



Roots of Change Foundation
Source de développement
18 Years of bringing hope to people in need

Spring 2023
Newsletter



Roots of Change Spring Fundraiser

“The poor should be seen, not as a problem, but as a people who can become the principal builders of a new and more human future for everyone.” (Pope John Paul II)

Mark your Calenders

Saturday June 10, 2023 - Holy Family Parish Hall

Hors d'oeuvres 6:00 PM - Tickets \$80/each with a \$50 tax receipt

Available May 1 online at www.rootsofchange.ca or call 780-405-8084

This event is an important part of our fundraising efforts for the year. Please plan to attend and invite your friends. If you are unable to attend please consider making a donation to this event.

Youth and Children Education and Development Program

The Youth and Children Education and Development Program is the longest running and one of the most successful programs being delivered by FUNDACCO today.

This year marks the 27th anniversary of a program that is delivered during the month of January each year (summer holidays for grade school children).

Young adult animators age 14 and up are trained throughout the year in preparation to deliver a program that teaches young children about human rights, family violence, self-esteem and leadership.

Harol Osmany Andrade, FUNDACCO's Project Coordinator sends the following report on this years activities:

As 2023 Nicaraguan summer began, the Youth and Children's program commenced January 3 with 240 boys and girls, between the ages of 6 and 11. One group from the Martinez D, Bisas del Xolotian neighbourhoods, and a second group from the Edgard Lang neighbourhood, in two separate locations. Activities and focus sessions were the same for each group and led by members of the Father Denis Hébert Youth Group.

The focus sessions this year educated the children on health issues: disease prevention; oral, hand washing, body, and home hygiene; healthy eating; and care of the environment. The topics were shared with the children through songs, dynamics, and playful games.

The Youth and Children's program ended Friday January 20 with a celebration and presentations by the youth and children. During the celebration, the children were organized by age. They made artistic presentations highlighting the knowledge acquired about health during the three-weeks of the program.

At the end of the celebration, FUNDACCO donated a school package to each participating child, thus helping parents to prepare the children for their return to school for the 2023 school year.

For yet another year, it is a source of joy for FUNDACCO to be able to share these benefits with children; funded by your generous donations to Roots of Change. We thank all those who participated directly and indirectly to make this program possible.

We faithfully trust God that, as in previous years, the program success is reflected in the smiles of the participants.



2022 Backpack Project



This past fall, the Roots of Change Foundation, along with our sister organization, FUNDACCO, piloted its first ever backpack project. The goal of this project was to equip 60 students from a small community school in Los Chupaderos, with essential supplies needed for a successful school year.

The hope was to provide each student with a backpack filled with notebooks, and essential school supplies including a school uniform and a pair of shoes. As well, the four teachers at the school would receive a supply pack, including textbooks for their classrooms. Father Denis Hebert, our founder, was a strong supporter of education, believing that it was the key to unlocking the cycle of poverty.

We are thrilled to report that this project was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who helped make this project a reality! A special thank you to the two schools from Edmonton Catholic that did fundraisers - Joan Carr Catholic Elementary / Junior High School hosted a Christmas market and St. Brendan Catholic Elementary School had a school-wide bake-sale.

Thank you to all the students, parent volunteers and to all the teachers who donated their time and effort for the success of this project. A thank you to everyone who read about this project on our website and donated online.

We are very proud of this project and look forward to continuing on with similar projects in the future. If you know of a school or teacher that would like to become involved, please contact charla.leblanc@rootsofchange.ca



El Chaparral – Replacement of Water Pump Motor & Controller

FUNDACCO advised Roots of Change in the latter part of summer 2022 of an urgent need in the community of El Chaparral (15 km north of Cinco Pinos in northern Nicaragua).

The pump motor and controller that delivered water to this community of 348 families had burnt out. The community was able to provide the cost of the labour (US \$900.) to install a replacement motor and controller but could not afford the cost to purchase them (US \$3,372.37). The expected cause of the premature failure of these parts was due to the frequent fluctuations in the supply of electrical energy common in many rural communities of Nicaragua.

While the community was without water distribution, families were forced to either store rain/surface water for domestic purposes which exposed them to stomach illnesses or they had to transport water by hand up to 2.5 km – which often means keeping children home from school so they can fetch water for the families needs.

The people of El Chaparral thanked God and the generosity of a few Roots of Change donors, that allowed FUNDACCO to purchase a replacement pump and controller for their community.

Installation was completed in November 2022.

Message from the President

In this newsletter I would like to recognize the Roots of Change unsung heroes, the men and women who serve on our Board of Directors. These volunteers give of their time and expertise to continue Father Denis Hébert's legacy of making known the successes of FUNDACCO and soliciting more donations and donors to fund the many poverty relief projects in Nicaragua.

Once every second month, the Executive body meets and in alternating months the entire Board meets virtually to discuss the Foundation and FUNDACCO's needs.

I want to tell you about the dedication of each board member and the expertise they bring to the Board, starting with members of the Board Executive:

Rod Valdes (Vice President) brings his skills and expertise to the redesigning of our webpage and the execution of our marketing plan, both of which are invaluable to the organization. This work involves countless hours of work that Rod does cheerfully. These undertakings would have been out of our reach financially if Rod had not volunteered to take on these tasks.

Lucille Damer (Secretary) does an excellent job of taking minutes of all meetings and filing all important documents. This job is time consuming and is very often taken for granted, even though it is so very important for the well-being of the organization.

Mel Kammerer (Treasurer) is very trustworthy and keeps our financial affairs up to date and makes sure that all our obligations are met. Mel is very meticulous in all he does and is greatly appreciated for his professionalism and keen sense of order.

Ken Handford (Project Manager) communicates frequently with Luis and Harold of FUNDACCO. Ken is always so encouraging and helpful to the FUNDACCO team. Ken assists them from the conception of projects to the final report, always ready to help in any way necessary to ensure the success of the project.

Jocelyne Durocher (Donations Administrator) diligently receives all donations, records them, issues tax receipts and prepares reports for the board. Jocelyne has been an anchor on the board because of her knowledge acquired over many years of service. Jocelyne also edits and corrects my correspondence and makes me sound intelligent.

The remaining members of the board are:

Charla Leblanc (Social Media) does a good job at posting content to our social media platforms and will also be collaborating closely with Rod to execute our marketing plan. Charla has spearheaded the new, very exciting, and successful backpack project.

John Schile (Education Fund Coordinator) has done a great job for many years now, of keeping all Education Fund donors well informed and motivated to continue giving to this very important aspect of FUNDACCO's programs. John is also chair of the organizing committee for the annual Spring Fundraiser. Along with his wife Raymonde, Lucille Damer, Charla LeBlanc, and Danielle Nobert, the committee is currently preparing a joyful fundraiser scheduled for June 10th.

Angy Spiller (Delegations Administrator) brings a wonderful expertise to organizing trips to Nicaragua. Her many years of taking delegations to Nicaragua to witness first-hand the work accomplished by your donations give her the ability to navigate the complex work of planning trips that are enriching and meaningful while being safe and enjoyable. Angy has also taken on the coordination of our newsletters and spends countless hours at collecting articles and ensuring that all content is in on time and ready for printing.

To everyone, I say a great big "Thank You" for your dedication to Roots of Change. Without your generous gifts of time and talents, Roots of Change could not exist. You are the backbone of this organization. The poor in Nicaragua and the staff at FUNDACCO thank you wholeheartedly.

To you our faithful donors, I want to say that the way you thank us for our work is by giving generously and continually year after year. We are encouraged to continue working when the donations come in and when we witness the enormous benefit of sustaining hope in Nicaragua. Please pray for us that our health be good and that our decisions be spirit-filled.

We are always looking for more people to help us on the board or for specific activities. If you want to join a dynamic and caring group of people with a heart for the poor, just let any one of us know and we will welcome you with open arms and heart.

God Bless David Fréchette

Ultrasound Saves Life of 3 Year Old



Dr. María José Romero examines 3-year-old Yelsin Said López

In September 2022, Ultrasonography was implemented at the San Rafael Arcangel Clinic. This service has allowed Dr. María José Romero to make more accurate diagnoses of her patients.

In November 2022, Dr. Romero performed a medical examination on 3-year-old Yelsin Said López Rivas who was suffering with abdominal pain.

Given the inaccuracies of the origin of the pain, an abdominal ultrasound examination was performed and a tumor was found in the right kidney, a situation that worried the doctor and the parents of the child.

For the parents of the child, it was difficult to understand what was happening. He was immediately referred to the Public Hospital of National Reference for Child Care Hospital (Manuel de Jesús Rivera La Mascota).

Fortunately, due to the ultrasound performed by Dr. Romero, he was given priority emergency treatment at the hospital. A new ultrasound was performed which confirmed the diagnosis made at the San Rafael Arcangel Clinic.

A difficult process began for the parents of their only child, who had recently entered the first level in the Joyitas de Jesús preschool located in the Altagracia neighborhood of Managua.

At La Mascota hospital, he was scheduled for surgery to remove the tumor and kidney, which was performed on January 17, 2023. He

then had to undergo a total of 26 chemotherapy sessions as part of the treatment and then followed by radiation therapy.

Fortunately Yelsin is very strong and is adapting positively to the process.

Yelsin's parents thank God and Dr. Romero for having discovered the disease in their child in time, otherwise they may not have had the opportunity to assist him medically.

Thanks to the ultrasonography service performed at the Rafael Arcángel clinic, some diseases can now be detected early and thus contribute to treatment in a timely manner.

Ripples by Angy Spiller



Angy with her host Momma

I have been involved with missions in the country of Nicaragua since 2011. It was on that first trip that I was introduced to Father Denis Hébert. What I remember most about that meeting was that Father Denis had an incredible sense of humour but most importantly, he had a passion for the people of Nicaragua, especially the poor. God placed him there to be a witness of Jesus not just in word but in action. That inspiration led me to lead a delegation back to Nicaragua in 2013. Since then I have been part of 4 other delegations. None, however, were as inspiring as our November 2022 delegation. It had been 5 years since my last visit and as I prepared for this trip there was great anticipation. Time had created an uncertainty that I hadn't experienced since my first trip. So many things have changed in our world since then.

There are so many experiences I wish I had the time and word count to share, however, the most important and life changing experience was surprising my host family from 5 years previous. In 2017 my family was part of a delegation of 16 that supported a water project in the community of La Carreta. We spent two weeks with our host families. It doesn't seem like a long time in the scheme of life, but it was quickly evident that although we entered as strangers we left as family. With thousands of miles between us, would that bond stand the test time?

Almost 5 years to the day I walked the familiar narrow path up the hill to the family home. The home I once shared, even if only for a brief period of time, I called my own. A place where meals were shared and memories were made. I wondered if they would remember me. My heart was racing. My pace became faster with each step as I drew closer. Then in a moment, I saw her.

Continued on page 4

Young Adult Mission Trip Nicaragua



July 20-31, 2023

Experience Culture

Serve the Poor

Live your faith

Contact Peter van Kampen at 403-848-0955

or vankampen.peter@gmail.com

Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.
1 John 3:18

Ripples cont from page 3

overcame her face. Our translator announced that she brought a friend and said my name. The basin Momma held quickly dropped as a smile emerged on her face.

A scream of excitement escaped her lips and her eyes sparkled like diamonds as we ran towards each other. By the time we reached each other's embrace, tears flowed freely from our eyes. We just stood there holding each other, frozen in time. I took a deep sigh of relief as I said, "Momma, I am home".

As we wiped away tears of joy I finally got around to asking about my Nicaraguan family. How was everyone? Were they here? Quickly, she said, "Oh papa." She led me inside the house where she made me wait as she woke papa from his nap. He too was in complete shock at the surprise visit. We hugged, we talked, we cried and he offered me ice cream. I smile at that. My Nicaraguan papa sells ice cream for a living. For him to share it is a great honor and a sign of great respect. His mother quickly joined us in the house for hugs and conversation. I am not sure when Julia - my house sister - came in. There was so much joy, and some sadness, as we shared our stories of family members. Those that have moved on, got married and those away at University. This family reunion was just like most others.

Papa led me outside where he was so proud to show me improvements to his home since water was brought to the community. They had some plants and fruit trees growing. He finished building his water reservoir and was proud to tell others present that Joseph (my son) had helped him build it. They had a new more modern latrine and they had replaced the shower made of poly with a new tin one built closer to the water line. Mama led me to their new kitchen with walls now made of wood instead of poly. I was struck by how clean and well cared for everything was. Momma and Papa were so proud of all their work.

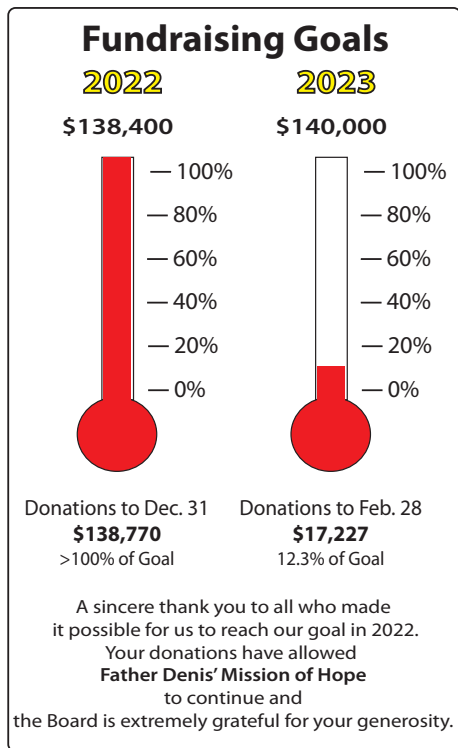
With Momma holding my hand and Julia staying right beside me, we visited the school to meet with the principal and other staff to discuss a project they had requested for electricity. The schoolyard was so clean and new latrines were installed. There were fresh plants and trees growing to provide shade to the classrooms. It was amazing to see the changes.

We then visited the church for which our delegation from 2017 had raised the much needed funds for the community to complete. As I walked, it dawned on me how much was the same yet different. Like the school everything appeared cleaner and the dirt roads somehow had curb appeal. I realized at that moment that water wasn't just an essential source of life for each household, but it was essential for the community.

Water afforded this community time. It appeared that they used their time wisely for there was a sense of confidence and pride in not just their homes but everywhere within the community. Everybody and everything seemed to be renewed, younger, more vibrant. This was confirmed as I listened to community members share how the initial project brought water, but as a community they had strived to continue to make further improvements for all members of the La Carreta community. More time meant there were more opportunities to work or sell goods. It meant more time to help one another. It also meant that more children could go to school and university. Those children could begin to help support their families which again improves their quality of life. Like the ripples in a never ending pool of water the gift of water continues to grow in ways that we will never truly be able to understand and will reach far beyond our lifetimes.

It is a great responsibility to serve as Jesus served, a quest that can only be started by making the choice to drop a pebble in the water of life.

My momma was sitting on a bench in her yard. The trees were full of leaves and I felt like I was walking into paradise as I focused on her amongst the foliage. I can relive that moment in slow motion over and over. She raised her head and at first a look of confusion



For more information www.rootsofchange.ca

Please help by supporting this ministry of hope

2022-23 Board of Directors

Officers:

President - David Fréchette
Vice President - Rod Valdes
Secretary - Lucille Damer
Treasurer - Mel Kammerer
Project Administrator - Ken Handford
Donations - Jocelyne Durocher

Directors:

John Schile - Scholarships
Angy Spiller - Delegations
Lloyd Arcand
Charla LeBlanc

Would you like to get involved or have a talent to share?

We are always looking for people who would like to help us in our **Mission of Hope** for the Nicaraguan people.

If interested, contact us at info@rootsofchange.ca to learn more on how to get involved.

The goal for our 2023 campaign is \$140,000.

The estimated cost of printing and mailing 3 publications per year is \$2400.

For information contact Jocelyne Durocher at 780.405.8084

PayPal Giving Fund

PayPal Giving Fund Canada provides a method to make a credit card donation that eliminates the fees the Foundation would normally be charged which is between 2- 3% of the donation - and every penny counts! Search for "PayPal Giving Fund" in your browser, click on 'Donate Here' then search for Roots of Change Foundation.

PayPal Giving Fund Canada will provide a Charitable Donation Receipt for your donation and we will be notified once it is processed.

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