



OCCASIONAL REPORT
July 2009

Hello all. I am sending some news and a little appeal for your continuing support. Our small foundation keeps plugging along and most importantly Escuela San Miguel moves forward and we keep educating students and improving lives.

As the economy has gone south we too struggle to stay ahead, though I am thankful to report another wonderful donation from PEACE Church of Eau Claire, WI. These folks (see at: www.peace-lutheran.org) have virtually kept us going the past several months with \$6,500 in donations. Additionally, the village of Cárdenas has contributed \$2,500 to the school budget. So we are able to project at least partial funding for 2010. Please consider us in your charitable giving decisions so we may keep the school funded.

I am in the school in a classroom with 12 students learning computer skills. These are extremely popular classes and we now have three Nicaraguan instructors teaching computing. The most exciting thing here though is the introduction of the Internet into their instruction. We now have what we believe to be a stable Internet platform that we will be able to sustain at the school. The mayor of Cárdenas has transferred the town's satellite Internet connection to the school, so we are back to where we were a few month's ago. We have reinstated the Internet into the classroom and have made it available to all in the village, hoping that the fees for Internet use by the general public will at least pay for the cost of the connection.

An exciting news item is that we will again be assigned a Peace Corps volunteer. I submitted a plan of work for the new volunteer and it was approved when I met with the director. Our present volunteer, Henry Greeley finishes his two year tour in mid-July and Mr. John Harrington will arrive at the school on August 2nd.

While in Managua one day Felipe and I took the opportunity to visit "The Wisconsin/Nicaragua Project". This is a great NGO operating many sewing centers and other programs throughout Nicaragua. They are helping us out with the shipping of computers, the much anticipated and anxiously awaited industrial planer and other equipment we need at the school. We arranged communication channels as we will handle the transshipping from Managua to Cárdenas.

Some of you will remember the Spanish/English book of poems "Mundo Verde" we sent out last Christmas time. While I was here there was a poetry reading at the school hosted by the author Augusto Zuniga. Five prominent poets from the region also attended, praising the work of Augusto and reading from their works as well. It was a real treat. Augusto is a most ardent Nicaraguan supporter of education and of Escuela San Miguel.

I will be meeting with our board soon and the number one thing on the agenda is the amount we can afford to support the school for 2010. It will surely have to decrease. Though we of course do not want the school to cease operations, it is becoming more apparent that "Projects for People" alone will not be able to keep the school operating. We decreased our donation of operating funds from \$16,000 in 2008 to \$13,000 in 2009. The village responded with a pledge

of \$5,000 (so far they have given \$2,500). So they are hanging on. The director has been working hard to find Nicaraguan sources of income for the school and we are now working with government education officials. Raising tuition is virtually out of the question as students in the area simply cannot afford it. The scholarship trust set up by one of our donors is now supporting 25 students, and the administration is having trouble collecting the current tuition (largely symbolic) from many of the other students.

Not wanting to end this on a sour note I remain optimistic. We have the only Internet connection in the village and are making it available to all. The municipality is trying to help and will go to bat for us with the feds in seeking funds. We also have the opportunity to take over the Internet connection in the village of Sapoá along with the loan of the building, furniture and computers to set up Internet capability for them. We may start teaching out of that building to save on transportation costs for students now traveling to Cárdenas.

Thanks for keeping up and for your continued support.

Blessings always,
Dean