



Roots of Change Foundation
Source de développement
 20 Years of bringing hope to people in need
www.rootsofchange.ca



Spring Message from the Board

As spring unfolds here at home, we're reminded that growth rarely happens all at once. It begins quietly — beneath the surface — before we ever see what is taking root.

At Roots of Change, that steady growth continues in Nicaragua through our partnership with our sister organization, FUNDACCO. While we help gather resources and build connections here in Canada, they are the boots on the ground — walking alongside families, supporting students, overseeing projects, and pouring their hearts into the work every single day. What we do is deeply interconnected. It truly takes a village — across countries, across languages, across communities — united by the same hope.

This season, we're especially grateful for that partnership. For the leaders and volunteers in Nicaragua who see firsthand the impact of scholarships, internships, the beekeeping initiative, and the backpack project — and who believe in this work just as deeply as we do.

We also carry forward the vision of our founder, Father Denis Hebert, whose belief in dignity, education, and community continues to guide us. His spirit is woven into every project and every relationship. Because of his compassion and commitment, these connections were formed — and because of that foundation, they continue to grow.

As we look toward summer, our upcoming AGM, and future fundraising efforts, we are reminded that meaningful change is never the work of one person or one organization. It is built together — patiently, faithfully, and with care.

Thank you for being part of this shared story.

With gratitude,
 The Roots of Change Board



Board members of FUNDACCO, our partners and "boots on the ground" in Nicaragua, bringing shared vision to life.



Annual Roots of Change Fundraiser

Community here. Impact there.

Join us for our annual fundraiser in support of sustainable development projects in Nicaragua.

Location: Star of the North Retreat Centre
 3A St Vital Ave, St. Albert AB
 Date: Saturday, May 16 2026 6:15 p.m. start

After many wonderful years at Holy Family Parish, we're excited to gather in a new space while continuing the same spirit of community and impact. Scan the QR code below to purchase tickets or visit our website.

We hope you'll join us.



Tickets \$80

(\$40 tax receipt with each ticket purchased)

Purchase your tickets by May 1 to secure your spot.

www.rootsofchange.ca/fundraiser
 or by phone at 780.405.8084

Backpack Project Update: A New School Year Begins with Hope

In our Christmas newsletter, we shared about the Backpack Project and the difference it makes for students in rural Nicaragua. We are grateful to share that on February 5, 2026, our partner organization FUNDACCO distributed 130 school supply packages to children in the communities of Santa Fe and Las Lajitas in the municipality of San Juan de Cinco Pinos.



Luis & Harol unloading and distributing school supply packets from the back of a pickup, helping ensure students have the materials they need for school.

In many of Nicaragua's most vulnerable communities, families face significant challenges in providing even the most basic school supplies. While education is a fundamental right, many children begin the school year with little more than their determination to learn and notebooks reused from the year before.

Through the generosity of our Canadian supporters and the dedication of the team



Harol distributing a school packet to a young student.

at FUNDACCO, these 130 students were able to begin their school year with the tools they need to learn and succeed. Parents and teachers shared their deep gratitude, emphasizing how meaningful these supplies are for the children's educational development. The smiles of the children receiving their packages serve as a powerful reminder that even small acts of generosity can open doors to opportunity.

At Roots of Change, we are incredibly proud to work alongside FUNDACCO, whose commitment to the children and families in these communities continues to inspire us. Together, we are helping ensure that more children can pursue their education with dignity, hope, and the support they deserve.

As we look ahead to the 2027 school year, we invite our supporters to continue being part of this meaningful initiative. Donations toward next year's Backpack Project help ensure that even more children can start school equipped, confident, and ready to learn.

Thank you for helping turn backpacks into opportunities and generosity into hope.



Pedro and a student proudly holding a school supply packet.



Recipients of the 2026 Backpack Project proudly holding their school packets filled with essential supplies.

Scholarship Program Update - 2026

Our Scholarship Program, started by John and Raymonde Schile, continues to support talented students in Nicaragua on their journey to education and opportunity. Thanks to the dedication of our partner organization, FUNDACCO, we're able to provide these students with everything they need to thrive—though costs have risen by \$14.50 per month as programs grow and evolve.

Every donation makes a difference. Contributions to the general Scholarship Fund allow us to respond quickly to student needs, but when someone sponsors a student directly, it transforms lives in a very tangible way. Sponsorship typically requires \$840–\$1,003 CAD per year, depending on the program, and we ask sponsors to commit for the full 5–6 year duration. This kind of commitment allows us to plan ahead and ensure each student has consistent support throughout their education.

To ensure our students are fully supported for the 2027 academic year, please make donations to the fund by September. Supporting a student isn't just a donation—it's a lasting relationship and an investment in the future of a young person with big dreams.

If you'd like to learn more or sponsor a student, please contact John at john.schile@rootsofchange.ca.



Scholarship recipients from Managua and San Benito gather to learn more about the opportunities and responsibilities that come with continuing their education.

La Carreta Latrine Project

In the heart of the La Carreta community, just 18.5 kilometers from Somotillo, lives a story of resilience and hope. This small community of 134 families has long faced the harsh realities of life in Nicaragua's Dry Corridor. While their fields yield sorghum, corn, beans, sesame, and vegetables, basic necessities like clean water and sanitation have often been out of reach.

For decades, families coped without proper latrines, leaving children, pregnant women, and the elderly vulnerable to parasitic and infectious diseases. Open defecation was a daily reality, and water sources—so vital to life—were easily contaminated. The consequences were more than just inconvenience; they were threats to health, dignity, and the opportunity for a better future.

Over the years, FUNDACCO, in partnership with Roots of Change and generous donors, has worked alongside La Carreta's residents to bring change. Three water projects have already improved access to potable water for several sectors, and community committees have grown strong, guiding development efforts with determination and care.

La Carreta Latrine Project Continued



Three community workers stand beside a newly built latrine, part of a project focused on improving sanitation while restoring dignity and opportunity for families.

Building on this foundation, 2024 saw a new chapter unfold: the construction of latrines for 20 families. This simple act—providing safe, private sanitation—has transformed daily life. Children can play without fear of illness, families can eat and drink without worry, and the dignity of each household is restored. The project is more than just infrastructure; it is a step toward healthier lives, stronger communities, and the kind of hope that sparks lasting change.

Through this initiative, 100 people gained direct access to improved sanitation, while nearly 700 community members benefit indirectly. Beyond the immediate health improvements, the project fosters good hygiene practices and a culture of care that ripples through La Carreta, inspiring other communities to dream and act.



Above - Women from the community stand beside the cinderblock materials that will be used to build new latrines, part of an initiative focused on improving sanitation and dignity for local families.

Below - A worker measures the foundation of a latrine under construction, carefully preparing the base before the next stage of building.



With every latrine built, FUNDACCO and Roots of Change shine a light of hope—proof that when communities, organizations, and donors come together, real change is possible.

This July 17 to August 3, our Roots of Change delegation returns to San Ramón, where Angy Spiller—who has led humanitarian missions to Nicaragua since 2013—will lead the construction of two homes and 10 latrines alongside FUNDACCO and community members. This work continues our commitment to improving living conditions in rural communities, alongside projects like La Carreta. To learn more about joining the delegation, contact Angy at angy.spiller@rootsofchange.ca

A Spark of Hope, A Path to Change

In the quiet, rural community of El Platanal, Nicaragua, life is shaped by resilience and hard work. Families rely on subsistence farming—growing beans, corn, and wheat mostly for their own consumption—and every day is a challenge when basic needs like safe housing, clean water, and accessible healthcare are scarce. For years, families drew water from a community well by hand, and traveling five kilometers to reach the nearest health center was often impossible, especially during the rainy season.

It was in this context that Roots of Change, in partnership with FUNDACCO, began their work in El Platanal. In 2024, improved cookstoves and water filters brought immediate improvements to health and daily life. Yet, as FUNDACCO's presence revealed, one of the most pressing needs remained: safe, durable housing.

Project F122602 was born to meet that need. This initiative is not just about building homes—it's about building hope and dignity. Three families, comprising 15 people, are directly benefiting from the project. But what makes this work truly special is the role of the families themselves. They are active participants, contributing labour, ideas, and effort to create homes



Before construction: many homes in El Platanal are built with corrugated tin and fragile materials, leaving families vulnerable during hurricanes and severe storms.

that reflect their needs and aspirations. They are not passive recipients—they are co-creators of their own futures.

The homes are designed to be low-cost yet durable, built with materials that meet safety and comfort standards. Wherever possible, local labour is employed, creating opportunities and strengthening the local economy. The result is more than physical structures; it is safer, healthier homes that reduce indoor humidity, improve hygiene, and provide a sense of stability and pride for the families.

Beyond the walls of each home, the project strengthens the social fabric of El Platanal. Families, neighbors, and community leaders come together, contributing their skills and energy to a shared vision. With each home



A community worker begins laying the foundation for a new home in El Platanal.

completed, the quality of life improves—not just for the families, but for the entire community.

Project F122602 is a testament to the power of collaboration, participation, and resilience. These homes are more than shelters—they are symbols of hope, dignity, and the transformative impact that happens when communities take an active role in

shaping their own future.

Together, we are building more than houses—we are building futures.



A newly constructed home built with cinderblocks and stronger materials, providing a safer and more secure place for a family to live.

If you feel called to be part of this story, we invite you to support Project F122602 - your donation will help build safe homes, strengthen communities, and bring lasting change to families in El Platanal.

You're Invited: Roots of Change Annual General Meeting

We'd love for you to join us for the Roots of Change Annual General Meeting.

Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Online (join from anywhere!)

This is more than a formal meeting—it's a chance to hear stories from our work in Nicaragua, see the impact your support has made, and look ahead to what's next. We're also excited to welcome new voices and fresh ideas.

Email info@rootsofchange.ca by June 6 to receive the meeting link.

Help us Continue Planting Seeds of Hope

Donations now accepted by e-transfer: donations@rootsofchange.ca

PayPal Giving Fund

Donate Through PayPal Giving Fund - No Fees!

Want to donate by credit card without fees? PayPal Giving Fund Canada lets you give online **without the 2-3% processing fee** that the Foundation would normally pay - so **100% of your donation goes to the Roots of Change Foundation.**

Simply search "**PayPal Giving Fund Canada**" in your browser, click "**Donate Here,**" and search for **Roots of Change Foundation.**

You'll receive an official tax receipt from PayPal Giving Fund Canada, and we'll be notified once your gift is processed.

Every penny counts - Thank you for your support!

Get Involved - Help Shape Our Future

Roots of Change is built on the passion of its volunteers - and there's always room to grow. Whether you would like to help with a project, join a committee, or explore future leadership, we would love to hear from you.
info@rootsofchange.ca

Go Green With Us

We encourage donors to sign up for our digital newsletter! By going paperless, more of each dollar you give goes directly toward our projects—making an even greater impact where it's needed most. Request a digital newsletter by contacting donations@rootsofchange.ca

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The goal for our 2026 campaign is \$140,000. The estimated cost of printing and mailing 3 publications per year is \$2,400. For information contact Charla LeBlanc at 780.405.8084.