



JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY

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

May 1995

NOW THE PEOPLE OF ROBERTO CLEMENTE HAVE LATRINES! As our last newsletter was on its way to the post office, folks were digging holes for latrines in the poorest neighborhood of Ciudad Sandino. Today every family in Roberto Clemente has access to a sturdy, new latrine. Getting Roberto Clemente potable water and latrines was top priority for the CDCA, and now that it is accomplished, thanks to your support and their hard work, we are progressing with other development projects.

The CDCA has been sponsoring training workshops for community people (mostly women) in the area of basic health care. Approximately 40 attendees have learned correct vaccination procedures, methods of birth control, community cleanliness practices, healthful and sanitary use of latrines, and information on sexually transmitted diseases. CDCA has provided transportation, assistance producing worksheets, refreshments and lunch for the participants, and occasional class materials. (For example, we bought needles so the class would not have to practice with only one syringe for everybody.) Dr. Wilfredo Avila gives his time as trainer. Dr. Avila is not a rich doctor; he is paid approximately \$150 per month by the Ministry of Health, and still he donates his time.

We also provide weekly transportation for doctors to go to outlying Trinidad Central for health clinics. In addition we have been given funds from St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Salisbury, NC, for prescriptions and are organizing an afternoon health clinic locally.

We are getting ready to build a building for the *olla comunal* (community pot -- a "soup kitchen"/pre-school for 300 children) for the neighborhoods Carolina Calero and Roberto Clemente. Our Board member Nora Laws is raising the funds and recruiting a team to come build in June.

Our micro-enterprise fund continues to provide jobs and explore areas to expand the economic base of Ciudad Sandino.

The staff of the CDCA meets, organizes, explores, fund raises, and works on development projects. We are able to provide a great deal of transportation for other groups in the community. (For example, we once transported iced fish to families and feeding centers in Managua and Ciudad Sandino so folks could make fish soup.) We provide food at community gatherings (piñata parties, appreciation events, even a roof-raising for a new church in Ciudad Sandino). Our typing and computer skills are in frequent demand. If there's a need, people have learned to come and ask us. And if we can meet the need, we will.



Fish for hungry folks

Mike and César went to the U.S. to locate and purchase diesel buses for a transportation cooperative. Bus lines in Nicaragua are run by cooperatives. A person, usually the driver, owns a bus and pays into the cooperative, and that bus is his job. The government has a program to loan money for buses at almost 100% interest. And when a bus owner can't make a payment they lose bus and all. This is designed to get the bus lines into the hands of the wealthy. By obtaining buses we raise a little income for the CDCA and help the owner/operators buy buses at a price they can afford. But used, cheap diesel buses are hard to come by and are becoming quite a commodity. We don't have much capital and the cooperative is desperate for five or more buses. Mike

and César looked and looked, but they had to leave without purchasing any. Mike will return and look some more.

If you can help in increasing our base of capital (by loaning us money), contact Mike through 1-800-ASHEVIL.

The only medical care available in a rural area of six small communities we serve is a one-morning-per-week clinic at Trinidad Central. A few months ago, they had no health care at all, but after much hard work, they now have a rudimentary health center and a contract with the Ministry of Health (MINSa) to provide doctors and medicines. My first week as driver for the doctor and health worker, I looked for my passengers at two places only to learn that health workers were on strike. The Trinidad Central community organizer was worried, after we had broken the bad news to the more than 30 people waiting (many babes in arms and old people, many having travelled miles on foot or horseback) that people would stop coming if clinics were unexpectedly cancelled and if medicines continued to be unavailable. I was struck by the truth of what he said. Why should they keep trying if they saw no results?

So the next week, after I had made five stops looking for doctors and learned that the assigned doctors had refused to come, abandoning more than 20 waiting patients, the people of Trinidad Central organized a delegation on the spot to demand a meeting with the director of MINSa.

I drove them into town, and an hour later they had the promise that the director himself would do a make-up clinic the next day and would bring medicine. The next day came, and we were able to pick up two small boxes of medicines (for all the residents of six communities!), but the director was not there. Another doctor offered to do a short clinic that day and to give up his vacation day the following week. One small victory after hours of struggle.



CDCA recently received a grant to cover prescriptions, so we will be able to supply additional medicine for the clinic. But just last week there was another health workers' strike on Trinidad Central's clinic day. The obstacles never let up, but the people struggle on, and we with them.

Community News -- Sarah, Mike, and Jessica are in the States right now speaking about the CDCA. (They can be contacted through 1-800-ASHEVIL.) This is a fund-raising and support-gathering tour of the Southeast. They will attend Tiff's and Beth's graduations from high school. Jessica, now a rising Junior, will stay on to attend a summer drama program. Tiff has been accepted at the Cornell School of Engineering where he will be a freshman next year! Kathleen, Coury, and Daniel just returned from an overland trip to the States with Mike and César, who went on business. They saw family and many friends. Pat is exploring possibilities of consulting with a family therapy organization as well as continuing in the sustainable agriculture project. Kathy has a part-time job outside the CDCA providing office support for a North American nurse who works at a clinic out in the country here. We are thrilled that some income will be coming in.



We are all pleased that Kathleen's cookbook Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto has been a successful fund-raiser. There are still copies available! We hope contributors have enjoyed it.

Kathy, Sarah, Daniel, Michael, Jessica, Coury, Kathleen, and Pat

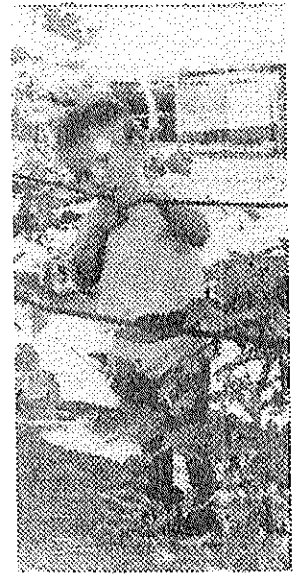
Many thanks go to so many people and for so much goodness to us!

- * Board members who have faithfully agonized and met and worked to get us here and keep us here.
- * People who have hosted Mike, César, Kathleen, Coury, Daniel, Jessica, and Sarah during their U.S. trips.
- * Folks who stay in touch with us. * Volunteers who've made the trip south, recently Jim Brown and Ann Lansing who brought lots of love, gifts, and grits!
- * Dick Gilbert and his expertise in so many areas. * Tim Frye for struggling with us over the US properties.
- * For a screened in house. Our friends Pam and Nora gave us money and Fidel did most of the porch work for just an ayuda (a little "help"). This will help with malaria, dengue, and flies.

We need prayers for:

- * Adjustments to this new life to continue for some of us. * School opportunities for Coury to open up.
- * Some way to have a phone (estimated costs for installation of two phone lines are \$4,000)
- * Ways to bring in income for the CDCA. * Buses to be found and bought. * Spanish

REFLECTION - On the way to the States, the increase of wealth as we travelled northward was amazing. Nicaragua is visibly as well as statistically the poorest country in Central America. Roadside houses are poorer in Nicaragua. Beggars are more prolific here. The roads are worse. The animals are more scrawny, mangy, and pitiful. And there are few trees. It was amazing to see the difference. I know we didn't see the squatter communities and the slums in the other countries, but I've seen them before. Nicaragua's low place on the economic totem pole is clearly apparent. It's heart-breaking.



When we got to the States, the wealth was overwhelming to me. The houses were HUGE. The roads were excellent. The horses and cows were well fed and groomed. And there were lots of trees. The aspects, I think, that affected César the most were the wealth and vastness of the United States compared to little Nicaragua.

The questions kept coming to me. Why did the US -- the great, big, rich US -- feel compelled to squash little, poor Nicaragua in the 80's? Of course intellectually we know, but emotionally -- why? And now after squashing it why continue to destroy this little piece of land with its poverty-stricken people through no aid and greedy banking principles? Why?

I don't think US citizens realize intellectually or emotionally how tiny Nicaragua is compared to the States. And unless you see the poverty and touch it, there is no way to know how poor Nicaragua is. Nicaragua needs the US to be generous and kind like all the teachings of all great religions encourage, because the US and Central America are neighbors and we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. -- Kathleen

Air Mail Address to Nicaragua: c/o FUNDECI - Casa Ben Linder, Barrio Mons. Lezcano, de la estatua 3 c. al sur, 1 1/2 arriba, Managua, Nicaragua

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