



PRONiCA

News from Nicaragua

December 2009
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Annual Report 2009

Program Coordinator Lillian Hall

In our third decade, ProNica continues to stand on the side of the powerless: Nicaragua's street-children, women, peasants, the hungry children in the infamous Managua city dump known as La Chureca, the incarcerated women in La Esperanza prison, and others. Although ProNica is a small organization, we use our limited resources to empower those with dramatically-fewer resources.

We provide books to neighborhood libraries to help children stay in school. We enable poor women to limit the size of their families to better care for their children. We help former sex workers and their daughters learn a new trade. We provide free pap smears so that women won't die from preventable diseases leaving their children orphaned and vulnerable on Managua's violent streets. We coordinate Alternatives to Violence Project workshops so that people learn new skills to confront violence in their lives. We provide food to children whose main source of sustenance comes from the municipal garbage dump.

We side with the powerless and share in their struggles. In return we are enriched by their spirit, their generosity, and their joys.

This year, thanks to thirteen clowns from the Gesundheit! Institute of Virginia, we also learned the importance of fun. Into some of the saddest and darkest places of Nicaragua, we brought joy, fun, love, noise, color and more-than-a-little-bit of chaos to people in need of just that.

With relentless love and laughter, the clowns overcame the sadness and pain of women in their last stages of cancer, children and youth addicted to glue who resort to prostitution in the infamous Alley of Death in the Mercado Oriental, differently-abled children

(many abandoned by their families), children in Nicaragua's understaffed and under-financed hospitals, elders left at the door of the old folks home because they had become too much of a burden for their families, and incarcerated women (in prison for crimes such as selling drugs to feed their children or killing their husbands in self-defense after years of brutal physical abuse).



A child walks by dump diggers in La Chureca
Misha Tulek, photographer

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ProNica's Mission is building sustainable cross-cultural relationships between the people of Nicaragua and North America using Quaker values.

ProNica's Vision is solidarity that empowers and educates Nicaraguans and North Americans.

ProNica assists in creating and sustaining programs by and for the Nicaraguan people. These projects should hold promise for grassroots growth, arise from Nicaraguan needs and tradition, and provide not only survival but also empowerment.

ProNica's priorities are on community cohesiveness and economic development, non-violence training, health, education, agriculture and women's empowerment. We seek to link Nicaraguan people with concerned individuals internationally to promote understanding and mutual action. We educate those who seek information or wish to serve.

Our work is accomplished by an international core of dedicated volunteers and staff who seek to embody Quaker principles of consensual decision making and action and respect for that of God in everyone. This service project arose from a deep concern over the international exploitation of the Nicaraguan people and resources and a wish to respond in practical and constructive ways.

ProNica, Incorporated is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation under the spiritual care of the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) with offices in St. Petersburg, Florida and Managua, Nicaragua. ProNica is a registered Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Nicaragua.

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Stateside Update

Stateside Coordinator Davida Johns

2009 brought the global economic crisis home to ProNica. The loss of donations for crucial projects was met by generous ProNica supporters. Children were fed. Families received medical services. Libraries remained open. Poor women learned a marketable skill. Program Coordinator Lillian Hall reports on all our Nicaragua activities in this issue. ProNica's first goal to empower Nicaraguans was attained.

Far less exciting are stateside activities - creating this newsletter, processing your donations, writing thank you letters, keeping the committee informed and motivated, meeting the myriad requirements for US non-profit status, ensuring accurate financial records. However, reaching out to US communities, coordinating delegations and volunteers, and educating North Americans about Nicaragua keeps my energy flowing.

Our new Facebook site is another method of reaching ever-larger groups; you can now become a Fan to keep informed. Join us soon. Presenting ProNica at annual Quaker gatherings, either in person or networking with local supporters, introduces and shares our work with old and new F/friends. Our new DVD contains a segment about a student delegation.

In Friends Journal December issue, long-time ProNica activist Herb Haigh shares his story of a Chureca Circus Christmas in Nicaragua. Check it out on their website: www.friendsjournal.org. Professional photographer Misha Tulek graciously shares his work for this issue. Contact Misha at mishatulek@gmail.com.

These are exciting times in spite of (or maybe because of) the need to focus on what truly matters.

ProNica thanks each one of you for your continued support in these uncertain economic times. □

this holiday season, give a
Gift of Life

*ProNica sends a hand-calligraphied certificate
acknowledging your financial donation
in celebration or memory of a person or event*

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spirits must also be nourished.

We were reminded that while bodies must be fed,

As we visited each of these locations, I reflected on the difference between these people and those in other parts of Nicaragua benefiting from ProNica-supported projects. Had these women in the cancer ward received a free pap smear, perhaps they would not be sitting despondently in the cancer ward with scarves covering their baldness, in great physical and emotional pain and facing the reality of death. Had these children in the Alley of Death been reached in time, perhaps they would not be sniffing glue and prostituting themselves. Had more women had the opportunity to limit the size of their families, perhaps there wouldn't be tens of thousands of children on the streets of Managua because their families can't provide for them. Had people had the opportunity to study, learn a trade or become professionals, perhaps they could better provide for their children and not push them into the streets to beg, steal or resort to prostitution. Had more women learned skills to deal with the violence in their lives, perhaps they would not end up as the victims of domestic violence or the growing phenomena of femicide or waiting out prison terms for having defended themselves. Had more men learned to deal with the violence inherent in machismo, perhaps they would be better able to control their rage.

Were it not for ProNica's efforts, there would be that many more women in the cancer wards and in the cemetery and more children on the streets. Thanks to our collective efforts, some will have a better future.

Delegations

This year, delegations became an even greater focus of our work. Last year we hosted four university delegations and one small Friends Witness group. This year we hosted five large delegations (Washburn University, Eckerd College, and Gesundheit! Institute, University of Florida, and Southeastern Yearly Meeting Teen Delegation) and two smaller Friends Witness groups. Delegations fulfill



Picking head lice
Misha Tulek, photographer

ProNica's mission to educate North Americans and are a source of income in times of increasing financial insecurity. Delegations provide an enriching experience for students. Working with these delegates and watching them experience Nicaragua, reflect on their lifestyle, and change perhaps just a bit, brings me immense satisfaction. As we change how North Americans think and act, we change our relationship with the world. Increased delegations bring opportunity for a full-time delegation leader; ProNica welcomes Carmen Gonzalez.

Student comments

“Before going to Nicaragua, I had absolutely no knowledge of history and people... Upon entering the country I found myself shocked by my naivety... I found this trip to be extremely hard to handle at times, but also uplifting. I would not change my time in Nicaragua for anything, and I look forward to a return trip in the near future.” Emily

“Now back home, I want to continue thinking in a worldly way and become more knowledgeable about other countries.

Nicaraguans taught me that when people get together and work hard at something, success is possible. They have shown me that the happiest people are some that have the least, and that family and community are some of the most important aspects one can have in life. It's really not about nice cars and big houses...” Chris

“These events all together changed how I feel about my future... more than the worn path of college, grad school and career. I vow to make my own path... because if this trip taught me nothing else it taught me that you have to appreciate the simple things in life and do what makes you happy. You do not have to be the richest, smartest, most successful person to find contentment.” Jocelyn

“My perception of myself has changed in that I realize I have been too content in my ignorance of world affairs and that I value material things too much.” KK

“One of the major differences I noticed was that we are rich with material possessions and still constantly complain about small things. Our host Nicaraguans have next to

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 insignificant... We ate the same thing for breakfast, lunch and dinner all week in El Limon, and we complained about it relentlessly to the group. Our host families ate the same thing at every meal for most of their lives, and I only heard them praise the cook for another wonderful meal....”
 Becca

“...we thought that we knew something from our research about Nicaragua. Until we experienced first hand what we researched, we understood very little... Never before have I witnessed such poverty, pollution, unequal distribution and exploitation, and yet so much pride, unity and hope.” Lucas



Delegation leader Carmen Gonzalez
 Misha Tulek, photographer

Volunteers

Kara Hartzler of Tucson, Arizona, worked on grant-writing for the Acahualinca Women’s Center. Two Haverford students, Gloria Vidal and Maggie Bishop from last

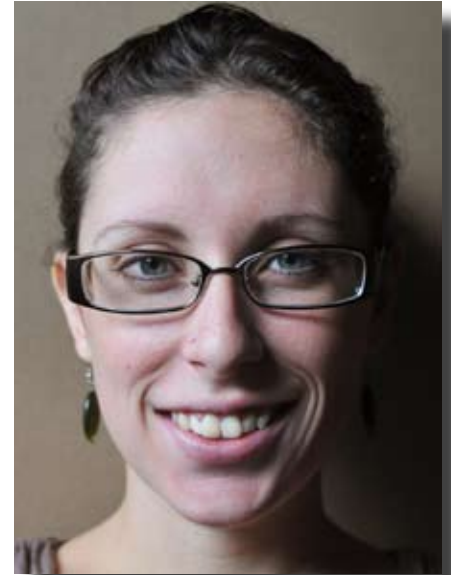
nothing and I never heard a complaint about anything

summer’s delegation, returned to volunteer again with Los Quinchos with crafts, poetry and self-esteem-building workshops with the young girls of the Yahoska house. Maggie raised funds for both Los Quinchos and Yahoskas libraries. Two volunteers of Nicaraguan origin residing in Florida, Raquel Ruiz and Donald Garcia, volunteered at Los Quinchos while also visiting their Nicaraguan relatives.

Quaker House

Groups such as Green Empowerment, Juntos Adelante, Just Hope, Witness for Peace, and United Students for Fair Trade, made Quaker House their home in Nicaragua. Returning guests become familiar faces.

Quaker House caretaker Kate DiMercurio lived in Nicaragua for a semester-abroad program with the School for International Training. ProNica welcomes Kate, who welcomes you on your next visit. □



Quaker House caretaker Kate DiMercurio
 Misha Tulek, photographer

Project Partners

Alternatives to Violence Project

Long-time ProNica supporters Kit and Ev Pilgrim conducted AVP workshops at the Acahualinca Women’s Center and in La Esperanza Women’s Prison on the outskirts of Managua. Both workshops were beneficial for participants, especially the incarcerated women where the need for AVP is obvious. A few women desire to learn more and possess facilitator qualities which could be cultivated for future workshops. Coordinating AVP workshops is important, but time-consuming. Our goal is for trained Nicaraguan facilitators to conduct workshops regularly.

seven hundred women received free pap smears and twenty women chose a tubal ligation as a permanent end to childbearing. Twenty-five young women, many the daughters of sex workers, will graduate this December as entry-level beauticians certified to work in salons. Just as workers worldwide, many choose to work independently for a full share of a patrons’ charge. The next newsletter will share stories from this year’s graduation.

Acahualinca Women’s Center

ProNica grants funds to this dynamic group to provide free pap smears, tubal ligations, and beautician’s classes to impoverished women in their community. This year,

Acahualinca Library and Preschool

In the 2009 grant cycle, this small library was awarded \$500 for cleaning supplies and office materials. Later in the year a \$2,000 donation netted an additional \$3,000 in books plus two new computers through Books for Life, an organization that provides matching funds to small libraries. On a book-buying spree, Acahualinca library founder Maria Elena Bonilla and I gleefully delivered a

vehicle full of primary, secondary, and university texts, story books, and novels for this important neighborhood library. This contribution boosts the library's inventory and improves the quality of service provided to the youth of Acahualinca.

The Acahualinca Pre-school received a facelift from Honduran artist and psychologist Otto Castillo with a grant from the Mason Hirst Foundation. Otto painted beautiful murals at the pre-school and taught the young teachers arts and crafts activities for the children.

Casa Materna Matagalpa

The Casa Materna received \$6,500 grant for tubal ligations and basic services such as electricity, water, telephone, and postage. Fifty women had their tubes tied. These women travel many hours from rural communities to Matagalpa. Typically, women from such remote areas have little access to any health services - much less birth control.



Playing ball in La Chureca
Misha Tulek, photographer

Ages of women and numbers of their children are sobering. 43 year-old Isabel Valladares Arauz with 15 children traveled the farthest. Rosa Muñoz was the youngest at age 24 with six children. Not only are these statistics eye-opening, but imagine the poverty in which these women and their many children subsist. These services have a major impact on the lives of these women and their families and are one of the most positive contributions ProNica makes in Nicaragua.

Los Quinchos Association

ProNica awarded the Quinchos \$3,000 for extracurricular classes in ceramics, sewing, carpentry, and clowning. The Quinchos know that not only is it important to give the children a variety of skills, but to keep them active and busy, too. Some children have acquired enough skill that their crafts are tourist-market-quality. Visitors to the Casa del Barrio in San Marcos can purchase their hand-crafted wares.

Quinchos library

The Quinchos received a generous donation from dedicated ProNica supporter and retired librarian, Jeanne Nash. This donation made an even greater impact due to *Libros Para La Vida* (Books for Life) matching funds program. The Quinchos library now is well-stocked with storybooks, textbooks, reference books, and two new computers. This was a very exciting event for the children and staff and serves not only the Quinchos children, but the entire San Marcos community.

La Chureca

The Quinchos feeding program in La Chureca continues to be one of ProNica's most important and well-supported projects. The shocking poverty amid horrid conditions often move visitors to this site from compassion into action. In 2008 the Nipigon Rotary Club of Ontario, Canada, spent a few hours with the children, served lunch, and took photos. Soon after, they sent \$2,000 for school uniforms, shoes and backpacks. They returned this past November with even more funds and books.

The loss of funds from a long-time financial supporter was a severe setback to the feeding program. Many generous donors filled the void after a special appeal in our March newsletter. Former delegation college students raised thousands of dollars. Individuals promised monthly donations. Our challenge is to keep that interest high and support sustained. We simply must - for the sake of these children.

Mama Licha Clinic

Mama Licha was awarded \$2,000 for pap smears for 142 poor women in the Estelí area. Some clinic patients work in the tobacco barns and are unable to seek health care at the government health post during working hours. Other women come on foot from communities one or two hours away. Mama Licha is available weekends and evenings enabling more women to get the medical attention. Her quality attention and quick results are vital. When a patient has a pap smear at a government health center, the results can be delayed. For a woman in beginning stages of cancer, such a delay could be fatal. For simple conditions, such as infections, a delay of a few weeks only exacerbates the problem and new problems can develop. Mama Licha requests more funds to provide for more women. □

Wilmington Friends Witness

Jenna Curcio

We four young women from Wilmington College made our way down to Nicaragua in August for a Friends Witness Tour with ProNica. We gained an absolutely unforgettable experience. Coming from Wilmington College, a small, private, Quaker school in Southwestern Ohio, just about everything in Nicaragua was completely unique to us. The principle purpose for our trip was to raise awareness and see a world different than our own. Like many Americans who live sheltered lives, we had never personally known first-hand how the rest of the world lives. Three of us hadn't even left the U.S. before. We were excited to bring ourselves to this new place. As we looked over the 10-day itinerary, we knew this wouldn't be a typical vacation. What we didn't know is how much more we'd receive.



Wilmington students with
Acahualinca beauty school students
Jenna Curcio photograph

The best part of our stay was the treatment we received from every person we came into contact with. From Mama Licha who runs the women's clinic in Estelí, to our cook, to random strangers, Nicaraguans definitely lived up to their reputation as a very kind people. Most important to us was Lillian Hall.

An American woman who has lived and breathed Nicaragua and all its history, she was the absolute perfect tour guide, informer, and friend to have along for this unique experience. We joked that she was our "mom" throughout the trip because she took such good care of us in every way, shape, and form.

We saw a variety of places in Nicaragua, its beautiful landscape, its beautiful people. We visited San Marcos and the Quinchos project for street children. We spent the day learning to dance the 'bachata' with the most amazing

young girls we had ever met. These girls lived more difficult childhoods than most of us could imagine, yet their spirits remained as high as the sky with non-stop smiles and laughter. We also encountered the beautiful landscape and discovered why Nicaragua is called "the land of lakes and volcanoes". Driving by the Masaya and Momotombo volcanoes, we spent a day at the Laguna de Apoyo, an incredible volcanic crater lake. It felt like we were swimming in bath water.

The most memorable experience was the Achuapa International Music and Solidarity Festival. We witnessed some amazing performances from young children performing traditional Nicaraguan folk dance, to an elderly woman named Lucilia who sang and played the guitar.

Inspired by the spirit of the festival, although our group's singing experience was lacking, Lillian and us girls created our own 'chick band'. We performed a song in front of thousands at the festival. It was a moment that none of us will ever forget.

We couldn't have asked for a more successful trip. What we set out to achieve was fulfilled, again and again. We left very impressed by all the disturbing, yet inspirational images we were exposed to. For myself, I didn't want my experience in Nicaragua to end. I left wanting to make a change. Even if we four students don't have the capacity to make a worldwide change, we now know the deep impact from seeing this beautiful country and its beautiful people.

We also learned the importance of these delegations. When students have first-hand experiences, we learned what this great country really had to offer. □

Books for Life

The Yahoskas library was created this summer by three volunteers, Maggie Bishop, Donald Garcia and Raquel Ruiz. The Books for Life matching funds program awards \$3,000 worth of books and two computers with software to libraries that collect \$2,000 in donations. Happily, the Yahoskas girls now have their own well-stocked library.

Food for Thought

\$5 feeds one Quinchos child 3 meals for one day
\$200 feeds 40 Quinchos children 3 meals for one day
\$1400 feeds 40 La Chureca children lunch for a month
\$16,800 feeds La Chureca children for a year

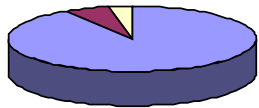
How will you share your abundance with the most needy?

Read all about 2010 project grant awards and the beauty school graduation in the March newsletter.

Find this newsletter (PDF with color images) on the News page at www.ProNica.org

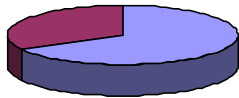
Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Financial Summary

1 June 2008 - 31 May 2009



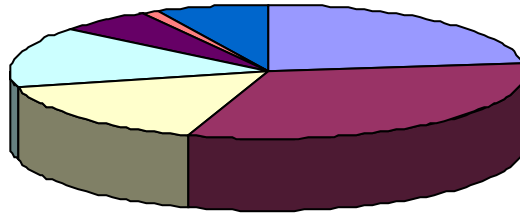
DONORS

355 Individuals
23 Quaker Meetings
10 Organizations
2 Estates



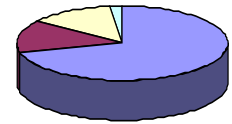
DONATIONS

67% Unrestricted
33% Restricted



PROJECTS

32% Health
23% Nutrition
16% Libraries
15% Children
6% Jobs Training
7% Quaker House, misc
1% Agriculture



EXPENSES

71% Projects
14% Delegations
13% Administration
2% Fundraising

\$279k Income
\$192k Expenses
\$87k Board
designated endowment

ProNica empowers Nicaraguans through financial support to our project partners in health, education, economic development and social service.

Delegations bring North Americans to witness first-hand the life, rich culture, and many challenges facing Nicaragua. Delegations also help to sustain ProNica administrative costs to reach our goal that 100% of all donations go to projects. Bequests from two estates allow much-needed and long-overdue upgrades at Quaker House in Managua and to replace our 10-year-old vehicle.

Financial supporters believe in ProNica's mission and trust our reputation to oversee the intended use of their donations. Because we visit our project partners throughout the year, both in times of sorrow and celebration, we understand their needs. We assist with funds, when available, and network to find other resources, when funds are low. This network is built upon ProNica's 23-year presence in Nicaragua.

The stateside staff handles administrative tasks, such as gathering information and preparing reports, sending grant checks, making presentations, reaching out to new communities, and thanking donors.

Reading donor letters is always heart-warming. Some writers express simple gratitude for ProNica's work. Others write about sharing their abundance with these most-need. Two donors are inspired to make and sell quilts and teddy bears. Another sends money not spent eating out. One is inspired to sell maple syrup at a local farmers market, raising awareness about Nicaragua among his customers. One of his customers, a single mother, gave a dollar

from her precious food stamp funds. Another market vendor, a 9-year-old girl selling lemonade for her college fund, donates \$1 each week. One Quaker Meeting sends their coffee sale profits. Two artists created note cards with their drawings and donate all sales. A generous supporter shared her inheritance. Several showed the ProNica DVD to friends, shared their experiences in Nicaragua, and directed donations to ProNica. A New Zealand supporter sends a monthly donation through PayPal. A few couples asked for wedding donations to be sent to ProNica. A family raised funds in memory of a beloved son. Two long-time supporters bequeathed funds to ensure ProNica's continued assistance to Nicaragua.



Nicaraguan children
Misha Tulek, photographer

It is a privilege to manage these 'mundane' administrative tasks to keep ProNica in service in Nicaragua. □

CASA
CUA'QUERA



Housekeeper Panchita Fletes
in Managua, Nicaragua

Quaker House is a hospitality house offering simple lodging for travelers in Nicaragua. Located in a quiet residential neighborhood,

Quaker House has a fully equipped kitchen, and is convenient to shopping, internet cafes, banks and restaurants.

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- * Mail checks to the stateside office, 130 Nineteenth Ave SE, St Petersburg FL 33705.
- * Visit our website for secure PayPal donations.
- * Gift of Life - in memory of a person or event, ProNica sends a hand-calligraphied certificate acknowledging your financial donation.
- * Name ProNica as a beneficiary in your estate planning. Contact us for details.
- * Friends Fiduciary Corporation has plans for now and later giving. Contact us for details.
- * Monthly gifts provide enduring/sustaining support for ProNica's Project Partners.
- * ProNica coordinates volunteers, work study delegations, Friends Witness Tours for groups of 4 to 6.

2010 Friends Witness Tour

10 days in Fall 2010

Learn about Nicaragua culture, economy, history

Visit ProNica Project Partners

Only \$950

includes all in-country transportation,
lodging, meals, and excursion entry fees

Bring only souvenir money and your camera

Airfare to Nicaragua is still lowest in recent years

727.821.2428 or stateside@pronica.org

Experience it yourself



Misha Tulek, photographer

*Misha Tulek's
photographs
poignantly
depict those
in Nicaragua
who need our
assistance.*

*ProNica
thanks you for
your generous
support.*