

Alongside Ministries en Nicaragua

A.M.E.N.

Evangelism Through Relationships

Halle and Kathy August, Missionaries

amen@ibw.com.ni

www.alongsideminstries.org

October 2005

... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Hebrews 12:1

Dear Friends,

In thinking and praying about what to write and share this month the idea of running a marathon came to mind along with the above scripture. Lately, our ministry and lives down here in Nicaragua have felt like we are in the throes of running a marathon. Have you watched and/or participated in a marathon before? I'm familiar with several – the Bloomsday Race in Spokane, the Boston Marathon, and of course the Olympic Marathon, but only as a spectator. Not being a runner myself (oh... now you know who's writing...) I am amazed at the tenacity and perseverance of runners. I remember watching one Olympic Marathon in particular where a runner made it to the last stretch of the race but was clearly suffering. She was hardly running – really just limping along, and it was agonizing to watch. As she entered the stadium for the last lap of the race there were several that were walking alongside of her, I'm sure aching to hold her and help her but keeping a safe distance to make it clear that they hadn't touched or aided her in any way. If they did touch her she would have been disqualified from the race and with a short quarter mile or less to go that would have been so disappointing.

Thankfully, in the “Alongside Marathon” we are not disqualified by receiving help, assistance and encouragement from those who run along with us. Praise the Lord for that because we're sure we would have been defeated long ago if it were not for the support we receive from you all – our family, friends and visitors. Looking back over the year and ahead to the few remaining months, it appears that we will have had close to 100 visitors passing through – most spending anywhere from 3 to 14 nights with us. Each brought with them a form of support whether it was a word of encouragement, financial support or true muscle and grit to work on sports center projects. Each of them, whether they knew it or not, was a participant with us in this ministry marathon – giving us a boost to continue on in the race. Hopefully each of them took back home with them a changed heart and a broadened vision of God's work in the world.

If you've ever watched a marathon on TV you've probably never really gotten to watch the whole race uninterrupted. It just doesn't make for very exciting programming. Instead, what the TV stations usually do is jump back and forth from different events, checking in on the marathon now and again to say something like, “Yep, they're still running...” When I think of writing about our ministry activities I tend to feel a little like those sports announcers. Yep, we're still running (well, ok, maybe limping sometimes) the race set before us. We are making progress on many of the same projects that we've been working on for quite awhile. Here are a few quick up-dates:

El Salero Sports Center

We continue to make improvements in the baseball field. New in-field grass has been planted, 1/3 of the homerun cyclone fence has been constructed and the concrete wall along the 3rd base line which parallels the main road is almost complete. Included in this concrete wall is a large access gate so that we can completely close off the rest of the field to cows, horses and other vehicles which will allow us to better maintain the field. We've also installed 2 more street lights along the road which will help with security at night.

The soccer field has been beautifully graded and is ready to be seeded with seed brought down especially for this purpose. However, this rainy season has been the wettest we've ever experienced and there haven't been enough dry days to spray and kill weeds. We have tried to spread seed a couple of different times but each time, before the seed can take root, a hard rain has come and washed most of it away. Nicaragua is as green and lush and beautiful as we've ever seen it but this weather just isn't conducive to planting grass so we'll just wait for the right opportunity.

The first classroom/media center/library which is situated near the ranchon is nearing completion. A recent visitor worked with Halle to wire the building for lights, fans and air conditioner so that what remains to be completed is interior finish work (ceiling, floor, finished walls and windows). The kitchen at the ranchon, too, has been wired and is waiting for similar interior work along with the purchase of refrigerator and stove. We're hoping to be using our ranchon kitchen for our 2006 teams.

El Farito Ministry Center

We're coming to the close of our 2nd year of preschool and are planning our promotion for November 17th. It has been a wonderful and successful year of preschool with much of the credit owed to Lori Scharffenberger who has been the main preschool teacher this year. Three of our 8 students are ready to move on to Kindergarten and we are hoping to place them into a high quality program to help them continue the progress they've already made. We've started an El Farito Scholarship Fund for this purpose and are so thankful that to date we've received enough support to scholarship 2 of the 3 students. We are trusting God to provide the remaining needed funds.

The feeding program continues to serve lunch to approximately 60 children each Tuesday and Thursday. Through this ministry we continue to grow in relationship with the children. Some of our goals in this ministry include starting boys and girls Bible clubs when we return after Christmas and beginning an offering program that will go towards providing a hot lunch once a month at a feeding program for the children of the dump community. This last idea actually came from one of the women of the neighborhood who had an opportunity to visit the dump community and was deeply touched by the poverty that she witnessed.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12: 1-3

Yes, sometimes it feels like we are running a marathon and I, for one, often feel more like that Olympic runner I remember from years ago. However, when I remember and consider the course that was set before Jesus who, *for the joy of a relationship with us*, endured the cross as part of His course, I am humbled and encouraged. I hope you are, too, and that you might, along with us, remember Jesus and the opposition he endured. If you are running the course set before you by God we pray that you will not grow weary or lose heart. And we hope you'll stay tuned to the "Alongside Marathon" and you'll continue to hear, "Yep... we're still running!"

Serving Together, Halle and Kathy August

Thank you for supporting our ministry in Nicaragua.
100% of your financial gift given through
The NEO Foundation is received and used in ministry here in Nicaragua.
The NEO Foundation
22301 S.W. 110th Pl. Tualatin, OR 97062