

April 2008 Report

Taller Artístico Xuchialt



April has been a busy month for Taller Artístico Xuchialt. They had their first parents' meeting of the 2008 school year on April 12. Approximately 40 parents attended the meeting, the majority of whom were parents of new students at the Taller. On April 20, the dance students of TAX gave a dance presentation (photo at left) at an indigenous festival in Sutiava. Several different folkloric dance groups from León and Matagalpa participated and it was quite a fun and festive

event. On April 20, we had the first session of our series of day-long Business Planning Workshop with the directiva (see photo at right). Only six members of the directiva were able to participate, but it was a very fruitful time. We are working on business plans for two different business ideas for TAX: mask-making and folkloric dance costume rental.



El Porvenir



The community members of El Porvenir have spent the last three weeks in April digging the trench for the pipeline of the water project (photo at left). I continue to be the “middle-person” on a lot of communications between the collaborating institutions. I have had several phone calls this month with the engineering professors at Bucknell regarding some of the practical aspects of installation. Then I met with Bob the Canadian for several hours in Managua on the 16th to consult with him on some of the electrical engineering aspects of the project. I have also had several check-in conversations with Mike at Jubilee House. Now that we are actually ready for the waterline to be installed, there are still a few technical issues that we have not yet resolved, but we are working on it! I was also worried for a few days about who would be supervising the technical aspect of the installation of the pipes. Thankfully, Jubilee House may be able to lend us their maintenance man, Rogelio, for a few days during installation to ensure that things are done correctly. We hope to program a site visit from Mike Toole, one of the professors at Bucknell, when we are ready to test the pump and system.

Santa Rosa

Ofelia (see Office News below!) and I made a visit to Santa Rosa on April 22 to begin making preparations for the Urbana High School Delegation coming down in June. The visit also gave Ofelia the chance to meet and get to know the CENMIN Directiva, Lilliam, the health promoter at the Casa Materna, and Iran, the contact for the Santa Rosa sister school relationship. Things are pretty much the same in Santa Rosa—the directiva has not been meeting regularly, there is no work plan and they complain incessantly about problems with the Health Center.

Doña Bertha had been saying since February that she was going to move to Costa Rica to work for the rest of this year, but I was glad to see her still in Santa Rosa. It sounds as if she might have a job prospect in El Jicaral, the municipality closest to Santa Rosa. It would be a great loss for Santa Rosa if she were to leave. In other news, Doña Gabriella is one of the mayoral candidates for this year's mayoral elections. We are all hoping she wins!

Vitamin/Medicine Fund

We received a letter from Dra. Luna, the new health center director in Santa Rosa, asking for support in buying medications for two rural communities where there have been lice-breakouts in the schools. We spent part of the \$480 in the Vitamin/Medicine fund that the Delow's sponsor to buy lice medication for 150 students. The rest of the fund was used to purchase 2000 tablets of multi-vitamins, 1000 tablets of Ranitidina (for gastric problems) and 60 antibiotic injections.

Office News

We have two new members of the León office staff! Our former housekeeper, Cristiana, decided to go back to school full-time in mid-February, so she recommended that her older sister Anielka replace her. Anielka is in her early 20s and has two children, ages three and five. She lives in Sutiava with her husband and is studying on Sundays to complete a technical degree in Business Administration.

In mid-April, Ofelia Arteaga joined our staff as Delegation Coordinator. This is the first time PGL has had a permanent delegation coordinator and I, for one, am very excited to have her! Ofelia has a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Development from the Central American University (UCA) in Managua. She co-founded and ran an NGO with her husband from 2003-2007 that provided scholarships for Nicaraguan biology, tourism and social work university students to do their thesis investigation in Protected Areas in Nicaragua. She has already hit the ground running, busy with preparations for two our summer delegations: Urbana High School (June 13-20) and our Gettysburg Community Delegation (August 1-9).



Ofelia with her family: husband Olin and daughter Kenna

Alejandra and I will be heading up to Gettysburg for a week in June! We will arrive on June 6 and I will be there for the PGL Retreat on June 7. We will be in Gettysburg until June 13 and I imagine our week will be filled with numerous activities and meetings in the Gettysburg area. I am looking forward to seeing all of you again, and I'm excited many of you will be able to meet Alejandra for the first time!

Submitted by:

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