

# Alongside Ministries en Nicaragua

**A.M.E.N.**

## Evangelism Through Relationships

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Dear Friends,

Here we are back in Nicaragua and our Christmas holiday with family and friends in the Northwest seems like a distant memory – but a strong one. We had such a wonderful time visiting and spending time with so many of you. We had great times of fellowship over great meals – both home-cooked and out. It was all fun! We look back and remember and relive those times in our memory and at the same time look ahead to be prepared for what's coming.

We returned to Nicaragua richly blessed in many ways but the monetary gifts that were given have opened the doors for continued improvements in our ministry facilities. The generosity of our home church, Woodinville Community United Methodist, has allowed us to start construction on a second dorm that we hope to complete before the rains start in mid-May. Thanks to some construction suggestions from a good friend, Halle is trying out a new style of construction that will provide a stronger, more reinforced wall and, after the workers get the hang of it, might even be a faster method of construction. It seems that the walls are going up pretty fast and it's fun to watch the construction transition.



**Just beginning – planning the foundation.**



**The walls are about 3' high. This view is from the opposite corner as the other.**

Our new dorm is an L-shape with a bathroom in the corner. This will allow for family groups or couples to have a more private area while sharing a common bathroom which will open to both sides of the dorm. It is also set in such a way that we'll have a nice courtyard area between the dorms that will look out to the north.

Another blessing we brought back with us was the great response at our Nica Night fundraiser. Those donations are being used for our ministry center activities and facility improvements. With preschool starting the first part of February the first thing we did was to give our facility a little face lift with a fresh coat of paint on the walls and a splash of color on the floor. We just love how it turned out.



Besides adding color and cheer the squares will help us section off play areas for the preschool children with a book area, painting area, cars and trucks area, etc. The square to the far right that you can't see in the picture is green and we have plans to paint some roads on the floor in this area for imaginative play with cars, trucks and blocks.

Preschool classes have started now and we've finished our first week of school. We are starting our new year with 9 students, only 2 of which we've had before. It is a great group. We've already fallen in love with them and know it's going to be a great year!



**Playdough is always a hit!**



**Raul, above and Allyson, right**



We are looking forward to making a few more improvements in the way of storage cabinets and new counter tops for the preschool and kitchen improvements for the feeding program. We hope to put tile on the counter tops and to build some cabinets so we can have a better place to store bowls, cups and cooking utensils as well as some cooking supplies. We'd like to add some counter space around the sink, too, so to have a better area for washing and drying dishes. Our good friend and gifted handyman Jim Jobes is coming down to spend about 4 weeks with us later this month. He's got some great plans for building a house for a single mom of three but Kathy's hoping he might be able to find time for some of her ministry center projects, too!

Not long after we returned to Nicaragua we welcomed our first team of 2006, a group from St. Paul United Methodist church in State College, PA. They were a wonderful group to start the year with. There were 10 of them and they were a hard working, fun-loving group. With an average age in the group of about 59 we were amazed and so pleased with how hard they worked out in the Nica sun and wind. They painted soccer goal frames and worked on the baseball infield setting in the concrete base holders, placing the pitching rubber and building up the pitching mound. They also manicured the base paths and infield area to shape it up to a first rate baseball field. We think we've got a pretty snazzy place to offer our Nicaraguan baseball teams as well as other visitors to the sports center.



This was a fun cross-generational team that brought so many different gifts and talents with them to serve the people here in our community. Along with all their hard work they also found the energy to host a clothing sale, present a parenting



seminar to the community, play and read with the children and even teach a few how to crochet. We think Lefty (we bet you can figure out who he is in the picture) at the age of 73, was an inspiration to all of us. There is no retiring from the Lord's work. He will use the gifts and talents of everyone who is willing to serve! We want to give a huge thanks to the St. Paul team for starting off 2006 on such a positive note.

Last of all we are excited to share some personal family news with you all. First, our oldest son, Brandon, and his fiancé, Misty, have set a date for their wedding. They will be tying the knot on Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> up in the Snohomish area (just north of Woodinville). We have been exchanging emails and joining in their excitement and anticipation as they keep us posted of their plans and decisions. We'll keep you all posted, as well, but for now please keep them in your prayers that God will be glorified in and throughout all their plans!

So, it looks like we'll be making a quick trip up to the Northwest in late August but not just for the wedding. Brookes, our youngest son, has recently been accepted to Northwest University and is looking forward to starting there as a freshman this fall. This is a major step for him and culminates 4 years of home schooling, independent study and some formal classes at Nicaragua Christian Academy. He will return to the Northwest with a wealth of experience under his belt and may even experience a bit of culture shock as he really settles in to living back in a first world country. We'll be praying for him regarding those issues at that time but for now please pray for his next 6 months of life in Nicaragua. Pray that God continues to work in his life, preparing him for what's to come, teaching him what he has yet to learn from this life down here, and growing him to continue to become the man God intends him to be.

Thank you so much for your support that allows us to continue to serve in the ministry here. It is windy, dusty, hot and tiring but the joy of the Lord is our strength and we enjoy what we do. We know we can't do it without your love and friendship and your prayers and support.

Serving Together,

Halle, Kathy and Brookes August

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