



Nicaraguan Children's Friendship Committee



September 2017

Dear Friends:

This past July, I spent an exciting morning in Leon, Nicaragua at NCFC's carpentry and academic tutoring program for high-risk adolescent boys. A horse drawn cart overflowing with broken rattan chairs, arrived at the "taller" (NCFC's Carpentry Program). The boys couldn't wait to start fixing the chairs. Other boys were busy inside using power tools purchased by NCFC to build bookcases and cribs.

The highlight was visiting with the mother and grandmother of Miguel (13) and Kenner (14). I previously met these ladies in their homes in January when their boys had just started the program. They described the difficulty of raising boys without their fathers in their poor neighborhood where glue-sniffing kids pass by their front doors.

Seven months later, these ladies were smiling and looked relieved! Maria Lissette, mother of thirteen year-old Miguel said, "Miguel used to be sad and bored at home. Now he can't stop talking about the taller. He wants to open his own carpentry shop one day." Maria Rosario, Kenner's grandmother, told me, "The taller's two male teachers are a "bendicion" (blessing) for me because they teach the boys' respect and responsibility." Kenner is the top student in his class and captain of the soccer team.

The ladies thanked me for the backpacks and school supplies NCFC purchased for their sons at the beginning of the school year. Both boys' are doing great in school.

It was so gratifying to see in person how our program is improving the lives of these adolescent boys and their families. Thank you for your support in making the taller a safe place where boys are learning carpentry and computer skills, getting tutored and having fun too! On behalf of all of NCFC's students: the boys in the taller, the girls at Las Esperanzas and, our current scholarship recipients, muchisimas gracias for your wonderful support.

*Veronica*

Veronica Sanchez, President  
Board of Directors

*Drawing above is by Junior,  
an artistic carpentry student,  
who is hearing impaired.*



Kenner unloads broken rattan chairs from a horse cart with carpentry teacher Juan Maradiaga.



“ Kenner's doesn't want to miss a work day at the taller (carpentry shop), he's even gone to work with an ear infection. He hates school holidays when the taller is not open ”

— said Maria Rosario, Kenner's grandmother.

*Pictured left to right: Maria Rosario, Kenner, Miguel and his mother Maria Lissette.*



“ Manuel rushes on Sunday mornings to put on his soccer uniform ”

— said Manuel's mother. Manuel is pictured bottom row, second from right with other teammates wearing NCFC uniforms.

NCFC Board of Directors

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SEE BACK FOR HIGHLIGHTS OF NCFC'S OTHER PROJECTS



## A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PROGRAM FOR HIGH-RISK GIRLS

Twenty girls, ages 11-19, receive academic tutoring along with English, and computer classes. In sewing and craft classes, the girls learn practical work skills. Las Esperanzas has a strong focus on preventing adolescent pregnancies through counseling, and reproductive health workshops. Dance, book clubs, and field trips are also offered.



San Francisco attorney, Ed Swanson and daughter Liza (right), delivered books for the girls' book club during their April volunteer trip. Madeline (left), and the other older girls enjoyed reading *The Kite Runner*. "I traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan through this beautiful book," said Madeline, who is also an NCFC scholarship recipient.



The younger girls loved reading *Charlotte's Web*. Thank you Folio Books, in San Francisco's Noe Valley, for donating proceeds of sales on International Women's Day to Las Esperanzas Book Club. NCFC is providing reading books to our girls that are not available through their schools or local library which closed.

## NCFC'S PAST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ARE THRIVING!



**Francisco (25) works as an agricultural inspector at a border crossing.** NCFC met him as a teenager when he lived at Casa Jacinta Shelter for Abandoned Youth. He continues to develop his skills by attending conferences with inspectors from Mexico and other Central American countries.



**Gabriela (20) is the only female electrician on the crew installing new meters on power poles.** She will graduate from the university as an electrical engineer in two years. She installed the electricity in the home her mother recently purchased from a church organization.



**Maura (21) works as an administrative assistant for an import company.** She will finish her university business degree in 2018. Maura recently met with the older girls at Las Esperanzas to offer career advice and share her impressive journey from a poor rural village to the big capital city.

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