



insider

Volunteer Update
April, 2014

Interfaith Service to Latin America 270 W. Page Street Saint Paul, MN 55107
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Kay Kramer leads a class of pre-schoolers in a learning game at the Jalapa library. Upper right, Don Pavek works on a two-room Pasmata school that was virtually completed during the January ISLA trip to Jalapa.

Building ISLA's future on experience and dreams

January teams in recent years have been interesting mixes of ages and individual goals - though with everyone sharing ISLA's bigger goals of aiding and working with Nicaragua and the Jalapa community.

This may never have been more true than this year, with the combination of some of ISLA's most veteran trip participants and St. Olaf students getting their first international experiences while

dreaming of their future roles in bettering the world.

Participants Rita Wilson, Don Pavek, Bill and Lu Lindstrom, Wayne Kivell, Dan and Kay Kramer all have likely logged trips to Nicaragua in double figures - going nearly all the way back to ISLA's founding in the early 1990's. Their efforts, along with others, have helped change the face of Jalapa and also the relationship between two very different cultures.

EXPERIENCE/DREAMS to P. 2

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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Letter from the Chair: ISLA programs keep springing forward

Dear Friends of ISLA,

Happy Spring! I am happy to say that the work of ISLA continues in traditional ways as well as some new ones. For example, the January 2015 team helped to build a school at Pasmata and celebrated the traditional January ceremony with our scholarship students.

In May 2014, Peggy Wasserman's delegation of amazing Idaho nursing students once again partnered with the nursing students at Martín Lutero Colegio.

Our partnership continues with the Jalapa War Veterans via Lisa Fitzgerald's ongoing photography project, ISLA's support of the prosthetics program, and frequent meetings and celebrations at the newly refurbished Veteran's Center. We honor these commitments and continue these traditions that

have been part of ISLA's work for many years.

We are also exploring new and useful ways to engage with our partners in Jalapa and beyond. For example, in December 2014, Jon led a small but intrepid team on a new trip to participate in La Purísima holiday and to explore traditional medicine on Ometepe.

In July 2014, my 14-year-old daughter and I participated in the first-ever Family trip and it was great! We played games in Spanglish with young Jalapeños every morning at the Jalapa Library, helped to finish the hoop house garden at Casa Materna, and played soccer with a group from Casa Adolescencia. These explorations promise to add new dimensions to our relationship with Nicaragua.



ISLA volunteers helped with January scholarship distribution to 85 deserving Jalapa students.

During the July trip, I visited with many of our scholarship students, their families and community leaders to talk and listen about the ISLA Scholarships Program. It was deeply moving to hear the difference that our support makes to the people of Jalapa.

The ISLA Scholarships Program is currently supporting 113 high school students and 13 college students in Jalapa and nearby

communities, thanks to the generosity of our donors.

This year's cohort includes 20 new high school scholars, chosen by their schools and communities.

I am grateful to be part of this good work and excited to return to Jalapa with the July 2015 trip to visit once again with our becados, their families and communities.

I hope you will join us!
Cecily Brown
ISLA Board Chair

Experience/dreams cont'd from P. 1

Stories of pushing the team bus across flooded rivers are as common as the satisfaction of seeing

Jalapa change from a war-torn community and of seeing Nicaraguan friends' lives improve.



Oles in full garb after an experience in the Jalapa hospital operating room.

That needs still remain is what both keeps them coming and what has also brought a new generation of ISLA visitor.

St. Olaf students interest in public health in both the U.S. and Nicaragua is the official draw. But the realization that the world is just a collection of neighbors will hopefully bring them back. The ISLA dream remains alive.

Remember ISLA in your giving legacy!



With your help ISLA has already made a dramatic difference in the lives of the people of Jalapa and other Nicaraguans. As we sustain and build on those efforts your ongoing support is more important than ever. Please consider the positive impact your legacy gifts, bequests by will or trust, IRA, life insurance or other benefit plans could make through ISLA. Contact your planner or we can help find qualified expert advice.

For more info:

jon@isla.cc or 612-819-8877

ISLA team and friends pass Pasmata pop quiz

New construction technique still relies on old-fashioned teamwork & sweat

Pre-fab doesn't always pop together simply, as the January ISLA team found out under the hot Nicaraguan sun. But with a little help from friends and experienced leadership from Northfield contractor Don Pavek, the team pulled off the semi-miraculous and put together a badly-needed two-room school

in addition for students of the grateful community of Pasmata. The new construction approach did save both time and money, said Pavek, acknowledging he had some concerns about the 125-pound weight of each block. "But we got our young guys in there lifting and everybody pulled



January team members used a pre-fab block assembly approach and physical labor to virtually complete a two-room school in little over a week.

together. It was pretty slick in the end after we got everything figured out," said Pavek.

Old-fashioned skills of measuring and leveling were still key to the effort - as well as teamwork. Both U.S. and

Nicaraguan workers were sweating side-by-side. But all enjoyed both companionship and a sense of satisfaction knowing that their work was going toward building a better future for local school children.

Oles discover public health!



St. Olaf students on the January trip got exposure to a variety of public health programs including infant physical therapy (above) and the internal workings of Jalapa Hospital. (below)



Bill Lindstrom makes preparations for a cement pour that is all that is needed to complete walls in the two-room school after blocks are assembled.

Working with local Nicaraguans, the project was faster and cheaper than expected.



The nearly complete project is missing just a few roof sections and completion of floor work before students can move in.



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