



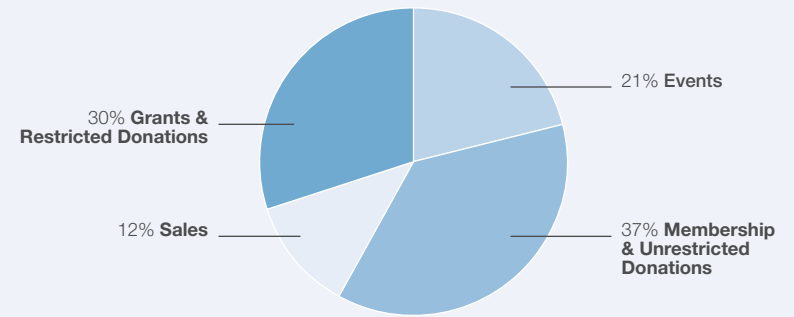
# n|n

SISTER CITY PROJECT

*The Norwalk/Nagarote Sister City Project  
is a partnership between the people of Nagarote,  
Nicaragua, and the Greater Norwalk  
Area of Connecticut, focusing on sustainable  
community development and breaking the  
cycle of poverty for the most disadvantaged  
children and youth in Nagarote.*

# 2014

ON APRIL 10, A MAGNITUDE  
6.2 EARTHQUAKE  
HIT NAGAROTE CAUSING  
EXTENSIVE DAMAGE  
AND DISRUPTING OUR  
PROGRAMS



INCOME 2014

**Highlights**

- On April 10, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake hit Nagarote causing extensive damage and disrupting our programs. Our members donated close to \$2,000 for relief that was distributed through the Red Cross and helped our staff repair damaged homes.
- We continue to be impressed by the energy, vision and management ability of our new Field Director, Miguel Salinas, and Assistant Director, Ricardo Rivera.
- Under the leadership of one of our more corporate-minded board members we have created an annual operating plan, but this time with corresponding metrics and a dashboard to help ensure that we stay aligned to our goals throughout the year — a truly professional operation.

**Preschool**

- The one-room preschool is too small for the increased enrollment of 50-55 kids in three levels. We're working with Holcim, a local cement producer, and the Ministry of Education (MINED) to build a new classroom.

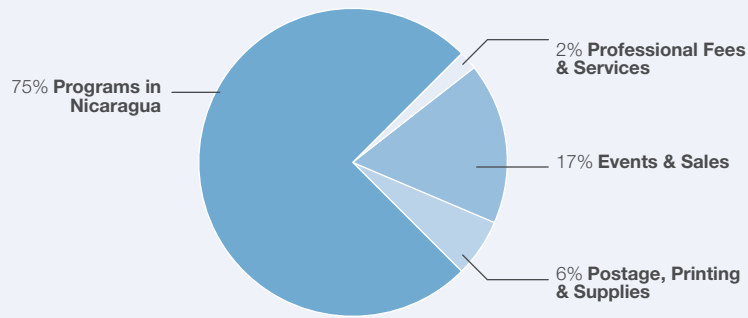
- As part of our continuing effort to engage parents with the Darling Preschool, they have made 30 chairs and 10 tables for the preschool stretching our Giving Tree donations much further.
- Our preschool staff attends monthly training for preschool teachers at MINED.

**6-11 Afterschool Program**

- Our staff keeps in touch with students' teachers to ensure that progress is being made.
- MINED trains our staff to reinforce learning.
- Students are showing progress in our own evaluations and also in reports from MINED.

**Teen Afterschool Program**

- In addition to basic computer skills and software applications, our computer instructor, Azucena, is teaching the more advanced students graphic design and Photoshop 6 which they love. She has also created a database for all of our students and programs, which will help tremendously with planning and assessments.



### EXPENSES 2014

- » Nele, a volunteer college student from Belgium, taught four English classes a week with 16 students enrolled. She was with us for six months and the kids were so enthusiastic about the classes that we hired the English teacher from the local high school to continue the classes until November. At that point, George, another volunteer from Belgium, took over the English classes. He will be with us for six months.
- » The theater class attended a live performance of Pinocchio at the National Theater in Managua sponsored by a grant from the First Congregational Church of Greenwich. Following the performance, they met backstage with the actors who gave them suggestions for the theater class. One of the actors has since become our theater teacher.
- » We organized a week of activities to celebrate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The focus was on teen drug and alcohol abuse and included workshops, discussion groups, films and a presentation by Juan Carlos Asiain, Director of REMAR, a Nicaraguan substance abuse prevention group. Activities were coordinated with the local high school and police, and 162 teens actively participated.

- » The kids and staff organized an annual fair at our center with performances by our theater and martial arts classes and a presentation by the Program's teen girls' club — the Norwalk Ladies — on being women in Nicaragua.
- » In December we held our annual graduation and award ceremony—Dia de Logros—for kids and parents who merit special recognition for their accomplishments in class and their service to the community.

### Scholarships

- » We have 82 scholarship students, 11 of whom are in college.
- » Royle Elementary School and Middlesex Middle School, both in Darien, sponsor scholarship students who correspond with students in their Spanish classes.



# MUCH OF OUR SEEDS OF HOPE FARM PRODUCE IS DONATED TO THE PRESCHOOL AND 6-11 AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR THEIR SNACKS.



## Workshops

- » Educators from the Ministry of Families, Ministry of Health and the police have trained our staff to provide workshops for our kids on teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence prevention, preventing sexual abuse, leadership and team building. They are providing workshops not only for the kids in our program but also for their parents, community groups and the high school.
- » Parents of program kids are enjoying workshops on child development, education and communicating with their children.
- » Miguel took five of our college scholarship students to a workshop at the University of Central America on Preparing for My First Job.

## Community Service

- » 171 kids volunteered to work at the farm. They learned how to use organic fertilizers and cleaned and planted 750 plantain corms in addition to planting, maintaining and harvesting crops.
- » Our 11 college scholarship students donated hundreds of hours of tutoring to the 6-11 Afterschool Program.

- » The Norwalk Ladies created a playground at our center and helped with disabled children.
- » A group of 10 teens plus our staff planted trees with SosteNica along the Tamarindo River watershed in Nagarote.

## Seeds of Hope Farm

- » A farmer contacted through SosteNica lent us plantain corms of a special variety that resists disease and drought and provides a high yield. When they've grown and created new corms, we will pay the farmer back with the new corms. Meanwhile we expect a large crop of plantains in February that we will sell.
- » Our harvest this year included cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, squash, watermelon, corn, papayas, guava and dragon fruit. Much of the produce is donated to the Preschool and 6-11 Afterschool Programs for their snacks.
- » A group of 70 elementary school children visited the farm and had a lesson on organic farming and tree planting.
- » SosteNica donated forest trees and the kids planted them at the farm.

### Health and Well Being

- » We took a busload of 56 kids and adults for our annual visit to the eye clinic run by the Connecticut branch of Volunteer Optometrists in Service to Humanity (VOSH).
- » Doctors from the Health Center evaluated our kids for malnutrition.
- » A delegation of dentists from Missouri visited our center and provided dental check-ups and cleaning for 177 kids.
- » Volunteer psychology students from the University of Nicaragua in Leon and University of Central America in Managua are providing counseling to four of our students and their parents. The counselors were particularly helpful following the earthquake which created unusual levels of fear and anxiety.

### Partnerships

- » We joined SosteNica in creating a school garden at a rural elementary school. The SosteNica agro-ecologists presented a workshop on sustainable gardening and helped create the planting area. Our teachers from the 6-11 Afterschool Program organized activities for the elementary school kids. In addition, SosteNica maintains a demonstration plot at our Seeds of Hope Farm.

- » We continue to partner with the Nagarote Ministries of Education, Health, and Families, the police, The Albert Schweitzer Institute at Quinnipiac University, the University of Nicaragua at Leon, the University of Central America, the Holcim Corporation, the Kathoicke Hogeschool Leuven University in Belgium, VOSH and Project Concern International.

### Professional Development

- » Three of our staff were trained to respond to natural disasters, of which there are plenty in Nicaragua, including earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts and floods.
- » We arranged for the Red Cross to provide safety training to all the staff.
- » Staff also received training in Leadership and Creative Pedagogy.
- » Our Assistant Director, Ricardo Rivera, provided very popular workshops on pedagogy for our teachers and teachers in area public and private schools.

OUR 11 COLLEGE

SCHOLARSHIP

STUDENTS DONATED

HUNDREDS OF HOURS

OF TUTORING TO THE 6-11

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM



## HEROES

Over \$2,500

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## Norwalk/Nagarote Sister City Project

P.O. Box 382

Norwalk CT 06852-0382

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[www.sistercityproject.org](http://www.sistercityproject.org)  
[nnscp@sistercityproject.org](mailto:nnscp@sistercityproject.org)

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