



Norwalk)/ Nagarote
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.

2015

HOURS OF TUTORING

DONATED BY HIGH SCHOOL

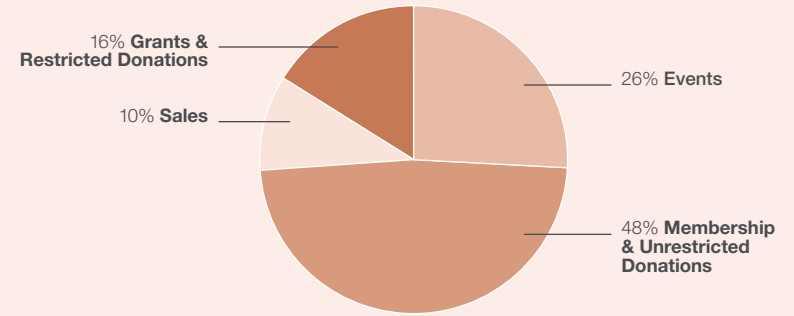
SENIORS AND COLLEGE

SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

1,302

Highlights

- ») In July we kicked off our Healthy Children Program funded by the International Foundation.
- ») The new preschool building was completed in August.
- ») Norwalk's and Nagarote's mayors—Harry Rilling and Mireya Urroz, respectively—signed the papers to officially become sister cities by joining Sister Cities International. It only took 29 years.
- ») We hired a Program Administrator, Catherine Bagg, in October to help with administration and fundraising as our volunteer Director celebrated her 80th birthday this year and looks forward to cutting back.



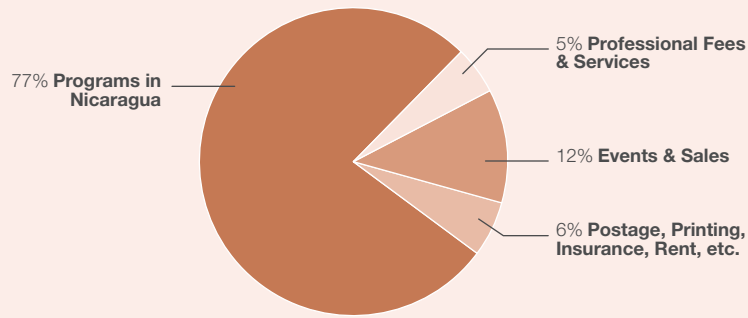
INCOME 2015

Healthy Children Program

All of our staff and college scholarship students attended five two-hour workshops on nutrition provided by a professional nutritionist. Students and their parents attended cooking classes based on the workshop information. The information will be shared with all project children through workshops and preschool units.

In addition, 20 families were recruited to create kitchen gardens to grow their own fresh produce. They were given gardening tools, plants, seeds and instruction as well as weekly instructional visits from the agronomist.

The cooking teacher, Marina, developed a spectacular cookbook using nutritious, inexpensive readily available food. A copy was given to each family at the final banquet for 200 participants at our community center in December.



EXPENSES 2015

Preschool

It was a banner year for the preschool as the new classroom and library were finished in August with help from Holcim (the local cement company), parents, staff, a delegation of students from the Northampton, Mass. High School Key Club, local youth groups and Nagarote's mayor. With 62 preschoolers enrolled in three levels, it was long overdue and very welcome.

The three preschool teachers received training from board members Joan Parris and Priscilla Woyke, as well as Sandi Kretsch, during our annual board visit to Nagarote. Students from Westport's Staples High School joined with our staff to create a playground at the preschool.

Parental involvement is our biggest challenge and we are constantly looking for ways to improve that including attendance prizes, parenting workshops and classes on preparing nutritious snacks and meals. Donations from the giving tree at our Anniversary Fiesta provided lots of exciting learning materials for the preschool.

Scholarships

We now have 71 scholarship students in elementary and high school and another 11 college scholarship students. Sponsors include Middlesex Middle School and Royle School, both in Darien, and the Norwalk High School National Honor Society. In June, we offered a series of workshops for our eight high school seniors to encourage them to continue on to college and help them with career choices. The workshops included speakers from the community who work in the fields in which the students expressed interest. We also had prep classes to help them pass the college admission exam.

Our one college graduate this year, Gloria Rebeca, has been invited to join a program that will take her to the U.S. in 2017. Her service as a tutor for younger students in our 6-11 Academic Support program earned her the award.

We have monthly meetings for parents where they discuss various topics relating to parenting and supporting their children in school but, again, parental involvement is challenging.

90%

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN

AT RISK OF FAILING,

WHO PASSED TO THE NEXT

GRADE AS A

RESULT OF OUR COLLEGE

STUDENTS' TUTORING

5,768

POUNDS OF PLANTAINS GROWN AT THE SEEDS OF HOPE FARM



6-11 Academic Support

The Nagarote Ministry of Education identified 91 students ages 6-11 who were at risk of failing and in need of academic support and asked us to provide them with tutors. We arranged for our high school seniors and college scholarship students to tutor them in small groups. Our staff coordinated with their parents and teachers to track their needs and encourage attendance. The tutors volunteered 1,302 hours. As a result, 90 percent of these at-risk children passed to the next grade.

Teen Afterschool Program

The 165 teens in the Teen Afterschool Program take classes in English, theater, computer, sewing, tailoring, painting, hair styling, soccer league and karate. The program also includes the Norwalk Ladies, a girls' group which focuses on service projects, theater, crafts, reading and discussions.

The teens make many of their own clothes in the sewing and tailoring classes, and two of the high school seniors are making their trousers to wear for graduation. The painting class joined a delegation of students from the Northampton, Mass. High School in painting a mural at our community center.

Workshops are an important part of the program and included topics such as teen pregnancy, local impact of climate change, nutrition, emotional changes in adolescence and substance abuse.

The teens donated 831 hours of service to the farm and were rewarded with a trip to a lake for swimming and kayaking.

As a reminder, the program was designed to provide alternatives to gangs and violence in addition to learning general and interpersonal skills, and there are now no signs of gangs in the barrios where we work.

Seeds of Hope Farm

Our model sustainable farm, Seeds of Hope, produced more than two tons of plantains plus guava, passion fruit, dragon fruit, papaya and copious amounts of mint.

Our well was struggling to produce enough water even during the rainy season and it was clear that we needed to dig it deeper to continue irrigating. The work, completed in September, adds 16 meters which should be adequate for irrigation, no matter what the season.

Although we sold most of the plantains to the local market, we donated plantain, papaya, passion fruit and mint plants to students who work at the farm to plant at home.

PARTNERSHIPS HERE

Center for Global Studies,
Brien McMahon High School in
Norwalk, Humans of Norwalk
and Nagarote Photo Exchange

Norwalk Nagarote Girls Group at
Brien McMahon High School

Northampton, Mass. High School
Key Club

Staples High School Sister
City Club in Westport

Montessori Middle School
in Norwalk

Scholarship sponsors
Middlesex Middle School and
Royle School, both of Darien,
and Norwalk High School National
Honor Society

PARTNERSHIPS IN NICARAGUA

We collaborate with SosteNica on a
variety of projects including
reforestation of the Tamarindo River
Watershed in Nagarote.

The Ministry of Education is very
pleased with the outstanding results
of our Academic Support program for
elementary school children.

Our board met with Mayor Mireya
Urroz to formalize our Sister City
relationship.

The Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven
University in Belgium provides us with
an intern to teach English each year.

We take a busload of kids to
Volunteer Optometrists in Service to
Humanity's eye clinic each January
for free eye exams and glasses.

We continue to partner with the
Nagarote Ministries of Health and
Families as well as the police, Red
Cross, the Holcim Corporation and
Fundacion Victoria.

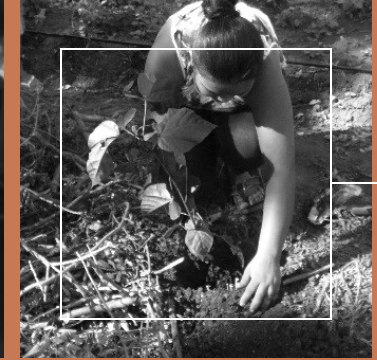
HOURS OF WORK

DONATED BY THE TEENS

TO THE

SEEDS OF HOPE FARM

831



HEROES

Over \$2,500

Aliza Family Foundation
Bill Collins & Elizabeth Gibbs
John Levin & Diane Keefe
MasterCard International, Inc.
John & Priscilla Woyke

BENEFACTORS

\$1,000-\$2,499

Anonymous
Carl Bailey
Kirsten Denney
First Congregational Church of
Greenwich Women's Fellowship
Sean & Laura Higgins
Tom & Sandi Kretsch
Bill & Roz McCarthy
Norwalk High School Honor Society
Christina Smillie
Guillermo Suescum &
Melanie Hughes

SUSTAINERS

\$200-\$999

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Gifts Program
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Post Road Diner
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Royle School PTO
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