At the end of this newsletter is a summary of what the CDCA and its staff accomplished in 2019; please take the time to read it and see how you have helped.

Harvest time is almost over. Here in Nicaragua during the months of November-January, crops are harvested, dried, and taken to be processed. Currently the organic agriculture cooperative, COPROEXNIC, is shipping about one container a week of organic sesame to buyers from the sesame processing plant that they operate.

The organic peanuts are in and being processed now. COPROEXNIC worked out a plan to have the peanuts processed in a timely manner with the processor they have used for years.

The organic coffee co-op is shipping their coffee. The Their-Bucks Coffee organization and its kind, wonderful, creative folks have now turned their operation over to the CDCA, as they are getting older. For years these folks, mostly from Mount Pleasant, SC, put heart and soul into making a profit on the El Porvenir coffee and giving back the profit to the small, impoverished cooperative of 52 families on a remote, rural mountain. Many, many thanks to John, Al, Elizabeth, Steve, Michael, Francisco, and Keeeling.

The coffee is now available through Farmer Shares, thanks to the help and organization from a law professor, Steve Virgil, who is one of our board members. He is setting up the logistics for roasting and selling the coffee through monthly subscriptions. Please buy El Porvenir’s coffee from this site… evidently Steve has 500 pounds of coffee in his living room much to the dismay of his caring wife. [https://farmershares.com/]

There have been reasonably good crop yields this season but little to no financing. Since the political unrest of April – September 2018, Nicaragua is PERCEIVED as a risky investment, though the country is still a safe place. Nicaragua is way more stable than its neighbor Honduras, and yet they have the same level of travel alert status from the U.S. State Department. Nicaragua continues to receive the World Bank’s endorsement for successfully completing social projects, etc., but financing is scarce.

Together with COPROEXNIC’s management and buyers, Mike is constantly seeking financing. Without financing, the cooperative cannot buy crops and the farmers cannot provide for their families.

Speaking of financing… the Nueva Vida Clinic continues to serve people, though we scrimp and save in order to provide health care of all types… dental, eye glasses, lab tests, acute and chronic medical care, pediatrics, therapy, medicines, ultrasounds, and public health.

Three years ago, we started our birth control implant program. Those first implants were ONLY viable for three years… so guess what? We need to replace them.

Our volunteer delegation in November included the only doctors going to El Porvenir all year to offer medical treatments. We paid close to $8,000 for medications in order to provide care to that community as well as have clinic medicines for December. Without delegations coming with their medical donations, our pharmaceutical costs have gone up and up.

A new, cheaper WiFi service is being installed in the clinic. The initial 18-month contract has expired, originally funded by a thoughtful British couple who realized its usefulness. We’ve learned how absolutely essential Wi-Fi is for both our clinic staff and community-wide health information.

Several years ago, we started giving our 30 lay health promoters a little cash each month as a way of thanking them for all they do. Last year they saw over 9,000 patients in their own homes and in home visitations! We are committed to keeping this program going.

This is the way of the clinic. You start a project… a good, needed project and then you have to keep it going. And with Nicaragua still trying to recover economically from the unrest of 2018, it is the poor who are suffering. (In 2019, Nicaragua’s economic growth still
fell by 0.04%). This means that the poor cannot contribute what they once could. With little to no revenue coming from delegations, the clinic’s services continue to struggle from lack of funding.

On a brighter note:

We were able to offer Dr. Soto a paid position as a therapist in our clinic through the Pat Floerke Memorial Fund. Also, we hosted a couple who came in December: Margaret worked in the clinic with nutrition counseling and Greg worked with our construction staff on the education training room of the third clinic building. With funding help from the Santa Barbara Sunrise Rotary for materials, we are hiring day laborers to get the training room finished.

In January, we were pleased to host a small delegation, Friends of Latin America, whose focus was much different than most of our delegations in the past. They came to see for themselves the impact of the unrest of 2018. What did they discover? Not only is Nicaragua safe for travel, but they also learned about the many good (and some not so good) aspects of Nicaraguan society and government. Unfortunately, we only have three other groups scheduled for 2020.

Casa Ben Linder, a hospitality house and training center, was full over the holidays with people staying one or more nights. We also received a donation of $10,000 to help with renovations as well as paying on a loan. Events will be picking up in February as schools open and Nicaraguans get back into their routines after the harvest-time break.

Sarah and Diana, our office administrator, went to Antigua, Guatemala, representing the local Rotary Club, thanks to funding help from Rotary partners. Besides representing the Club, they were seeking partners for the Nueva Vida sewage project, for a climate change mitigation project to help coffee farmers, as well as funding for an Alternatives to Violence Project and Aquaponics… all projects of the Ciudad Sandino Club with the CDCA helping.

Sarah is setting up her spring speaking tour. Contact her if you would like for her to speak somewhere along the east coast of the U.S. Email: Sarah@jhc-cdca.org

JHCommunity:

Paul, Becca, Eibhlin, and Orla have just returned from their trip to see Paul’s sister Jean, and her family in New Zealand! Jean’s family graciously paid for their flights. They had a marvelous time seeing new flora and fauna and of course reconnecting with family.

Before they left, we the Community had a small gathering to remember Pat, marking one year since she died so suddenly. Those of us remaining in Nicaragua enjoyed family coming to Nicaragua. Grandson Alexander turned one year old here! We had little grandchildren running and squealing, older grandchildren putting up with the toddlers, adult children and their loved ones all home for the holidays. It was grand!

Kathleen’s brother and his family came to Nicaragua to also experience new flora and fauna, volcanoes, and see our work. And of course, with cousins abounding, the family was able to reconnect some.

We are enjoying Kathleen’s mother who is with us until mid-March. Peggy is now 90 years old. We also celebrated our dear friend Nora’s 70th birthday, when she and her partner Becky, came. And we have enjoyed having other special friends here, Tom and Jenny, who labor to change U.S. policies regarding Honduras and the horrors happening there [https://friendshipamericas.org/].
REFLECTION:

2020 is here. A new year. A new decade. This could be the beginning to a whole new future and yet, so many people struggle to just survive their own individual lives.

As I write:

- there is an impeachment trial going on in Washington;
- people seem to have lost the ability to be kind;
- Nicaragua’s economy is still struggling to return to where it was in March of 2018 before the unrest;
- the last decade was the hottest in recorded history;
- Australia is still burning, threatening extinction for species of unique animals;
- the rich are getting richer, widening the gap between the rich and the poor;
- the Middle East is even more unstable than it has been;
- young people globally are not idealistic, but angry and depressed;
- the coronavirus outbreak is looming; and on and on.

We need hope. We need laughter. We need security. We need each other as we are part of humanity and this earth. Hope, laughter, security, and each other – these are the tools we need to turn things around.

Studies\(^1\) have been done that show when people are afraid they tend to move to the “right”… limiting immigration, more hawkish, more conservatism in the sense of clamping down on what one has, more controlling of women, more suspicion of different races, less taxes, more military, less gun control, more drug control, etc.

When people feel secure, they tend to move to the “left”… more open borders, more governmental services, more diplomacy, more dove-like, more open to others’ freedoms, less suspicious of different races, more gun control, less drug control, etc.

Of course, there are people who are firmly on the “right” or the “left” and are not affected as much by fear. But so, so many of us are affected by fear, which means that…

Many politicians have learned that fear will bring in the votes for them. Many in the news media have also learned that fear will grab and keep people’s attention. Many religious bodies have learned throughout the ages that fear will “keep people in line”.

Before he was elected president, Donald Trump\(^2\) said, “Real power is – I don’t even want to use the word – fear.”

Adolf Hitler took frightened Germans who were struggling and starving under insane inflation and blamed the Jewish people. And what happened then?

Nazis killed over 12 million innocents in concentration camps, while 75 million civilians and military personnel died in World War II… including 27 million Soviet Union citizens!\(^3\)

Fear is power… real, true power… fear controls us, manipulates us, and can make us do insane, horrific things… so how do we negate that fear? How do we stay good and kind amidst the fear?

Love.

“There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid…” 1 John 4:18\(^4\)

If we love, we cannot be afraid of others… we can be worried for them, but not afraid OF them. Love changes EVERYTHING.

Love gives us hope. In love we can laugh. In love we are safe. Through love we help each other, work together to solve problems, reach out, give and embrace. Love gives us the tools to change all the bad.

Love.

2020… may love fill each of us, so we can conquer fear.

-Kathleen

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2 Opening quote in Bob Woodward’s book, Fear: Trump in the White House


4 Good News Bible
Here is a brief summary of what you helped the CDCA accomplished in 2019…

- COPROEXNIC, the organic agriculture cooperative, with our help, exported 763,500 pounds of organic sesame to three buyers… worth $1,292,189 (an increase of 26%)!
- Together, we exported 652,000 pounds of organic peanuts to three buyers… worth $735,953, a decrease of 44% due to late rains that damaged the crops.
- Together with El Porvenir, we exported 19,800 pounds of organic coffee… $39,204. All the above-mentioned exported crops were mostly grown in 2018.
- With help, we launched Farmer Shares Coffee, marketing the exported organic coffee through direct subscription sales.
- The sesame plant continues to undergo tremendous renovations to make it a world-class processing plant, employing 40.
- Through the Vida Fund we lent out $293,739 in 2019.
- Loan payments and interest received in 2019 totaled $149,954.
- We hosted three business contacts to talk directly with the farmers and discuss future plans with COPROEXNIC.
- Much of our efforts in agriculture have been towards broadening the pool of financing for COPROEXNIC and slowly financing delayed revenues were improving, but since April 2018 COPROEXNIC still struggles to find adequate financing.

- In the Nueva Vida Health Clinic, we continue to serve 1,500 people monthly and though we charge a nominal fee (less than $2/person for lab tests and medications) we exonerate costs for about 30% of our patients due to their poverty.
- In the clinic, 9,971 patients were treated by our two part-time physicians (general physician and pediatrician), our full-time radiologist, and volunteer physicians (only three who worked for five days).
- Our family planning program offers free, consistent birth control for 837 women and 685 men (who received condoms)… very important with Zika. We are offering birth control implants lasting 3-5 years. We put in 298 implants and 95 IUDs (in addition to the women noted above), and we also provide birth control for about 50 women in a remote rural coffee cooperative.
- Our radiologist performed 447 ultrasound exams on 382 patients after we received the donation of a used ultrasound machine. We also did 457 EKGs.
- We gave out treatment and medicines for 18,710 conditions and diseases.
- We treated 141 patients monthly through our chronic care program. In addition to 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 which make up 21% of the diseases and conditions for which we supply medicines.
- We were fortunate to have a volunteer therapist who worked three mornings a week to fill in the gap left by Pat’s death. Dr. Soto saw 476 clients… most issues presented were domestic violence and behavioral. She also held tutorials in two schools.
- Our lab completed 5,645 tests in the clinic for 1,466 patients.
- We also do glucose checks as well as urine tests when patients are checked in. We sent out 412 PAP tests to be read by a pathologist.
- We continued our dental program with ORPHA Network to see children in Nueva Vida from 22 community feeding centers across western Nicaragua.
- Our full-time dentist, hygienist, dental assistant, and volunteer dental professionals saw 6,571 patients (63% were under the age of 12 years). They performed 10,271 procedures. Of those procedures: 64% were preventive care (cleanings, fluoride and sealants), 24% were restorative care (fillings, etc.), and a little less than 10% were extractions… this is up from the previous year, because we are seeing more patients for the first time because the government closed its dental clinic in Ciudad Sandino. Our dentist of eight years moved and we hired a new dentist who is equally wonderful.
- Our three-mornings-a-week eye correction clinic saw 945 patients and provided 1,017 pairs of glasses (11% custom-made).
- We gave out wheelchairs, canes, handicapped toilet seats, crutches, etc., to 158 patients.
- Our community outreach and health education had its trials this year with our paid health promoter being out 6-7 months with poor health. We have had the help of a social work intern and graduate for that time and he has helped carry out 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; and a support system for patients who are HIV positive.
  - Provided weekly to monthly classes through the year with 314 attendees for learning, support and fun.
- We held 107 different trainings with 3,645 participants.
- We received another grant to give our 30 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 4,899 children and 4,390 adults. They, with our general physician, did 929 home visits.
- We hosted only two delegations all year… that is down from about 13-14 delegations a year… and the delegations were much smaller. One delegation came to help us celebrate 25 years in Nicaragua and the other were faith filled medical people from Alaska (plus one Iowan).
- We hosted only six volunteer medical, dental, and other health professionals in the clinic, down from 36 the year before, and one veterinarian who went to the coffee cooperative.
- We hosted only one other individual volunteer from the U.S. One Nicaraguan therapist volunteered all year and a Nicaraguan dentist volunteered one morning a week for seven months. We also hosted eight Nicaraguan interns volunteering in the clinic.
- We went on two speaking trips that included 17 states for 76 presentations in the U.S. We made many new contacts as well as renewing long-time supporters.
- We developed three social media fundraisers for Mother’s Day, Giving Tuesday, and the end of the year.
- We’ve continued to improve the Casa Ben Linder in Managua in order to house guests and host events, as well as 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 all other businesses in Nicaragua; however, we did host 36 different events with 985 participants total and rented rooms for 404 nights.
- Once each month, lab tests sent out 1,000 medicals with half going to emails.
- Our on-line recurring donations increased by 20%! This is critical with few to no delegations coming to provide support.
- Our number of donors increased by 5%, and the average total per donor increased by 13%. We continue also to receive donations in euros and in pounds.

Whew!

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)

Donor name & address:

NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR DONATIONS - JHC-CDCA, c/o Sue Williams, 4376 Pennington Rd, Rock Hill, SC 29732

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