

# Nicaragua Newsletter from Nan and Miguel

United Methodist Missionaries in Nicaragua; October, 2010

We thought it would be nice to start with some good news. With your help the Scholarship program of Women and Community is supporting 8 college students, 59 high school students and 20 children in fourth, fifth and sixth grade. All of these kids are from impoverished village families and many of the families only count on support of one parent - the mom. W&C continues to support Yubelka Galeano who has had a scholarship with us for five years. She comes to Managua to study at a school for the hearing disabled Monday through Friday. W&C also provides extra support for a twelve year old who is in third grade. She was brutally raped two years ago and is living in a foster home kind of situation near our offices. She is doing well. As many of you know, along with receiving a little economic help, W&C also provides training workshops and has the kids get involved in community social work. Below are short testimonies from three of the college students. You can support the scholarship program by giving through the *UMC ADVANCE for Christ #13285A Women and Community*.

**\*My name is Gema Jimenez Delgadillo.** I am twenty-two years old. I am almost finished with my studies in psychology. My scholarship has helped me a lot because my family has few economic resources. I am the daughter of a working mother with five kids and she is the sole supporter. She has worked very hard to help us get ahead. I have been able to study on weekends in Managua for five years because of the scholarship. I will finish in December.

I am also a person who likes to participate in things; I like to be helpful in whatever I am asked to do. I am part of a Youth Network Against Violence and am very active in the organization. I love to dance!

I am very thankful for the support that I have been provided. I wish you success and luck in your work, both personal and social work. Thank you for supporting Women and Community.

**\*My name is Edwin Antonio Urbina Arauz.** I am eighteen years old and I live with my mother, brother and sister in the village of Laurel Galan in San Francisco Libre. I am in my first year of journalism studies.

I want to thank you for the support you are providing to me through Women and Community. The situation is such that without it I would not be able to study. Studying allows me to have a vision for the future in my life. I come from a poor family, but very hard working. My mother is the head of the household and is our sole supporter; we cannot count on my

dad. The support of my family has inspired me to want to get an education and be a professional and eventually be able to help my family and my community.

I also feel thankful for the knowledge I have received through workshops with Women and Community which help me in my personal life and help me set new goals. Your help with my studies gives me hope to be able to achieve my dreams of being a journalist. I hope you continue to have success and health in your lives.



*The Youth Network Against Violence. Gema is in the front row in black and Edwin is to her left. Rebecca is behind Gema in Red and Elder is leaning in from the left with a blue hat on. another scholarship student, Nathan is directly behind Edwin and next to girl in yellow.*

**\*My name is Elder Garcia.** I am twenty-two years old. I live in the neighborhood called Sunny Hills in San Francisco Libre (this neighborhood was built by Women and Community with help from the United Methodist Church-UMCOR after Hurricane Mitch). I am studying journalism and am in my first year.

I am a very active youth: I belong to the Youth Network Against Violence. We work in the process of building awareness among youth about the need to reduce chauvinism and violence against women and children and also about the need for equality between the genders (Men and Women). We also educate youth about protection against sexually transmitted illnesses, like HIV AIDS and protection against unplanned pregnancies.

In the Youth Network we receive training workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights; gender equity, prevention of violence; many aspects of human rights; citizen participation and many other themes. Then we reproduce the workshops in 25 villages with about 300 other teenagers and young adults.

I am very thankful for my scholarship. I am just beginning university because before, without the scholarship, I couldn't study. I am from an economically challenged family. My mother went to work in Managua as a maid many years ago and my sister brought me up. I continue to live with her and her son. With the scholarship I study on weekends. I hope to one day be able to give back to my community.

I feel passionate about my career, I love to communicate. I hope to one day be one of the best journalists in Nicaragua. I also hope to continue to help in the development of the Youth Network and the youth of our municipality. Thank you! *Note from Nan: Elder is one of the leaders of this network and is a hardworking young man. He goes out to help other Network members when they multiply the workshops in the 25 villages.*

### **Human Rights and Violence Prevention**

W&C works to educate many different sectors about violence and how to prevent it – this involves finding ways for women and youth to empower themselves, learn about their rights, the laws and increase their self-esteem and acquire new attitudes about gender relations and violence: They learn that we are not born to be violent, we learn violence from the people around us, unfortunately especially in our families. They learn that people can also learn NOT to have violence behavior - not to use violence. They learn that God wants us all to be able to develop ourselves to the fullest, to live without violence, subordination and oppression.

A big part of W&C's work is also attention for women, youth and children who have experienced violence and come to the offices looking for help. We have two lawyers (Miguel is one of them), a psychologist, and a social worker. 45 members of the Youth Network Against Violence and 40 legal advocates in the Women's Network Against Violence provide supportive roles in their villages. They accompany women, youth and children when they need to come to our offices and they encourage them to come and get help so that there might be a chance of ending the violent situation.

Here is a brief recent story about a woman W&C is supporting in her struggle for a bit of justice:

Urania lives with her five year old daughter and her sister in a new community built by W&C after Hurricane Mitch. Los Piches is near a big river and 20 km from the main little town of San Francisco Libre. It is made up of people from eight villages that lost everything in Hurricane Mitch. There are 150 homes that were built by W&C with help from UMCOR and the Catholic Women of Austria. Urania is very poor – pretty much everyone in Los Piches is also. One day Urania's neighbor couldn't find one of her chickens. For whatever

reason, the neighbor thought Urania had taken the chicken to eat. The two women began fighting and the other woman's husband came after Urania with a machete and cut her arm and her leg. It was very traumatic – the man kept saying he was going to kill her. People helped her get away and come into town. She had to have stitches at the health center and had a friend go get one of the W&C lawyers, Minerva. Once Urania was stitched up Minerva went with her to the local police station. The police wouldn't go out and get the perpetrator, they said they wanted more proof, so they sent Urania to go to another bigger town, Tipitapa to be evaluated by the Forensic Doctor and get a report. Minerva went with her. The police have had the report now for a week and have still not arrested the guy. So this is one of the cases Miguel and Minerva will be working on now for a while. And guess what? The chicken showed up! It was out in the weeds sitting on its eggs!

### **San Francisco Libre is once again under water!**



We have had way too much rain this year and Lake Managua (a big lake between Managua and San Francisco Libre) is now a meter higher than during Hurricane Mitch. The lake is 4.42 meters (almost six yards) above its normal level; 290 families, 1,100 people, have had to leave their homes in SFL. Nationally about 10,000 people are in refugee centers. 150 families up in Lomas del Sol (Sunny Hills) the new neighborhood built by Women and Community with help from UMCOR after Hurricane Mitch are housing 150 displaced families. Some have gone to be with families in Managua and others are refugees in churches. The local government is supplying food, medicines, doctor's visits, etc. And they are trying to get tents so that some families can set up their own little camps. The problem is that the majority of the old town, which is pretty flat, is now flooded – including houses, the mayor's office, the Ministry of education, the major primary and high school, the Ministry of Ag office, our women's clinic and

popular pharmacy and the new port. The government health center is totally surrounded by water but the building is still dry and functioning. Thank God, after Hurricane Mitch, with your help, through UMCOR, W&C purchased high land in three different places in the county, surveyed and made lots and built 400 homes. Other organizations built another 300 homes, so 700 families that were in flood areas are in safe places. If not, this would be a disaster of even more enormous proportions. With Hurricane Mitch 13 villages and part of the main town (about 700 families) were totally wiped out (the infrastructure) and nearly 10,000 cows perished.

By the time you get this newsletter the situation might have improved or might be worse. With the lake this high it will be six months before it goes down enough so that people can return to their homes (if they are still there).

At this point we ask for your prayers. We feel that your long term financial support for Women and Community programs is the best way W&C can help this time around. We are writing a project and will try to get some help for food for the people who are refugees as well as tents, to supplement what the government can get. Our experience with Hurricane Mitch was that when there is a disaster, violence against women, youth and children increases. So we need to have our staff able to continue to act in prevention and attention with women, youth and children, victims or at risk of becoming victims. We also really believe in all of the W&C programs: Scholarships, The Youth Network Against Violence, The Women's Clinic and the work with pregnant adolescents; the economic programs like Cows in Women's Hands; the work with the legal advocates, etc.

W&C's main offices are up on the hill, but the Women's Clinic and Popular Pharmacy are along the main road and are flooded, so we've had to transfer everything to the offices – everyone is doubled up to make space. We also have also donated our auditorium to the courts for the month of October so that they can keep functioning. We have temporarily given land to the cell phone company so that people can have cell phone service. And we will provide land as people get tents.

**So as during every fall newsletter we ask you to consider making alternative Christmas presents to your family and friends by giving to ADVANCE for Christ, Women and Community #13285A for Youth Scholarships, Cows in Women's Hands, The women's clinic and work with pregnant adolescents or for our human rights work including prevention and attention for women youth and children.**

### **Nicaraguan News (From the Nicaraguan Network)**

-According to the International Development Bank Nicaragua is the best prepared country in Central America, and number four in Latin America for confronting natural disasters.

-Nicaragua is recognized as the safest country in Central America by the **World Bank**; in its publication "Doing Business 2010," says it is also the **best country in Central America in which to invest**. These and other factors have influenced the growth in tourism.

-Nicaragua reduced its Gini coefficient from .41 to .36 between 2005 and 2009 and was **now the least unequal in Central America**. Under the current government Nicaragua replaced "deregulation, privatization, liberalization, and minimization of the state with policies that facilitate the role of the state in promoting development and redistribution of income in direct support of the poor."

-According to respected independent economist Nester Avendaño, director of Consultants for Business Development (COPADES), Nicaragua's economy grew by 7% in the second trimester compared to the same period in 2009. Exports grew by a whopping 33% in the period from January through August. Seafood, beef, dairy products, gold, and manufacturing led the way.

-Chamber of Construction President Mario Zelaya said the construction sector has grown thanks to the affordable housing program developed by the government.

**-FIDEG confirms reduction in extreme poverty in Nicaragua between 2005 and 2009.** Alejandro Martinez Cuenca, director of the International Foundation on the Global Economic Challenge (FIDEG) said "the tendency toward the continuing reduction in poverty in general is clearly reflected." The survey showed extreme poverty had declined by 7.5 percentage points between 2005 and 2009.

-Minimum wage rose 6%: Nearly 108,000 public and private sector Nicaraguan workers received a pay boost of 6% starting Aug. 16. The increase is part of a labor stability agreement negotiated between the government, unions and businesses last February. The agreement mandated a 12% wage increase in two six months increments

**Please remember your Covenant church giving as well as donations to special projects. For the projects ask your treasurer to make the check to your conference earmarked for ADVANCE 13285A Women and Community, please add an extra note specifying the project.**

Contact us at [nanmig1@yahoo.com](mailto:nanmig1@yahoo.com) for pictures of programs or about how to help the baseball ministry or ACODEMA. Thank you so much!