

New Haven / León

Sister City Project



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Annual Report 2007

*"Today, more than ever,
it is important to belong to those who resist,
who fight, who believe and hope."
Gustavo Gutierrez*

Dear Friends,

Over the past twenty-four years, the people of Nicaragua have inspired and challenged us. Their ongoing efforts to create a society centered on social justice and compassion have sparked fires in many here to join that struggle. The Sister City Project strives to embody this hope, believing that people joining together can transform this world.

In 2007 the Sister City Project celebrated sending its 1000th delegate to Nicaragua – that's 1000 people who took the important step to learn first-hand about the realities facing two-thirds of the world's population. We sent a record 80 people to León as delegates and Peace and Justice Interns, and provided over \$150,000 worth of direct support in programming, material aid and services to the rural communities of Goyena and Los Barzones outside of León.

Even with these successes, we continue to feel the urgency that the poverty in Nicaragua presents. Under-employment in Goyena is about 80% and malnutrition is very high among children. We continue to work to increase the number of Nicaraguans and North Americans working to address these issues. This is really the heart of our work – building capacity for change and supporting local leaders both in León and in New Haven. These committed women and men multiply the Sister City's Projects limited resources, but also often become active in long term movement for systemic change.

To this end Sydney Frey has moved to Nicaragua to focus on developing new projects that will increase active participation and leadership. Chris Schweitzer has recently been hired as Program Director to continue to support the delegations and work with the Board. In Nicaragua, Rene Venegas Morales is continuing as the Interim General Coordinator, and Giaconda Torres was hired as Education Coordinator.

Below are additional highlights from 2007. Thank you for all the ways you enable these efforts of belonging, resistance and hope to continue and grow.

Sincerely,

Chris Schweitzer
Program Director

C e l e b r a t i n g o v e r . . .



2007 Program Highlights

We expanded the after school program to add the 2nd grade (building on 2006's 1st grade focus), giving more children access to small-group attention in the afternoons, and increasing the overall attendance to about 50 students. The primary schools in Goyena assign 40 students to each teacher, which makes it nearly impossible for the teachers to offer the kind of individual attention necessary for kids of that age. So teachers in the after school program focus on small-group learning and offer individual attention to children with difficulties.



Head preschool teacher, Marta Osejo, with some of her students at graduation.

León staff members began offering workshops to local youth on starting a tree nursery to be cared for and managed by them. The staff had recognized the need to work with youth in the community, who have little traditional job or educational opportunities. Many young people go directly from primary school to working seasonally on other people's land. The SCP staff hopes that recreational activities and small economic projects will serve as a vehicle for organizational skills and empowerment for Goyena's youth.



Olivia Kaplan, from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Science, meets with workers outside a Nicaragua Sugar Estates plant. The workers have been organizing to address health and environmental concerns related to the plant

1 0 0 0 d e l e g a t e s . .





A group of youth from the community of Goyena who participated in workshops on violence, self-esteem, and sexuality.



Leaders from the neighborhood of Nueva Vida

The Board, with staff from New Haven and Leon, committed to emphasize community organization and participation in any and all endeavors undertaken by the Project. The NHSCP is interested in nurturing efforts that respond to specific needs identified by Nicaraguans, that build existing local leadership, and that improve long term capacity to challenge systemic barriers to better quality of life.

We continued to work with the parents' council at the schools to increase attendance at the preschool and grade school -- attendance was also encouraged by the provision of milk to preschool attendees. Attendance is usually limited by a combination of factors related to rural poverty in Nicaragua. Many children are needed to care for younger siblings while parents work in the fields, if they themselves are not working as well to earn enough to feed the family. The SCP also supports the preschool and primary school with materials like notebooks, paper, pencils, and markers.

Two weeks after Hurricane Felix brutalized the Atlantic Coast of Central America, particularly the indigenous RAAN region of Northeastern Nicaragua, the Pacific Coast was inundated with 18 straight days of heavy rains, which dropped nearly as much water on the region as did Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Residents of the city of León were not too adversely affected, but many in the surrounding rural areas, including residents of Goyena, needed brief temporary evacuation.



2007 Delegation Participants

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Science (March)

Laura Jensen
Olivia Kaplan
Beth Moore
Nadav Tanners
Michael Coren
Tara Morberg
Jeff Chatellier
Sean Johnson
Jean Silk
Jason Weiner
Erin Barnes

High School Agriculture

Melissa Minto
Jessica Bucklin
Isaac Shub
Kate Bennett
Eric von Hohenleiten
Victor Lambert
Aimee O'Neil

Yale / ReachOut

Jessica Bialecki
Veronica Wallace
Sophie Turrell
Rebecca Arzonian
Jessica Johnson
Jane Park
Crystal Aldape
Brittany Robinson
Alexandra Welch
Abby NcCartney
Robin Rotman
Cara McClellan

Fairfield University
Marie-Agnes Sourieau
Walter Petry
Lauren Asensio
Marielle Bermingham
Ashley Lauro
Brit Maianauskas
Jessica Marques
Eliot Smith

Albert Schweitzer Institute at Quinnipiac University (March)

Kelsey Pratt
Alysis Richardson
Dan Fox
Sean Gary
Timothy Dansdill
Richard Campbell
Taylor Ives
Moses Beckett
Michael Perkins
Julia McClelland
Tamara Irving
Justin LeBlanc
Dylan Reitenbach
Jennifer Ellsworth
Caitlin Dowley
Kynia Ortiz
Tamara DeCarter
Sarah Grady
Sean Geary
Ann Marie Mangano
Zinacay Quiñónez
Michael Migliore
Jaclyn Trojanowski
Andrew Fanelli
Jennifer Girard
Andy Clark
Alison Marsh
David Ives
Sean Duffy
Cheryl Kerison
David Ives

Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies
(November)
Olivia Kaplan
Sean Johnson
Jason Weiner
Jean Silk
Kristen Genovese
Sydney Frey

Quinnipiac Business Delegation

David Cadden
Edward Breed
Jennie MacDougal
Monique Beauchamp
Suzanne Shulze
Don McKnight
Mike Holt
Jessica Krol
Joanna Greene
Paul Bogdanoff
Megan Girard
Paige Muraca
Colleen Flaherty
Karen Sargent
Erica Latimore
Mariela Molina
Sarah Ahlers
Richard Brown
Elder Romero
Kyle Chumas
Andrew LaDuca
Chad Papson
Brynne Salomone
Spencer Toomey

Hopkins/ Amity High Schools 07

Silas Meredith
Susan Bennitt
Gregory Monahan
Matthew Joseph
Adam Holzman
Francesco DeCamilli
Nicholas Andreassi
Daniel Nudel
Jennifer Richards
Kat Stewart
Zachary Wright
Ulises Berrios

"...listening to the people of Goyena speak about the dismal conditions of their community and the massive hardships the face every single day. I couldn't help but recall how stressed I was last week in the midst of midterms...But hearing the people of Goyena talk about the limited educational facilities, inaccessibility of schooling past 6th grade, and the unbelievable percentage of people there who can't even write their own name, I realized that my problems are pretty good ones to have. This trip is teaching me that a world exists outside of my personal career choices and aspirations... in just these two days, I've been able to expand my perspectives on life..."

*Brittany Robinson
Yale/ReachOut Spring Break Trip 2007*



2007 Peace and Justice Interns Adedana Ashebir • Jessica Johnson • Rebecca Markowitz

Star Volunteers Julia Berger • Kimball Cartwright • Mary Colwell • Carol DiFabbio • David French • Erica Holahan • Cathy Jackson • Louise Miller • Marie Milliard • Gigi Mooney • Roger Pahl • Jean Silk • Maria Tupper • Joan Whitney

Superstar Volunteers One of the challenges of a small not for profit (501-c-3) is that we require many skills that in larger organizations are provided by paid staff. We are fortunate to have three long time friends of the Project who provide such services for us as volunteers: **Shelly Altman**, manages our internet presence (web site, email, etc.), as well as the New Haven office computer network. Shelly also trains staff and volunteers in these areas. You may remember that for many years Shelly organized our used bicycle program - collecting and packing hundreds of bikes to be shipped to Leon; **Katherine Cole**, continues to maintain our database as well as perform data entry at a level of accuracy that seems almost super human. For years Katherine and Tom's home in New Haven was the site of our container packings; **Susan Landon** helps us meet our state and federal financial filing requirements. She has the patience and disposition of a saint. A top notch administrator, she continues to find time for us here at the NH/LSCP who need her help getting this paper work done.

Thank you does not adequately convey the immense gratitude we feel toward these skilled and loyal friends.

I am also in the enviable position on an almost daily basis experiencing

the generosity of our donors. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who have made our work possible through these years. Your financial support is indispensable. Adelante



Patty Nuelsen
Director of Development

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NHLSCP Financial Statements FY 2007 (draft)

Current Assets

Cash and Other Current Assets **104,480**

Liabilities

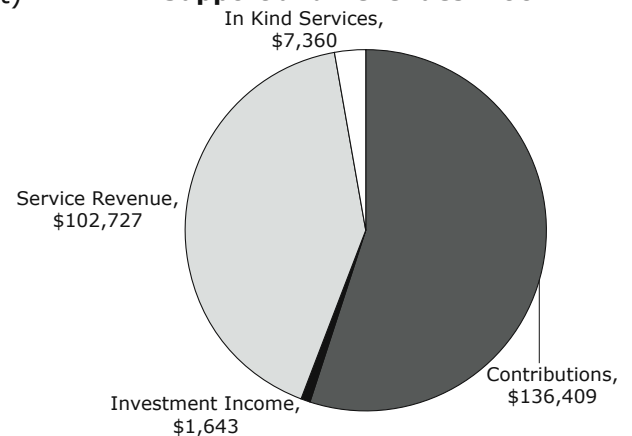
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expense **4,110**

Net Assets

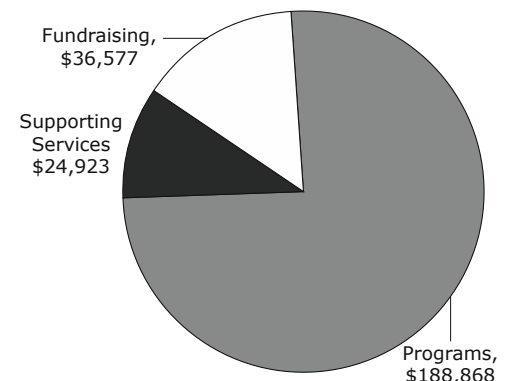
Unrestricted	61,629	
Board Restricted	38,031	
Temporarily Restricted	710	
		100,370

Total Net Assets and Liabilities 104,480

Support and Revenues: 2007



Expenses: 2007



Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Support and Revenue

Contributions	136,409	
Service Revenue	102,727	
Investment Income	1,643	
In kind Services	7,360	
Total		248,139

Expense

Program	188,868	
Supporting Services	24,923	
Fundraising	36,577	
Total		250,369

Net Income (Loss) (2,230)

Celebrating over 1000 delegates



The New Haven/León Sister City Project is a progressive, grassroots organization that fosters a partnership between the communities of Greater New Haven, Connecticut and León, Nicaragua. Our mission is social justice and we work to form fair and respectful relationships between the people of our two cities in the political, economic, social, spiritual and cultural spheres.

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Sydney Frey, Project/Outreach
Coordinator
María Antonieta Chevez, Administrative
Coordinator

New Haven Staff

Patty Nuelsen, Director of Development
Chris Schweitzer, Program Director

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