Jesus did not teach fear.
Jesus did not teach hatred.
Jesus did not teach meanness.

Jesus taught love. He taught going the second mile. He taught kindness. He taught justice for the poor and the oppressed. He taught grace.

Maggie was tired. She was one of the most loving, kind women I knew. She was indeed a devout Christian. Maggie chose to go on to her next adventure instead of hanging around here anymore; therefore, it is left to us to bring into reality the goodness, the kindness, the generosity that Jesus taught us to bring into this world (or “to make flesh what God has ordained”).

Maggie prayed and prayed when she could no longer see, nor walk, nor work for the poor.

Most of us can still work, so let’s get busy.

-Kathleen

---

2016 Year End Summary

Thank you for your gifts in 2016. Below is a quick summary of all the work that your gifts helped to accomplish. Please take a few moments and see what your gifts have done and imagine all the children, mothers, fathers, teens, and elderly… all the people YOU have helped. We know that sometimes life and the world around overwhelm us and we feel helpless while there is so much to be done. Your gifts make good things happen… there is always hope in goodness, generosity and kindness.

♦ COPROEXNIC, the organic agriculture cooperative, with our help, **exported 18 containers of organic sesame…720,000 pounds!** All exported crops were mostly grown in 2015, the second year of one of Nicaragua’s worst droughts.
♦ Together, we **exported 8 containers of organic peanuts…308,000 pounds.**
♦ Together with El Porvenir we **exported 20,100 pounds of organic coffee.** The buyer, Their-Bucks Coffee, together with a foundation, Winds of Peace, hired a consultant to help them improve their coffee quality in light of climate change and quality control issues.
♦ Yet again, no cotton was grown due to the drought, which also caused smaller harvests in all other crops.
♦ **For 2016, COPROEXNIC again was granted a lease for the sesame processing plant, employing 32 workers.**
♦ **COPROEXNIC hired a new manager whose specialty is food quality.** Under new management, COPROEXNIC is improving its accountability.
♦ The **sesame plant continues to undergo tremendous renovations** to make it a world class processing plant.
♦ Through the Vida Fund we **lent out $403,026 in 2016.**
♦ **Loan payments and interest received in 2016 were $460,747.**
♦ We hosted **different groups of buyers** from Once Again Nut Butter, Their-Bucks Coffee, and a possible new buyer from Germany, but that visit did not result in a new market.
♦ Much of our efforts have been towards broadening the pool of financing for COPROEXNIC.
In the Nueva Vida Health Clinic, our four part-time physicians (orthopedist, general, ob/gyn, and pediatrician), a full-time radiologist, and volunteer physicians treated 11,821 patients.

Medical personnel did 1,051 visits in patients’ homes to provide better treatment.

Our half-time ob/gyn took not only PAPs but also biopsies, performed cryotherapies, conizations, and pre- and post-natal care (we had 323 pregnant mothers in our program). She, with a volunteer ob/gyn, even removed a lump from a woman’s breast in our clinic’s new clean room!

Our radiologist performed 1,682 ultrasound exams on 1,372 patients. We also did 126 EKGs.

We gave out treatment and medicines for 22,688 conditions and diseases.

We did a survey and study in the Nueva Vida barrio to better understand the prevalence of mosquito borne illnesses (i.e. dengue, Zika, chikungunya, etc.).

Through our chronic care program we treated monthly 140 patients monthly, 60 of whom are elderly. Besides their check-ups, lab work and medication they also attend monthly meetings to learn about diet, exercise, taking medications properly and giving each other support. Most have type 2 diabetes and/or hypertension.

Pat, our part-time counselor, saw 365 clients... 64% were under the age of 13 years. 51% of the problems presented were family problems and behavioral issues. She had an Nicaraguan intern for many months.

Our laboratory completed 4,619 tests in the clinic for 1,619 patients including 183 patients who were seen by doctors outside our clinic. We did at least 2,000 additional tests processed by other labs. We sent out 414 PAP tests to be read by a pathologist.

We continued our program with ORPHANetwork to see 1,200 children twice a year in our dental clinic.

Our full-time dentist hygienist, dental assistant, and volunteer dental professionals saw 5,813 patients (65% were under the age of 12 years). They performed 9,363 procedures. Of those procedures: almost 70% were preventive care (cleanings, fluoride and sealants); 12% were restorative care (fillings, etc.); and less than 5% were extractions... this is amazing for Nicaragua!

Our dental staff continues to teach patients about the importance of good oral hygiene. They also gave 33 classes to 3,462 children in feeding centers. They went into schools and did fluoride treatments on students reaching 2,068 children (these are included in the above patient numbers).

Our one-morning-a-week eye correction clinic saw 525 patients and provided 747 pairs of glasses. A pilot project with Bucknell Engineers obtained equipment that allows us to make glasses to patient prescriptions in new modern frames and sell them at cost. Of the 747 pairs of glasses 21% were these custom-made glasses. Three days of community outreach visits for vision checks were done.

Our family planning program offers free, consistent birth control for 464 women... very important with Zika.
Our community outreach and health education included the following:

- **Continued the new mother’s group** and included classes on pregnancy, labor, and birth, as well as family planning; a group of mothers of 0-1 year babies; a group of mothers with toddlers; a group of pre-teen and teen girls to give options for the future other than becoming a teen mother; a support group for parents with children with asthma; and continued a support system for patients who are HIV positive. We started a boy’s group (Los Leones) to instill responsibility and a support group for LBGT community.

- We received a grant in July to give our 30-32 lay health promoters a small monetary gift of appreciation each month for all that they do. We maintained the nebulizers and first aid kits in the homes of these lay health promoters and these services helped 1,543 children and 1,690 adults.

- We held 143 different health trainings on 60 different topics of diabetes, sexual health, family planning, etc. for 2,670 participants!
  - We are receiving medical donations within Nicaragua from two foundations and one business.
  - We have worked extensively towards completing our registry with the Ministry of Health as an approved Health Clinic.
  - We hosted 18 delegations that stayed from 3-22 days.
  - We hosted over 15 volunteer medical, dental, and public health professionals in the clinic plus 2 classes of students in the medical profession.

- Two speaking tours encompassed 14 states in the U.S. for 83 speaking engagements, making many new contacts as well as renewing connections with long-time supporters.
- We developed 4 social media fundraisers for the growing new mothers and infants program, the boy’s group, the third clinic building’s construction, and our budget.

- We hosted 16 groups from other organizations based in Nicaragua, speaking about and showing them our work.
- We hosted 9 individual volunteers from a week to 10 months.
- Once each quarter we sent out over 14,000 newsletters with about half going by email.
  - Our on-line recurring donations increased by 8.5%! And we received more gifts in Euros. **NOTE:** Your gifts are extremely important! More than three-fourths of our cash donations continue to be $100 or less.

---

**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 ______________________________________ (designation if desired)

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** via SlightlyTwistedSpoons@jhc-cdca.org

☐ I would like to receive an electronic newsletter at this email address: ____________________________________________

☐ 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:

NEW (as of 2016) ADDRESS - Mail to:
JHC - CDCA, c/o Donita Miller, 420 Longhorn Dr., Rock Hill, SC 29732-8886

Please include your correct name and address information from the newsletter label to avoid duplications!