



**CASA**  
**PUEBLITO**

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

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## FROM THE DESK OF...

**NADINE JUBB, COUNTRY DIRECTOR**

We just had a very hot Holy Week in Nicaragua. Holy Week – or Semana Santa in Spanish – is the major summer holiday here. Children get the whole week off school and adults may take three extra days of vacation time to add to the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday statutory holidays.

It's an important time for rest that is spent with family. The most popular activities are: participating in religious activities, going to the beach or local swimming spot, or spending time at home with the adults cleaning or fixing things while the kids may be swimming in a kiddie pool or playing video games.

In these times of climate crisis, cooling down is a vital issue. We had record-breaking temperatures of 39 degrees Celsius in Chinandega and close to that in Managua during Semana Santa. People recommended putting out water for birds and other animals. At the same time, there was talk of environmental fines being leveled for excessive use of water in order to ensure enough water for the basics for everyone. For that reason, no inflatable pools were being sold on the streets of Managua this year. In one popular neighbourhood, people were renting out their pools. That is one creative tactic!

At the same time, we are working with several of our partners for more sustainable access to water, improved food security and environmental justice. Thanks to your generous donations, our partners have built artesian wells in several rural communities and equipped farmers with hoses to water their crops. This year, we will provide women and men farmers with water tanks and a hydraulic ram pump so that farmers can water their crops without using fossil fuels. Some partners will also purchase more seeds and fruit tree saplings to diversify their crops and have nutritious food and drinks.

*Irrigation hoses being used to water a plantain crop, Santa Teresa.*



*Vegetable seeds growing in trays while waiting for the first rains, Somotillo.*



## GENEROUS MATCHING OF DONATIONS

**FROM THE DESK OF CO-FOUNDER & VP, BILL HEFFERNAN**

Thanks to a number of Anonymous Donors we are pleased to announce that the first \$5,000 raised in this Spring Appeal will be matched dollar for dollar. Please donate today to help us reach \$5,000, which will instantly become \$10,000 thanks to donation matching!

This wonderful news could not have arrived at both a more critical or more opportune moment. The rising cost of living and the increased costs of implementing projects such as ours combined with the high exchange rates on the conversion of Canadian dollars to USD have led to a 2024 shortfall on our 11 community projects.

All monies raised through the Matching Donors Campaign will be used to address this critical need and will ensure that we are able to fully fund all of our 2024 projects. Please help us reach our goal of doubling your generous donation through this very generous initiative. Muchas Gracias!

# “FULL BELLY, HAPPY HEART, AND ENERGY TO LEARN”

BY NADINE JUBB, COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Education has always been at the heart of our mission at Casa – Pueblito. All the projects we support have a learning component, such as: classroom construction or repair, academic reinforcement, talks and messages on gender equality woven into arts classes, or farmers teaching other farmers about making and using agroecological fertilizer.

Several of our partners provide comprehensive education to children, especially Daukaia, Hogar Luceros del Amanecer, Christine King Cooperative, and Huellas de Paz. They complement the public education system by offering academic reinforcement, a range of extracurricular classes, as well as other supports, such as health services, life skills, and training for youth and adults to increase their income.



*Students eating a meal at Hogar Luceros del Amanecer.*

Nutrition is a vital part of their comprehensive education models. Many of the children served by our partners come from poor families and some do not even get one full meal every day. Hogar Luceros del Amanecer (or Hogar, based in Camoapa) learned that the nutritious meals that they provide are one of the main reasons why parents send their children to three Hogar-supported schools. The children may have to walk 30 minutes or more to get to school or to Hogar, in order to receive extra-curricular classes, but they are happy to do so. The children are eager to learn, and the meals are tasty and filling. Children who live in extreme poverty receive two meals a day.



*Hogar students visit the garden at the Bosque Verde farm.*

The funding we supply helps Hogar provide over 1,000 meals every week. At one of their schools we supported part of the infrastructure so that Hogar could make meals there and water the garden. With the ever-increasing cost of food, Hogar also started a garden at its Bosque Verde farm last year to supply vegetables and fruits for the meals and drinks it serves.



*Hogar students learning about planting at the Bosque Verde farm.*



*Students eating a snack at Daukaia.*

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The Christine King Cooperative (in Estelí) has used our recent contributions to build a park and a kiosk where children and adults receive some of their classes, have recreation time, and can eat a healthy pizza or other food prepared in the outdoor oven and kiosk. They will be planting a garden in part of the space this year.

When we started working with Daukaia (located in Ocotal) two years ago, they used part of the funds to feed the children nutritious snacks every day, as well as teach and practice good hygiene with them. Last year, they planted a garden and we provided a

fridge and stove so that they could provide more food and better nutrition at lower cost. Our environmental coordinator provided them with some tips to improve food production and we supplied a water tank for irrigation.

Thanks to the food provided, children's attendance and retention rates have improved, both at Daukaia and at school. It is also helping them to improve their understanding of the classes and contributing to their intellectual and physical development. The teachers reported that the children often say, "full belly, happy heart and energy to learn."

One boy, who has been attending Daukaia for a few years, recently moved far away from the centre. He said to one of the teachers, "I will always come because I like it here and I learn more. When I'm with you, I feel understood and I'm happy. The distance I travel with my brother to get here doesn't matter."

We are proud to support our community partners so that they can improve the health and learning of students today, which will lead to better life outcomes tomorrow.



*Students receiving guitar class at the Showers of Love park, Christine King Cooperative.*



*Daukaia students, parents and staff remove a log to prepare a garden for planting.*



# COMINGS AND GOINGS



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President Carl Melvin, seen pictured here, receives and accepts a special honorary award on behalf of Casa – Pueblito in Camoapa, Nicaragua on the 20th Anniversary of the Hogar Luceros Educational Reinforcement programs. In Carl’s words: “It was great to spend time with our partners in education at Hogar Luceros del Amanecer. I was honoured to represent Casa – Pueblito and all of our Canadian donors in accepting this recognition, as well as meeting with other international volunteers and supporters from Spain and Japan in support of Hogar’s very impressive projects serving 634 children and teenagers and 3170 family members.”

Romi Fischer-Schmidt, our part-time Communications Administrator pictured here, has moved to Rabinal, Guatemala where they are involved in important accompaniment work with Breaking the Silence Maritimes-Guatemala. Thanks to modern technology Romi can continue their Casa – Pueblito work on our newsletters, e-blasts and website design improvements from there. We are happy to have Romi on board in this capacity wherever they are—in Toronto, or in Guatemala!



Board member Ken McGuffin has twice visited the El Triunfo project in Guatemala in 2024. He writes: “Spring greetings from Guatemala where I visited the middle school that we are supporting here. The school year is well underway with approximately 50 students enrolled in Grades 7, 8, and 9. Everyone was very pleased to receive the backpacks and school supplies in February, as a result of your donations.

Co-founder Bill Heffernan, pictured here, reports from Ocotol, Nuevo Segovia way up near the Honduran border, in the very north of Nicaragua. He writes: “What a rich and inspiring experience we had with the staff, the volunteers and the students here at Daukaia. The students were clearly proud of their many achievements, and grateful for having a place like Daukaia where they can get academic reinforcement and good nutrition on a daily basis. I have never seen a happier bunch of kids in all my years in education than what I saw here at Daukaia on this trip!”



And from Toronto and the GTA, informal preliminary talks have begun about a potential Teacher Alumni Group trip to Nicaragua with some community visits. In conjunction with that and our on-going outreach campaigns we are about to relaunch our popular Teacher Roundtable Sessions and Social to be held in Bloor West Village, Toronto. So, stay tuned for further updates...



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 HELP FUNDRAISE TO  
 SUPPORT COMMUNITY  
 DEVELOPMENT**