



# insider

**Volunteer Update  
August, 2010**

Interfaith Service to Latin America      270 Page Street West      Saint Paul, MN 55107  
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*Yes, it is time again to  
Celebrate*  
**An evening  
with Mama  
Chunga**

**Nicaraguan-style  
food & fun!  
Reconnect with  
ISLA friends!**

**Sat., Sept. 25, 5-9 pm**

*At the Assembly hall of  
First United Church of Christ (UCC),  
300 Union St., Northfield, MN*

**Silent auction preview 5:00 pm** *(Dinner program follows)*  
*Nicaraguan artwork, crafts, furniture, local services, etc.*

**Suggested donation \$25 per person (\$10 student)**

*Order tickets now or further information:*

**ISLA, 270 Page St. W., Saint Paul, MN 55107**

**Or Jon at 612-819-8877**

ISLA'S mission is to partner with communities in Latin America through health, education and construction programs to become self-sustainable.

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**Education Program Director**

**Dan Kramer**

**Construction Program Director**

**Dave Dexter,**

**Medical Program Director**

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**Administrative Director**

**Jon Kerr**

**Program Coordinator in Jalapa**

**Javier Eduardo Aguilar Cordoba**

## ISLA stoves project smokes out healthier Jalapa homes

Smiles on residents' faces told the story as well as the physical differences in kitchens that once were full of smoky haze.

A recent tour of the first nine Jalapa homes receiving more fuel-efficient and ventilated stoves through a pilot project funded by the Foldcraft Foundation left little

doubt that dreams were being fulfilled.

"Estoy muy satisfecho," said one beaming woman, describing how her new stove both saved her money and possibly was saving the lives of family members exposed to



**Jalapa residents are breathing and living easier thanks to new, fuel-efficient stoves that send smoke outside their homes. Photo by Jon Kerr**

# *New ISLAers come from across the country*

## **March trip includes active Idaho nursing program contingent**

**By Peggy Wasserman**

ISLA's March 2010 trip was a dream that became a reality for myself, my colleague Bev Kloepfer and four baccalaureate nursing students from the Lewis & Clark State College, Idaho. Preparation began one year prior with discussions amongst college faculty and administrators about the implications of college nursing students participating in an international humanitarian project.

Being from a small Idaho town, I felt that exposing students to this opportunity would provide them with a realistic and life-changing perspective of world issues. I was not disappointed.

The Idaho group worked closely with other ISLA volunteers from Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio and Montana. They went to schools and screened for vision problems, referring children with abnormal tests to local medical providers.

The school children also received dental hygiene education and toothbrushes that had been donated by Idaho dentists and orthodontists. Nicaraguan interpreters at the schools were crucial, although the bits of choppy Spanish spoken by the Idahoans provided Jalapa locals with a great deal of entertainment.



**Jalapa youth proudly displayed toothbrushes and other health items distributed to them by Idaho nurses during the March trip. Photo by Peg Wasserman**



**ISLA veteran surgeon Dr. Tom Chisholm, center, was assisted by Idaho nursing students Scarlet Hazzard, left, and Elizabeth Karkoski, right, during March procedures on Jalapa patients.**

Additionally, students helped volunteering surgeon Tom perform surgeries and procedures, and assisted nurse practitioners with women's exams. The group was impressed with the warm hospitality of Jalapan families and with their general interest in maintaining health: as nurses walked through the barrios wearing stethoscopes, they were immediately recognized as medical providers and were invited into homes to screen for high blood pressure, asthma and address other health issues.

As a student stated, "this was one fantastic trip". Plans are to continue to encourage student involvement, and in the future bring additional toothbrushes & reading glasses, and provide blood pressure screening equipment for local Red Cross workers.

**Peggy Wasserman is a new ISLA board member in addition to being a certified nurse and nursing instructor.**



# Library visit yields interesting results

By Anne Morton

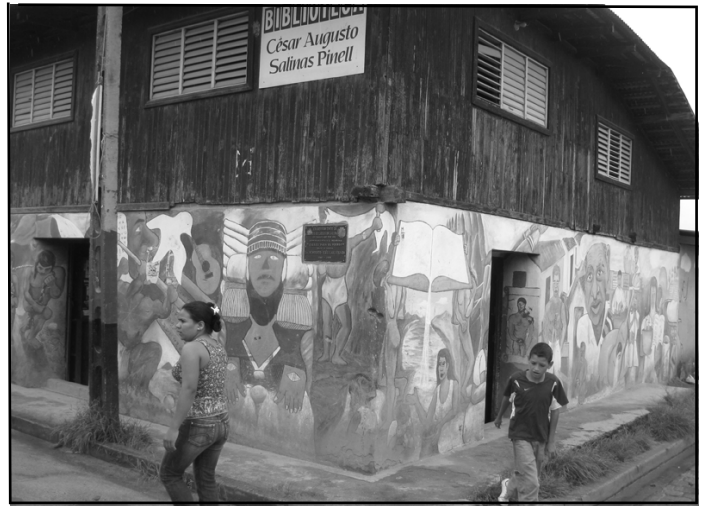
During the June mission trip to Jalapa this year, I was directed by the Education Committee to find answers to certain questions concerning the Jalapa library and provide feedback to the committee. Jon Kerr and I met with the two librarians and then went back another time.

The library is open M-F from 8-12 am and 2-5 pm. The only time it isn't open is when the librarians have a meeting in Ocotal. The library is funded by the Institute of Culture in Nicaragua. They receive their books from the National Library in Managua. There are no restrictions on the books, and they will give ISLA a copy of a list of books they need.

Currently the library is used by elementary, high school and college students. In addition, they have a program of reading for elementary students. People from Honduras also use the library. Reference books are the most read books. Professional English books are read a little. The library does have control of their books. If a person is from Jalapa, they would let them take books home. In order to do this, they need to deposit a national ID.

Jon and I met with Steve Carpenter, a Peace Corps volunteer, who is teaching English at INAJAL. The high school students are learning how to read in English. He is interested in getting easy children's books in English which have many pictures and also picture dictionaries in English. Students could read these books in the library and/or take them home. Steve said that he would work on a grant, and we said that ISLA would help him. If Steve gets a grant, the Peace Corps would match our funds. Our biggest problem is shipping of the books.

The library has real potential to be used as a community center. Mothers already bring their toddlers there. In order



**Jalapa's library looks bright and colorful from the outside at a busy street corner.**



**But on the inside it is dark, with half-full shelves carrying old books, no computers and limited hopes for improvement.**

to do this, some repairs are needed. The lights don't work and the library needs more shelves for their books. Also, the stairs going up to the second floor need to be repaired so they are accessible to children. Currently they don't have computers and don't share between libraries.

Jon and I were encouraged by our visits and felt that the library in Jalapa would be a good project for ISLA. This project would benefit both the students and the community.

## Stoves cont'd from P. 1



**At first glance, the new stoves look similar to old - a strength in the eyes of Jalapeno cooks. Photos by Jon Kerr**

asthma and other respiratory ailments with the old, smoky stove.

The homeowners who helped construct the stoves and paid for part of the cement, sand and horse dung mix themselves were also thrilled that the end product built for under \$50 apiece rivaled cooking results from their old stoves. This comes despite using less wood and thus reducing the deforestation of surrounding Jalapa hillsides.

"We've found that fires can burn even hotter and boil water faster with less wood," said Don Pedro, a Jalapa area trainer hired by ISLA to teach construction to the first round of stove

recipients. They will be required to help train others in their community.

Need for the project was first identified from community health surveys done by St. Olaf students showing respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, to be one of Jalapa's greatest public health issues.

First recipients of this round of stove construction were identified during March, 2010 trip and home to home visits by Idaho student nurses.

ISLA plans to continue assisting in construction of the stoves as long as funds remain- with another 16 now underway with volunteering families in another area of Jalapa.

ISLA  
270 Page Street W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55107

# Jalapa wants you!

And it's never too late!



**Trips to  
Nicaragua  
have  
openings  
now through  
next June!**

*Be part of medical, construction and  
education programs helping build a better  
future for our friends!*

**More information, dates and  
applications available on-line**

***www.isla.cc***



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a difference!**

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\$100, or \$200  
suggested) will always  
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