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SISTER CITY PROJECT

The Norwalk/Nagarote Sister City Project

is a partnership for sustainable community

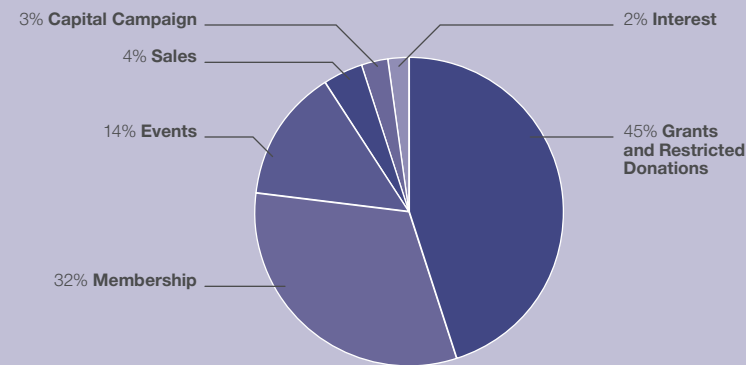
development between the people of Nagarote,

Nicaragua and the Greater Norwalk area

in Connecticut.

2008

OVER THE THREE YEARS
 OF THE GRANT MORE THAN
 11,000 TREES
 HAVE BEEN GROWN...
 IN OUR NURSERY AND
 DISTRIBUTED
 THROUGHOUT NAGAROTE.



INCOME 2008

Overview

The Norwalk/Nagarote Sister City Project made significant progress in 2008.

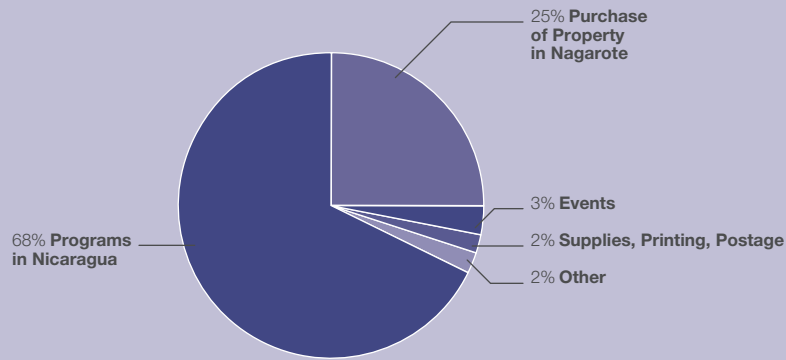
- We bought the property for our new Community Center.
- We partnered with ViviendasLeon and the Architectural Program at the University of San Francisco to design our Community Center. We reviewed and responded to their preliminary plans and await final drawings and engineering.
- We underwent a comprehensive, professional evaluation of the Jeronimo Lopez program and began the process of addressing the issues raised.

Jeronimo Lopez Youth Project

Providing an alternative to gangs and an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty in the desperately poor Jeronimo Lopez barrio in Nagarote, the Youth Project has been effective in producing positive results for area youth and the barrio according to our recent evaluation.

The year began with a bus trip to San Juan del Sur where VOSH, a group of opticians from Connecticut, held an annual eye clinic and provided free glasses. Thirty-three kids made the trip, all had their eyes examined and 10 received needed glasses. In March, we had an art and photo exhibit at the Nagarote library and, in June, a very successful first annual Youth Fair highlighted Project activities and achievements.

In July, we hired a coach for the girls' volleyball team and Wesleyan student Lorena Estrella, who spent the summer in Nagarote as an intern, organized a girls' book club. The Science Fair was the highlight of November. Throughout the year, in addition to their classes in computer applications, sewing, art, hairstyling, baking and photography, the kids attended workshops on women's equality, self-esteem, domestic violence, communication and health issues. The main community service activity was growing and distributing 5,400 trees.



EXPENSES 2008

Jeronimo Lopez Preschool Project

Attendance at the preschool is now up to 36 . All preschool graduates are guaranteed a Sister City scholarship for public school. We organized a parents’ committee for the preschool project and took the youngsters and some of the parents on a first-ever field trip to a nearby nature reserve. Thanks to AmeriCares, we have been able to give the children much needed vitamin supplements at the preschool. Parents welcomed the doctor’s talk, which we arranged, on good nutrition on a poverty-level budget. Our newest board member, Priscilla Woyke, Director of the Preschool at the New Canaan Nature Center, has been diligently collecting teaching materials which she took with her in January ’09 when our board members visited Nagarote.

NicaPhoto

With 18 students in two classes, the photo class continues to stimulate student creativity and expand their vision. Photography class often opens with a journal entry, one either related to photography or merely a personal reflection. Unfortunately, in the Nagarote public schools students rarely have writing assignments. Through journaling they are becoming more comfortable with self-expression and the creative process.

In August, Byron and Walter, the photo teachers-in-training, and board member Ronnie Maher travelled to Guatemala to assist a Norwalk-based sister project, Education and Hope, in setting up their first-ever Mac Lab. As part of a community service project at Christmas time, the photography class offered portraits to families in a very poor barrio where families don’t have electricity or running water, let alone cameras or the money to pay a professional photographer to take their portrait. All the families greatly appreciated the photos the students created.

**ALL PRESCHOOL
GRADUATES ARE
GUARANTEED
A SISTER CITY
SCHOLARSHIP
FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL.**



Urban Reforestation

Our third year of funding from New England Biolabs Foundation was more successful than ever with 5,400 trees grown from seed in our nursery and distributed throughout Nagarote to families who agree to care for them. A diligent group of 35 youngsters, mostly girls, did the bulk of the work. They also enjoyed a series of environmental workshops provided by our arborist, Javier Silva, held on Saturdays during September as well as a splendid 3-day field trip to a nature reserve, cloud forest and coffee plantation near Esteli in December. Over the three years of the grant more than 11,000 trees have been grown. For 2009, we're looking forward to our fourth year of the Urban Reforestation grant.

Scholarships

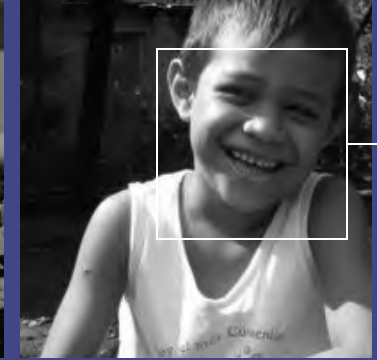
All 11 of the N/NSCP scholarship students who completed high school in 2007 went on to college in 2008—a powerful indicator of the project's impact considering that most of their parents didn't finish sixth grade. The college students, who continue their scholarships, are tutoring youngsters in the Youth Program. We now have 77 scholarship students thanks in large part to Frank Keen's Agua Team at Middlesex Middle School in Darien and the Cottonwood Foundation, as well as many sponsors in the U.S. and Canada.

SosteNica

Our partnership and investment in micro-lender SosteNica continues to have a positive impact on Nagarote's fragile economy. Each loan helps to create jobs—a huge boon in an area with double-digit unemployment.



**THE YOUTH PROJECT
HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE
IN PRODUCING
POSITIVE RESULTS
FOR AREA YOUTH AND
THE BARRIO, ACCORDING TO
OUR RECENT EVALUATION.**



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