



# REPORT FROM THE FIELD



## PEACEWORKS 2018 DELEGATION TO NICARAGUA

January 9-22nd, 2018

Personal Reflections and  
Financial Reporting  
from the Field

This "Report from the Field" aims to take you up steep mountains passes, through tiny, rural villages and even to an island sanctuary only accessible by boat -- to introduce you to the Nicaragua people and organizations that we call our partners and friends. In all, we hand-delivered \$87,000 in support on behalf of the PeaceWorks community. And while you may not have been there when we went from *pueblo* to *pueblo*, your generosity and kindness was felt by everyone in the spirit of people to people.

Diane Sterner, Delegation Leader

[peaceworks.org](http://peaceworks.org)



# PUSHING BACK

## Axayacatl Center for Women by Marilyn Devroye

"If it weren't for you, we would still be getting pushed around by men. Now we have our animals, our plants," Doña Rosita told the women leaders of Axayacatl in discussing their income generating project.

Axayacatl provides support for women in Masaya, Nicaragua who are victims of domestic violence. They also lobby for women's rights through legal and political advocacy work and foster women's economic independence by teaching them to raise and sell livestock.

When a woman takes her abuser to court, the Axayacatl support group shows up en masse to fill the courtroom, proving to municipal officials that people are paying attention and that impunity for the perpetrator will not be tolerated. And if the officials don't listen, Axayacatl contacts one of the many local television and print journalists that they have trained in their gender equity workshops.

During our visit, we had a chance to see Axayacatl's (nearly finished) new building. Over the past two years people and churches throughout northern New Jersey have contributed around \$40,000 to help Axayacatl build the new Women's Center. As a delegation, we were proud to hand deliver another \$31,880 in support with the firm conviction that any woman that enters the doors will find the safety and support to push back, to protect herself and provide for her family.

## Spark of Life Chispa de Vida Center for Disabled Children

By Diane Sterner

Our visit to La Mariposa Spanish School began with an exciting tour of the new "Chispa de Vida (Spark of Life)" center for disabled children, under construction on school property. The first stage of the center - the physical therapy building - has been completed and physical therapy is taking place. Chispa de Vida also provides aquatic and horse therapy for more than 30 kids.

We were treated to wonderful performances by Chispa de Vida kids and La Mariposa staff during our delicious lunch, including songs, dances and a very amusing play. The Mariposa Spanish school is a very attractive option for those wishing to learn Spanish, volunteer for a range of community projects and visit Nicaraguan cultural and nature attractions.





## Something to Celebrate! Federation of Rural Farmers of Nicaragua, FEDICAMP

By Micha Loughlin and Tom Berry

FEDICAMP supports farmers in 21 communities in the states of Estelí and Madriz, focusing its work on organic, sustainable agriculture and community infrastructure. Our delegation was honored to be invited to participate in the official inauguration of a water project in the small community of El Apante.

During the project's 3 months construction period the "men, women, children and beasts" of El Apante undertook the backbreaking work of hauling materials and equipment up and down the mountain and of installing the filter, pressure breaker, storage tank and water lines. Gravity now brings clean, dependable drinking water from a spring high on the mountain to 34 homes and to the school and its 66 students, eliminating the daily chore of hauling untreated stream water.

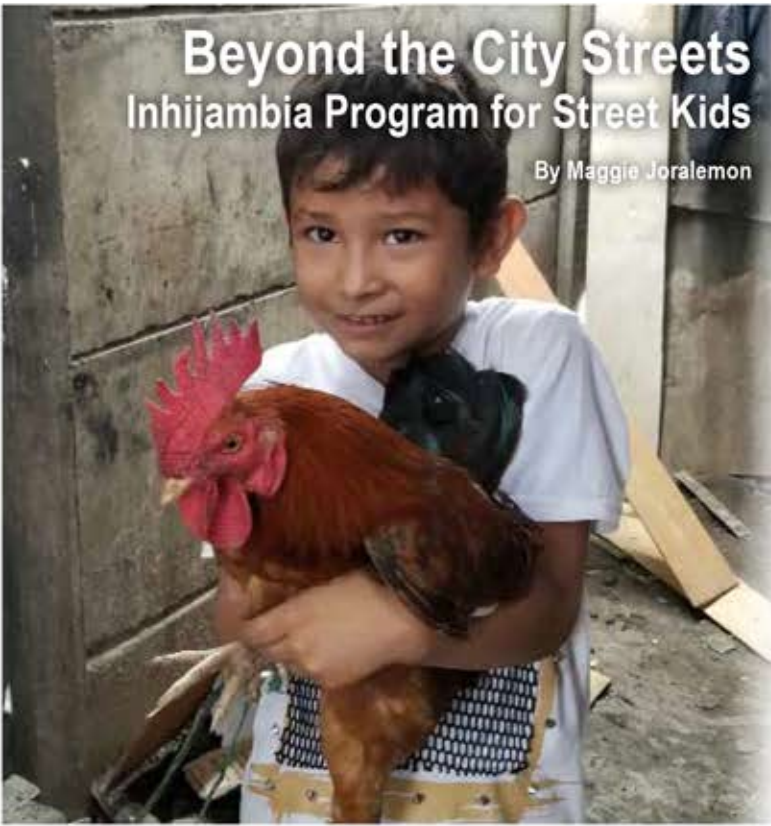
El Apante gave delegation leader Diane Sterner the honor of cutting the ribbon at the water spigot in front of the school. Cheers all around!

We also visited the community of Son Cuan, which means "place where the bees are," named for tiny honey bees that inhabit the area. FEDICAMP youth promoters Hector and Moises have created an apiary, acquired basic bee-keeping equipment, and are producing honey and packaging it with their own label. Good stuff!



## Beyond the City Streets Inhijambia Program for Street Kids

By Maggie Joralemon



Most of us know Mirna Sánchez and Inhijambia for their education and advocacy work with children who live and work in the streets of Managua. We had a chance to see their work first hand, visiting the kids living in deplorable conditions in Managua's Eastern Market. They also took us outside of Managua to see how they are working toward sustainability and long term support for the community they serve.

Just outside of Ciudad Sandino, we met Melida and Estela and their children, beneficiaries and legal owners of the two new homes Inhijambia built last year with funding provided by the Emmaus community in Maplewood. A third home is under construction for Ingrid, another Inhijambia "graduate" -- a young adult whose life was once as precarious as the children we visited in the Eastern Market

We also visited Inhijambia's farm, "Yann Verdina" which grows food to feed the kids in its program and to sell commercially. The farm has grown quickly and has been amazingly productive in a very short time. It includes two large greenhouses with 1,000 tomato plants that have already produced approximately 25,000 tomatoes. The farm produces and slaughters chickens, using them to feed the kids, but also as a way to generate income for program expenses.

## El Porvenir Coffee Coop

By Joan Berry

When we visited the coffee cooperative of 50 families living and working in the Nicaraguan mountains, we learned that a shortage of water has affected the community. Lack of rain has reduced the yield of the coffee crop, and has also resulted in smaller coffee beans. In addition, the water shortage has made life more difficult for cooperative members, as the main source of water for the community is rain water stored in reservoirs.

Past PeaceWorks support has provided the community with a health clinic (which the cooperative named for Jim Burchell), welding equipment, computers and a truck. This year's delegation brought \$2500 in support that allowed the coop to buy tires for their aging tractor, as well as batteries for the inverters we brought to provide solar power to the cooperative, which has no other source of electricity.



## Palo de Oro Sea Turtle Sanctuary

By Terri Piazza

Late one afternoon, we visited the Juan Venado Island Nature Reserve located on a 22 km barrier island off the coast of the beach community of Las Penitas. We took a small boat through a Mangrove-lined channel, home to dozens of bird species and aquatic wildlife, to the Palo de Oro Sea Turtle sanctuary where they rescue endangered species of sea turtles.

At sunset we stood along the beach shoulder to shoulder, each holding a turtle hatchling smaller than the palm of our hands. We placed our baby turtles -- all had been born that day -- onto the sand about 15 feet from the shore line yelling encouragement as "our" hatchlings began their final approach. Watching 2-inch hatchlings begin their swim into the ocean was thrilling; I am left with a mental snapshot that still makes me want to cheer.

