



Esperanza

Newsletter

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.



Fall Mission Trip

***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](#)

Rotary 
Club of Stratford
Charitable Foundation

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

Fall Mission Trip Highlights

This fall we returned once again to Nicaragua to work on our projects and help a family build a home. There were six of us, a doctor, a nurse, a retired farmer, a retired social worker, a student and one skilled laborer, a carpenter. Our diverse group of people had one goal in mind and that was to work hard, nevermind that most of us had very little building experience. But that didn't stop us from rolling up our sleeves and getting down to work. Thankfully we had Dave Meinen who owns his own company here in the Stratford area, plus two hired construction workers from Rivas to lead the pack. We also hired a friend and translator whom we had worked with on previous trips, as well as my godson Orlando's family to help with the work.

The family had started to build their home five years ago, but due to lack of funds had only succeeded in getting the walls to about waist high. Through personal donations and sponsors, we committed to helping the family build as much of the house as possible within our budget. Thanks to Rauser Quality Build and Dave Meinen construction for your generous donations towards this project, as well as the other donors. The work was hard and grueling, everything done by manual labor. We rented a cement mixer to lighten the load, but the concrete still had to be carried in buckets or in wheelbarrows. At the end of our trip the walls were up and ready for the roof to go on, a huge amount of work completed. We had so much fun working together, laughing and joking but always working hard. What a privilege to spend time with these hardworking Nicaraguense. Edgar as a pastor now has space to hold church meetings at his house, as well as store equipment for COMMIT. What a blessing.

Meetings were held with the mayor of Nandaime and a government official about our shipping container. We are excited to announce that it will finally get its sea legs in March, arriving just in time for our May team to distribute. What an honor to give the people of the Nandaime area much needed equipment and supplies for the hospitals as well as for the surrounding villages.

We also spent time checking up on our various projects, meeting with Rotary, meeting with the heads of the hospital and taking a tour, as well as enjoying a pinata afternoon with the children of NPH. There is something heartwarming about watching children dance and laugh around a pinata, and then pounce when the anticipated candies rain to the floor. I will never tire of watching this, so precious.

Fall Mission Trip

As all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, we also did a couple of outings; Granada with a city and island tour and a walk around the Mombacho volcano cloud forest. Nicaragua is such a breathtaking country and the people are simply beautiful. We also had the privilege of attending the wedding of Bryan and Dina- such a fun experience. All in all, a great and successful trip.

Janice Rauser- Co-lead and Co-Founder of COMMIT

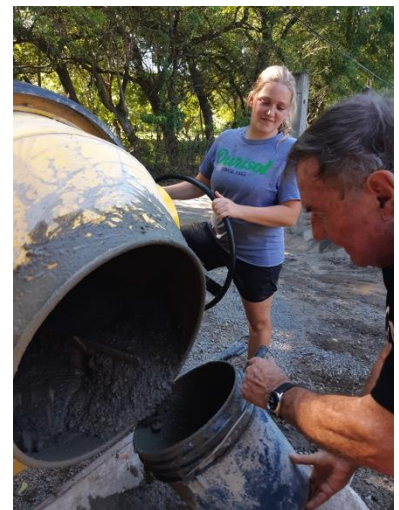
If you want an experience like no other, sign up for our upcoming trip May 4-May 20 2023. We have lots of plans for this trip and need a wide variety of talents

- Sewers- we plan to start a sewing co-op in Casa de Piedra- 15 interested ladies want to learn
- Builders- we plan to renovate a few buildings to be used for sewing and Doctors
- Builders- we plan to start our eco-friendly stove project- we also need lay people to help with the stove building, mix concrete, carry supplies etc
- People to help with the agriculture project start up in Casa de Piedra
- People to sort through container boxes of supplies and help with distribution

Contact me for more information and cost- janice.e.rauser@gmail.com



Piñata Fun



Makayla Meinen & Dave Meinen
Mixing Cement



Front Row L to R: Jhonny Flores, Stephen Chandler, Reynaldo Gonzalez, and Janice Rauser
 Back Row L to R: Edgar Avila, Manuel, Raquel Gonzalez, Kevin Gonzalez, Yamil Gonzalez, Kim Neeb, Orlando Gonzalez, Doug Thompson and Efrain Gonzalez



Doug Thompson, Isabella Doctora, Dr. Espinoza (Hospital Director) and Janice Rauser



Janice Rauser, Kim Neeb, Doug Thompson and Stephen Chandler



Makayla Meinen, Kim Neeb, Janice Rauser, Dina Avila (Bride), Bryan Avila (Groom), Doug Thompson, Stephen Chandler and David Meinen



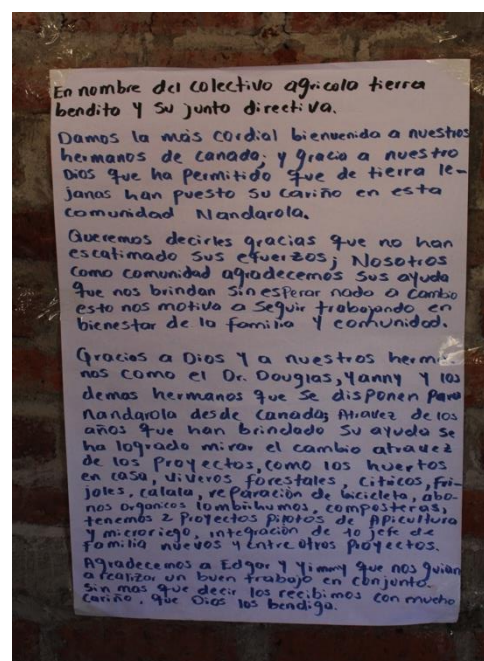
In the Village of Casa de Piedra
 Knitted dolls donated by Rita Menkveld

Making a Difference

Every NGO and organization that works in a developing country makes a difference and are to be commended. Our difference is that we stay in one area, collaborate with the people, develop an infrastructure to work more effectively and as such invest in a community and its various needs. Some ideas are ours, some are theirs but the importance is working together. It takes years to build up that trust and relationship. Perhaps they best express this when they celebrated our success together at a visit in March and posted this on the wall. Basically, it says thank you. And thanks to God for our work together.

Cleaner cooking at last!

We hope to start our stove project by May of next year in the first of 3 stages to build 800+ ecofriendly stoves for families to replace the 3-point inefficient open fire cooking stoves they are now using. They contaminate and cause burns and health hazards especially to women and children that cook around them. They pollute the environment to the equivalent of one gas powered car and increase Global Warming and women /children inequality. Women and children have to spend extra time gathering firewood and cooking that could be spent in more useful and productive time. We are combining this project with more efficient pots and pans and cooking methods and with a tree planting operation for sustainability. We have piloted the project; input was very positive and everyone is eagerly waiting for the project to start. And we are employing local people to build these stoves at a fair wage. I know some of you are asking why this has taken so long but lots of hoops to jump through beyond our control.



Making a Difference

Food Security - “our Grow Op”

Our garden project started by Pat and Jane Feryn and daughter Tess is doing very well. Composting and new techniques have enabled farmers to grow a variety of crops and sell some to their economic benefit. Three farming cooperatives are operating now in two villages and they look after each other if illness or disability occurs providing their own social net. We have provided microloans to buy seeds and equipment with a default rate of zero and one group has been provided with a microloan to buy land they were otherwise in danger of losing to further increase their operation. No other financing opportunities than our microloans are available to these farmers and thus very little chance to get ahead. We are looking to expand the operation further to other villages.

We also have a garden project going at NPH (orphanage where we stay) growing Grenadines (melons) and we are hoping to expand this to three other areas on their property. We have a very active bee/honey operation with twenty hives at NPH reaping a lot of honey for sale and have started two more bee operations in the village of Nandarola. All of this is under the direct supervision of our coordinator Edgar and agronomist Jimmy whom we have described in our previous newsletters and who have been invaluable in carrying out our projects in our absence.

Best Doug



Fruits of our Labour

Why do we need your help!

We have a wish list of requests. We have had requests from the hospital to build accommodation for their newly graduated doctors to reside in remote villages for a period of time as part of their training and to provide medical care to that underserved area. The hospital has requested equipment including a portable ultrasound machine for maternal/prenatal care in remote villages, and a pressurized canister to hold liquid nitrogen for the treatment of cervical cancer, which is prevalent in their country. They do not have HPV vaccinations for prevention of this problem as we do in Canada. The government locally has also asked for infrastructure (Pumps and Water Towers) for two more wells they have drilled in remote areas. In addition we hope to expand our garden and sewing projects to other villages and respond to other requests in education etc. that always come our way. This costs out about \$38,000 USD. Our Golf Tournament and Fashion Show fundraisers have been very successful this year and we thank all those who have participated. But they barely provide for our present projects and expenses, so your generous donation will help us reach our goal and provide for the requests below in continuing the work we do to better their lives.

Thank you everyone for your continued support.

Sincerely The COMMIT Team/Rotary Club of Stratford

US Dollars

- Liquid nitrogen canister \$1,000
- Portable Ultrasound Machine \$10,000
- Hospital medical supplies & minor equipment \$1,500
- Pumps & water towers for two more wells \$5,500
- School supplies, textbooks and music program \$2,000
- Expand Garden Project to another village \$3,000
- Contracted services for agronomist and project manager in Nicaragua \$10,000
- Sewing project start up \$1,000
- Fix up building for sewing co-op Casa de Piedra \$2,000
- Construction of a doctor's residence in the remote village of Camerones \$2,000

Mary O'Rourke's Ride to Nandarola

On March 1st of this year, I decided to take another stationary bike ride as a fundraiser for COMMIT.

My first ride was to Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories (6,680 kms), and raised \$6,700. I loved the daily workout.

This time I decided to ride 5,800 kms from Stratford, Ontario to Nandarola, Nicaragua, and asked almost everyone I knew in Canada and USA to sponsor the ride at a rate of \$0.01 per kilometer. I anticipated it would take at least 7 months to complete.

So, here we are at the end of November and I am still happily on my way. Many things have happened that delayed my daily ride, but I have been able to complete 3,888 kms to date. So, I am 1,912 kms short of my destination and if I can ride 30 kms a day, I could get there in 64 days. And, if I were actually on the ground & riding the roads, I would now be about 100 kms north of Mexico City.

PLEASE sponsor my ride - a \$58.00 commitment. If you can, please email me:

patandmaryorourke@gmail.com

I will send updates on progress and at the completion of my trip, details on how to send a cheque or e-transfer to the Rotary Club of Stratford and receive a tax receipt.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Thanks in advance.

Mary



1st Time COMMIT Mission

I have just returned from my 1st COMMIT mission trip in Nicaragua. This was primarily a building trip and the work was gruelling, but so rewarding. I found enjoyment in the humour of some of the local workers as we worked together. Yamil particularly liked to play tricks on me. Despite my very, very limited Spanish and their non-existent English we were all still able to communicate. I was able to have one on one conversations with a few people and we managed to understand each other. It is good to learn their life stories.

While visiting a couple of the villages my eyes saw 1st hand how very poor they are and how grateful for what COMMIT has done for/with them. Seeing an empty building in La Piedra I was inspired to begin a sewing project with the women there. My suggestion seemed to be well received so hopefully next spring we can "get sewing" with the ladies. On that note - I will accept any sewing related articles - machines, fabrics, threads, needles, scissors, measuring tapes - EVERYTHING - to be put to good use in a needy village.

Thank you COMMIT (and Rotary) for allowing me this very worthwhile and wonderful experience. I can't wait to go back again.

Kim Neeb



Raquel Gonzalez & Kim Neeb

Music Program

I have often said that every Nicaraguan child is born with a music gene. When COMMIT is in Nicaragua we are always delighted to see how the children, even the smallest ones, move and dance as soon as they hear music. There is no sitting still for them! It is such fun to watch.

COMMIT is trying to build on this love of music and rhythm by starting a small music program in a couple villages we visit on a regular basis. It is heartwarming to be so welcomed by the students who run out of their classrooms to greet us when we arrive.

We have been taking recorders to the country for many years but if there is no one to teach the children, not much happens after we leave. However, we are fortunate to have Jhonny, a Nicaraguan who works with us on our construction projects. But lucky for us, he is also a teacher and a musician. So we have hired him to visit the schools on a regular basis to help the children learn some basic music skills such as reading notes and rhythms and applying these to making beautiful music with their recorders and their voices.

If any of you play an instrument, or sing, or just like to hum along to your favourite song, you know what joy music can bring. So providing some musical training is a small gift to give these children who have so little.

Beverly Neeb



Beverly Neeb Teaching School Children

COMMIT Projects

Over the past ten years, COMMIT has delivered more than \$500,000 in supplies, equipment and financial support to several remote villages and hospitals in Nicaragua which includes microeconomic start up support. Even with the challenges created by the COVID pandemic and difficult political times, we are committed to continue our work and support in Nicaragua. Our focus this year relates to the wish list of our villages, hospital and their medical teams, NPH, village schools and municipalities as outlined previously. Our goal is \$38,000; however whatever money we raise will be put towards these projects. Please help us to make their lives better.

Thank you

Merry Christmas and Happy New!

For more information please email:

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

