



OCCASIONAL REPORT

November 2011

This report unhappily has been very long in coming and I do apologize. The need to keep everyone informed grows as an organization ages, and I have been remiss.

I am glad to report of the addition of two board members who have already blessed us with their great enthusiasm and work. Jeff White brings us those gifts along with the attributes gained in his lifelong business experience and financial acumen. He has been very involved in PFP from the start and his election to the board only makes official his assistance and guidance. Our other new member is Anthony White. Anthony brings to us his knowledge, skills and abilities working with non-profits along with a sincere dedication to working for the betterment of the poor and marginalized population of the San Diego area. Anthony has worked and served on many boards and brings to us another invaluable resource, his Spanish language skill. They have jumped on board quickly as you will see below.

Jeff and Anthony just recently traveled to Nicaragua to offer their advice and expertise in the operation of the school board and with the director. It seems too that the stars had aligned as the partial container of supplies, tools, equipment, machines and baseball equipment that had been collected over the past year arrived while the guys were in Nicaragua, and so they were able to assist with transporting and unloading that gear. The donations arrived successfully in large part to our ongoing collaboration with Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas, Inc.

During their two week visit, Jeff and Anthony met several times with the director and the school board about budgets, curriculum, finances, vision etc. While the school is functioning properly, there is a concern that annual budget requests may not be met for items that are legitimate needs of the school and student achievement. Anthony reports that “overall the school is operating well. Escuela San Miguel is still a very important part of the community of Cárdenas...” Student numbers are down however, primarily due to transportation costs.

Financially, we were in some dire straits a while back, but due to the incredible generosity of one donor we were able to stay afloat and keep the school in Nicaragua functioning. Since that time we have slowly increased our finances again to where we now have sufficient resources to be able to look ahead to the schools’ prosperity. We currently have \$22,766.73 on hand for operating expenses of the school in 2012. However, this includes a \$5,000.00 CD that we would like to keep in savings. School expenses are running at about \$224.00/week, but we expect that to increase to ~\$300.00/week with the addition of two more teachers. We are waiting for a proposal from the ESM Board and Director for the 2012 budget. We don’t have much of a cushion at any rate. For example, we could increase enrollment by expanding transportation services. However, we currently do not have financial wherewithal to accomplish that.

Again, the addition of Anthony to our board is proving very productive as he is able to communicate fluently in Spanish; this has been a breakthrough as he now communicates regularly with the School Director as necessary at no cost to PFP. Anthony and the director built a rapport on the last visit which allows for ongoing open and frank discussions.

One of the principal issues is the inability of the school to attract new funding sources. PfP has been donating at an agreed upon rate based upon our annual fundraising efforts. As mentioned previously, this did not include funding for transporting students. Getting the students into Cárdenas, or teachers to the outlying villages, is something we really need to work on collectively and resolve.

We are proud to announce that we have expanded our Internet services into Sapoá, a small village located about 12 miles from Cárdenas on the Pan-American Highway. Now with connections in two villages we are providing the ability to connect students and the general population to the world. Remember, these two sites are the only Internet connections available in the area. They are being used for teaching purposes as well as for general use when classes are not using the facility. Space for the Internet Café in Sapoá is being donated by the municipality of Cárdenas of which we are very grateful.

I said earlier that PfP is again on reasonable footing financially, however this does not include enough to be able to resolve the student transportation issue. I feel however that if there is a matter that we can discuss and get some cooperation and funding from the municipality it will be this issue. Getting students to the school! Perhaps there is a better chance now that elections are over and the government has sworn to increase aid to the poor in rural Nicaragua. We shall see. This issue must be taken up by the Escuela San Miguel board and presented to their national legislature. We hope we can assist them from here and get this accomplished.

Please take a moment to “Like” us on Facebook and see all the photos from Jeff and Anthony’s trip this summer. The shipment arrival, students smiling faces with the donated baseball equipment and other great shots are now online. A heartfelt thank you to all who donated.

Again I want to apologize for the long delay in keeping you informed. Please know too, that I and the board would appreciate any input or comments on the functioning of Projects for People our non-profit, and Escuela San Miguel our principal project.

Blessings to all,
Dean



Jeff with the School Board and the unloading the donation shipment at San Miguel.