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www.peacehost.net/Dorothy

## Dear Friends,

The last few months have been exciting and extremely busy for the Cooperative and Clinic. At the end of May I made a lightening trip to Washington, D.C. to receive, for the Cooperative, the **Best Practices in Global Health Award** from the **Global Health Council**. Long-time supporter **Dr. Ann Alexander** made the nomination and reports below. This wonderful and surprising event was followed in a few weeks by the Nicaraguan Government honoring me with its highest award, the **Order of Rubén Darío**, for contributing to the health rights of Nicaraguan women. It doesn't stop there! Two days later, Cooperative President, **Grethel Sequeira** and I met with the Minister of Health, **Dr. Maritza Cuan**, who said she wanted to visit the Clinic and develop a plan of cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Cooperative to better serve the community. Story inside.

## National Scene

The new government is trying to reverse the 17-yr. neglect of the poor by addressing the most urgent needs. The three previous neoliberal governments privatized education and health, as well as most public utilities and stripped the land from poor and medium farmers by denying loans. These and other measures effectively caused the poor majority to be abandoned. Former Contra combatants were promised everything necessary to help them re-enter civil society. Few of the promises were kept contributing to increased violence in families and communities.

- A government commission is working to find land for these former soldiers.
- The program, Zero Hunger, will provide 75,000 poor peasant families over a 5-yr. period with the means to be food self-sufficient giving them a pregnant cow and pig, chickens, a biodigestor, medicinal and food plants and basic grain seed.
- Health care and medicines are free in Ministry of Health clinics and hospitals.
- Education is again free.
- Non-politicized Councils of Citizen Power (CCPs) are forming to provide a space to participate for those who do not normally have access to officials. A slogan of the new government is "The President is the People". Councils of Citizen Power (CCPs) are a concrete step in this direction.
- Energy Crises - Blackouts increase over the country due to insufficient energy caused by robbery of electricity (by rich and poor),

inefficiency and failure of up-keep of the system, lack of rain, and corruption by the Spanish transnational Union Fenosa who purchased the distribution during the early 1990's.

- Nicaragua Network Hotline 24 July - "Over half a million people attended the celebration of the 28th anniversary of the triumph of the Popular Sandinista Revolution on July 19th... Latin American unity is the only viable option for the region in the face of the social, economic and environmental disaster caused by the imposition U.S. imperialism." Messages calling for Central American and Latin American unity dominated the words of presidents Ortega, Zelaya of Honduras, Torrijos of Panama, and Chavez of Venezuela.



**Dorothy, with President Daniel Ortega, is presented the Rubén Darío Award, the highest award given by the Nicaraguan government.**

- Nicaragua Network Hotline July 24 - "On July 20th the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, laid the first brick on the construction site near Port Sandino, where an oil refinery will be built... cost US \$4 million and is being financed by the Venezuelan government.

- Nicaragua Network Hotline 31 July - "On July 21 at a meeting of the Sao Paulo Forum in Managua, Daniel Ortega accused the U.S. government of conspiring with representatives of the Nicaraguan opposition and the Nicaraguan media against the Sandinista government... the US Embassy in Managua is providing funds and giving orientations to groups who claim to represent the people... Ortega believes the principal objective of this low intensity intervention is to confuse the population and undermine programs such as Zero Hunger and the Councils of Citizen Power (CPCs)... During the Nicaragua Network's June 2006 delegation to investigate the U.S. government's \$12 - 13 million interference in

the presidential election, the delegation met with the International Republican Institute (IRI). The IRI is one of the four core groups of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and receives money as well from USAID...The IRI staff person proudly told the Nicaragua Network delegation that the IRI had created Movement for Nicaragua which organized demonstrations against the Nicaraguan government... Nicaraguan government adviser and sociologist Orlando Nuñez believes that the success or failure of the implementation of the CPCs is key to the ideological struggle the government must win in order to guarantee future FSLN electoral victories. Despite having won the presidency Nuñez says that the FSLN is still in the opposition. We have a socialist government administering a capitalist system and governing a neo liberal society."

## Global Health Award

by Ann Alexander, M.D.

On the evening of May 31, at a festive celebration, Dorothy Granada accepted, on behalf of the Maria Luisa Ortiz Cooperative and Clinic, the **Best Practices in Global Health Award**. The award is given to *an individual or organization whose innovative practices in the field have made a significant contribution to improving the health and well-being of disenfranchised populations*. There were three other recipients of awards that evening, including one from Thailand accepting the million dollar Gates Award for Global Health and another from Ethiopia receiving the Jonathan Mann Award.

The awards were given at the Global Health Council's annual conference in Washington D.C. The Global Health Council has the world's largest membership alliance dedicated to saving lives by improving health throughout the world. Approximately 2,000 people from all over the world attended the conference, where they represented hundreds of organizations involved in third world health. The spectacular banquet included many luminaries from the health field, and the master of ceremonies was **Dr. Sanjay Gupta**, CNN's medical correspondent. Everyone was dressed up, many in their native dress.

In Dorothy's acceptance speech, she talked about the development of the cooperative, her involvement, and the evolution of the clinic. "We listen to the people we serve with our hearts and minds. We believe that health is a human right. We believe that poor women should have control over their bodies and live without violence."

Dorothy almost didn't make it from the banquet table to the stage. Unnoticed on the menu was the inclusion of "crab mango ceviche." Dorothy is allergic to mango! After the attention of medical personnel and 20 minutes after an epinephrine shot, Dorothy Granada ascended the stage with great dignity and accepted the award.

Dorothy was nominated by **Ann Alexander**, a Santa Fe, New Mexico physician, who has known Dorothy since her earliest years in Nicaragua. Ann has long been an admirer of the clinic's approach to provision of health care responding to the needs of the people. The hard work of the cooperative and the spirit, dignity, and selflessness of Dorothy inspired her to make this nomination.

## Historic Visit of the Minister of Health

A week after Grethel and I met with Minister of Health, **Dr. Maritza Cuan**, she and a group of physicians arrived. Never before had a Minister of Health come to Mulukuku. Hundreds of people were present to receive her. The physicians she brought provided health consultations to over 500 men, women and children. From a wide spectrum of the community Dr. Cuan appointed a **Council**



**Global Health Council board member Dr. Valerie Nkamgang Bemo presents Best Practices in Global Health Award.**



**Dorothy and Minister of Health, Dr. Maritza Cuan, sign an Agreement of Cooperation to provide comprehensive health care.**



**A message from the citizens of Mulukuku to the Minister of Health.**



**Explaining the Clinic and Cooperative's programs to the Minister of Health.**

**for the Defense of Free Health Care.** The visit culminated in the signing of an Agreement of Cooperation between the Cooperative and the Ministry of Health to provide comprehensive primary health care, particularly reproductive care throughout the Municipality. Details are being worked out and a full report will appear in the next Newsletter. Dr. Cuan praised our work and said it is a model to be copied. We in the Cooperative are extremely happy about this new relationship.

## Visitors and Delegations

**April - Michael Hanrahan**, Treasurer of WEN, came and helped improve financial record-keeping. He also visited Mulukuku. **Judith Jenkins**, faculty member of the **Albuquerque Academy** in New Mexico visited to arrange for a group of students to come next year.

**May - Tina Olson**, WEN staff person, visited to learn about the Cooperative. **Kay Taylor**, Gynecologist/Obstetrician, founder of PINCC an international organization dedicated to reducing cervical cancer, came with a group for the second year to treat women with pre-cancerous lesions and teach our staff. "Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in the world today, and in poor countries it is number one. Over 290,000 women die of it every year; yet it is completely preventable with screening and treatment."

**June - Galveston Delegation** - For the 12th year a health care delegation sponsored by the **First Presbyterian Church** and the **University of Texas Medical Branch** in Galveston, Texas, traveled to the Clinic to provide primary health care services. The 40 member delegation consisted of medical and nursing students, volunteers from the church, physicians, nurses, a Nicaraguan dentist, and nurse practitioners. **Dr. Elliot Trester** from Austin, Texas was the medical director for the trip. The medical and nursing students had three days of class under the direction of **Dr. Janice Smith** and **Kathy Nash**. The healthcare delegation spent a day in Managua learning about the health care and the politics of Nicaragua. After arriving in Mulukuku, Dorothy Granada educated the students on the history of Nicaragua, the U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and the Cooperative.

The delegation spent three weeks working with the amazing Cooperative staff. Over 2300 patients were seen, with 134 women receiving vital prenatal care, and 599 women having a well woman exam and pap smear to check for cervical cancer. The team provided care to 777 children and there were four births in the new birthing center. The dentist saw 117 patients and performed 209 extractions and 90 fillings. The delegation also sponsored a health fair held at the nearby Rancho. The health fair was attended by men, women, and children in the community who learned about sexually transmitted infections, condom use, malaria, hand washing and other health promotion topics while having fun.

The trip was a tremendous learning opportunity



**Galveston Delegation sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church and the Univ. of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.**

for the students and faculty and we are hopeful that the model presented by the MLO Cooperative inspires our future healthcare providers to empower vulnerable people everywhere and to continue with service work in their futures. *by Kathy Nash, RN, PhD*

**July - Olympia, Washington's Sto. Tomás/Thurston County Sister County** delegation, a group that has hosted fund-raising events for the Clinic made a visit. **Beth Doglio** and **Eddy Cates, M.D.** write about their experience:

Ten years ago, Eddy, then a third year medical student and Beth, a community organizer lived in nearby Rio Blanco for seven months. Hearing about Dorothy and the clinic, we ventured to Mulukuku and spent several weeks volunteering with the cooperative.

Inspired by the work of the clinic, we always remained in contact and continued to support the clinic by hosting fundraisers in Seattle and Olympia. Beth even worked briefly for WEN, helping to move the headquarters from Santa Cruz to Olympia. Unfortunately, until this trip, we had not been able to return.

Finally, after ten years, we returned with our two children, Ian (8) and Aspen (3), and 11 other people from Olympia's solidarity group, **Thurston Santo Tomás Sister County Association.**

It's been ten years. And while CMLO has undergone many changes, the underlying principles have not. The grounds which were once open and sparsely developed, with few buildings are now densely developed with buildings housing the many new programs.

Greeted by the beautiful new (for us) murals adorning the clinic walls, we were reminded of the power of art to tell stories. These murals tell the story of the cooperative. For us, seeing the mural and hearing the story again, enriched our understanding of the history of the cooperative and the on-going struggle of these inspiring women.

The legal program occupies a large corner of the grounds. This program broadens the mission of women's empowerment beyond physical health deeper into women's larger welfare and safety. This unique program assures women a platform from which to defend their right to a life free of violence, as well as their right to physical health. It is clear that the women of the cooperative remain committed to creating a more just world one where women recognize healthcare as a fundamental human right

The grounds are now also filled in by the recent arrival of two large shipping containers ingeniously transformed into health care facilities. One, which maybe once transported sweatshop products across international borders, will soon serve as a sterile operating suite. It is a remarkable clean facility floating on the muddy grounds on which the clinic sits. What can one say! A surgery suite in Mulukuku! This new facility provides a sterile environment in the midst of the muddiest place we know.

The second converted container serves as a labor and delivery unit. Walking into this clean, air-conditioned and well equipped space is like stepping through a time-warp. The facility complete with air conditioning, electronic equipment, including a fetoscope and a birthing

bed is more reminiscent of a high tech U.S. hospital than any Nicaraguan health care facility we have ever seen. It provides a sterile, well equipped room in which to bring children into the world

Perhaps most unusual is the solar power grid which provides clean renewable energy lighting the clinic 24 hours a day. Electricity makes an exponential difference in the ability to provide quality care. Ten years ago there was no electricity. *Ahora hay luz!* As Dorothy likes to say, "No more births by flashlight!"

The 15-bed Casa Materna is nearly complete. This airy and pleasant building will provide rural "high risk" women a safe place to live in the final weeks of pregnancy. The Casa Materna will provide education for mothers about nutrition, hygiene, breast-feeding, anti-conception, etc. It will support up to thirty births a month.

The ambulance. Wow! Now when emergency transports are needed, clients can be safely and more quickly moved to facilities capable of dealing with more severe and acute illness over a road which now is mostly paved cutting the trip from eight hours to three and a half.

One notable, though perhaps less tangible difference since our last visit is the cooperation that now exists between the regional state run clinic (MINSAs) and the CMLO. In fact, the Casa Materna will serve both clinics. Seeing this shift ignites hope about a renewed commitment to public welfare with the new government.

It is wonderful to have seen many familiar faces continuing the struggle side by side. Now though these folks are joined by many new faces. These include a full time physician, when before there were only nurses. Also the brigadistas, trained health promoters, who travel into the surrounding communities to bring some of the clinics capabilities deeper into the campo.

*Vive la revolución!*

## Legal Office January through June 2007

In the first six months of this year the Legal Office attended 132 cases including rape (20), attempted murder (1), child support (16). There are now two attorneys on staff. Cooperative member, **Yahaira Arroliga**, graduated from law school after attending weekend classes for a number of years. She joins **Oscar Morales**. Yahaira combines her legal work by continuing as a Dental Technician with a clinic one morning a week.

Prior to health consultations in the Clinic, women patients are interviewed by Social Promoters who offer women the opportunity to discuss concerns in their homes which may require mediation or other interventions of the Cooperative. Some women have 3 or 4 interviews before gaining enough trust to discuss serious problems such as incest. 2,570 women were interviewed January through June.

## Memorials and Honoring Gifts

- In memory of our good friend **Arlene Cobin** from **Deborah Maloney** and **Marcello Bigliardi**
- In memory of **Donnis deCamp**, my sister, who supported much charitable work to improve the lives of women and children, from **Debra Heavens**
- In memory of **Cliff McCarthy** from **Arlene McCarthy**
- In memory of **Ben Linder** - who might have been my son from **John Lamperti**
- In recognition of **Patricia Spicer's** Birthday from **William and Jeanne Sanford**
- In honor of **Tina Olson** and **Lois Gordon** from **Dot Gordon**
- In memory of **Nelda Dunaway**. Member of the First Presbyterian Church in Galveston. She made the delegation trips to the Maria Luisa Ortiz Clinica de Mujeres happen for the past few years with her good organization. From **Elliot J. Trester, M.D.**
- In honor of the college graduation of **Madeline Biesek** from **Claire Paget**

**Clinic Report**  
Jan. - June 2007

**PAP Report**  
Jan. - June 2007

Women	2,667	NCM	1,230
Men	347	HPV	27
Adolescents	800	NIC I	8
Children	1,222	NIC II	5
Dental	321	NIC III - CIS	8
1st Prenatal Visit	506	Ca - Invas	0
Subsec. PN Visit	279	Pending Results.	20
1st Family Planning Visit	235	Total	1,298
Subsec. FP Visit	387		
1st PAP	506		
Subsec. PAPs	772		
Births	27		
Malaria	68		
Natural Medicine	510		
Total	5,867		

Dear Friends,

I wish I had better, stronger words to offer than "thank you" for your support through the years and for your faith in our ability to serve the people of Mulukuku. You kept us going through death threats; the vicious and senseless attacks by president Arnoldo Aleman who closed the Clinic for 4 months; as well as keeping us afloat in financially hard times. Even now, a small group of disaffected former Cooperative members are engaged in a campaign to harm the Cooperative led by an accused abuser of children, North American, Fred Polichio, and former Clinic supporter, Bette Cowan. We encourage those who have legitimate complaints against us to use the Nicaraguan legal system. We welcome criticism but baseless accusations are impossible to respond to.

I never thought it would happen again but we now have a government dedicated to responding to the needs of the neglected poor majority. The Ministry of Health admires our work and has invited us to be in partnership with them to better serve the health needs of women and their families. The government does not have the resources to provide health care to all which is why our work is more important now than ever. With the combined efforts of the Cooperative and the Ministry of Health we will have the opportunity to make a more meaningful impact on the health of women and their families in preventing illness and death. We need your help now more than ever.

We are one family. All strength to each of you in your efforts to save this precious planet ~~and all its wonderful creatures,~~

Abrazos,



Tax deductible donations may be sent to:

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Two boys celebrate the inauguration of the program *Zero Hunger* in Palacagüina, Nicaragua.