



New Haven/León  
Sister City Project

Annual Report 2008

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events

**April 10 to May 10 Earthathon 2009** - For you, for Nicaragua, for the Earth! New Haven/León Sister City Project invites you to join Earthathon! Take action to help build a sustainable future locally and globally. The event will raise funds to support small development projects in rural Nicaragua by getting individuals and groups to collect pledges for their green activities. For more information, a calendar of events, or to download a pledge form/brochure go to [www.newhavenleon.org](http://www.newhavenleon.org).

**May 3rd Sunday 3-5 p.m. \*House Party\*** Join us for a potluck and socializing. Cheryl Doss, an international economist with a specialty in women's issues, will speak on development issues in Africa and Nicaragua @ 4pm. Home of board member Susan Bennett, 1 Killam's Point, Branford. Too early for swimming but not too early to enjoy the beautiful Short Beach area and friendly company. \*RSVP yes only\*. Patty: 562-1607 or [pnuelsen@newhavenleon.org](mailto:pnuelsen@newhavenleon.org). Rain or shine.

**May 30<sup>th</sup> Saturday - 1pm. Critical Literacy Workshop with Ira Shor.** Much of what we learn about the world in the US - whether from schools, newspapers, television, etc. - is often distorted, heavily favoring certain perspectives and leaving out many less powerful voices. Using the tools of critical literacy, we will unpack what we've learned and explore perspectives that may have been left out. First in a three part series. Ira Shor, an English professor at Staten Island College, City University of New York, worked with Paulo Friere, and has been teaching and writing about education for fifteen years. To register or for questions contact Chris at [nh@newhavenleon.org](mailto:nh@newhavenleon.org).

*"Critical literacy challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development. This kind of literacy--words rethinking worlds, self dissenting in society--connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity."* Ira Shor

**July 19th Sunday 1-4 p.m. \*Picnic/Potluck\*** Come celebrate the 25th anniversary of the NH/LSCP and the 30th anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution. The triumph of the people of Nicaragua and democracy over the 40 year dictatorship of the Somoza family. Live music and a speaker. Help us make it green: bring your own utensils, plate, cup, and napkin. At the home of Allie Perry and Charlie Pillsbury, 247 ST Ronan Street, New Haven. \*RSVP yes only\*. Patty: [pnuelsen@newhavenleon.org](mailto:pnuelsen@newhavenleon.org) or 203-562-1607. Rain or Shine.

**Additional house parties and events will be scheduled in the Summer and Fall. Please note: Times subject to change.**



*"Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."*

*Paulo Friere*



Dear Friends,

For over 25 years, the New Haven León Sister City Project has been working with different communities in and around León, Nicaragua. After 25 years of effort, delegations, projects, and protests, most people in Nicaragua are still struggling. Many mothers we work with must stretch to feed their children; fathers need to work extremely demanding jobs - often in other Central American countries - to make ends meet; many rural children only make it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Clearly, the scale of the problem - rooted in powerful economic and political forces - is larger than all the commitment and generosity our small community of Nicaraguans and US citizens has been able to summon to date.

Yet, along with many Nicaraguans, we continue - with your involvement - to side with the Nicaraguan people and their struggle for basic economic and political rights. We are working to expand our education program offering children and adults in Goyena - the rural community outside León where we're focusing our efforts - opportunities to learn in creative ways. We will continue to support community development projects that address housing, water, and school needs. Many in the US are being invited into a long-term relationship with people in Nicaragua through delegations and internships, and we are looking to increase the number of people active in the US in a campaign to support sugar cane workers from León and Chinandega who have organized to demand better working conditions.

We are also expanding activities in Connecticut to involve more people in the Project, including a brand new Earthathon! (see Calendar on facing page) and series of talks this year on critical literacy and popular education.

As you may know, Sydney Frey has moved on to grad school and is living in Managua. We have hired Erendira Vanegas from León to take over from Sydney and coordinate the delegations in Nicaragua. We also hired Cristina Cantú to help with the development and outreach work here in New Haven.

Twenty five years ago a small group of New Haveners organized the NHLSCP not to solve Nicaragua's huge challenges, but because they wanted to be part of the movement of Nicaraguans who were working for a better world. We continue to be faithful to that commitment today and, in the face of larger challenges, find concrete and creative ways to improve people's lives.

Below are highlights from 2008. Thank you for continuing with us on this journey and for continuing to take sides!

Sincerely,

Joy Gordon  
Co-President

Roy Money  
Co-President

## Program Highlights for 2008

The primary work of the NH/LSCP in León, Nicaragua is to support programs and projects that supplement the efforts of the formal education system in the community of Goyena. This includes:

**Preschool** The program serves 32 children, and offers in-home support to struggling families and children, capacity-building efforts for the local teachers, nutritional assistance for the students, and support for the school infrastructure.

**After-school Program** Facilitation of an 84 student after-school program for first, second, and third graders, with emphasis on small-group work and attention to those with learning difficulties.

**Youth Leadership** Support of a youth leadership committee and of the group's educational workshops and recreational activities. Activities include sports and dance instruction.

**Continuing Education** Offer trainings to parents and teachers in rights of children, indigenous culture, parenting skills, and confronting domestic violence. We also provide support for local facilitators of adult literacy groups.

In 2008, we also:

- Raised funds to support bringing a pilot secondary school to Goyena, and backed community efforts to pressure Ministry of Education to open a school in Goyena in February 2009. The school is now serving 87 students.
- Constructed a water tower (see photo on facing page) to provide clean water to the school and clinic with financial support from South Church in Middletown, and labor provided by the community and a delegation from the Hopkins School
- Organized a "Toxic Sugar" letter/postcard writing campaign to pressure the World Bank and Nicaragua Sugar Estates (NSEL) to address concerns of sugar cane workers (ASOCHIVIDA) suffering from chronic renal insufficiency (CRI). The communities are working with the Center for International Environmental Law and are now negotiating with NSEL for the first time. Over 1,000 workers have died from CRI.
- Offered a workshop on Nicaragua and "U.S. Policy and the Roots of Migration," at Quinnipiac University with Gloria Alba Andino Lopez. The October event was organized by Sandy Torres (a QU student volunteer). Lopez, who was on a speaking tour of New England with Witness for Peace, spoke of her own community and the struggles of people there. Lopez comes from a farming family in Estelí, Nicaragua, and heads a small farmer's association there.



Nestali Peña Chavez Mr. Peña Chavez is 38 years old. Mr. Chavez began working in the NSEL at 19 and was diagnosed with CRI at 20. Both his father and brother died of CRI. Mr. Chavez has been bed ridden for the last two years. He has three children (6, 14, 12yr. old) He and his three children live on his mother's \$25 widow's pension check distributed monthly.

# 2008 Delegates and Interns

The NH/LSCP has been organizing delegations to Nicaragua since its founding in 1984, and has sent over 1,000 delegates inviting them to think critically and creatively when making connections between their own lives and the lives of Nicaraguans. Peace & Justice Interns are of college age or older and have relevant skills/experience and the desire to gain an understanding of Nicaraguan struggles for social justice within a broader historical/economic context.

## PIER Teachers Delegation

Elena Serapiglia  
Barbara Connolly  
Beth Therien  
Heather Bellobuono  
Kim Brown  
Leslie Abbatiello  
Maria Valentin  
Rachel Sexton

## First Congregational Church Middletown

Kathy Novak  
Dan Novak  
Corrie Novak  
Jennifer Bowers

## Hopkins Delegation

Silas Meredith  
Susan Bennett  
Nicholas Andreassi  
Beatrix Bennett  
Coral Bennett  
Eric Coffin-Gould  
Frances DeCamilli  
Matthew Joseph  
Connor Martin  
Kelsey Martin  
Anna Milne  
Greg Monahan  
Lauren Ruotolo  
Emma Scymanski

## Yale ReachOut

Chhitij Bashyal  
Christine Saffold  
Jessica Johnson  
Keily Miller  
Alexis Blissett  
Markus Jackson  
Naomi Bland  
Rebecca Cooper  
Tiffany Mason

## Peace and Justice Interns

Rebecca Markovitz  
Zoe Black

## NHLSCP Board and Staff

Susan Bramhall  
Joy Gordon  
Chris Schweitzer



*"I spent many of my days in the pre-school and first grade classrooms, working with young students who are deprived of fundamental necessities for living a complete and healthy life. Despite the children's dire circumstances, their faces radiated hope, and they always wore big, charming smiles.....Volunteers frequently visit countries like Nicaragua, but the trips are fleeting and only stay a short time. I want to continue to work with the community of Goyena, to help begin sustainable projects that the community can carry out over the years, I am arranging to lead a delegation to Nicaragua in December 2009."*

Zoe Black  
Hopkins Delegate 2005, Intern 2008

## Fairfield University

Alex Caram  
Kristin Villanueva  
Ericka Rojas  
Amenda Legros  
Alex Erhardt  
Aytza Pacheco  
Janine Martire  
Laura Sabia  
Astrid Krogstad  
Steven Bachelor  
Dina Franceschi  
Alejandro Martinez

¡GRACIAS POR LOS PRIMEROS 25 AÑOS! Gracias a ustedes, amigos nuestros, continuamos nuestra obra. Ustedes han aportado de tantas maneras: trabajo voluntario, viajes a León, asistencia a eventos, palabras alentadoras, servicio en nuestro consejo administrativo, así como ofreciendo sus hogares para eventos y hospedaje. También han sido generosos y firmes en su apoyo monetario. Han logrado que estos 25 años sean posibles. Gracias a ustedes y a nuestros amigos Nicaragüenses, hemos podido forjar esta relación basada en el respeto y la dignidad. Es esta relación que da espíritu a nuestro trabajo, sea que los proyectos tengan éxito o no. Afortunadamente, muchos de estos proyectos son exitosos. Los invitamos a que nos sigan acompañando por los 25 años que siguen y más.



THANK YOU FOR THE FIRST 25 YEARS! Thanks to you, our friends, we keep the work going. You give in so many ways: volunteer work, travel to León, attendance at events, encouraging words, service on our board, as well as offering your homes for gatherings and hospitality. You also are generous and steadfast in your financial support. You have made these 25 years possible. Thanks to you and our Nicaraguan friends and staff, we have been able to make visible a relationship that is respectful, dignified and mutual. It is this relationship that gives soul to our work, whether individual projects succeed or fail. Happily many do succeed. We invite you to accompany us and the people of León for 25 more years and beyond. Adelante!

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## NHLSCP Financial Statements FY 2008

### Current Assets

Cash and Other Current Assets **95,435**

### Liabilities

Deferred support and liabilities **710**

### Net Assets

Unrestricted 54,668  
 Board Restricted 40,827  
 Health Fund 8,453  
**103,948**

Unrestricted Assets - 4124

Net Income - 5099

**Total Equity 94,725**

**Total Liabilities and Equity 95,435**

### Statement of Revenue and Expenses

#### Support and Revenue

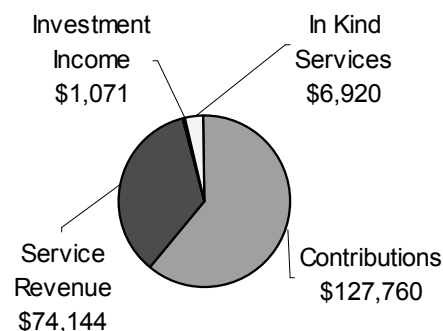
Contributions	127,760	
Service Revenue	74,144	
Investment Income	1,071	
In kind Services	6,920	
<b>Total</b>		<b>209,895</b>

#### Expense

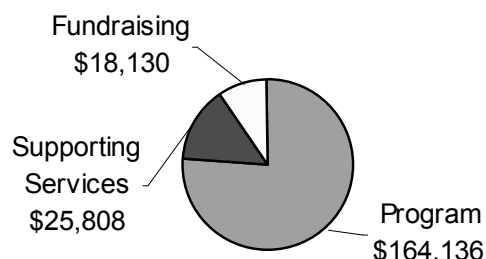
Program	164,136	
Supporting Services	25,808	
Fundraising	18,130	
<b>Total</b>		<b>208,074</b>

**Net Income (Loss) 1,821**

### Support and Revenue: 2008

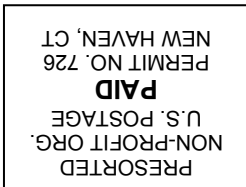


### Expenses: 2008





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Sister City Project**  
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Chris Schweitzer, Program Director

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The New Haven/León Sister City Project is a 25 year old progressive, bi-national, grassroots organization that fosters a partnership between the communities of New Haven and León, Nicaragua. Our mission is to promote social justice. Our work is focused in the rural community of Goyena outside León.

