



Our Mission

COMMIT is a team of dedicated volunteers from Southwestern Ontario working under the umbrella of the Rotary Club of Stratford Charitable Foundation. Our team's mandate is to provide long-term support to some of the poorest villages in Nicaragua. Our focus is to provide medical clinics, and other outreach services such as clean drinking water, sanitation, eco-friendly stoves, sustainable agriculture as well as educational and social support.

*Our newsletter name
Esperanza translated means
"Hope"*

*We (COMMIT) have hope
that our efforts will improve
the lives of our friends in
Nicaragua.*

COMMIT Website:
[Click here](#)



**March 2022
Building Trip Highlights**



Canadian Outreach Medical & Mission Team (COMMIT) is a project of the Rotary Club of Stratford Charitable Foundation and works in partnership with NPH Nicaragua.

March Building Trip Highlights

Bringing a community together!

Once again we had another successful building trip. In March 2022 a team of 8, including two carpenters from Melloul Blamey Construction in Kitchener traveled to Nicaragua to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate (Front row: Davna McLean, Milla Sayavongsa, Janice Rauser, Beverly Neeb & Naomi Kuepfer. Back row: Brad Osborne, Cosmin Paiu and Doug Thompson).



An existing building in San Luis was renovated receiving a new floor, roof and paint. It will be used as a medical clinic for this very remote village. We have learned that a doctor and nurse plan to visit the village of San Luis twice weekly and will be available for consultations in the new community centre. This is amazing news for this remote village, which is almost an hour drive through the forest to the nearest hospital.

An addition was also built onto the side which will be used by the sewing co-op and others for crafts, meetings etc. The ladies of the sewing co-op have had to sew outside up until now. Heavy rainy seasons made it difficult to accomplish any sewing. Heavy blocks formed the walls, which will receive a layer of stucco and be painted a bright orange and yellow as per the wishes of the ladies of the village.



A kitchen will also be built in the community centre by the locals and used to cook daily lunches for the school children. We unfortunately ran out of time to participate; however we provided the financial resources needed to complete this work.

The villagers were delighted with their new community centre and are taking a new pride in their community. They extend a big thank you to COMMIT, the Rotary Club of Stratford and especially to Janice Rauser for all her help in raising the financial support.



Villagers mixing cement for the new Community Centre



Cosmin Paiu and Brad Osborne with a cute little helper



Team picture inside new Community Centre

Update on Well Project ... Clean water to 1,000 families!

The 6 wells drilled by COMMIT/Rotary Club of Stratford with the help of a Rotary Global Grant were visited and inspected for the final report. All but one of the wells has received water towers and electric pumps (one community has no electricity and continues to use a hand pump) and 3 have received a water distribution system throughout parts of the community. Discussions were held about how to improve the well projects and their functioning (for example one community wanted the tank moved to higher ground to extend the distribution system) and the possibility of installing another well in San Luis (it is actually two villages and very spread out) and a larger water tower for the village of Nandarola. Remarkable that we take a glass of water out of our tap for granted when there are people in North America that do not have that basic right.



Recycling Project ... Combatting plastic and burned garbage going into the Environment!

In many rural areas of Nicaragua plastic is not recycled and garbage is burned because it is not collected. Janice, on her last trip started a recycling project in the schools and through our garden project we are encouraging the composting of most garbage.

Visits were made to the 6 schools that participated in a recycling challenge. Prizes were awarded and pinatas distributed to all schools participating. A meeting was held with the Director of the School Board to discuss future needs and how COMMIT can play a role. On this occasion a replacement printer was needed and provided for one that was broken. Imagine one printer for the whole school district!



A meeting was held with COMMIT and government officials to discuss the future of COMMIT and its work in Nicaragua. It was a very successful and productive meeting and both Doug and Janice felt the government will support and recognize COMMIT as a valuable partner in Nicaragua. We are very thankful to be able to continue our work in the remote villages of Nicaragua.

Music to our ears!

We spent time at two schools helping to build their music program, teaching recorder and giving out donated instruments. Jhonny will continue the music program in our absence and support the teachers where needed. COMMIT Team members Beverly Neeb, who started the program and David Knoppert, have offered to help financially to help continue this project. Music plays an important part in all our lives and having the basics in school is important. We even recognized a few virtuosos.



Two very enthusiastic students practising along the fence line at the school

Bev Neeb & Jhonny Flores, translator and fellow musician working in the classroom

A successful project in organic sustainable farming

A visit was made to the village of Nandarola and La Vigia to check on the progress of the Garden Project, including a new beehive project that was recently started. The Team enjoyed delicious treats of corn flour based bread and donuts baked by local families. As well, we heard touching testimonials and words of appreciation from several local farmers, benefiting from this project and how it has changed their lives and giving hope to mediocrity. All their work is done by hand with the exception of an electric corn grinder, which COMMIT helped purchase for the village. Thanks to Pat & Jane Feryn and Jimmy Espinoza, local agronomist for starting this most successful project. This is a shining example of regenerative farming that works. The project is now three teams strong, operating in two villages, co-operative in nature, with many women involved. An example of social and gender equality and a hand up not a hand out.



Jimmy & Doug checking out the new corn mill project in Nandarola



Visiting the Garden Project in Nandarola



Beehive Project



Stove Project Update

Impacting Health, Gender Equality and Global Warming

It is now 1 year since the cross Canada virtual bike ride was completed. We had to wait until July 2021 to begin the process of applying for a Rotary Global Grant. The initial submission was made to Rotary near the end of 2021. After almost three months we did hear back, in March. More detailed information about the training for the expert stove builders was required for the Grant Application. Training is a weeklong process, followed by mentoring before a person is qualified for stove building.

We hope to hear from Rotary soon to let us know if the Grant Application is successful. Meanwhile we do need to wait. If successful the money for Phase 1 of building will be almost tripled. Hopefully we will be able to begin this summer. That would be perfect timing for a planned trip to Nicaragua in October.

As soon as we hear whether we were successful with the Grant Application we will inform all of our supporters.

Our overall goal is still to build up to 800 eco-stoves in several communities to benefit the health, social and gender equality of the participants and reduce global warming in a very impactful manner.

David Knoppert

October 2022 Mission Objectives

A Chance to Make a Difference

This October COMMIT/Rotary group plans to once again travel to Nicaragua on a mission trip. The main purpose of the trip is to send down a 40-foot container and distribute the contents, start the build on our eco-friendly stove project and check on our other projects above.

We also plan on this trip is to build a house for a family. We are looking for skilled labourers to join our team to help build this family a home. Please let us know if you would like to help out.

The trip is from October 20 to November 5, 2022 at a cost of \$2,200 per person. You will receive a tax receipt for the entire amount and will have an adventure of a lifetime while helping to promote social equality in Nicaragua. We also need to raise \$10,000 for this build.

If you are interested in joining the team or have any questions please contact Janice Rauser at Janice.e.rauser@gmail.com

Team Member Highlight

Jimmy Espinoza

I first met Jimmy 8 years ago when we went on a Mission trip with an American mission group from the USA to Eastern Nicaragua. He was a translator and stood out as being tall and muscular, very fluent in English-Spanish, knowledgeable and a great communicator. We subsequently hired him to join our team as a translator. We also found out he was married, had a son (and now also a daughter) and ran his own organic farm about 2 hours away. It came time to start our farming project as we felt we could improve farming methods in the area (mainly subsistence farming on poor soil), we were not getting anywhere with the farmers (who are you as foreigners to tell us how to farm land we have lived on and farmed all our lives?). We visited Jimmy's home and he showed us his organic farm, his passion for farming and how money could be made with the right expertise. We knew we had to bring him on our Garden Team, which Pat, Jane and Tessa Feryn were developing, and at the first community meeting he had the villagers convinced they could improve their operation and they could actually make money. That passion and knowledge and supervision has allowed our Garden Project to prosper, expand and give hope to the farmers for a better life. We have enjoyed his friendship, his easy demeanour but most of all his passion in working with the farmers and the respect he gains from all. Keep up the good work Jimmy and thank you for all your great work!



Jimmy with Farmers in Nandarola



Jimmy's Family

Fundraising Activities

Golf Tournament



Proceeds to support our numerous projects in Nicaragua to reduce poverty, increase health and promote gender equality

**SATURDAY
June 4, 2022**

Shotgun start at 9am with scramble format

**RIVER VALLEY
GOLF COURSE
St. Marys**

\$120 Per Golfer
Includes partial tax receipt

18 Holes with cart, lunch, prizes, ball toss and silent auction

Additional meals can also be purchased

To register contact:

Janice Rauser
Janice.e.rauser@gmail.com



Coffee Fundraiser

Our coffee sales have been underway since May 2021. We have sent just over \$3,700 to Nicaragua to buy eco-stoves.

Patrick's Beans continues to be an excellent partner for us. We have had a great response to his many different selections of tea and types of roasted coffee.

We now have a consistent order every two months. We have had nine of our customers take advantage of the "BUY 10 GET THE ELEVENTH FREE". If you are interested in supporting our fundraiser and satisfying your caffeine urges you can contact Mark or Jo-Anne Edlund at jmedlund85@gmail.com in the London area. If you live in the Stratford area contact Kim Neeb at kim.neeb58@gmail.com. We offer free delivery within these cities.

Mark Edlund

Self-appointed VP of Regional Sales

COMMIT Projects

How you can help! Its simple DONATE!

COMMIT Website: <http://commitwithnphnicaragua.simplesite.com/>

For more information or to donate please email:

commitnphnicaragua@gmail.com

Over the past ten years, COMMIT has delivered more than \$500,000 in supplies, equipment and aid to Nicaragua, including a bus to transport less fortunate children to a better education, disaster and COVID relief and a school nutritional meal program at NPH. Even with the challenges created by the COVID pandemic and difficult political times we have been able to continue all the projects mentioned in this newsletter and we are committed to continuing our work and support in Nicaragua. We have proven we can make a difference and will not walk away.

Our focus over the next 3 to 5 years is to:

- Initiate our eco-friendly stove project in six villages (800 stoves) with accompanying reforestation project (3,000 trees) and related environmental spinoffs; and if possible, obtain a Rotary global grant that may triple the number of installations,
- Expand our composting and garden project to other villages,
- Explore other microeconomic projects with loans to villages that through good planning can demonstrate sustainability and scalability (expand) and a way forward to decrease poverty,
- Continue to ship containers with desperately needed supplies and equipment,
- Continue to financially support natural disasters, COVID and other emergency needs.

Thank you to all our supporters from the COMMIT Team and the Rotary Club of Stratford.