

New Haven/León Sister City Project
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NH/LSCP supports education and sustainable development in Nicaragua and New Haven.

HOPE IS IN YOUR HANDS

The people we serve in the rural communities face uncertainty every day. Inflation is up as is unemployment. Food and fuel prices have been going up. The already inadequate education budget has been cut yet again. Our work in Goyena and Troilo is something the community can count on.

Some of the teachers in the formal school are able to supplement their income by teaching in the after school program founded and supported by the NH/LSCP. The Ministry of Education (MINED) provides rice and beans for the students' mid day meal, and the NH/LSCP supplements with either chicken or vegetables. How much longer or to what extent MINED will continue supplying the rice and beans is uncertain. **But we will be able to step up with your help.**

Reliable economists predict that the economy will not improve before 2023. Your generosity during these difficult times will help us meet some of the basic needs of the people we accompany and serve. **Please use the enclosed envelop. Your donation is tax deductible.**

Many thanks from the people of Goyena and Troilo and the staff and board of the NH/LSCP. Adelante!



NEW HAVEN LEÓN Sister City Project



2018
Annual
Report

New Haven, Connecticut

León, Nicaragua Sisters since 1984

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Patty Nuelsen
Director of Development

Chris Schweitzer
Program Director

*Cover: Mothers march to
demand justice for those
who killed their children.*

Dear Friends of the New Haven/Leon Sister City Project,

The Uprising of April 18 triggered country wide protests against the government of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo who became corrupt as they amassed enormous political power. The earliest large peaceful demonstrations in Managua and Leon were met by truck loads of heavily armed police and paramilitary. While the demonstrations surprised everyone; the violent reaction of the government was truly shocking.

During this perilous period in urban Leon, the rural areas remained relatively quiet. The Women's Program in Goyena was on hiatus, however, as it was unsafe to travel from Leon to the countryside. Because all the teachers of the preschool and after-school programs live in Goyena, these programs lost little time and the education of the children continued. This brought a much needed degree of normalcy to the lives of families and, especially, the school children. Meanwhile life in Leon was anything but normal. People avoided leaving their homes for fear of meeting up with police and paramilitary.

All credit goes to our staff in Leon, Erendira Vanegas, Ivett Fonseca, and Luis Chavarria, who kept the work going and the staff in New Haven informed, even while making decisions about their own safety and that of their families. When it became possible to resume travel to the rural areas, staff never traveled alone and left the rural area in time to get home before dark. This is still the case today. Life is very stressful.

The situation continues to evolve and no one knows how it all will end. We do know that the people resist and with your help, the work of the Sister City Project will go on. Thank you for your past support and with your continued generosity we will keep on keeping on. Our gratitude abounds. Adelante.

Patty Nuelsen, Director of Development



Leaders planning activity at health and reproductive rights training in Goyena on International Women's Day.

NH/LSCP Financial Statements

	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2016
Current Assets			
Total assets	211,666	192,183	170,843
Liabilities			
Total Liabilities	26,439	38,122	36,060
Equity	185,227	154,061	134,783
Total Liabilities and Equity	211,666	192,183	170,843
Statement of Revenue and Expenses			
Support and Revenue			
Contributions	138,711	127,654	128,636
Net Service Revenue	10,989	22,369	
Investment Income	(2,844)	8,281	3,737
Costs of Goods/Services	(6,293)	(30,253)	(14,101)
Gross Profit	140,563	148,706	140,641
Expense			
Program	97,121	105,430	107,862
Supporting Services	1,690	8,406	5,356
Fundraising	14,464	14,780	14,040
Total	113,275	128,616	127,258
Net Income	27,288	19,278	13,383

2018 Contributions

Foundations

Exelon Foundation
FUUS
Ladies Home Missionary Society
New Haven Green Fund
Patagonia
Peace & Justice Fund
Phoebe Foundation
Shalom UCC
Trico Foundation
Polly-Rose Fund
Anonymous (4)

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Gail Mirza
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Allie Perry & Charles Pilsbury
Norine Polio
Margaret & Henry Powell



Students hard at work in Goyena Afterschool

Liz Prete
Beth Rosen
Beth Robins
Beth Roth
Ellen Rubin
Nina & John Ruckes
Denise Saldana
Tina Santoni
Jill Savitt
Anne Scheffler
Anne F. Schenck
Bobbi Schmidt
Karen & John Schneider
Peter Schultheis
James Schweitzer
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Lori Sudderth
Victoria Traube
Susan Trucksess
Semeon Tsalbins
Melinda Tuhus & Rob Dubrow
Maria Tupper
Carol Turetsky
Flora Zoe Vandyke
Claudia Vestal
Vincent Villano
Barbara White
Joan Whitney
Jennifer Zocco

Dear Friends of NHLSCP,

In September 2018, a group of mothers who'd lost loved ones in the Nicaragua uprising came together in Managua (see cover). They gathered to support one another and demand justice for the 325 people killed in the government suppression of the student-led protests. "We will do everything legally and humanly possible to fight and find truth and justice. We will not accept any cosmetic solution, nor to begin anew as if nothing happened. First there must be an acknowledgment of the crimes committed, accompanied by truth and justice. That is the only way," summarized Francys Valdivia, President of the Association "Mothers of April" (AMA). In 2019, even with the continuing government repression and some AMA leaders in exile, there are chapters organizing in many areas of the country.

On top of the continuing human rights crisis, the April uprising and government repression has brought a lot of other changes to Nicaragua. The economy is a mess with growing unemployment and it's getting worse due to sanctions and lack of tourism. People live in fear, and because of this, there are very few demonstrations about anything.

The NHLSCP programs in the rural communities of Troilo and Goyena were able to continue throughout 2018 - with a month stop during the most intense protests and state violence. We actually even expanded the Education Program last year and now have 80 Troilo 1st to 4th graders in an after school program there. We have to credit the Gettysburg/Leon Sister City Project for sparking this program with a couple seed grants which supported expanding educational programs in the Leon area during the crisis.

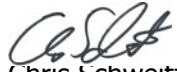
Starting another after school program in Troilo did remind us though how the Nicaraguan education system continues to fail (see centerfold). The educational testing NHLSCP did in Troilo to choose struggling students showed significant numbers of children not reading or writing at grade level, something that our Goyena after school program has significantly addressed. This sad reality calls us to renew efforts to address systemic failures by the Ministry of Education.

In the US our climate justice work continues with both weekly terrible climate crisis news and also a limited uptick in attention paid to this ongoing disaster. NHLSCP will be working more in the coming year on climate justice, and specifically calling on our communities in the global north who created climate change to help people in the global south prepare for the increasing heat, droughts, and intense storms. We think NHLSCP - as a bi-national organization - has an important role in mobilizing climate justice efforts here in Connecticut.

Of course in 2018, the NHLSCP community stepped up to fill financial gaps created by the Nicaraguan political crisis, and helped maintain our programming. We very much appreciate all your energy, concern and generosity. You should know that our Leon staff - who have been feeling very vulnerable in the face of state violence and impunity - were very moved by your support also

We will continue to try to fulfill our social justice mission in 2019 - our 35th year - and look forward to creatively meeting critical challenges here and in Nicaragua.

In hope,


Chris Schweitzer
Program Director



NHLSCP staff and Troilo Afterschool Program teachers meeting to plan program.

Teacher training and pay: Teachers are poorly paid in Nicaragua (about \$200 per month), and many need more than one job to make ends meet - which leaves teachers with little prep time. They also don't receive quality support or oversight from the Ministry of Education. Also, many rural teachers lack more than a 6th grade education (urban schools in general are better off). One success of the Education Program is that many more Goyena children regularly make it past primary and secondary school, and more are attending college. This means our Afterschool Program is able to hire teachers from a pool of Goyena-based college educated residents.

Poverty: One major barrier to increased levels of education is that many families need to have children work or take care of other children rather than attend school. Families also struggle to provide clothing and materials to students, and some parents - who live a distance from the school - don't have the time to accompany small children to school. One role of the Education Program is to do home visits and help families scheme how to have their children regularly attend school. Of course, meal programs offer an incentive relieving some pressure on families to provide food.

Parental support: Given the difficulty in finding work in Nicaragua, some parents don't see education as a way out. Too many people who went through a few years of school are not better off economically. Also, many parents - because of their own limited education - have a hard time helping their children with homework. The NHLSCP Afterschool Program plays a critical role in helping children get their homework done and helping them get through tough material.



Yara Perez - above - a the Lead Teacher in the NHLSCP Goyena Afterschool Program.

Education Challenges In Central America, budgets for education are generally quite limited. But in Nicaragua, funding is even lower for primary education as the government prioritizes funding university level schooling. NHLSCP's Education Program works to fill in these gaps and the ten plus years of preschool and afterschool support, advocacy with the Ministry of Education, parent support and leadership development, and teacher training in Goyena have produced more secondary and university graduates there. But - as one can see on this page - there's much more to do!

Infrastructure, security, materials: In Nicaragua, many rural school buildings are built through donations from international organizations. NHLSCP has funded school expansion (like the additional classroom in Nueva Vida) and regularly supports improvements (like installing electricity and fans in the Trolio preschool and a library in Goyena). Most classrooms need more regular funding to do repairs, for desks, chalk boards, fans, etc. The lack of resources also means that teachers have a hard time introducing new educational activities into classrooms.

Management and corruption: Given the corruption in the system (it's often used to award political favors) there are teachers in schools who should not be there, who are often no shows or late, or are not invested in the work. And it's hard to remove these teachers, even when their poor work is well documented. NHLSCP works to organize regular parent meeting to pressure MINED to do better, which results in some small victories, but families living day to day find it hard to invest a lot of time in these struggles. Proof of this educational disaster is the very low reading and writing levels for many primary school children in Troilo - where NHLSCP is just starting a new Afterschool Program.