

Learning Center Visits

Learning Center Report: La Gateada, Acoyapa, Juigalpa, San Benito, Ocotal, Somoto and Estelí

By Moises Guillen & Learning Center Volunteers

In seeking how to provide better assistance to the WNP Learning Center network, site visits have been included as part of the program. We are looking at not only what needs the Learning Centers have, but also how they are working, what activities and classes they are carrying out and how they are able to budget this into their annual expenses.

Volunteerism is the key to the Learning Centers Coordinators success and during these visits it was amazing to observe how the local coordinators have kept their projects going.

I would like to share with you four examples that illustrate how Learning Center activities are carried on during the year.

La Gateada Learning Center Solidaridad (about 221 kms from Managua) was having basic sewing classes from February to August and all during the year the Solidaridad Center is having different hand craft workshops. Also they are opening the Learning Center building as a place to stay for pregnant mothers from far away communities that are getting close to the time of delivery for their baby and need to be in town when their labor time comes. During their stay, the ladies learned how to make different handcraft products focusing on children's items for their babies. The women learned that children's items have a good market which introduced ways for them to earn some income while waiting for the delivery. Then after the delivery this new skill becomes a good way to get some income in the future for their own home. The Solidaridad Learning Center receives about 60 pregnant women per year.



LC's staff in La Gateada receiving sewing materials they were happy and grateful with the donation they needed knitting and embroidery materials these materials just came on time.



Like most of our Learning Centers, the local coordinators collaborate with local institutions in how to facilitate and organize different educational and health programs for the town of La Gateada. The La Gateada Learning Center works with 15 children with special needs. They do fund raising to help provide three social activities for them during the year. The first activity takes place at the beginning of the school year during the welcome of first day of classes, the second activity in June for children's day and third is December for Christmas day.

The La Gateada Learning Center will host one of the three Learning Center Trek workshops in February 2013. Community members from the Acoyapa and Juigalpa Learning Centers will go and share this workshop experience in La Gateada with the volunteers from Wisconsin.

WNP provides sewing machine maintenances service to the machines during the Learning Center site visits as well.

Learning Center Visits

Learning Centers are supplied with material donations from Wisconsin. When shipments arrive to the Managua Office, some Learning Centers can come to the office and pick up sewing materials and sewing machine donations. When WNP has a site visit, we also deliver supplies of some sewing materials as well.

Learning Centers listed in Acoyapa, Chontales and activities:

Zulema Duarte: Sewing classes, bakery and cooking.

Zulema Duarte LC's staff & receiving sewing material boxes.



Ladies learning how clean and oil sewing machines from Chester. Zulema Duarte Learning Center Acoyapa



Instituto San Sebastian: Sewing classes for students of high school during the week and adults on Saturday.

Creacion y Elegancia: Sewing classes and hand craft classes.

Learning Center listed in Juigalpa, Chontales and activities:

Eddy Alonso: Sewing classes and hand craft classes.

Monte Horeb: Sewing classes and hand craft classes.

Santa Clara: not currently active, will be relocated in Juigalpa.

Luz y Esperanza: Sewing and handcraft classes.

North visits Ocotal, Somoto and Estelí.

Learning Center listed in San Benito and activities.

Escuela Sagrado Corazon de Jesus: Hand craft classes, working with children with special needs, sewing, cooking classes, bakery, and gardening.



Monte Horeb LC's coordinator with Santos Martinez and Yamileth Alvarado volunteers from Juigalpa and sewing supplies boxes.



Learning Center Visits

Sagrado Corazon de Jesus students in hand craft activity.



Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Learning Center teacher with students and one of the girl students to the right.



Eddy Alonso LC's student with sewing supplies boxes.



Student trying sewing machine after Chester Espinoza and Moises Guillen Managua Office staff cleaned and oiled and made adjustments.



Thanks to Chester for clean and oil the sewing machine during LC's visits before Moises Guillen made the necessaries adjustments to finish the sewing machine maintenances.



Learning Center Visits

Ocotal: The Casa de la Mujer Learning Center in Ocotal is another example how Learning Center Coordinators encourage people in the community to become volunteers. Looking at the building, one would not imagine it holds about 100 students each week, including weekends as well.



Socorro Torrez is the Ocotal Learning Center Coordinator. In addition to keeping the sewing, bakery and beauty classes going at the Ocotal center, she also travels to three different rural communities; Susucayan, Jicaro and Muyuca in the country side of Ocotal.



Here Socorro is picking up 3 treadle sewing machines from the Managua Office for the Learning Center.

Not having funds for transportation, Socorro asks for rides from other organizations that have a presence in those communities to take her with them in their vehicles. She has cultivated good relationships so that most the time she does not even need to ask for a ride, they just stop so she gets into the vehicles. Sometimes this works out well and other times it is hard for her to get transportation as she needs to expend a lot time waiting and sometimes she needs to sleep overnight in those communities.

When she gets some funds for materials for their different classes or programs, she likes to share with those surrounding communities, this is one of the ways to encourage others and let them know that someone is concerned about them. When she does not have materials for their classes in those communities, even with their lack of economic resources, people like to support her so they buy their own materials as they are able to keep the classes going. They are grateful with Socorro and in this way both are proud of themselves as they make things work somehow.

50 % of the ladies and gentlemen that come to Casa de La Mujer in Ocotal come from communities around Ocotal looking for new skills to improve their lives.

Learning Center Visits

Estelí: We feel it is very important to try and support the Learning Centers in different ways that will help to keep activities and opportunities available and growing. For example, in Estelí, the Gotita de Amor Preschool is working on having Learning Center classes. 10 girls and women were very happy to receive Suyen Cerda (Jewelry teacher from Managua) to teach a two day jewelry workshop. We are trying to encourage Sergio Acuna (a community leader and husband of preschool Director – Petrona) and help him to continue working on improving the well-being of his neighborhood.



After receiving Sergio's request from Gotita de Amor to have a jewelry class, Suyen Cerda was designated by WNP to teach the class and travel to Estelí with enough Jewelry material to teach 8 different designs of jewelry.

This visit to Estelí also included the delivery of ten sewing machines. In November they will begin a pilot project at the school for spring training

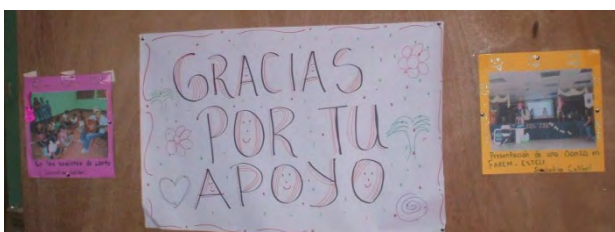
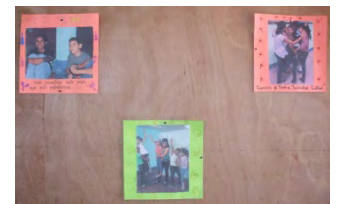
in sewing classes. 15 ladies are ready for the sewing classes. Nahima Solis, from Managua was assisting and helping Suyen during the jewelry workshop, and also gathering information for the Estelí Learning Center report.

Two weeks after the jewelry workshop Sergio called and let us know that another group is ready for jewelry classes. One of the girls who attended the workshop taught by Suyen Cerda will be the teacher and the funds for materials will come from a Tobacco company that heard about the classes being held in the Gotita de Amor Learning Center. Word traveled rapidly how useful this newly learned skill



was to the ladies because from the workshop they are now marketing their products. The company is willing to sponsor this kind of workshop because it is a good opportunity for ladies to earn some money and help relieve some of the economics challenges in their homes.

There is a group of dance and drama students practicing in the Gotita de Amor Learning Center. The name of the group is Colibri LC's and 45 children, boys and girls are attending preschool classes with Petrona Galeano as teacher.



During Estelí visit it was not the day of Colibri drama and dance Group practice, but you could see part of their activities from these picture on the wall.

Learning Center Visits

Somoto:

Somoto is the Partner City of New Richmond, Wisconsin. Lynda Pracht from New Richmond is happy to know that Daysi and Los Quinchos Learning Center are keeping their activities going. The Rotary Club is sponsoring some activities for both the Learning Centers in Somoto and XOMOTHL organization is coordinating activities with Los Quinchos.

Last Friday, October 19th Suyen Cerda and Irene Largaespada traveled to Somoto for a two day jewelry workshop for ten people from the Daysi and Los Quinchos Learning Centers. Ivonne Castillo and the Rotary Club made the arrangements for this workshop to happen so the ladies will be learning how to make jewelry.

Ladies from LC's and institutions Los Quinchos and Daysi LC's and Asociacion de Mujeres de Somoto and Aldeas SOS attended the Jewelry workshop



Colonial hotel sponsored the jewelry workshop in Ocotol they provided a room to the two teachers from Managua and they provide the place for the workshop too.



Two days of workshop in Somoto.

Learning Center listed in Ocotol and activities:

Casa de La Mujer Ocotol: Sewing class, bakery and beauty.

Learning Center listed in Somoto and activities:

Daysi: Sewing and hand craft.

Los Quinchos: Carpentry, Sewing and hand craft.

Learning Center listed in Estelí and activities:

Gotita de Amor: Hand craft (jewelry) class, Sewing class, drama and dance class, English class, and preschool class.