



Project Opportunity

April 2016 Newsletter

Now in our eighth year, Project Opportunity accomplishments, both large and small, grow and multiply. Graduations, new job skills, lives saved, employment and a thriving preschool are results we all can celebrate. Each year in León, Nicaragua, we build on previous achievements and create something new.

Your support is essential to these life-changing programs. Together, we generate hope, opportunity and a path toward some financial security.

News highlights:



Job skills and technical training

Over 40% of Nicaraguan families are stuck in the cycle of poverty. Gaining a job skill is necessary for increasing income. Since 2014, Project Opportunity (PO) has facilitated training opportunities and continues to provide regular follow-up with 26 adults, 19 of whom are now earning money using their new skills (see p. 2).



Scholarships

PO students advance in their studies and lives with the support and counsel of the PO team. Each struggles with family crises and economic hardship at home while maintaining focus on school and assuming more personal responsibility (see p. 3 & 5).



New preschool enhancement program

This year PO teachers, Vilma and René, work individually with preschoolers having the greatest learning needs. Using books, puzzles, gentleness and creativity, we hope to assist these children join their age-peers and experience greater success at school (see p. 4).



iSalva una vida! Classes

PO's CPR class is free, fun and life-saving. Each year we learn of more lives saved because a former participant acted quickly in an emergency. To date, over 1200 adults and older teens have attended 98 classes (see p. 6).

Project Opportunity donors and supporters (see p. 8)

OUR PROGRAMS

Job Skills Training, Accounting and More...

A training opportunity can open a new door or kindle an interest or hidden talent. And it provides a necessary stepping stone to family economic stability. PO has developed an excellent reputation among community groups, institutions and employers.

Over 8 years we've focused primarily in several underserved and extremely poor neighborhoods. We connect motivated young parents with job skills training and then provide the follow-up and accompaniment required to achieve life-changing results.



Karla, a mother of 4, completed home appliance repair week-end classes and is planning a mobile repair business using her bicycle and back pack of basic tools.



Vicenta (L), PO's hotel housekeeping instructor, trained 14 women in 2013-14. Most continue in their jobs at local hotels and restaurants.

PO sponsored training (we either find an instructor or a program):

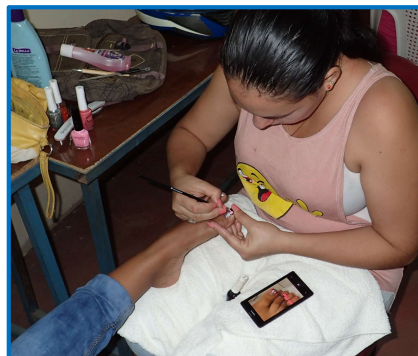
- Computer/internet/MS Office (7)
- Hotel housekeeping (13)
- Restaurant kitchen prep (3)
- Auto mechanics (2)
- Driving school (1)
- English (4)
- Accounting for home business (6)
- Residential electrical (2)
- Home appliance repair (1)
- Baking and cake decoration (1)
- Beautician skills (1)
- Welding (1)
- Handicrafts (3)



In 2015, PO helped Xochilt learn to decorate cakes, then with accounting skills and a purchase of supplies. Now she can hardly keep up with cake orders and she sells smoothies and other baked items.



René Alberto, PO instructor, teaches Rafael and Ana how to use a computer and access the internet at a local cyber. Soon, they were able to help their daughter with on-line homework.



Lisbett learns beauty skills and plans a mobile salon business.



With PO support, Moises took an auto mechanics class in 2015. He currently offers motorcycle maintenance and simple repairs from his home.

PO student Scarleth Patricia Blanco Manzanarez graduates and begins classes at Universidad Americana.



After 5 years of dedication to her studies at La Asunción, Scarleth reached her first life goal - graduating from high school. At the same time, she helped care for her siblings while her single mother worked and was also active in extracurricular activities.

PO covered her academic expenses and provided tutoring, emotional support and life and family counsel when needed during the 5 years. So, not surprisingly, she invited us all as "family" to join her and her mother at her graduation.



Scarleth is a bright, curious and highly motivated 17-year-old with big dreams and aspirations. Her mother, Karla, works as a housekeeper and champions education for her 3 children. Over the years, the family has suffered crises, hunger, health problems and more. We consider Scarleth's accomplishments beyond impressive. We are ALL so proud of her!

Deborah, Scarleth, Karla (mother), Doribel (PO staff), Kate and Vilma (PO - not shown) celebrated the special day - Scarleth and her friends were flying high!



We met Scarleth in 2008 when she was 9. Even then, we knew she was extraordinary. Now, with PO's help, she has started on her 2nd life goal - a university education. She earned a partial scholarship at UAM, Universidad Americana, the best independent university in Nicaragua.

The PO team helped set her up in Managua in her new room and opened a bank account for expenses. She is majoring in International Relations with an emphasis in Global Business. So far, she's loving her classes, especially English, Law and Sociology.



Preschool Enhancement 2016

Preschool can be a dynamic place where children learn pre-academic skills and how to function in a group. They also improve their fine and gross motor coordination. Creative activities, materials and animated teaching accelerate this development.

Thanks to PO donor supplied books, puzzles and more, along with the efforts of PO teachers Vilma and René, preschoolers and educators at "Tortuguitas" benefit from an enriched program. This contrasts with the standard of rote memorization, copying and too much classroom "down time".



Young Seen loves the book The Littlest Mariachi. He shows Deborah a guitar and how it's played. This was the first time he experienced the magic in books!



René shows students and the toddler educator play options with colored blocks. Hoarding is often the children's first response to new toys,



Vilma assists educator Ana in the 5-year-old classroom and identifies children needing individualized attention. Some students have not attended preschool before.

New Patio Play Area for Toddlers



This area between the bodega (last year's project) and the toddler classroom was rocky and baked in the sun.



Andrés, PO contractor, plans with Kate and Mercedes, preschool coordinator.



PO responded to Mercedes' request and collaborated with preschool families to build this patio, now a dedicated shaded play and nap area for the toddlers.

Meet Project Opportunity Scholarship Students



Larry Ramos is 21 and now is in his 5th and final year of the Nursing Program at the national university (UNAN) in León. Larry's PO scholarship has allowed him to continue his studies. He is a top student in his class, earning honors for academic achievement. He has a dream of studying in the US and is actively studying English. PO pays for his academic expenses, uniforms for his clinical practicum and Saturday English classes. Over the years of PO support, Larry has become more self-assured and confident. He will truly be an asset in his profession; he hopes to work as an intensive care nurse.



Scarleth Blanco is 17 and graduated from Colégio La Asunción in November 2015 (see p. 3). In January 2016, she began classes at Universidad Americana in Managua. She is adapting impressively to life away from home and many new university challenges. Her major is International Relations. She is a dedicated student - curious, enthusiastic and surprisingly insightful in her views. Now in her 6th year as a PO scholarship student, PO pays $\frac{1}{2}$ of her tuition (UAM scholarship pays the other half), all living and academic expenses and fees for school activities.



Lester Gutiérrez is 19 and studies in his 2nd year of the advanced auto mechanics program at Politécnico La Salle. He is among 5 of the top students in his class and this year was elected class president. This is his 4th year with PO as a scholarship student, having earned his high school diploma in 2014. Lester has totally "blossomed" this year. He's engaged and excited about engines, electricity, renewable energy and more. He is in line to be offered a job-worthy internship. Every day he leaves his home of black plastic, tin roof and dirt floor to build his path to a better life.



Shirley Astacio is 16 and attends 9th grade at a public high school. Shirley is highly motivated yet suffers from severe hearing loss in both ears. PO has shared the costs of hearing evaluations and hearing aids since 2011. PO staff's detailed evaluations revealed that she had not learned many basics of daily living nor academic fundamentals due to her severe auditory impairment. Family, school and PO continue in a comprehensive and coordinated effort to fill in the gaps. We all agree that a good vocational program would best benefit her life and future job possibilities.



Lester learns to drive - a necessary skill for an auto mechanic. PO supported driving school and helped him obtain licenses for operating vehicles and motorcycles.



Speaking English is an asset when looking for work. PO supports the cost of tutoring and classes at this Center. Larry, Lester and Scarleth are avid English students.



Shirley attends a vocational program on Saturdays and is learning computer skills. PO collaborates with her family and pays most of the cost of annual hearing tests and aids.

¡Salva una Vida! / Save a Life Classes



Take note!!! Here Juan Duarte teaches how to do the Heimlich maneuver on a child who is choking.

After 4 years, community acceptance of this valuable class is now a given. Thanks to Juan's dynamic teaching, participants love the class and conscientiously master the techniques.

Juan brings 13 years of experience as a First Responder and René competently organizes and assists in each class. They promote the program widely - classes are held in churches, businesses, schools and beyond. Even health care professionals find the class content essential.



Teachers practice the Heimlich. Many participants share this life-saving technique with family members and in their communities and churches. Below: High schoolers learn CPR for infants.



Dental Hygiene Program



Now in its 7th year, the PO dental hygiene program has become an anticipated and applauded part of each preschool year. After our team of 12 mothers completes a month of daily efforts teaching children how to brush at 3 preschools, the classroom educators take over and brushing is a part of the daily curriculum. WOW! We've now taught over 2700 children.

Our staff provides dental hygiene classes for parent groups and at other preschools. We are as zealous about preventive dental care as we are about teaching life-saving skills.



To date, we've had no success in stuffing piñatas with carrots. Here Mercedes prepares the candies for a piñata.



Dental hygiene mothers often want to continue with PO job training or request help with job search skills.



Dental hygiene classes for parents have their lighter moments. Here a grandmother covets our demo teeth.

Project Opportunity Team in Nicaragua



Since 2009, Andrés has been the contractor for each annual PO construction project.



René's red moto transports her and Vilma to preschools and out-of-the-way PO home visits.



Doribel, PO's León accountant, orients Xochilt on how to manage expenses in her new home baking business.



Alberto is PO's reliable-in-all-ways taxi driver and "fixer". He's helps PO in a myriad of ways.



Our team from L to R: Doribel Niño (Accountant), Andrés Hernández (Construction), Vicenta Hernández (Job training), Vilma Dolmos (Teacher, Facilitator PO programs), Deborah DeWolfe (Director), René Real (Teacher, Facilitator PO programs), René Jirón (Computer class), Róger Fernández (Math tutor), Kate Stewart (Co-Founder), Not pictured: Juan Duarte (CPR instructor) and Alberto Maradiaga (Transportation).

Deborah and PO team
Doribel, Vilma and René take
time out to learn to swim.



Kate and the "Save a Life"
team, Juan and René, celebrate
successes.



YOU, our friends and donors, are essential partners with our on-the-ground team in León. Together, we generate opportunities that help Nicaraguan families move out of poverty.

**Our shared efforts inspire hope, empowerment and long-term benefits.
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.

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¡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.