



FROM A DUMP TO A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

by Charlene Meyer

'Against all odds' certainly is an understatement when thinking back to our first visit to the La Cruz dump in Esteli in 2010. We visited families who made a living by working the dump. It was an extremely hot day. Our four-wheel drive truck could only make it part way; the rest would be on foot. The steep road was covered with large rocks and mud, an occasional pig and some chickens. With each step the flies multiplied. Stench from burning trash filled the air. Children were sitting on old tires or broken chairs scavenged from the dump in front of their tiny tin/cardboard homes on both sides of the narrow road. Is this a nightmare or am I witness to children living in conditions beyond my imagination?

We continued our journey. Another 15 minutes climbing slippery rocks we come to the



end of the road. A family watches us approach their home. We are greeted with smiles and a warm hug from "grandma." This is home to three generations of proud, hardworking Nicaraguans. They share stories of love for family and pride in their hard work to support their children—no word about pity or handouts.

Our next stop was the dump. As we approached the burning inferno we were witness to scores of workers amidst the garbage. All ages. Mothers, fathers, and children. All digging through the trash looking for treasure... plastic to resell, clothing, and food. The ground seemed to be moving from the thousands of swarming flies. My eyes were burning from the smoke-filled air. It's was hard to breathe. I noticed some of the workers had a cloth tied over their nose and mouth. I can't image this being much help. This is hell on earth.

ONE PERSON CAN CHANGE AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Today, less than four years later, we are happy to say the children who were working the La Cruz dump have a school with a garden in their community. In addition, thanks to a Tin Roof Foundation donor, they now have new playground equipment. Against all odds, the children who only knew trash and working the smoldering garbage now have a clean place to play and just be children.

It is possible for one person to make a difference in the life of a child. You can be that one person. For more information on how you can help, please contact Charlene Meyer, hope@tinroof.org or call (513) 474-4540. You'll be glad you did!

AGAINST ALL ODDS

by Charlene Meyer

Three days until our scheduled departure to Nicaragua. School supplies and games for the kids have been carefully packed. Hotel rooms are reserved and our partners and friends are anxiously awaiting our arrival. There is just one problem. We have been closely watching the weather forecast for the last several days. They are predicting bad weather the day we are scheduled to leave Cincinnati, especially the Atlanta area. Each day we are hoping the forecasters will be wrong. All we can do is wait.

The waiting has been stressful. The predictions for the storm are becoming more severe, especially in Atlanta. Unfortunately, the day before our departure I get the dreaded e-mail from Delta. Our flight has been cancelled. Darryl Bashford, a first-time traveler to Nicaragua, began the grueling task to get us another flight. All flights from Cincinnati to Atlanta have been cancelled. All flights from Dayton and Columbus have been cancelled. The only option is flying out of Lexington, Kentucky. Darryl rebooks all

our flights to depart from Lexington to Atlanta. We have no idea how a plane flying from Lexington will be able to land in Atlanta when all the flights from Cincinnati to Atlanta have been grounded. It is against all odds that our flight will not be cancelled, but we have faith.

Early the next morning we drive to Lexington. We are sitting in the terminal watching the flight information. The flights to Atlanta scheduled for takeoff before and after ours have all been cancelled. The board lights up that our flight is being delayed. It seems our plane hit a flock of birds and will need to be cleaned and inspected. Two hours later we are able to board the plane. The plane is de-iced and then another delay. It seems the flight attendant's seat needs to be repaired. Another inspection and a second de-icing are required. More flights to Atlanta are being cancelled as the storm intensifies. It is against all odds that our flight will not be cancelled, but we have faith. Nearly three hours after our scheduled flight we are in the air. Is our faith more powerful than the odds?

WHERE IS EVERYONE?

After a bumpy flight we land on the icy runway in Atlanta. We are told the jetway is frozen and we need to wait onboard until our plane is moved to another jetway. Unfortunately, after 30 minutes we are told this jetway is also frozen. It will be necessary for our plane to be pushed back, equipment brought in to remove the thick ice, and then deplane two by two, walking to the terminal with the help of airport personnel.



As we enter the gate we have an eerie feeling. The normal bustling Atlanta airport is deserted. No one on the escalators. No restaurants open. No long lines of travelers eager to get to their destination. I feel like I am in one of those movies where we are the only people left on Planet Earth. As we approach our gate we see a handful of folks waiting for our flight to Managua. Once again we wait, staring at the flight information. The dreaded information flashes on the board... delayed.

Against all odds, after a 1½-hour delay, our plane is on the icy runway departing to Managua, Nicaragua. Once in the air we are told our flight was only one of 47 (out of 2,500 flights daily) to depart Atlanta...the ONLY flight from the entire Midwest region! We are convinced there is a powerful reason for us to be in Nicaragua at this time. We will soon know the reason.

This trip reminds me of the many children and families who are facing unimaginable stressful situations each day and how The Tin Roof Foundation donors, with God's guidance, are helping them overcome these challenges ... against all odds. In this issue you will read about some of those children.



THE TIN ROOF FOUNDATION WHO ARE WE?

The Tin Roof Foundation is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to "Bringing Hope to Kids" by providing educational opportunities, meal programs, healthcare to facilitate learning, and economic development assistance for their families, thereby enabling children to escape the spiral of poverty. There are no salaries. All administrative costs are funded by Tin Roof Foundation founders Al and Charlene Meyer and special designated gifts. The Tin Roof Foundation, Inc. is incorporated in the State of Ohio. It is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF NICA 2013 — A HUGE SUCCESS!

by Danielle Quales

As Al and Charlene's niece, I've been involved in some way with all of the Nica Noche events since they first began. Each year, Tin Roof's major fundraiser has gotten better. Looking at it from behind the scenes, the various activities have been more seamless and better orchestrated each year. Hopefully, also from the perspective of the attendees, each event is getting better and better!

Nica Noche 2013 was the first time in which I was very closely involved from the first planning meeting. Ready or not, my husband Jonathan and I were officially on the Marketplace committee—spearheaded by Nancy Stover and Cathy Rector.

The past two years, the Nicaraguan Marketplace—featuring the iconic orange Christmas tree complete with hundreds of twinkling lights and dozens of Neida's handmade crocheted ornaments—has quickly become a visual centerpiece of the evening's festivities. If you stopped by this year, you may have noticed the wooden frame of a market that we constructed to further enhance the shopping experience.

We tried to capture the spirit of shopping in an authentic Central American market. The Marketplace is a great place to shop for Nicaraguan goods like pine needle baskets, clay pottery, and—our best-selling item—bold-taste, shade-grown coffee.

Working in the Marketplace is fun, but I don't get to experience all the aspects of the evening from the same clear vantage as you hopefully did. You may have seen me—or even given me money for your Marketplace purchase—working at the cash box at the far end of the market.

One of the highlights of the evening's exciting program included a local Cincinnati family enacting a scene of a typical Nicaraguan family who “lived” in a makeshift house on stage. It was extremely powerful for audience members to watch the family go from abject poverty to hope for the future—thanks to the support of Tin Roof programs. In his keynote address, Peter Schaller inspired attendees with his first-hand account of working in Nicaragua, showing how the Tin Roof Foundation is making a huge difference in the lives of thousands of kids.

Nica Noche was blessed to be graced with the musical talents of soloist Kalynn Delorenzo and Ivo Olivera. Each year,

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we have wonderful entertainment and 2013 was no exception. Auctioneer Jim Poe expertly facilitated a highly successful live auction that energized the audience, getting a few people involved in some friendly “bidding wars”, and raised several thousand dollars for Nicaraguan kids. It was truly a win for everyone involved!

At the end of the evening, I felt satisfied. We—

**\$165,400
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TO THE
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the Marketplace committee members and the rest of the event committees—felt we had contributed to a fun, informative, and inspirational evening for hundreds of Cincinnatians (and even a few Kentuckians, Georgians, Virginians, and folks from Chicago). Even if I had missed out on participating first-hand in many of the festivities of the event, I was happy to be a part of promoting handmade Nicaraguan goods—to offer for sale to

Nica Noche attendees but more importantly to positively impact the economy of one of the very poorest countries in the Western hemisphere. I feel blessed to be able to participate in bringing this event to life for you—our devoted supporters and event attendees!

The net proceeds of the evening were \$165,400—which all goes straight back to the children of Nicaragua to support Tin Roof's programming. We want to extend a heartfelt “Thank You” to our sponsors, volunteers, committee members, and those of you who were able to attend the event. If you were unable to attend, please consider mailing in your donation today to The Tin Roof Foundation.



NAZARET PAO: SMILING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

by Peter Schaller
Executive Director, Rayo de Sol

It's hard to understand why some children are born into situations that even adults have difficulty managing. The world works in mysterious ways and sometimes God sends us unusual obstacles that test our faith and endurance.

Such is the case of Nazaret Pao. She looks like a healthy 6 year old, but unfortunately she has been challenged with serious health problems



since birth. She was born with spina bifida as well as hydrocephalus, a disease which causes fluid to accumulate around the brain. Both

of these illnesses are quite serious and have also caused additional health risks. She has been in and out of hospitals continually, which is very stressful for her and for her family.

Nazaret had valves implanted when she was very young, to help drain the fluid around her brain, but she continues to require constant treatment. The spina bifida has caused some kidney problems and she has become highly sensitive to infections. It has also made walking difficult for her and her doctors recently prescribed special, orthopedic shoes. All of that is a tremendous burden for such a small child, though she continues to be a source of light, love, and laughter for her family, friends, and neighbors.

Nazaret lives with her mother and her older brother. Her mother, Raquel, is a single mother with no steady source of income. Because of Nazaret's condition, it is difficult for her to take a full time job. Instead she takes on occasional work, washing and ironing clothes for neighbors and other families in the city of Matagalpa. Because of their frequent trips to the hospital, it would be difficult for her to have a full-time job, as there is no one else who can provide direct care for Nazaret. Despite her hard work, she earns barely enough to cover the family's basic needs.

HELPING NAZARET

This year, Nazaret is in the first grade and she is off to a great start, but she will have to maintain



permanent medical treatment in order to remain healthy and miss as few days of school as possible. Nazaret's medical expenses are approximately \$75 a month, which is very difficult for her mother to afford. When there is a lapse in her treatment, she becomes instantly susceptible to kidney infections, which weaken her body. She will likely need to have surgery on her spine in June or July and we will all be praying for her safety.

Your support will ensure that Nazaret has the medications that she needs, which will greatly improve her quality of life. Even from thousands of miles away, you will be able to feel the warmth of the light shining from her smile. You will feel the sincerity in her love and you will hear the music in her laughter.



MEET JOSÉ SEGUNDO: A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

by Peter Schaller

José Segundo Garay is soft spoken, shy, and one of the smallest boys in his class. But, when it comes to academics, he is a giant. In December, nobody was surprised when he won the award for the best academic performance among the students graduating from the sixth grade at the 15 de septiembre school, in Matagalpa.

José lives with his grandmother, his brother and two cousins. Despite the difficulties his family faces, they have always prioritized education and José has consistently been the best student in his class.

Unfortunately, many children in Nicaragua do not make it as far as the sixth grade. According to UNICEF, only 48 percent of all children complete primary school. In most communities, less than 20 percent of all adolescents are able to earn a high school degree.

In a country that is engaged in the complex process of development, education is vitally important for Nicaragua's future. Many young people choose to immigrate to other countries, since there are so few educational and economic opportunities available. This vicious cycle keeps many children, adolescents and families trapped in the complicated cycles of chronic poverty.

José and his family live in a community called



Nuevo Amanecer, on the outskirts of the city of Matagalpa. The neighborhood was formed eight years ago as a resettlement camp for families that were living in areas that were at risk of flooding and mudslides. The conditions in Nuevo Amanecer are very precarious, as the neighborhood is located on a steep hill.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HELPS JOSÉ REALIZE HIS DREAM

José has to climb up and down the hill every day, on narrow, rocky paths, in order to get to school. Many families do not have running water and the

electrical system is comprised of a few stray wires tied to makeshift wooden posts. Despite these challenging conditions, José and his family are committed to constructing a better future.

Thanks to a new scholarship program that The Tin Roof Foundation is supporting in Matagalpa this year, José will now be able to go to high school. His family was concerned that they would not be able to afford to send him to his first year of high school, and they were ecstatic when they learned that he had been selected for the new scholarship program.

José has told us that he dreams of becoming a doctor, and with his intelligence and perseverance, there is no doubt that he will be able to make his dreams come true. We will be there by his side, providing support and encouragement. We are all confident that he will continue to be committed to excellence and will work hard to make a bright future for himself, his family and his community.

There are hundreds of other young people, like José Segundo, that need our support. They have the drive and the motivation to succeed, but simply lack the resources. With your help, we can continue to provide opportunities for young people that will transform their lives. Please donate to The Tin Roof Foundation today.

THANKS FROM SANDY PRICE IN MULUKUKÚ



generosity many, many people are enjoying better health and many problems have been solved. A large part of your assistance has been helping people get to and from hospitals and be able to get the tests that the hospital cannot do and meds they cannot afford. You have saved many lives.

What is new this past year is that I have been able to organize workshops and follow-up with the health promoters in the mountain

communities. These are campesinos who are trained to handle all kinds of health needs in the communities where there are no doctors or health facilities. They really are a marvel. We

have been able to receive a program of basic medicines at very reduced prices. They have learned to diagnose common illnesses, handle suturing of wounds, channel pregnant women to the services in the hospital, recognize serious health problems and, in short, they ARE the mountain doctors.

We have organized a directive of the best trained promoters to visit and assist those who are less able or just beginning. Your help is reaching over 20 communities.

We are also going to have a program for the midwives in February. We have been told that of all of the groups of promoters in the program of basic meds, Mulukukú is the most efficient and best organized, and the reason is, thanks to The Tin Roof Foundation, we are able to provide training and follow-up for the promoters. THANK YOU.

We hope some of you will visit us so we will be able to say thanks in person.

Abrazos de todos nosotros,
Sandy Price

Dear Tin Roofers,

We all send you warm hugs and best wishes for the new year. Here in Mulukukú all is going well as we begin a new year. Thanks to your

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- 100% of your gift goes directly to the project
- No salaries (all volunteers, all the time)
- No administrative costs paid from your donation

Note: We will never share your name or information with any other organization.

TIS THE GIFT: LIVE SIMPLY SO OTHERS CAN SIMPLY LIVE

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.*

— Joseph Brackett



by Kevin Russell
Pastor, Walton Christian Church

Simplicity has been on my mind, along with the concepts of privilege and rationalization and complexity and relationship. These are just a few words and emotions that jumble together in my mind and heart when thinking of a recent trip to Nicaragua. I give thanks for the opportunity of traveling with Al and Charlene Meyer, Darryl Bashford, and Peter Schaller for seven days as we journeyed through the Nicaraguan landscape. The trip gave me an opportunity to see up close the amazing work and ministry of The Tin Roof Foundation. It also allowed me to develop friendships with traveling companions as well as new Nicaraguan friends. Our time spent in Nicaragua was a very significant and moving experience in my life.

To read of Nicaragua's history is to find complexity, as it's a story filled with many twists and turns and plots. There are struggles for power and resources both from external and internal forces. Revolutions and wars and dictatorships and earthquakes and volcanoes have created chaos at times. It is a place that is often forgotten by folks outside; in fact, most Americans cannot find

Nicaragua on a map. Yet, in spite of current and past challenges, to visit is to experience genuine openness and warmth.

It's true that we enjoy privilege simply by being born in the U.S. Privilege that folks in other countries do not enjoy, especially children. I was reminded of this while shopping for souvenirs to bring back home. There I met a 14-year-old young man who made a grasshopper/heart/flower out of palm branches (very amazing!). It's the way he makes a living, making designs for visitors hoping that they will give him some money for his craft.

OUR PRIVILEGE IS OUR OPPORTUNITY

As I see the palm branch crafts hanging in our kitchen window, I think of the difference in lifestyle and opportunity of typical 14-year-olds here in the states—my daughter is 14—and of the young man in the market. Different experiences of education and opportunity; different experiences in abundance of food and clean water; different experiences of medical care.

It is easy to rationalize that we should only take care of our own. Just worry about what is local. We've got enough problems without worrying about people in some far away place, some may say. Yet, it seems to me, our privilege is an opportunity to be generous in our lives toward all of God's sons and daughters instead of just toward a privileged few.

There's a saying, "Live simply so others can simply live." May it be true in this life. May it be true that generosity will begin to mark our souls and lives as a response to the privilege we've been given. It's really quite simple. We have the privilege to be part of great work. It's called The Tin Roof Foundation. It's a work that gives physical and spiritual nourishment and opportunity to children in Nicaragua. Education, lunches, and meeting medical needs are some of the tangible ways that The Tin Roof Foundation makes a real difference in real lives.

I give thanks for the privilege of seeing firsthand the effects of Tin Roof's influence in the lives of young folks in Matagalpa, Cusmapa, Esteli, Managua, and places in between. May our lives be marked with generosity, as we find freedom by our giving.

CHANGING THE ODDS

YOUR GIFTS WILL CHANGE THE FUTURE OF THE POOREST OF THE POOR

Your support will have a profound affect in the lives of children. Nazaret will receive her needed medication, Jose will be able to attend high school, and special needs families will have the means to become self-sufficient.

Please donate to The Tin Roof Foundation today.
On behalf of the children, Thank You!



The Tin Roof Foundation, Inc.



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