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# News from León



Hello... from Leon... We are happy to send our second newsletter of 2017! After having amazing volunteers and wonderful groups of delegations that contribute in amazing ways to our work in the communities of Goyena and Troilo, we are ready to share with all of you who have been part of this process for a more inclusive world and less violent communities. After all the events of hurricanes, earthquakes and tropical storms that have hit the most vulnerable community we want to thank for all the efforts you may have done to help these communities. Gracias from León, Nicaragua! To see more pictures and get more information about our programs please visit our [Facebook page](#) ... Muchos saludos...! Eréndira.

## *We resist and we also fight back ...!*



León November 25, 2016 All out to stop the sexist violence! Photo of protest march for women's rights in the city of León.

Commemorating the International Day Against Violence towards Women, the New Haven Leon Sister City project, as part of the local network of feminist organizations "Women in Action", called for a citizen's march for the defense of life and liberties of women. The activity was attended by women from urban area as well as from the rural communities, including Troilo, Goyena and Malpaisillo.

We united in a single cry of resistance to the oppressive system, which ignores the most fundamental rights of women over their own bodies. So we demanded together that today our priority is to raise our voices and actively join in solidarity with SURVIVORS and FAMILIES of the victims of macho violence that is abusing, raping and killing women ... We denounced the IMPUNITY that is guaranteeing more violence in León, in Nicaragua, in Latin America and in EL MUNDO.

As women and feminists we demand: No more institutional violence; That there be public policies which guarantee a country without domination of partisan interests. We demand an inclusive, fair, free and healthy country for All, respecting freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of choice! We call together for an end of the macho violence ...!

## **An example worth following ...!**



Yaranesi Pérez, 22 years old, young community leader, Afterschool Program teacher.

Studying at a university is already very difficult for any young person, especially for those with limited resources. Just applying to the public university in the city of León (UNAN) makes you compete with students from all over the country. But for Yaranesi Pérez this has not been her only struggle. She is also a school Afterschool teacher; a community collaborator/leader; and a young activist willing to help her neighbors and friends as much as she can. All the efforts made by this young leader are for the sake of her community because she wants to improve it.

Yaranesi aims to be an agent of change. One of her primary goals is to be a teacher at the formal school in her community. This year Yaranesi will graduate - after five years - with a degree in Natural Sciences at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua. Yaranesi studies in "sabatina" mode, which means she wakes up very early Saturday to be able to do her chores at home, and then takes the bus that leaves her community at 4:00 am to be able to arrive punctually at classes to the city of León at 7:00 am.

She, like many other young women in the community of Goyena, was awarded scholarships by NHLSCP and is achieving her goals. This success makes for better economic and social conditions for their families, as well as sets an example for the rest of the young people in the community. Already many young people from the community who are in high school admire Yaranesi, and have expressed "If she can, so can we". At the New Haven-León SCP we hope to continue to support the goals of many young people through the scholarship program, so that more young people like Yaranesi become examples of perseverance, discipline and leadership for their friends and family.

### Chasing dreams...!



From left to right Augusto Donaire, Jorbin Baquedano, Fany Osejo, Mario Rivas. These young people were able to attend the Afterschool Program every day for five years.

When the Afterschool Program was started almost 12 years ago in the community of Goyena, we knew that it would be a challenge for all involved. In the socio-economic context that the community is located, they lack basic necessities. For many parents who never attended school or managed to enter but did not finish even primary school, the main need is to provide families with daily food, and for this the support of their children was fundamental. With large families and few decent employment opportunities, the only option for fathers and mothers was to work in the cane and peanut plantations. The older children are often taken to help them in the fields and the girls stay at home taking care of the younger children.

However, with the commitment of all and trainings for parents, the Afterschool Program has been a great help for both children and parents. In the Program, they are helped to do their homework, have fun and learn from the teachers, participate in a lunch program. Through the Program, parents and children were convinced that education is the main tool for personal development and for the community as a whole.

The four young people in the photo - after attending the Afterschool Program every day for five years - finished high school in 2016. For many of us living in urban areas this would not be a special achievement, but just a further step in our process to achieve higher education. However for many of these young people, staying in school has meant many sacrifices. For them it has not been so simple, and many of their friends who are their own age, already work, have children and have failed to finish their primary education.

In the years they attended the Afterschool Program, their parents were also involved in order to raise awareness of the importance of education. This work had positive results since they all managed to finish secondary school and currently intend to enter the public university.

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**Needed:** Creativity, Interns, Energy, Delegation Leaders, Commitment to Social Justice, Volunteers, Interest in Learning, [Financial Support](#).

[www.newhavenleon.org](http://www.newhavenleon.org)



*New Haven/León Sister City Project works to promote social justice, education and sustainable development in Nicaragua and Connecticut. For more information see [www.newhavenleon.org](http://www.newhavenleon.org); [www.facebook.com/newhavenleon](https://www.facebook.com/newhavenleon); email [nh@newhavenleon.org](mailto:nh@newhavenleon.org); or call 203.562.1607*