

Project Opportunity

April 2014 Newsletter

Each year Project Opportunity digs deeper and generates more success in León, Nicaragua. Our team works shoulder-to-shoulder with families and community groups to weaken poverty's grip on their lives. Whether it's a preschool bathroom and septic system, a scholarship, job training or a hearing aid, our collaborations continue to foster well-being, dignity and hope.

Your contribution is essential. Because of our grass-roots presence in communities, we reach those with the greatest need and potential. Read on to celebrate accomplishments with us.

Highlights: What's NEW this year?



Preschool bathroom replaces pit latrines

Thanks to Project Opportunity, 75 children and 10 staff benefit from this new bathroom with 4 toilets and a child-level sink with 4 faucets. The project required the installation of a septic system as well (see p. 5).



Job training in hotel housekeeping

Mothers living in poverty with little education and job experience can't find jobs in León. Our comprehensive program helps women gain all the skills necessary to work in quality hotels (see p.4).



Primary education for adults

In Nicaragua, more than half of those who enter 1st grade drop out before 6th grade. Motivated by the desire to improve their lives, 8 adults joined our primary class and will earn their 6th grade diplomas by the end of 2014 (see p. 7).



Scholarships

Four new students were selected to receive Project Opportunity scholarships. In total, 10 young people and their families participate. A solid education is key to moving out of poverty (see p. 6).

Project Opportunity donors and supporters (see p. 8)

Project Opportunity Team in Nicaragua

Personal commitment and willingness to go the extra mile make our team extraordinary. Together we generate a synergistic force that empowers and inspires others.

Our team exemplifies our mission. All are thrilled to be working with Project Opportunity assisting fellow Nicaraguans achieve a better life.



Our team from L to R: Kate Stewart (Co-Founder), René Real (Teacher, adult primary class), Vilma Dolmus (Consultant, adult class), David Jirón (Coordinator), Doribel Niño (Accountant), Vicenta Hernández (Instructor, hotel housekeeping class), Andrés Hernández (Manager, construction projects), Deborah DeWolfe (Director and Co-Founder), Lenín Perez (Tutor, scholarship students). Not pictured: Pio Romero (Instructor, CPR classes) and Alberto Duarte (Transportation).

OUR PROGRAMS

¡Salva una vida!/Save a Life! Classes



This popular 2-hour class teaches CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver for infants and adults. Our instructor, Pio Romero, makes each class fun and engaging; everyone practices the techniques. To date, we've provided 36 classes reaching over 425 teachers, hotel and restaurant workers, bus drivers, social workers, parents and older teens. We are grateful to Oxford-León Association and Trust for a second year of funding for this life-saving program.

Dental Hygiene in its 5th year: Over 2000 children now brush!

Children's toothbrushes, generously donated again this year, are always put to good use. Fourteen preschool mothers were trained to teach 250 children aged 2-6 years at 4 preschools. We hire mothers for a month; their participation becomes valuable job experience useful for seeking future employment.



Juana tenderly helps young Maria learn to brush. Each preschool child receives at least 5 days of individual attention so that they master good brushing technique.

Our dental hygiene teams go to other preschools and neighborhoods with the big demonstration teeth, coloring books, little toothbrushes and paste to teach all who want to learn...and that's everyone! It's like a piñata party with a health focus.



Seventeen children enthusiastically participated in this neighborhood "learn to brush" event. Here, Deborah helps a youngster who's really trying to get it right.

Preschool Enhancement



Friends of Project Opportunity donate puzzles, blocks, trucks, musical instruments and more. And your donations purchased an array of children's books in Spanish as well as crayons, glue, clay, notebooks, scissors, paper, pencils, etc. Our annual shopping trip to Managua has become a tradition.

These materials were distributed to 3 community preschools that have been our collaborating partners over 6 years. They are SO appreciative. They would not otherwise have such resources.

Advocacy for Disabled Children



Look at Jorge now! Jorge was born with severe club feet. Now after almost 3 years of casts, surgery, physical therapy, orthopedic shoes and the incredible dedication of his parents - Jorge can walk, run and play soccer with his friends. Over these years, Project Opportunity collaborated with 6 NGO's, 3 orthopedists, physical therapists, provided lots of family support and counseling and now continues to assist with advocacy and sharing expenses as needed.

Project Opportunity collaborates with several families to obtain reliable diagnostic evaluations, appropriate interventions, rehabilitation aids and services for their disabled children and assists them in connecting with community resources. We are currently working with 2 boys with physical disabilities, a teen with severe hearing impairment and a 3-year-old with Down's syndrome. We can now proudly say - each child is truly maximizing his or her potential.

Job Training in Hotel Housekeeping

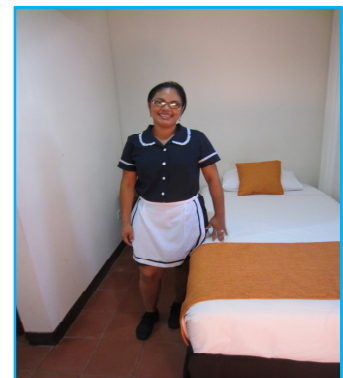


Working in a hotel involves much more than knowing how to make a bed or wash floors. Our students learn how to manage their lives so they can reliably arrive at work on time, every day. Many have never had a full-time job with a salary, much less had to deal with relationships with co-workers, a threatened husband or demanding boss. Not to mention competently respond to those picky tourists who don't speak Spanish!



Vicenta Hernández, our instructor with years of experience in hotel housekeeping, facilitates a self-esteem exercise to help Aracelys prepare for her job interview.

Most students are mothers and their families desperately need the income. They attend our 8-session program and then practice what they've learned in a 4-week practicum. We've developed cooperative relationships with 3 León hotels known for their fair and just employment practices.



After successfully completing her practicum, Tania was offered full-time work with her hotel. Two other graduates are now working at participating hotels as well.

Bathroom Construction at Preschool "Las Tortuguitas" (Little Turtles)

The 75 preschoolers at Las Tortuguitas were afraid to enter the pit latrine. There was no adequate place to wash hands. Waste water was draining into the street. It was obvious a bathroom and sink were needed. Installing a septic system was necessary as well.

We saw the need, raised \$7500 and got the job done!

Project Opportunity worked closely with families and teachers to design and build their bathroom. Now, the children in each class gleefully line up every 2 hours to head to the new toilets. This improvement of sanitation and hygiene prevents the spread of disease.



Deborah and preschool coordinator Mercedes are delighted to work together on yet another project. Mercedes is also known in the community as "abuela" (grandmother).



Families collaborated by digging the enormous holes for the septic system, moving dirt and refilling one of the old pit latrines.



Andrés Hernández, our "maestro de obra" hired construction workers from the community and supervised family volunteers. The work was hard; the energy was respectful, positive and fun.

Before →



← After



Kate and Andrés worked arm-in-arm during the 6 weeks of construction. This is our 4th building project with Andrés. He manifests our values in every way - he's honest, kind, responsible and always on-time.



With a child-level sink and 4 faucets, low urinal and 4 toilets - the bathroom is the pride of the community. Ever resourceful Mercedes used the left over paint to paint the school too.

Meet Project Opportunity Scholarship Students



Scarleth Blanco is 15 years old and attends 11th grade at Colegio Asunción. Now in her 4th year as a Project Opportunity scholarship student, she earns top grades. Even though she assumes many responsibilities for her younger siblings, she finds time to study hard and play the xylophone in the school marching band. Scarleth's tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, school activities and tutoring cost \$1300 per year.



Larry Ramos is 19, attends the national university (UNAN) in León and is in his 3rd year of the Nursing Program. Larry's family has struggled economically since his father's death 3 years ago. His scholarship allows him to continue his studies, which he certainly deserves with his 92% grade average. His tuition has been waived by UNAN. Project Opportunity pays for Larry's uniforms, books, supplies and fees (cost: \$600).



Alison Fierro began our hotel housekeeping program. When it became clear that this motivated 17-year-old wanted to work in a hotel so that she could earn money to go to high school on Sundays, we proposed a scholarship to study full-time. She gained acceptance at Sagrado Corazón de Jesus and works hard to make up for lost school years and frequent moves. Alison's tuition, uniforms, supplies and tutoring cost \$800 per year.



Lester Gutiérrez is 17 and in his final year at Colegio La Salle, a prestigious and demanding high school. Now in his 2nd year with a scholarship, he's gained maturity and clarity about his goals for the future. He continues to work hard with our tutor while also helping his mother make and sell tortillas, the business that supports his family of 5. Lester's tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, graduation fees and tutoring will cost \$1500 this year.



Shirley Astacio is 14 and began high school at Sagrado Corazón de Jesus in February assisted by her well deserved scholarship from Project Opportunity. Two years ago we shared costs with her mother to purchase a hearing aid as Shirley suffers from severe hearing impairment. Since then, we've been impressed with her dedication, excellent grades and passion to learn. Shirley's tuition, uniforms, supplies, and tutoring cost \$800.



Yaren Belén Bravo Blanco is 11 and attends 5th grade in the public school system. Her family life is unstable and chaotic, making consistent attention to her studies impossible. Our coordinator and community psychologist, David Jirón, assists Belén to organize her time, motivates her to study and provides tutoring. His visits and positive caring have become a life saver for this at-risk child. The cost for uniforms and materials is \$200.



Moises Reyes, Heidi Sánchez, Jorge Reyes, and Jeiling Reyes attend 3rd grade, 1st grade, 2nd grade and kindergarten respectively. We have a long standing relationship with this very hard-working yet economically disadvantaged family. The parents graduated from our primary education classes in 2013. The scholarship will pay \$600 this year for uniforms, books, school supplies, 75% of bus expense, tutoring and family support.

Our coordinator, David Jirón, is engaged with each student and family. We review exams and homework frequently and facilitate tutoring when needed. Each student receives empowering attention according to his or her individual needs, abilities and learning style.

Adult Primary Education Classes



Johanna never believed she'd earn a 6th grade diploma, much less learn to read, multiply and divide with ease. In December 2013, Vilma Dolmus, our Ministry of Education supervisor, presented her hard-earned diploma.



Graduating Adult Primary Class 2013

This was the best graduation ceremony ever! With dressed-up children in attendance, these 4 proudly accepted their diplomas (with Deborah and Kate blinking back tears).

It's an arduous journey to get from dreaming of a 6th grade diploma to actually earning one. Project Opportunity classes are 3 hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with homework required for each class. Eight adults are enrolled in our 10-month program which follows the government-approved curriculum. We anticipate an inspiring graduation in December.

Why do our students want to study? Parents want to be able to help their children with homework. An inability to do basic math destroys small business efforts. A 6th grade diploma is required to get a job at the largest local employer. Some feel ashamed that they can't read or write very well - and now, with courage and fortitude, they have the opportunity to achieve this dream.



With René's Real's excellent teaching, the students are animated and engaged. Martín in the foreground walks to class 45 minutes on crutches. Excuses don't fly when he puts out so much effort just to show up.

YOU, our friends and donors, are essential partners in these empowering programs. Together, we plant the seeds and build bathrooms.

**Together, we generate inspiration, hope and astounding benefit.
Thank you so much for caring.**

www.projectopp.org

*Project Opportunity is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

Project Opportunity Donors and Supporters

May 2013 - May 2014

Janet Anderson and Evelyn Anderton	Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Susan Anemone and Barry Griffin	Richard Miller and Jules Strand
Cass Avery and Paloma Martinez Sánchez	Christy and Frank Monahan
Jeff and Mary Lynn Bogdanovich	Barb Morgan and Stephen Gall
Lorraine Barrick and Paul Maybee	Gerry Morrison and Julie Weston
Barbara Barry	Nicaraguan Children's Friendship Committee
Sylvia Becker-Dreps and Chris Dreps	Paul Olver and Delia Nuesch-Olver
The Boeing Company Gift Matching Program	Summer Ostlund
Peter and Barbara Bradfield	Oxford-León Association and Trust
Marilyn and Kerry Bunday	Janet Peterson
Constance Cameron	Anne Phillips and Jake Oshins
Mitzi Carletti	Project Gettysburg-León
Frances Carr	Project Minnesota-León
Susan Cooper	Joyce and Rick Rice
Raymond Cox and Jerry Olson	Steve Russell
Judith and David Culver	Jain Rutherford
Brenda Cunningham and Tim Manns	Lukas and Kai Sahlin
Bill and Susanne Daniell	John and Donna Sahlin
Marie Dessomes	Veronica Sanchez and Jeffrey Bornstein
Polly Feinberg and Bob Platka	Suzanne Schlicke
Patricia Tusa Fels	Brian Schoof
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund	Sarah Shelton
Holly Theodore Finan (John J. & Georgiana Theodore Foundation)	Barbara and Michael Silverstein
Brian Flynn	Presha Sparling and Keith Buckley
Rick and Suzanne Gleason	Linda Spurling-Krug and Terry Krug
Lynn Gonzalez	Bob and Merrily Stewart
Laurie Greig	Tim and Laurie Stewart
Terry Graham and Terri Torson	Dave Stromquist and Jill Kinney
Anne Harvey and Jan Pickard	Jo Surbrugg and Mark Benson
Bill Healey and Linda Peters	Marion Sweeney
Janice Helming	Lauri Tadlock
Jan Hesslein and Allen Sanders	Mary Torkelson
Hotel Cacique Adiact - León	Paul "Skip" Vonckx and Zanny Milo
Hotel El Convento - León	Sharyn Wallin
Hotel Mercedes - León	Anne Weaver
Michael Johnson and Lauren Montgomery	Marcia Weaver and Michael Chapko
Pete Johnson and Carol Troup	Alex Werner
Ted and Kris Johnson	Susan and Richard Winslow
Michael Kelch and Marilyn McIntyre	Donations in Memory of:
Bill Krusell	Anna Harvey
La Libélula - León	by Jeff and Mary Lynn Bogdanovich
Melissa Leone	Jane DeWolfe
	by Pete and Betsy DeWolfe

¡Mil gracias a todos!

Despite our best efforts, errors can occur. Please accept our apologies if we misspelled or omitted your name. We'd be grateful if you would let us know.