



Nica News FEBRUARY 2018



When I first heard the quote, "Don't just do something, stand there," it made me squirm, more than a little. I thought, "Well, what are we here for then, if not to do something, if not to affect some kind of change?" Twelve years in Nicaragua has taught us, slowly but surely, that we are not here to make changes in the kids' lives. We are here merely to walk alongside them, often taking 2 steps forward, one step back, and stand in awe as they are the ones to make changes in their own lives. We try to provide the fertile soil, but all credit goes to them for the sowing and growing. **They** are the change.

Kerstin, who has been with us since the age of 6, and spoke at the P2P Breakfast of Hope 2 years ago, is now 17 and just graduated from high school in November. Several months ago, she decided of her own accord, to apply for a scholarship at United World Colleges (UWC) UWC is an international organization based in London, England, that provides young high school graduates the opportunity to do a 2-year International Baccalaureate Program in one of 17 schools in diverse countries all over the world. There is a multi-step selection process involving essay writing, participation in some special events, and a personal interview by the selection committee. Kerstin submitted her essays at the end of November and burst through the doors of the

Center last Friday, beaming from ear to ear, to tell us she had been pre-selected! Step 1, done. Step 2 will be her participation in several events scheduled in March, and Step 3, in May, the final selection will be made and the successful applicants chosen. Go Kerstin!

Isaac is another example of one of our students who is doing something for themselves. Isaac has never been a great student. We took him into the program when he was about 11. Nice kid, from a very dysfunctional family living in extreme poverty. He definitely deserved a chance. He struggled throughout his years with us, and when he was failing miserably in his final year of high school, we took him out of the program and enrolled him in a public school so he could at least pass the

year and receive a high school diploma. He then started working for a trucking business and we saw him very little. However, he did drop in to the Center from time to time and began to express a desire to really learn English. He had taken English in school but had never done well – could read some but really could not speak a word. He started looking stuff up online and practicing. He started speaking to us in English and insisting we only speak back to him in English. He was determined to learn. Just a few months ago, Ed and I met a couple who have opened a new English school opened in Managua. It is a Christian school for adults, who live in Monday to Friday, and are taught completely by native-speaking North Americans. Ed took Isaac over to meet the director and last week he was asked back for an interview, and this week, for a placement test. Despite the fact that he was never an A student like Kerstin, he's got a dream every bit as big as hers. We believe that if he can learn English and get a job in a call center, this will be his ticket out of poverty. Go Isaac!

The new school year began on Monday, January 29th. Two weeks ago, our annual medical team was here to do well-child check-ups on all of our kids and their families. We are always grateful for their presence here because they give such excellent care to our children and their families, taking time to explain things and to educate them on matters of nutrition, hygiene, anemia, managing diabetes and high blood pressure, which are crucial to good health and disease prevention.



Last week was an action-packed week for 11 of our senior high schoolers who chose to participate in the building of a home for Julio's grandmother. We had received a donation for the cost of a home and decided to ask the kids entering their final year of high school if they would like to form the group that would build the house. Eleven of our



fourteen kids at this grade level jumped on board. They worked every morning in construction

and then got to go on various excursions every afternoon, just like a "real" group! The week culminated in an overnight trip to El Chocoyero National Bio Reserve where they camped at the base of a waterfall and got to greet the dawn with the breathtaking 6 a.m. departure of the thousands of parakeets that nest there every night.

For those who were not so interested in construction, we had another great project on the go last week. This project involved 9 high school girls of all grade levels, 3 very patient women, 3 sewing machines and lots of laughs. In 5 short afternoons, in temperatures sometimes surpassing 90 degrees, these girls, who had never used a machine before but were keen to learn, turned out 9 string backpacks and 9 pairs of PJ pants, ready to take home and wear. What fun they had and how proud they were of what they made.



We welcome all donations on our website www.p2pnicaragua.org or cheques can be mailed directly to:

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