



## Nicaraguan Children's Friendship Committee

Dear Friends:

Summer 2010



"Las Esperanzas," NCFC's new vocational project for impoverished girls. Pictured: students, teachers and NCFC Board President, Veronica Sanchez, during April visit.

**"We are going international!"** shouted an excited twelve-year at NCFC's new vocational program for adolescent girls, **"Las Esperanzas"** ("the hopes"). The girls relished the news that their picture would be on NCFC's web site. NCFC is providing these young Nicaraguan girls an opportunity to learn skills to make them self-sufficient so in the future they won't have to abandon their children.

These preteens and teenagers must walk through a cemetery to access their homes made of plastic tarps and tin panels. There is no running water. Many collect recyclable bottles for sale at the nearby garbage dump. Others sell tortillas and other goods. Despite their young age, they care for siblings and older family members. Early pregnancy and abandonment of children by mothers and fathers in this community is the norm.

*Las Esperanzas* is the inspiration of Doña Carmen, a well-respected community leader who persuaded parents and caretakers to let their girls attend afternoon sewing classes and learn marketable skills. Last October, this visionary lady had twelve ready students, committed teachers and a location, but lacked money.

**NCFC filled the gap and helped launched the program!** In February, we purchased sewing machines, supplies, books, and furniture. We initiated an accelerated literacy program supervised by the government for four girls who have not completed sixth grade. NCFC pays the literacy and sewing teachers' salaries and local university students are providing health workshops and counseling.

The girls now have a place on the worldwide web and a safe place in their own neighborhood to **"hacer una vida mejor"** (to build a better life) – their words! Thank you for your continued support in helping us give impoverished Nicaraguan boys and girls educational opportunities.

**Veronica Sanchez**  
President

**Jeff Bornstein**  
Secretary

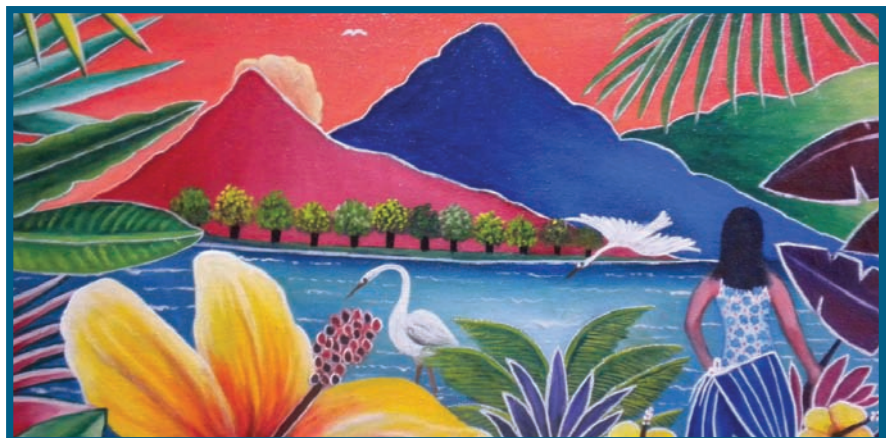
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Las Esperanzas are already selling pillows, children's clothing and tableware at local markets.



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"Paraíso" ("Paradise") by Rosa Delia López Garcia, internationally renown Nicaraguan artist. Reprinted with her permission in support of "Las Esperanzas."

## NCFC'S SCHOLARSHIPS GROW



Jeffrey Bornstein, NCFC Board Member with two NCFC scholarship recipients during their spring break. Norlan and Francisco have lived at Casa Jacinta for over five years.

**Casa Jacinta's Graduates:** NCFC looks forward to the graduation of seven students from high school and vocational training school over the next four years! These students found shelter at Casa Jacinta after being abandoned by parents or extended family members who could not sustain them due to poverty or illness. The six boys and one girl have grown into healthy, hard working high school students and athletes. They are determined to complete their studies and become self-sufficient. During their years at Casa Jacinta, they benefited from NCFC's educational, sports, counseling and social programs. Five students continue living at Casa Jacinta and two others are living with extended family in Leon.

NCFC has become their extended family. They are appreciative of the opportunity to receive a secondary education, a luxury for poor Nicaraguan youth. NCFC pays for tuition, tutors, school materials, uniforms, athletic equipment for school league play, and Internet expenses. NCFC's vocational counselor, Sra. Veronica Blandon, is a "surrogate parent" and supervises their academic progress and emotional well-being.

In Managua, we continue supporting twelve former Casa Jacinta residents living at a wonderful residential and educational program for younger boys operated by Pan y Amor Foundation (a Nicaraguan and American non-profit).

### CHANGES AT CASA JACINTA

Last year, the Nicaraguan government reclassified Casa Jacinta as a temporary residential shelter and reunified most of Casa Jacinta's residents with family members, regardless of the family's ability to sustain them. Casa Jacinta's population decreased and is mostly transient. NCFC's Board agreed that these changes make it difficult for NCFC to plan and fund programs that meet our objective of **making lasting changes in the lives of Casa Jacinta's residents.**

We are building a bigger scholarship program, giving priority to Casa Jacinta's graduates and other young people who've participated in NCFC's other programs for impoverished youth: carpentry apprenticeship program and "Las Esperanzas." Furthermore, in three years we will celebrate the first class of grammar school graduates from our rural preschool!



NCFC pays for a teacher to help scholarship recipients with coursework and Internet research. Hernaldo has lived at Casa Jacinta for 10 years. He plans on graduating from high school in 2011 and then studying civil engineering.

**Board of Directors:** Veronica Sanchez (President & Founder), Jeff Bornstein (Secretary & Founder), Raul Hernandez (CFO), Maria Cordero, Nanci Clarence, Dr. Sophia Chang, Jeff O'Connell (Legal Counsel & Founder), Dinah Stroe and Jim Wiltshire

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Prescolar Abuelita Carmen serves 24 students from two rural communities. NCFC pays for two teachers, materials, daily meals, and health care costs.