

# CDA News: Fall 2005



Circulo de Amigas library with full-time librarian Gloria Huerta.

## All Important Library Services Expanding

by CDA CEO Fanny Morales

Circulo has opened its doors to students in our area in yet another capacity: this time with a new Community Library. With no books in student's homes, nor even at the little school nearby, this is a rare resource. And the highlight of this expansion? A full-time librarian, Gloria Huerta. The library is located right at CDA, and is available to students of all levels, and to neighbors who need it.

Every day the young people come, with great enthusiasm, looking for information for their schoolwork. Others come to enjoy reading, or to share experiences. We now even have a copy machine so students can copy what they need from the books and take it home with them.

The children who have sponsors are organized into Reading Clubs in order to explore all the books that interest them. This way their knowledge and imagination are opening up. In these compatible groups, students are motivated to read more, and to share their experiences and information.

Pat McCully, founder of CDA, hopes and plans to make 3 computers available for public use, and further hopes to expand library services to include the ability to check out materials so that they may be taken home. While a normal operating practice in the USA, this would be the first library to provide such a service in Jinotega.

Chatting with the students, they report that they are very happy, and feel privileged to have this library, because it helps them so much in their assignments, so important for their academic development and progress.

## Your generosity - the library:

- The library service that Circulo de Amigas is able to provide to our community is due to the generosity of individual donors in the United States who send donations to cover the costs of the librarian, educational materials, and operating expenses.

- In the name of our benefited community, we **thank everyone** who has made this possible. It is so useful for the teachers in our little school, and for the students. It is a pleasure to see this in full operation.

Fanny Morales,  
CDA CEO

*Did you know that  
CDA now sponsors 84 girls  
and 12 college students in  
their studies? WOW!*

Students of a similar age meet in book groups.



# The Wonderful Story of Marisol Melendez

by Patricia McCully, CDA Founder

A wonderful success story is that of Marisol Melendez. It couldn't happen to a more worthwhile young woman.

One day I was up at the little school up the road from CDA that we help, observing the first grade class. I noticed a group of about 10 little ones - certainly not first graders - hanging on the periphery. After class, I asked the teacher about them. She told me that they are really pre-schoolers. She let them hang around, as long as they were quiet. The government had dropped the pre-school. Parents weren't paying the small, required fees to keep it going. They couldn't afford it. The teacher felt it was quite important that the little ones have at least a little school experience as it made their entry into first grade much easier.

I told her that I thought the government action was terrible. She then told me of a young woman in her last year of high school who had offered to teach the preschool for \$20 a month. I said, "She's got it!" Later I found out that an inexperienced teacher normally earns \$40 a month. I proposed it to some friends back in the USA, and two agreed to give \$20 each for the class.

This high school senior, now teacher, was Marisol. I told her to compose her class of no more than twenty little students. The room for the class was very small. Later she wrote me asking that I not be angry with her, because she now had thirty-five students. Since CDA donors provided many lovely toys and wall decorations to make the room colorful and fun, the kids just kept coming. Marisol couldn't bear to turn them away.

On my next trip down, we tore out a wall that separated two small rooms at the school and got a good -sized room for the preschoolers. We painted it white to bring in light, because the only light came in through a row of deco wall blocks high on the wall. We also cemented in the dirt floor.

One learning experience for us all was when I found that Marisol had put the number pictures high on the wall, and in inverse order. I had to teach her about learning to read the numbers left to right, and to bring them down where the kids could see them. "But they'll get dirty," she said. I told her I'd get the next bunch laminated, but those weren't doing any good way up there!

Later she told me that she was using part of her pay to study psychology in town. She said she really wanted to be a doctor, but since that was impossible, she could at least study psychology to better understand the children and their parents.

Well, I had to make an attempt to help her obtain her dream. She is such a fine young woman. At a presentation in Phoenix, Arizona, I remarked that I would like to find six people who would give us \$25 each in order to have the \$150 a month that Marisol would need to study medicine. There is no medical school in Jinotega, so she had to pay room and board in Leon, about 6 hours away from CDA. The \$150 a month was adequate for room, board, fees, and textbooks. Can't get a doctor for that most places in the world!

A nurse, Barbara Robinson, attended the Phoenix presentation. She went home and told her doctor husband about Marisol. They agreed to sponsor her. In December 2003, Dr. Terry Robinson flew down to Nicaragua to walk Marisol down the aisle at her graduation from medical school!

Marisol has now completed her residency, and is doing a year of service in a little town north of Jinotega, San Rafael del Norte. She plans to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, with a special interest in birth control.



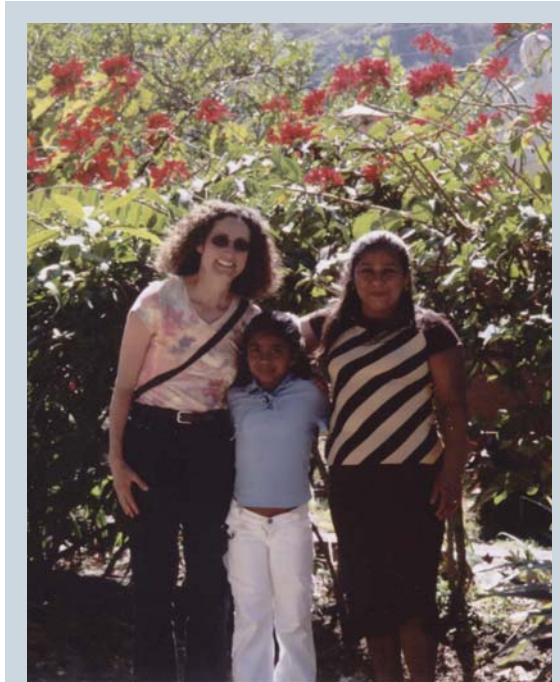
Marisol Melendez in front of Círculo de Amigas

## My Trip to Jinotega by Tina Gorelik

This past February, my niece and I were able to travel to Jinotega and visit Círculo de Amigas. This was my second visit to CDA and I was surprised at how glad I was to be back.

I looked forward to meeting Candida, the student that I sponsor, and her wonderful family. Getting to know Candida, her mother Carmen, and her brothers Joel, Milton, and Salvador was the highlight of our trip. Candida is a bright and energetic child and I enjoyed watching her take dance lessons from Joel, her older brother, an extraordinary dancer and wonderful teacher to many young dance students in the neighborhood. We were lucky enough to be able to watch them practice and to attend their dress rehearsal for an upcoming performance. Denise, my niece, and I were amazed at their talent and beauty.

We were also able to spend a day with Candida and her mother, Carmen. We walked into town and had lunch, did some shopping, and purchased a propane stove for Carmen. Carmen earns



Tina Gorelik, sponsored student Candida, and Candida's mother during February 2005 visit.

money by making and selling tortillas and a propane stove will make this task a great deal easier.

Of course, another highlight was meeting Fanny again. She was as friendly and helpful as I remembered. Fanny took time to help begin the process of providing Candida's family with running water, a basic utility that most of us take for granted. This option was not even available on my previous trip and I was happy to take advantage of the opportunity.

I was touched by the neighborhood children. They were so happy to play with us. I remembered Michael from my last trip when he was six. He is ten now and also remembered me. I wish the best for Michael and hope that Jinotega will be able to provide him with opportunities for a successful life as he grows up.

I am grateful for the dedication of Isabel, Fanny's assistant, who helped me with the purchase of the stove, and for the doctor who stayed late to assess the medical needs of Candida's mother and began her on greatly needed medication.

Our trip ended too quickly, and I hope to return to Jinotega and CDA soon. I value my connection to Candida and Carmen and hope to remain a part of their family. When I tell people about my visit they are amazed at the personal involvement I have with Candida and her family. This is part of what makes CDA so special. It is a unique and special organization. Thank you, Pat, for all your help in making this trip so special.

### ✍✍✍ From Pat's Pen: Expanding Space, Expanding Services ✍✍✍

Our newsletter editor asked me to spell out my hopes for CDA in 2006, if money exists beyond the base CDA programs (in other words, from your donations), so here it is:

I have been hoping for some time to add a multipurpose room to the CDA site. The addition of the room would allow us to expand our programs by giving us a large, flexible space, including a kitchen sized to do some teaching. By moving many of our group activities into the multipurpose room, we would also be able to expand the library and its services, and add 3 computer workstations for public use. We would have space for drop in use of 3 sewing machines, as few women have machines and space to sew.

The cost of the addition itself will be approximately \$4,000. The kitchen will need two propane stove/ovens at \$350 each, a refrigerator at \$400, and a sink with cabinets (made by local craftsmen) for about \$250. To perfect the plan, we will need about \$1,800 more to do remodeling in the library and front office area, and place the computers.

It is my hope to have funds to start the project when I am in Jinotega in February. If any of you can see your way clear to funding a part of this project, I believe it will be a substantial improvement to the facility and the CDA programs. And I **know** that it will be greatly appreciated by our students and the community.

## Donations:

*Círculo de Amigas*  
10583 La Fuente  
Fountain Valley Ca 92708

CDA is a 501(c)(3)  
organization under Internal  
Revenue Service tax code.  
CDA is operated in  
Nicaragua by CEPS (Centro  
de Estudios y Promoción  
Social).

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## Coming Soon

*The CDA website is being  
redesigned by Apropos  
Web Design of Seattle.  
Watch for a new look  
(aw, quit yer griping)  
after the first of the year.*

## The Season of Thanksgiving and Love by Sharon Euster



The hints have been everywhere. I hear it all around me. Each successive year I hear it more frequently. This year it seems as if I am tripping over the idea everywhere. More and more, people all around me are using charitable giving as a gift to others, as well as to the charity.

Last year, both of my teenage nieces suggested donations in their names as a possible gift idea. This year my sister and mother have both suggested the same. In October, I traveled with a couple who told me how they and their adult children celebrate the holiday season. They choose a worthy charity. Instead of exchanging gifts, they make a group donation to the selected charity. They gather together and share a meal, and also share information they have discovered about the charity, and what aspects of it they find the most attractive. Isn't that a lovely idea?

Let me think about this: saves gas; no lines, crowds or traffic to fight; no big frustration over whether the item will fit or is the right color; and no more trying to think up a gift for someone who pretty much has everything they need or want. Am I in error here, or is this starting to sound perfect?

CDA donors are generous all year 'round, whether by sponsoring a girl on a monthly basis; or by donating to the medical clinic, the pre-school, the library, the general fund, or any of the huge number of projects that come up. One of the things donors can count on with CDA is that Fanny and Pat will squeeze the heck out of every dime, and get you tons for your donation!

So, this year, as you are planning your year-end charitable giving, consider giving a gift to CDA, for yourself or on behalf of your family and friends. It will also be a gift to those who have so much less than we do. We can be thankful for the great plenty that we have, and those on the receiving end will be thankful for our help and shared love.

## 2006 Sponsorships

Basic sponsorship to keep a student in school remains \$29 per month. CDA suggests an additional \$50 donation for Christmas, half of which is given to the family in cash, and half in the form of a well-filled food basket.

To assure the continuation of the medical clinic, which has proven critical to our students and their families, Pat McCully, CDA founder, requests sponsors to consider increasing their donation by \$10 per month. If you choose to donate at \$39 per month plus \$50 Christmas money, the annual support for a student is \$518.

*~ Thank you!*



## A Big Surprise news tidbit from Pat McCully

Quite unexpectedly, the European Union is going to put in a new highway to bypass the mountains. It will provide a safer, faster route for farmers to get to their markets in Managua.

While this is a fabulous plan to assist in economic development, CDA has been stunned by the fact that the plan will take the road right over part of our property, and completely through Fanny's house (our local CEO)! CDA was only saved from being completely removed because of the medical services we provide to a community in such need.

The highway construction is programmed to start in February; just when I plan on being there. The location for the new multipurpose building may shift a little depending on exactly where the highway lands. It should be interesting.