

CDA News: Summer 2006



Circulo de Amigas Dancers demonstrate thier skill

CDA Dancers Take 3rd Place City-Wide

by CDA CEO Fanny Morales

Our City of Jinotega had a fiesta recently. During the month the traditional fiestas of the Cruz are celebrated. This fiesta was to honor Otto de la Rocha, a Jinotegan singer-songwriter of national and International fame. For this event the Mayor organized a contest of dance walk-ons, in which different educational centers and local entities took part.

CDA's Dance Group of sponsored girls could not miss this. The Dance Group mounted a nice stage-set ('scene' perhaps) and choreographed dance that was successful enough for us to win 3rd place. We feel very proud because it was the product of a joint effort, and because it was a difficult competition, taking into account that all of the contestants were excellent.

Circulo de Amigas, with their program of scholarships, is helping the students and preparing them for a better future, which allows them to improve their quality of life. We promote our culture and this way the girls and young people have a space to develop their artistic skills. The sponsored students are so filled with enthusiasm by this victory that the vast majority now want to join the Dance Group.

Thanks to all of the sponsors and individual donors, who make possible the development of our work with the sponsored students and all the rest of the services that CDA offers to the poor persons of our community, such as the clinic with it's primary attention to health, and the subsidized selling of medicines.



Straight from the front:

As this newsletter goes to press, CDA founder Patricia McCully is in Jinotega doing her annual program review.

*One of Patricia's goals this year is to build a new "Multipurpose" room. The full project will take an **additional \$6,000** to complete.*

Please read "From Pat's Pen" inside to hear about her hopes and plans for this room and the rest of the CDA facility.

If you are able to make a one time donation to the building fund for this project, please send checks to our treasurer. Be sure to mark checks as being for the Multipurpose Room Building Fund.

And, as always, a huge thank you from Patricia, and all the CDA community members.

A Treasured Time by Pat Pratt

I traveled with Molly Fairbanks to Jinotega and Círculo de Amigas, and met my ahijada (foster daughter) and her family for the first time. Katy is a beautiful, intelligent, loving 8-year-old, with a ready smile that illuminates her whole world. Her family of parents and 6-year-old brother are equally loving and devoted to each other. They welcomed me into their family circle like visiting royalty, with instant communication between us, in spite of my fairly limited Spanish. Our six days together went by in a flash, with wonderful and memorable times together.

One thing that Molly and I had not understood before being there is that our foster daughters attend the full schedule at public schools in their area, going either to the morning session or the afternoon, and then attend supplemental classes and activities at Círculo de Amigas. CDA provides them with a changing spectrum of studies which they feel are not being adequately covered in the public schools. At the time we were there, the students had classes in handwriting and English language at CDA, in addition to their public schools experience.

A valuable service of Círculo de Amigas which is not talked about



Pat Pratt demonstrates solar cooker

very much is their Clinic, staffed by their able Doctora Elisa Garcia Blandon and a pharmacist. In fact, among the neighbors in Barrio Linda Vista, CDA is known as "la Clinica." Their busy days are spent dispensing family planning information and treatments, caring for pregnant patients and treating illnesses and other problems. We were also delighted to see that "la doctora" was attending the English classes along with the older class of CDA students, and several times took the opportunity to ask us about pronunciation of some of the English words.

It was a treasured time with the very dedicated and helpful staff of CDA, and especially with our delightful students and their families. Molly and I shall have to live the rest of our lives without the large portions of our hearts which we left there in Barrio Linda Vista in Jinotega! We can hardly wait to go back again!

From Pat's Pen (part 1): Help Wanted

You already know when you see me coming I will be asking for help. This request is of a different kind, but terribly important.

I am 77 years old and feeling older, much older, every day. I, and CDA, need someone to take over the operation, and play the role I have played in recent years. Likely it would need to be someone bilingual, with the time and financial resource to travel to Nicaragua, as well as operate with phone and e-mail in the United States.

We have fine staff in Jinotega, and fine volunteers at home doing sizable parts of the work, but a leader is

needed to keep the direction of our little boat true.

I would accompany the person on a trip to Jinotega to become familiar with the center, and to work with them side by side until they felt comfortable in the new role.

Please contact me directly if you are interested or know someone who might be interested in this opportunity. It will be a job, but I assure you that there is reward a plenty in what you will accomplish.

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A Life Changing Event by Molly Fairbanks

In February, my dear friend Pat Pratt and I traveled to Jinotega. It was a wonderful opportunity to share in the lives of our foster daughters, if only for a few brief days. I found myself humbled by the experience of Circulo de Amigas. I learned so much in the 6 days we were there. It was a profound experience.

It is a privilege to be a guest in someone else's house, especially when that person's world is so different from ours. I learned that my 14 year old "ahijada" (foster daughter), Jaqueling, is muy simpatica, a very competent, capable, responsible person, and a very good cook. She and I had been writing each other for 5 years (me with my limited Spanish), and it was so exciting to finally meet her in person and find out what a wonderful young woman she is.

Jaqueling lives with her mother, Maria, and 15 year old brother, Walter, 3 or 4 blocks from the CDA buildings. And, I was privileged to meet her extended family which included her grandmother, Haydée Gonzales, the first administrator of CDA, and her aunt, Elica Centeno, who recently graduated from college with a degree in Agrarian

Engineering. Haydée, an accomplished seamstress, promised to teach Jaqueling how to sew on the sewing machine I brought for the family.

We all know that Nicaragua is a very poor country but I learned first hand how that impacts our families. We quickly grasped how scarce money is, how little they have in the way of material comforts, many of which we take for granted, and how important our scholarships are. And, we learned what a great

organization Circulo de Amigas is, how much it offers to the community, and how able the present Administrator, Fanny Morales, is. And, I re-learned "not to sweat the small stuff." By contrast, so much of what we worry about in our stateside lives is inconsequential and unimportant.

I encourage all of you to visit Barrio Linda Vista if you possibly can. It could be a life-changing event for you.



Photo by Pat Pratt, February 2006

✍✍✍ From Pat's Pen (Part 2): Expanding Space, Expanding Services ✍✍✍

Earlier this year, 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. (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 there in early summer. 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
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CDA is a 501(c)(3)
organization under Internal
Revenue Service tax code
EIN# 33-0586472.

CDA is operated in
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NEW JINOTEGA PHONE

For those of you who might
need the phone number of
CD offices in Jinotega, the
number is now:

78-25-083

And Now, a Word from Our Treasurers



Many thanks to all you wonderful sponsors and donors to Círculo de Amigas! We've known and loved Pat McCully for more than 20 years and greatly appreciate her efforts to build such a valuable project. We sponsor two lovely young ladies ourselves (ages 12 and 14) and find much joy in our relationship with our godchildren (as we're sure you do!) And we appreciate all monies sent from donors for support of the various Círculo neighborhood projects, e.g. the clinic, library, Grade Incentive Fund, or the wonderful "just use wherever most needed" notes that come with your donations.

Though we've been CDA Treasurers for almost a year now, we consider ourselves "still new" in our Treasurer duties. Here are a few things you can help us with that would make our job easier:

1. Please be sure to indicate your student's number on ALL communications.
2. Please send all donations to Clover Behrend-Gethard at 10583 La Fuente, Fountain Valley, CA 92708. (When you send to Pat McCully, she just has to get them to us, so sending it directly simplifies things.) If you want to send a special note to Pat, please send it directly to her at 20631 Kelvin Lane, Huntington Beach CA 92646. Of course, we will forward any note to Pat.
3. If possible, when you send a special donation for, say, your youngster's birthday, it would help if you send your donation *a month before* the special occasion. That way, your child will receive the gift "on time."
4. Be sure to designate, in detail if necessary, what you want your special donation to go to. That REALLY helps us post to our accounts properly.
5. If your demographic information changes, i.e., address, phone, e-mail, please let us know immediately. It's difficult to check return addresses on your envelope with my database just to be sure mine is current.

We deposit checks twice a month, usually around the 15th and 28th.

It's our distinct pleasure to serve Círculo de Amigas and all of you, and appreciate the little notes so many of you send along with your donations.

Be well and happy and blessed that you are part of the Círculo de Amigas family and have helped this Project thrive.

Love, Clover Behrend-Gethard and Paul Gethard, Co-Treasurers