

New Haven/León Sister City Project
608 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511
www.newhavenleon.org nh@newhavenleon.org 203.562.1607

NEW HAVEN / LEÓN

Sister City Project

Annual Report 2017



*NH/LSCP supports education
and sustainable development in
Nicaragua and New Haven.*

Thank You for your Ongoing support!

Make a Plan to Amplify Your Impact

If you would like to extend your support of New Haven Leon Sister City Project to make a lasting impact, there are several gift arrangements to choose from. Making a meaningful gift is easier than you think. A gift in your will or trust, for example, is accomplished by adding simple bequest language to your will - and you'll join others already part of *New Haven Leon: Presente!*

Whether you would like to put your donation to work today or benefit us after your lifetime, you can find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family and support NHLSCP.

More information at newhavenleon.org on the Give page.



New Haven, Connecticut León, Nicaragua Sisters since 1984

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Luis Chavarria
Finance/Sustainability

Ivett Fonseca
Education Coordinator

Erendira Venegas
Delegation Coordinator

New Haven Staff

Patty Nuelsen
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Chris Schweitzer
Program Director

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Cover: The three NHLSCP Leon staff. Ivett Fonseca (middle) and Erendira Vanegas (right) started working with NHLSCP 10 years ago. Luis Chavarria has been on staff over seven years but first got involved as a kid helping unload shipping containers of aid for Hurricane Mitch recovery in 1998.

Photo: Education Program Coordinator Ivett Fonseca with Intern Eef Verweij from Holland.

Legal Services Needed.... The Women's Legal Fund

Many a year when I start writing this annual thank you, I end up writing about an expanded or a new program. So it is this year.

Currently, we are starting an expansion of our Domestic Violence Prevention Program. Over the years, the women in this program have had trainings in self esteem, workshops on their rights by law, and consciousness raising regarding domestic violence, and more. These trainings have increased their sense of dignity and confidence, leading some to want to report their abuser to the police. To do so can be intimidating and confusing. The women have great courage and determination but they also need support and accompaniment.

These women need a lawyer to help navigate the system and confront impunity. For a time a lawyer working at another nonprofit was able to work to support impacted women. When funding ended, she was not able to continue as she needed to be earning money to support herself and her family.

YOU ARE PARTNERS IN OUR WORK The NH/LSCP is responding to this situation. Because it is the right thing to do. We are establishing a **WOMEN'S LEGAL FUND** to raise the money to provide legal accompaniment for these brave women. Your steady support allows us to do this. You enable us to meet the needs of the people we serve as they arise. You have helped us grow our programs through the decades. And we trust we can count on you now. We thank you for this.

Gratefully, Patty Nuelsen

If you would like more information on the Women's Legal Fund, you can contact Patty. 203-562-1607; pnuelsen @newhavenleon.org



NH/LSCP Financial Statements	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2015
Current Assets			
Total assets	192,183	170,843	162,982
Liabilities			
Total Liabilities	38,122	36,060	41,582
Equity	154,061	134,783	121,400
Total Liabilities and Equity	192,183	170,843	162,982
Statement of Revenue and Expenses			
Support and Revenue			
Contributions	127,654	128,636	119,984
Net Service Revenue	43,024	22,369	6,183
Investment Income	8,281	3,737	747
Costs of Goods/Services	(30,253)	(14,101)	
Gross Profit	148,706	140,641	126,914
Expense			
Program	105,430	107,862	108,204
Supporting Services	8406	5,356	10,210
Fundraising	14,780	14,040	14,040
Total	128,616	127,258	132,454
Net Income	19,278	13,383	(5,540)

2017 Donors

Foundations

Community Foundation of
Greater New Haven
MA Audobon Society
New England Grassroots
Environmental Fund
Greater New Haven
Green Fund
Patagonia
Peace & Justice Fund
Phoebe Foundation
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Dear Friends,

The New Haven/León Sister City Project started its long life working in the City of León, Nicaragua with hospitals, schools, and other urban projects. Our work was rooted in poverty reduction, leadership development, and social justice.

In 2000, we were invited to work in rural Goyena to help that displaced community recover from Hurricane Mitch, not realizing we would be working with some of the world's first climate refugees. No one in 1998, except maybe climate specialists and Exxon Mobile scientists were aware that 1998 was an extremely hot year and would fit into the general trend of hotter and hotter years.

Our work in rural communities led us to learn about and pay more attention to environmental issues like water concerns, sugar cane plantation pollution, and chronic kidney disease.

NHLSCP's move to create climate change projects started in New Haven in 2010 in the hopes of helping limit the impact of global warming on marginalized communities. But work in Nicaragua continued to focus on education, public health, and domestic violence, along with hosting delegations and interns.

We are now starting to realize the need to address climate resiliency in Goyena and Troilo. The more intense droughts and rain events increasingly impact these communities, as happened in 2016-17 with a water shortage and flooding rains in Troilo. These changes are consistent with climate forecasts that predict that that area of Nicaragua will see more intense rain events, longer droughts, and higher temperatures... all disasters for workers, farmers, and vulnerable communities.

These communities have very limited resources, so making the needed adjustments to help them respond will be a significant challenge.

We're hoping we can develop projects that both limit long term climate exposure, and also improve quality of life in the short term. The clean cook stove project, for example, helps families economically by reducing the amount families must spend on wood, and also drastically cuts indoor air pollution and GHG emissions.

So far NH/LSCP has mostly prioritized our climate work on cutting greenhouse gas emissions in New Haven, as there is really not much humans can do if climate change is allowed to run amok.... which is the path we're on.

We face two challenges: to pull away from our fossil fuel addiction here in the US - a huge task - and the need to prepare families in Nicaragua for the growing onslaught.

Right now without widespread action, the forecast is grim. While we know what to do, we're moving very slowly, and it will demand all of us getting involved in the struggle for the future of our human communities if we are to succeed.

We hope our great community of supporters will reflect on the climate emergency, participate in our regular discussions on this challenge, and join in helping create essential solutions.

In hope,

Chris Schweitzer



Fair Haven School students in New Haven learn about climate change shortly after Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico.

Climate Resiliency Challenges in Rural Nicaragua

Climate change is making these rural communities hotter with more intense droughts and rain events. NHLSCP is beginning to explore ways to make these communities more resilient in the face of these changes.



The community of Nueva Vida in Goyena has five deep wells that provide clean water for the community, like this one at the school. Many families have hand dug wells which now need to be regularly deepened as the water table falls.



The preschool in Goyena is surrounded by trees which cool the building and the play areas. More work could be done to find which trees would be best given changing precipitation patterns and increasing heat and storms. Other plantings at the school could also help reduce dust and support growth of grass. Also installing fans, painting roofing white, and installing drop ceilings could help fight the increasing heat.



The rural communities where NHLSCP works are fairly isolated and are reached by bumpy dirt roads. During the rainy season it's common for the communities to be cut off from León by flooding. Better roads would likely limit vulnerability and also improve economic and educational opportunities.



A recent tropical storm flooded a number of homes in Troilo. The government response was very limited so NHLSCP donated food and water to help families during the initial recovery period. Of course, as the climate warms up there will be more and more extreme weather events, testing our ability to respond and meet even basic needs.

Ideal climate resiliency projects have various short and long term impacts that community members value. For example, while the clean cook stove program reduced greenhouse gas emissions, families invest in them to save money and reduce indoor pollution. They are also mobile and use less fuel, both helpful features in a crisis.



TO RIVER

SCHOOL



Community networks, leadership and organizations, like those developed through our education and women's programs, are essential in preparing for climate changes and emergencies, and in organizing crises responses.

NUEVA VIDA

TO LEON



Staff person Luis Chavarria and community member Nubia Quiroga near the Goyena River explain what happened during Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Resiliency planning should include exploring lessons they learned from the Mitch experience, and what could be done to lessen risks. But this type of visioning discussion can be hard in an impoverished community where there are few resources and where much energy goes into just getting by. We have seen that people in Goyena have a harder time taking leadership roles than in other communities and it's possible that hunger, displacement, and trauma impacted human development after the hurricane.



Many rural Nicaraguans live in housing made of found sheet metal, wood, and plastic, clearly inadequate for intense storms. Many homes have metal roofing which radiates heat into the homes. Also, water collection and better sanitation need to be considered in resiliency efforts.



Isolation in rural communities can make crisis response much harder. Most people get around by walking, biking, motorcycles, hitching, or the infrequent bus. The same weak infrastructure and lack of resources that limit development ongoing, are particularly problematic as families try to respond to intense weather events.