

# NEWS FROM THE ROOFTOP



**THE TIN ROOF  
FOUNDATION INC**

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Spring 2018

## THE PAST ... THE PRESENT ... AND THE FUTURE

by Charlene Meyer

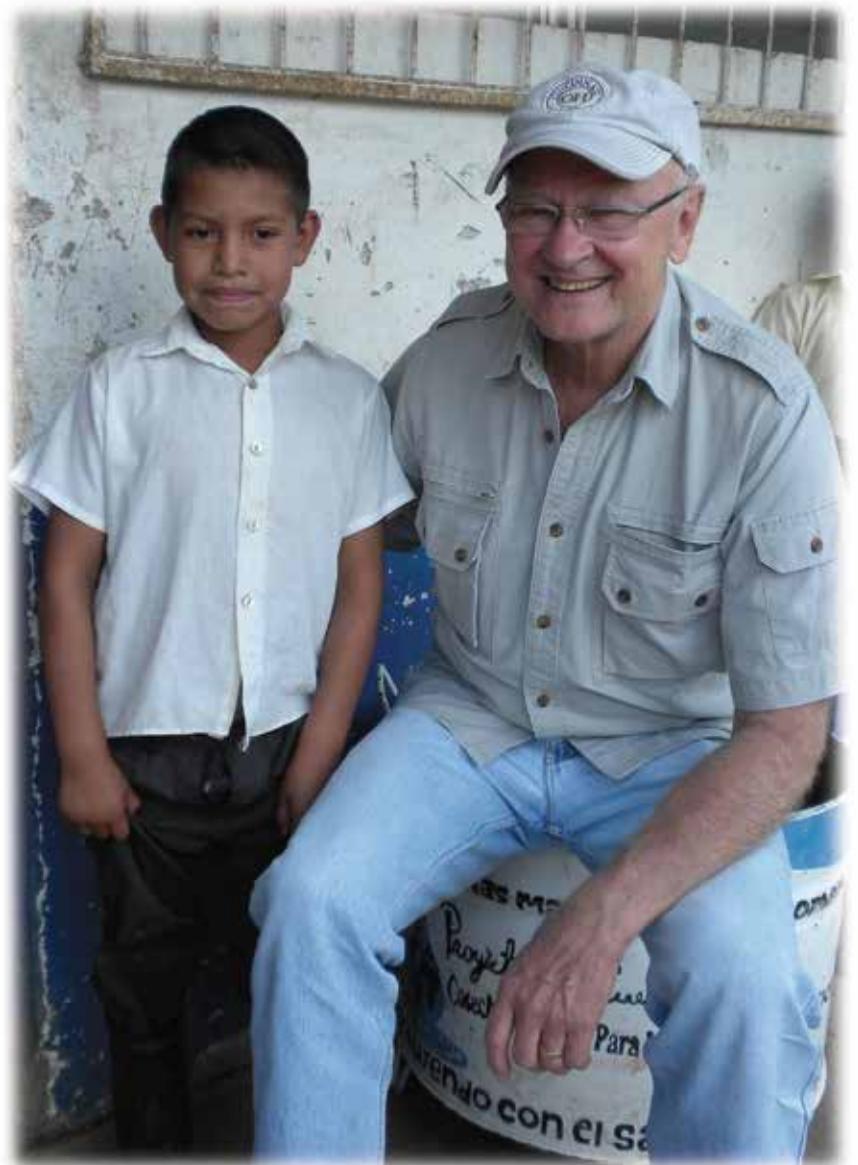
**THE PAST...** Have you caught yourself thinking about the past? Each evening I observe Al scanning through his i-Pad looking for his favorite Facebook page, Old Photos of Cincinnati. He will sit for hours looking at scenes from his early childhood through his young adult life. Each photo stirs up old memories. He will say "Oh, look! This is a photo of Grandpa's store on Kellogg Avenue during the 1937 flood. Wow! Here's a photo of the 1964 flood, one of the 15 worst floods in Cincinnati. (The flood closed innumerable roads and highways, inundated bridges, tied up traffic, and interrupted train and bus services.) I remember my brother, Bruce and his friend, Lee, paddling down the flooded street in a row boat they built looking for treasure." Of course, there was never any 'treasure' found but there were always wonderful memories and great relationships formed.

Despite his love of the past and all its history, Al is always ready for the challenges of today and the future. Once again he has signed up to play in a senior softball league. He has all the games and practice dates highlighted on his calendar. He also has his thoughts on our upcoming July mission trip. (He can't wait to play baseball and soccer with the kids in Matagalpa!)

When I find myself thinking of the past, my thoughts are almost always about Nicaragua and my memories of those first visits to a country I knew nothing about. Anxiety, fear, worry, and apprehension of being in such an unfamiliar place...one of, what seemed to me, to be of hopelessness.

**THE PRESENT...** Today my thoughts are much different... making sure our 7,711 Spanish books and fabric arrived in Columbia, MO to be put on a container being shipped to Nicaragua within the next few weeks. Gathering information on our new scholarship students to be shared with their sponsors. Continually checking with our partners for updates on the current most critical needs and ways we can help with those critical needs.

*Continued on back page*



**BRINGING HOPE TO KIDS**

# THANKS AIMS INTERNATIONAL BOOKS!

Thanks AIMS International Books for the awesome gift of 7,711 more Spanish children's books, the many volunteers who helped process and pack the boxes, Gutter Topper International for preparing the pallets for shipment, and Mobility Worldwide for providing space on their container being shipped to Nicaragua.



## MEMORIAL GIFTS...

### DONATED BY:

John Brusegard  
Marilyn Dittrich  
  
Joyce Foley  
Julie Forsthoefel  
Ramona Gillock  
Amy Gloyd  
Naomi Gloyd  
Timatha Harrison  
Wendy Stewart Henehan  
Jane Hoffman  
Kevin & David Hopper  
Alice Laub  
Mike & Barb Lohmueller  
Rich Lohmueller  
Al & Charlene Meyer

### IN MEMORY OF:

Judi Matthews  
Bob Dittrich  
Thom Lautenbach  
Casey Meyers  
Mrs Kathy Vershinski  
Charlene Farrell  
Jack Gloyd  
John Gloyd  
My Parents  
Helen & Robert Stewart  
Michael Hoffman  
George & Jessie Hopper  
George Drysdale  
Charley & Ginny Lohmueller  
Ginny & Charley Lohmueller  
Casey Meyers  
Darryl Bashford's Mom  
Camille Meyers  
Don Potter  
Sue Rice Wetenkamp  
Ed Green's Birthday  
Carl N. Shadix  
Bill Wachs  
Joann Meier Yeager

## ...HONOR GIFTS

### DONATED BY:

Chris Barfels  
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Robert W Dorsey  
Mary Dykes  
Susan Eppley  
Bryce Farrar  
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Al & Charlene Meyer  
Don & Mary Lee Olinger  
Faith Rose  
Peggy & Joe Rose  
Debbie Schaller  
Nelda Thompson  
Dick & Jane Tuten

### IN HONOR OF:

Wayne Barfel's Birthday  
Trent Buckler  
Mary Butler  
Mary Butler  
Anne Grieme Dorsey  
Mary Butler  
Deborah Thompson  
Anna Scheeser  
Brad Bowers' Birthday  
Al Meyer  
Al & Charlene Meyer  
Bob Lohmueller's Retirement  
Debbie Thompson  
Polly Sedziol  
Al & Charlene  
Debbie Schaller's Birthday  
Al & Charlene  
Al & Charlene  
Sue Green's Birthday  
Charlene's Birthday  
Mary Butler  
Zig Main

### WHY GIVE TO THE TIN ROOF FOUNDATION?

- 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.

# CELEBRATING NICA NOCHE 2017

Although November feels long ago—with an entire holiday season and the start of a new year since then—the sights, sounds, and fun of Nica Noche 2017 is still fresh in our minds.

There were some aspects of this last Nica Noche that were different from most of our events. For example, for the first time ever, Nica Noche was held on a Friday evening. Also, we didn't have our matching gift in place to match every dollar raised for the event.

Despite these differences, Nica Noche was still a great success! Despite some initial concerns about not holding the event on a Saturday evening, we had a capacity crowd in the lovely space at Sharonville Convention Center. We raised \$96,834.33 for the kids. We also had top-notch auction items and world-class entertainment by hypnotist and illusionist Ron Diamond. We heard from many in the crowd who raved about the program and the illusions performed by Ron.

And, finally, we want to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to all of our sponsors, volunteers, businesses, donors, and attendees for your continued support of our critical programming. Without all of you, we truly couldn't be making the major impacts we are making in the lives of thousands of kids.

## THANK YOU EVENT SPONSORS!

### EVENT PATRON SPONSOR (\$ 10,000)

Anonymous  
Anonymous

### EVENT BENEFACTOR (\$ 5,000)

Don & Linda Teasdale

### EVENT DONOR (\$ 1,000-\$ 4,999)

Anonymous  
Wayne & Ann Barfels  
Darryl & Sheilah Bashford  
Tara & Jay Clements  
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Rick & Joan Dostal  
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Barry & Kathy Lisner  
Bob Lohmueller  
Tom McAllister  
Al & Charlene Meyer  
Russ & Peggy Monjar  
Doug & Mary Anne Newman  
Jon & Danielle Quales  
Bill & Nancy Tidd  
JoAnn Withrow

### TABLE SPONSORS (\$ 600)

Mary Chappelle  
Florence Christian Church  
Highland United Methodist Church  
John & Phyllis Landrum  
Cathy Rector  
Walton Christian Church



## THANK YOU BUSINESS DONORS!

Please support our generous business donors who helped make Nica Noche 2017 a remarkable success:

American Heritage Insurance Group  
Bluebird Bakery  
Body Reflections  
Buck's Tavern  
C & R Living  
Camp Washington Chili  
Chef's Café  
Cincinnati Symphony  
Deerfield Township Fire & Rescue  
de'Sha's  
Susan Ward Diamond, Author  
Dole Food Company Inc.  
Einstein Bros. Bagels  
Everything Bagels  
Funky Rock  
Groovy Gumball  
Happy Chicks Bakery

Highland United Methodist Church  
JETS Pizza – Symmes Township  
Johnny Chan 2  
Loveland Stage Company  
Lunatic Fringe  
Mariemont Players, Inc.  
Mayorga Coffee  
Mazunte Restaurant  
MCC Preschool Parents  
Picture Perfect by Michelle  
Poshfans  
Richter & Phillips  
Roney's Restaurant  
Staples – Beechmont  
The Spirit Wind Trading Post  
Tony's  
Whit's Frozen Custard

# INCREASING ECONOMIC & EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL NICARAGUAN YOUTH

Research from 2015 UNICEF states that only 50 percent of youth in Nicaragua are enrolled in secondary education (high school) and that within that population only one third will graduate. With no degree or training, youth living in rural communities either continue the subsistence income-generating practices of their families or migrate to more urban areas in search of minimum-wage employment.

## A VIABLE SOLUTION

In 2007, Tin Roof partner Fabretto Children's Foundation began addressing these challenges by reimagining secondary education in Nicaragua's rural communities via Sistema Aprendizaje Tutorial (known as SAT), a rural technical education program that serves as an alternative to traditional high school.

The SAT program establishes training centers utilizing existing infrastructure and land within communities, eliminating youth's need to traverse long distances to public schools. Those who choose to participate can enroll in one of three options: a five-year high school degree, which is accredited by the Ministry of Education; individual, technical courses, which are accredited by the National Institute for Technical Education; or a hybrid program combining facets of the other two options.



## SUCCESS & GROWTH

Demand for SAT has increased. In 2007, the pilot SAT program served 300 youth in 28 communities. By 2020, the program will reach more than 1,800 youth in over 60 communities.

Female empowerment is a key component to

SAT. 532, or 47 percent of the 1,131 program youth are young women. Young women are particularly encouraged to participate so they can help change the culture of machismo, challenge the traditional perspective of a female's role in society, and ensure that all citizens—women and men—are equipped to contribute to the economic and social development of their communities.

## SPOTLIGHT ON KATHERINE

Katherine was 15 years old in her second year of SAT when she learned about the growing demand of chia.

In pursuit of a certificate, she and her family worked to fulfill the environmental criteria to be an organic farm. Upon completion, Mayorga Organics subsidized chia seeds for Katherine's farm. That year, Katherine and her family produced 500 pounds of chia, which Mayorga Organics purchased. (Mayorga Organics is an international distributor of chia, coffee, and other crops with the mission of helping to eliminate systemic poverty in rural Latin America through responsible trade of artisanal organic foods.)

## SPOTLIGHT ON DIEGO

One graduate who exemplifies the meaningful difference that SAT makes is Diego, a young man from a small, isolated rural community in Nicaragua's Madriz province, miles away from the nearest secondary institution. SAT gave him the opportunity to continue his education beyond sixth grade, and in 2014, he received his high school degree.

During his final year of the program, Diego started an income generating project processing and selling coffee, which he continued to grow by selling bags of coffee out of a store he established in his community. Since graduation, Diego has also utilized his SAT training in his university studies of Business Administration and in his job as a roaster with exporter Vega Coffee.

Female empowerment is a key component to



## UPDATE FROM TIN ROOF PARTNER FAMILIAS ESPECIALES

Tin Roof partner Familias Especiales (FE) continued their important work with handicapped children and families in 2017. Key projects and activities include:

**Horse therapy:** FE celebrated 15 years of working with over 300 children who receive this special and highly effective therapy.

**Recycling program:** Staff worked to grow their recycling program.

**Workplace safety:** Staff worked to improve the work environment for better safety measures.

**Wheelchair project:** FE hired a new program leader. Their wheelchair program staff also includes four deaf men and one man who has epilepsy. FE sent over 200 wheelchairs, walkers, and other aids to rural areas this past year. FE pays for the containers with funds from Tin Roof, which makes a big impact since the wheelchairs that FE gets are specialty children's chairs that are not typically available in Nicaragua.

**Yogurt program:** Yogurt has continued to pass all the safety inspections from the ministry of health and is fully certified. FE has been able to maintain three vendors and a supervisor/promoter of the product, who works by phone and sends deliveries on the motorcycle taxi. This is the largest staff that FE has ever had, and their yogurt sales are steadily increasing. The workers for the FE lunch program are staff members of the yogurt program, and the yogurt sales are paying their salaries.

# FOCUSING ON COMPASSION, COMMITMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

by Peter Schaller, Executive Director Rayo de Sol, partner of The Tin Roof Foundation

It is so exciting to be starting a new year. The school year just began on February 6 in Nicaragua and the air is charged with excitement. We were recently invited to a meeting with officials from the World Bank and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education. The great news is, Nicaragua is moving forward. Over the past several years, Nicaragua's social and economic indicators have been improving. There has been consistent economic growth and although poverty reduction has been slow, there seems

to be some light at the end of the tunnel. These positive changes are the product of the combined efforts of the government, the private sector and dedicated social service agencies, like The Tin Roof Foundation.

With this climate of optimism, it is critical that we continue, not only to keep doing what we have been doing, but to strengthen and expand our actions in 2018. It is up to us to maintain this momentum at this critical juncture in Nicaragua's development. While chronic poverty still affects a significant percentage of the population, we know that with concerted efforts in health, nutrition, education and economic development, all founded

in unflinching faith, can make lasting changes.

These will be focus areas for us in 2018, as they are areas in which we think we can create the most impact. Our work is so vital to the future of so many Nicaraguan children, adolescents and their families. Our theme for 2018 is "Compassion, Commitment, Development." If we begin with compassion—the ultimate expression of God's love—our work will be well focused. We must make a long-term commitment, because poverty cannot be changed with short-term interventions. And if we dedicate sufficient resource in this formula, we will stimulate a process of continual and sustainable development.



## LOAVES OF HOPE

What a difference one person's generosity made for a group of women, their families, and their community.

In mid-2017, a group of eight women from the Nuevo Amanecer neighborhood began a training program with a local bakery. Six months later, the women are up and running with their own bread business.

This sustainable business opportunity was only possible due to a loan made to the women so they could purchase an industrial oven and other needed supplies. Funds for this loan came from a donation by one loyal donor.

The group of women bakers are thrilled to have a new, dependable source of income for themselves and their families—and their community is enjoying the variety of fresh-baked breads available for purchase every day.



# FLORENCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH + TIN ROOF = A PARTNERSHIP PREDESTINED BY GOD

by Pastors, Florence Christian Church

After our first time meeting Al and Charlene Meyer, we sat in the car together afterwards and looked at each other. We both knew that Florence Christian Church had to explore the possibility of working with Tin Roof in Nicaragua. We knew that it was a partnership that was meant to be.

Now, we all know when discerning that, sometimes it takes time. Oftentimes, calls from God are a little vague. Sometimes it feels as if you are unsure. But from that moment, we really did not doubt that we had to explore this call.

## LISTENING TO THE CALL

All the signs pointed to The Tin Roof Foundation partnership:

- Florence Christian was looking to connect with international missions work.
- Nicaragua was the country that our denominational body had previously had a focus with.
- Tin Roof was both local—headquartered in Cincinnati—and international.



- Tin Roof and their work held the same values that we did.
- We felt moved by the Spirit.

Our call continued to be reinforced. The more we learned about Nicaragua, the more we desired to be a part of the work that God is doing there. God is doing amazing work changing the lives of children by equipping them and their families to break the cycle of poverty and build lives which are filled with more joy than struggle, more hope than hopelessness.

## EARLY WORK WITH TIN ROOF

We started our partnership by helping raise funds to provide clean water for families and communities, which developed into the Rain Harvesting project. Then, our senior minister went on a preliminary discernment trip and came back

certain that God was calling our church to work in this place. We began to discern that we were called as a congregation to develop a long-term partnership through Tin Roof.

## PREPARING FOR THE NEXT STEP

Now, a team of eight members of Florence Christian is preparing to go on a Mission Partnership Trip with Tin Roof in July. This team is meeting monthly, doing readings, watching films and preparing ourselves to go and begin to build relationships with people and communities.

We go not because we know everything... we go to learn. We go not to “help,” but to stand in solidarity and build relationships. We go to laugh and cry. We go to see what God is doing and how we can journey alongside and support the work. We do not know all that God is calling us to... but we do know that we are being called. We look forward to this being the next step in hopefully what will be a 30-year partnership!

## 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.

# HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

by Peter Schaller, Executive Director Rayo de Sol

When Alan Altamirano first applied for a high school scholarship five years ago, we thought it was a mistake. He was so small, we thought he was probably in third or fourth grade. But, it was we who were mistaken. Alan began his first year of high school in 2013 and what he lacked in height and weight, he made up with his heart and desire. Alan quickly demonstrated his social and academic abilities to become one of the best students in the program.

Alan’s mother is a police officer and works in Managua. He and his younger sister and brother live with one of their aunts, while mom is away working. She is only able to come home once or twice a month to visit her children. Her salary is very low and barely covers the family’s basic needs, but she always sends every paycheck home to her children.

## YOUTH CLUB TRANSFORMS

Three years ago, Alan also became very active in the youth club that we have organized in coordination with Young Life. When Alan began to participate in Young Life, we all noticed a substantial change. Even though he was always a good student, Alan was also a little rambunctious and unruly. However, Alan began to grow and mature, as he further explored his faith. After participating in a couple of retreats, Alan began to develop real leadership, both within the Young Life club, as well as among his peers in the scholarship program. He has shown moral fortitude, commitment and perseverance. We have all been so impressed and inspired by the way Alan has grown over the past five years.

## YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING 27 SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

Alan graduated from high school in December 2017. We have all celebrated his accomplishments and continue to be motivated by his example. In January, Alan passed the entrance exam to the National University and studies for an English degree. He dreams to work as a translator or in the tourist industry. He is grateful for the experiences gained in the scholarship program and will continue to serve his community as a university student. Alan is one of 27 university scholarship students we will be supporting this year, as a result of your generosity.

Your commitment to The Tin Roof Foundation is transforming lives, like Alan’s, every day. Alan had everything that he needed to succeed inside of him, he simply needed an opportunity. Poverty can be debilitating, as the lack of opportunities can often produce resignation. Opportunities are the fertile soil in which dreams grow.



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

### 2018 GOALS FOR TIN ROOF AND PARTNER RAYO DE SOL

#### Education—Early and Primary

- 18 reading clubs organized
- 1,800 children involved in extracurricular Play, Learn, Grow activities
- 15% increase in attendance and retention rates
- 75% of children demonstrate adequate reading comprehension skills for their grades
- 25% increase in parents participating in educational activities

#### Education—Secondary/High School

- 90% projected retention rate
- 250 students participating in life skills training
- 85% of all students improve academic performance
- 3 libraries established

#### Nutrition

- 13 school gardens developed
- Organic garden training provided for 150 families
- Nutritious food provided for more than 370,000 school lunches (180 lunches for 2,064 children)

#### Community Development

- 2 community water projects implemented
- 10,000 fruit trees planted
- 100 small farmers trained in small scale, organic agriculture
- 100 adults involved in vocational education program
- 5 small businesses organized and operating

## THE PAST ... THE PRESENT ...

*Continued from front*

**THE FUTURE...** Al & I both think about the future of Nicaragua. We know the future of the country will be in the hands of today's youth. We are thrilled to see so many children/youth take advantage of our scholarship program (in addition to the many sponsors making that program possible). This year there are a record number of young people who have graduated high school and are currently enrolled in university or trade school. We look forward to many more small businesses developing in areas that have, in the past, had very few opportunities for families to generate income to support their families.

In this edition of our newsletter, we will be reflecting on relationships and celebrating the successes of the past and looking ahead to even more in 2018 and beyond. While we have accomplished much in the past years in terms of bringing hope to kids, there is always much, much more we need to do.

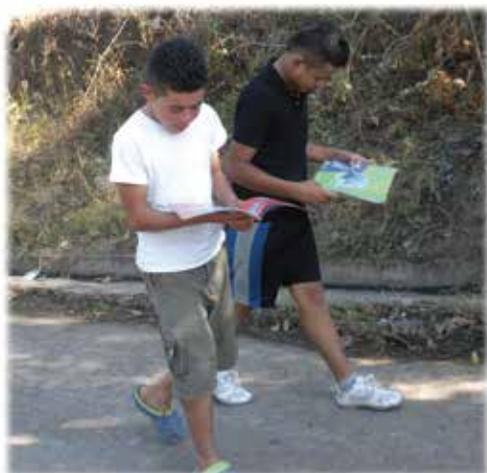


# TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE THE FUTURE!



It's always great to reflect on what Tin Roof and our partners have done in the past year and on the work we've all accomplished. But, doing so always reminds us to think of what's coming next. The next child we can help ... the next little boy who yearns for an education but doesn't have the means to attend school ... the teenage girl with a medical condition who requires specialized healthcare not available in her little village ... the list goes on and on.

It seems like a daunting task. How can we reach each one of them? How can we make even more of an impact in 2018? We can and we will—with your continued support! Please send your donation today and continue to pray for The Tin Roof Foundation's work. Let's do it together for the kids!



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