The Jubilee House Community is saddened to share with you the news of Pat Floerke’s death. She was Kathy’s sister, a Jubilee House Community member for 31 years, and the Nueva Vida Clinic counselor since 2001.

On the 14th of December after our end-of-the-year staff party, Pat fell... probably due to a stroke. The plate she was carrying broke as she fell and sliced her carotid artery and jugular vein. We rushed her to the hospital with one of our clinic doctors, Dr. Jorge Flores, applying pressure to staunch the flow of blood. She was pronounced dead three days later. It has come as a shock for all of us, especially Kathy and all Pat’s clients at the clinic.

We were fortunate to have Dr. Jorge still here after the party and were very pleased with the care Pat received at the public hospital, Lenin Fonseca. Many friends, clients, and staff attended a Quaker memorial service for her. Pat was one of the few Quakers in Managua. Those who attended told stories of how Pat had helped them. She will be sorely missed, and we dedicate this newsletter to her memory. Gifts in memory of Pat can be sent to the CDCA or to the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

The Center for Development in Central America is celebrating 25 years in Nicaragua! In 1994, five adults, a teen, a 5-year old, and a toddler moved to start a new life here and new work after starting and running shelters for the homeless and battered women in North Carolina. We have many memories and stories from the early days, but what we felt the most was a huge welcoming spirit among the people who interacted with us.

During this anniversary year we will share a story or two with you on our blog and social media about some of what has been accomplished. So, if you are interested, please look for them.

Tremendously impacting our work here is the ongoing strife. Although the political situation has stayed predominately calm, the U.S. State Department has not lowered its travel alert level. This means that universities are not allowing delegations to travel to Nicaragua. 2019 was heavily booked with volunteer delegations coming to the CDCA and most (not all, thank you Alaska folks!) have cancelled. Loss of delegations means loss of $100,000 in revenue for the CDCA, and $50,000 worth of donated medications for the clinic.

The high alert level also means tourism has taken a big hit. Nicaragua is looking at a 2% loss in its economy that had been steadily growing for six years. Also, the U.S. signed the NICA ACT into law, blocking international loans coming to Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and cannot withstand more hardships.

Pope Francis has called for dialogue and for a halt to the violence in Nicaragua. With some Catholic bishops calling for a violent overthrow of the government, we hope the Pope’s statement will bolster calls for dialogue again.

With the NICA ACT sanctions coming from the United States and the loss of tourism and business, poverty will increase substantially…which is why your gifts are so important to this work.

Briefly about the work: Harvests are coming in and they are lower than expected. During our last rainy season, we had periods of no rain and periods of too much rain. The farmers were expecting 2.2 – 2.5 million pounds of organic peanuts but are getting about 1.8 million pounds. Also, the sesame seeds did not develop well with the flux in rainfall.

Adding to that, a company here is buying up conventional peanuts and sesame seeds and reselling them out of Mexico as organic. This practice is flooding the market with “organic” peanuts and sesame seeds. With the NICA ACT, we are unsure how its implementation may affect exports of any kind, especially agriculture.

COPROEXNIC met with the government, which owns the sesame processing plant and it said it will sign a three-year lease with COPROEXNIC for use of the plant. COPROEXNIC would love to buy the plant, but the government is not interested in selling. COPROEXNIC would also like to start its own peanut processing plant on the CDCA property.
The **Nueva Vida Clinic** opened back up on the 2\(^{nd}\) of January after a two-week break starting the 14\(^{th}\) of December. Patients were in line waiting to get inside to see the doctors, the lab tech, the **eye glass** assistant, the **dentist** and hygienist.

We were happy to have Margaret Ling, a nutritionist, come in December and do home visits with our patients. She also gave us pointers for diabetics and for people who have a hard time swallowing.

Our boys’ group, The Lions (Los Leones), went to the national zoo for an outing with Becca Wheaton, a volunteer who ran the group for two years. They had a great time and our volunteer coordinator, Andrea, got some amazing photos. Andrea and our paid health promoter, Jessenia, are running both Los Leones and Las Lobas, She-wolves, a group for pre-teen and teen girls.

Las Lobas went on a camping trip to Paul and Becca’s house, which is in a rural area, for two days and one night. They had a great time as well. Claudia is teaching them English.

Please see the last pages of this newsletter for a more complete summary of the accomplishments of 2018.

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**Casa Ben Linder** received the gift of a Mario Montenegro painting from Pam and Owen Bell, Alaskan volunteers. Mario Montenegro is a well-known painter here and is a pioneer of children’s music in Nicaragua. This piece is part of a series “**Sin Musica No Hay Ciudad**” (Without Music There is no City)

A **Peaceworks** delegation from New Jersey came and stayed in Casa Ben Linder. Peaceworks is a non-profit organization that ships used donations to us and other non-profits in Nicaragua. Our clinic has received so many useful items because of their good work.

**We are busy getting all the end of 2018 paperwork done.** If you gave to the CDCA in 2018 you should have received a year-end letter; if not contact Sarah at Sarah@jhc-cdca.org. If you would like to receive our year-end booklet, please email her.

**We are organizing a delegation to visit Nicaragua!** Come join our work and see Nicaragua with your own eyes. May 11\(^{th}\) – 19\(^{th}\). Write volunteers@jhc-cdca.org for more information.

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**JHCommunity:**

This year, the **Jubilee House Community** is celebrating its 40\(^{th}\) anniversary. 40 years is a long, long time for a collective of adults to stay together. We started in 1979 in Statesville, NC, by moving into a home in a poverty-stricken neighborhood and researching how we could better serve the poor.

Sharing a common purse, meals, prayers, worship, celebrations and “cursing the dark” together has made us adaptable, yet stubborn; part of each other, yet separate; organized, yet chaotic. Those of us who are introverts learn to be with others and those of us who are extroverts learn to leave others alone…but we are all made better by the whole.

Another grandbaby is born… Alexander Dean Murdock Iutzi to Coury and Cassie. Mike and Kathleen went to meet their grandbaby in January.

We enjoyed having family here for Christmas; it brought us much joy especially after Pat’s death. Also Becca’s parents came to visit the last part of January.

Orla graduated top of her class from primary school. She will go with Eibhlín to secondary school close to the offices of the CDCA.

Sarah is working on her spring speaking tour along the East Coast of the U.S. Here is the link to attend or arrange to invite her:  
Many of you were so kind to write about Pat’s death and to ask how Kathy is. Kathy is – of course – extremely sad, but she is also doing as well as can be expected. She said that when she was 1½ years old, her grandmother taught her how to hold her new sister using a pillow so she could be ready when Pat came home from the hospital. From that time on, they had never been parted for very long. Please keep Kathy in your thoughts and prayers, because grief can rise anytime.

**REFLECTION:**

After Pat died, Kathy told the community that she wanted a Quaker service in memory of Pat. Laughing softly Kathy said, “And Pat is going to finally get us to shut up.”

Sitting quietly during the service, I reflected on Pat’s life. It is hard to sum up one person’s life… it’s impossible, so I will not try.

One of Pat’s greatest loves was children. Pat took our boys on “field trips” when they were kids and we were home-schooling. Off they would go with hats on their heads to seek some new adventure. She and Kathy taught Tiff and Jessica about interesting board games…a love they continue to have. And the current Community children, Eibhlín and Orla, enjoyed going into her room to play for hours and make crafts…it is sad to think that baby Samantha will not know that joy.

But in the clinic with children, Pat really shone. Around 90% of her clients were kids with behavioral issues, school and family problems, developmental delays or learning disabilities, grief and trauma, because all of these children were poor…some desperately poor. They know death and violence first-hand and often do not have enough to eat. Pat had toys and would get on the floor with them as they played. One of her specialties was play therapy.

Worldwide children…the Innocents…suffer the most under the weight of poverty. They die faster and younger. They are not allowed the possibility of dreaming of a future where they can be anything they want. They often work to bring in money for the family. They care for their siblings as parents struggle to survive. Most don’t have the opportunity to learn. They suffer violence often at home, but more times with gangs and war. They are yanked away from parents through death, violence, and immigration.

In Matt 19:14, Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them: for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” Why? Jesus was Jewish and the Jewish faith protects orphans and widows. Children were cherished and taught.

And now, where are we? The United Nations just released a report on climate change, and it is terrifying to know what kind of world the children are now inheriting.

We separate children from their parents when they cross the U.S./Mexico border…children with their parents, fleeing death and violence.

Scenes of children’s bodies being pulled from bombed-out buildings; children starving in Yemen; and running out of schools when a gun starts firing are becoming “just the news of the day.”

The NICA ACT will increase poverty and limit what the Nicaraguan government can do…like giving free meals at schools, free higher education, access to free health care, and on and on…the children suffer the most. They always have throughout history…always paying for the greed of the few.

It is long past time for all of us to love children as Pat did. We need to listen to the children. Ease the burdens that are too heavy for their little backs to carry. We need to uplift children worldwide…for they are the future of the human race.

-Kathleen

Here is a brief summary of what the CDCA accomplished in 2018…

- **COPROEXNIC**: the organic agriculture cooperative, with our help, exported to two buyers 704,920 pounds of organic sesame... worth $962,100!
- Together, we exported to three buyers 1,148,596 pounds of organic peanuts... worth $1,302,191.
- Together with El Porvenir, we exported 20,100 pounds of organic coffee...$37,880. All the above-mentioned exported crops were mostly grown in 2017.
- The sesame plant continues to undergo tremendous renovations to make it a world class processing plant, employing 44 workers.
- Through the Vida Fund we lent out $1,140,623 in 2018.
- Loan payments and interest received in 2018 were $906,554.
- We hosted one business person to discuss the establishment of our own peanut processing plant, but with the unrest he was hesitant to invest right now.
Much of our efforts in agriculture have been towards broadening the pool of financing for COPROEXNIC and slowly, financing was getting more secure, but with the current environment it is not as secure.

In the Nueva Vida Health Clinic, we continue to serve people though we have lost two specialists, one nurse, and now our counselor. While the unrest was going on, several decided this was a good time to retire or resign.

In the clinic, we treated 11,056 patients by our four part-time physicians (general physician, pediatrician, an orthopedist who only worked 9 months, and ob/gyn who only worked 10 weeks), a full-time radiologist, and 11 volunteer physicians who worked for 5 days to 5 months.

1,055 visits in patients’ homes provided better medical treatment.

Our family planning program offers free, consistent birth control for 300 women and 14 men...very important with Zika. We are offering birth control implants lasting 3-5 years. We put in 119 implants and 12 IUDs, in addition to the above-mentioned 300 women, and we provide birth control for about 50 women in a remote rural coffee cooperative.

Our radiologist performed 278 ultrasound exams on 225 patients, because our old machine broke 9 weeks into 2018 and is unrepairable. We are hoping for a new used one in 2019. We also did 198 EKGs.

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We treated 147 patients monthly through our chronic care program. Besides their check-ups, lab work, and medication, they also attend monthly meetings to learn about diet, exercise, taking the medications properly, and giving each other support. Most have type 2 diabetes and/or hypertension.

A global health doctor did well-child visits in the schools for 4 months. She and her husband put WiFi in our clinic that helped us collect data, spread information, and helped the clinic staff stay in touch with the Nueva Vida community. The clinic made a Facebook page. Unfortunately, the WiFi has not been working for several months now, because the person they hired to keep it up has left the country.

We hosted a volunteer plastic surgeon who did 39 minor surgeries in our clean room.

Our part-time counselor, Pat who died, saw 376 clients working on an average of 2 and a half different issues in each session...most were family problems and behavioral issues. She did in-school consultations and led two support groups on trauma after all the violence occurred in April and May.

Our laboratory completed 6,417 tests in the clinic for 1,697 patients. We also do weekly-to-monthly glucose checks as well as urine tests when patients are checked in. We sent out 294 PAP tests to be read by a pathologist.

We continued our dental program with ORPHANetwork to see children in Nueva Vida from 17 community feeding centers across the western side of Nicaragua.

Our full-time dentist, hygienist, dental assistant, and volunteer dental professionals saw 5,828 patients (51% were under the age of 12 years). They performed 10,416 procedures. Of those procedures: almost 55% were preventive care [cleanings, fluoride and sealants]; 31% were restorative care [fillings, etc.] and a tad more than 8% were extractions...this is amazing for Nicaragua! Our dental clinic is serving more adults as the government closed their dental clinic in Ciudad Sandino.

Our three-mornings-a-week eye correction clinic saw 691 patients and provided 869 pairs of glasses (18% were custom-made glasses).

We gave out wheelchairs, canes, handicapped toilet seats, crutches, etc. to 208 patients.

Our community outreach and health education included the following:

- Continued the new mothers' 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 build self-esteem and give options for the future other than being a teen mother; a boys' group to build a sense of responsibility and self-esteem as well; a support group for parents of children with asthma; a support group for the LBGT community; and a support system for patients who are HIV positive. We provided 101 classes and meetings through the year with 3,293 attendees for learning, support and fun.

We received another grant to give our 30 volunteer Nicaraguan 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 3,256 children and 3,279 adults. They and our medical staff did 1,055 home visits.

We hosted 7 delegations from Jan- March; then all delegations cancelled except the Alaska one in November. Not anticipating the absence of delegations, we hired a Nicaraguan volunteer coordinator in January.

We hosted over 36 volunteer medical, dental, and public health professionals in the clinic, plus 2 classes of students in the medical profession, and one veterinarian who went to the coffee cooperative.

We hosted 6 individual volunteers from Belgium, Germany, the UK, and the U.S. We have also hosted 10 Nicaraguan interns volunteering in the clinic.

We went on six speaking trips that encompassed many states in the U.S. (new states: Alaska, New Mexico and Colorado), and also England and Ireland. We made many new contacts as well as renewing long-time supporters. We were donated a van on the west coast and one for the east coast.

Bucknell University gave the CDCA their first Global Engagement Award.

We developed 4 social media fundraisers for the implant program, the boys' group, the clinic and our budget.

We've made many improvements to the Casa Ben Linder in Managua in order to house AirBnB guests and host events to raise the money needed to restore the murals and run a museum, remembering the fallen of the Nicaraguan wars and the benefits of the Revolution. With the lack of tourists because of the high security levels placed on travel, this program is suffering like a country.

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