

Farm to Table...

Our lessons in all things organic



Since our two children's programs have been going strong, we have spent **this** year developing our organic farm. In the early years, soon after founding the project, we purchased about 25 acres of farmland 1 mile outside the town's center. The long-term goal has always been to eventually move our entire project (with brand new buildings, owned by us) onto this land. However, in the meantime, we are cultivating the rest of it (that is not designated for buildings) for both private and future commercial use.

So what's been a'growin'?

In the third week of May we seeded 1.25 acres of red beans as well as constructed a new 400 ft² concrete pad in order to more efficiently dry the beans. The beans yielded about 700 lbs., which was about half of what we hoped, but because of a virus infection, the beans ripened unevenly and we lost some of the crop. We hope that the second crop, and possibly a third, will result in a year's supply for our center. We are beginning the



second planting season now and we are seeding corn, sorghum, soy and black beans which will be exclusively for the program center. We will also be experimenting with cover crops such as Canivale beans, which are not used as food, but help to renew the soil and reduce weeds. Forty rosa de jamaica plants have been planted as well. The variety planted is one that is used mostly for personal use so when it is harvested it will be used in our project kitchen to make a healthy lunch *fresco* (cold drink) for the kids, which is high in Vitamin C. However, with research we have learned that there is a better, stronger variety that is used more for commercial export, which is something we are exploring for the future. Plus, we have 100 yucca plants growing. In addition to all this exciting harvesting, we are also currently offering our staff an intense month-long training called "Family Gardens." It's on all things farm – from tropical plants (and how to grow them organically) to insects to common diseases

to how to produce food for commercial use – and it's meant to help us improve our overall production.

And what's to come?

What's most exciting is that we have recently been doing research on developing the farm as a commercial *vivero* (nursery). The purpose would be two-fold. The first is to develop a source of earned income for the self-sufficiency and sustainability of our nonprofit organization. Until now we have survived solely on private donations and a few small grants and we are



actively looking to diversify our funding sources. The second is to do our part in promoting reforestation in our area of Nicaragua which has been largely deforested by commercial cattle



production. We hope to be a leader in the community by providing an example, readily available and affordable tree seedlings, and green jobs as well as training our youth to care for the environment.

To start this process we have planted over 400 cashew trees on the property. It will take at least 3 to 4 years

Clockwise from top left: drying bean plants, cashew saplings, small veggie plants & cement drying pad.

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HOGAR LUCEROS DEL AMANECER & AYUDAME A CRECER

Summer newsletter
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Ceee-le-brate good times— Come on!

In true Nicaraguan style, we've had lots of reasons to celebrate over the past many months. Back in February, we celebrated our 7th year as a successful and growing children's program in Camoapa. We threw a party for the kids, with a couple piñatas and served *arroz de leche* ('rice with milk,' a typical and delicious Nicaraguan dessert.) We had our folkloric dance group perform and the kids played a variety of games, as we nearly always do. In other celebratory news, we *always* party-on for Mother's Day in May and International Children's Day in June in some form or another, and this year was no exception! We often do it up special with our children performing dances, songs, and poems for their Mothers. Friendly competitions of any sort are also very popular.

But most recently, we had the milestone 70th birthday celebration for our Executive Director and Founder Rachel Greenwood. She was lucky enough to get *two* parties, one with the kids, and another with the adults! And we are lucky to have had her around this long. *Thank you for all you have done for us Rachel!*



← *llis who won best costume during Children's Day competition; Mari and → Nadine preparing La Gigantona for Mother's Day.*



New Boxing Coach

As part of our ongoing commitment to the Youth Boxing program (that targets street kids), we continue to provides all meals, Monday through Friday, to our new trainer Carlos, who lives in Managua and travels back and forth to Camoapa every week. Carlos comes from a family of boxers and has been training since he was small. He is 24 years old, and has fought in over 60 fights. Though this is his first experience as a trainer, he has lived a life similar to the kids that he is working with, giving him the background necessary to understand them and their struggles. He has been in Camoapa for several months now and he has shown outstanding commitment to both the kids and teens he is coaching as well as the small children we have here at the Hogar.



Carlos with a donation of new boxing equipment brought from the US.



OHH YEAH...

Happy
70Th!

Social Media Update

We have a *brand new website!!*

Check us out at

[www.](http://www.thesunrisefoundation.org)

[thesunrisefoundation](http://thesunrisefoundation.org)

[.org](http://thesunrisefoundation.org)

You can also now

find us on

YOU TUBE!



Find us:
HogarIda

Talleres ...and growing up

This year, several of the kids that have been at the center for more than a couple years have transitioned into their early adolescent stage. Since part of our mission is to help these children learn the skills that they will need as they eventually transition into adulthood, they have all been connected with *talleres* (apprenticeships) that will teach them marketable skills in Nicaragua. Medardo, age 16 and Serafin, age 15, have both been studying for a couple years now. They are studying mechanics and saddle making, respectively. Delvin, age 15 and Freddy, age 19, are also both in saddle making, while Noel, age 12 and Enrique, age 13 both decided on shoemaking. Our two young women, Yahoska, age 13 and Katy, age 12, decided to learn the art of beauty and baking, respectively. We are very proud of all of them and look forward to being a part of their lives as they grow up and grow into mature, responsible and talented adults.

'Farm to Table' cont'd

for cashew production to begin, but we are planning ahead and the cashew nut is a lucrative crop. The fruit can also be used for *frescos*. As these trees develop we will plant crops such as beans between them, a system known as agro-forestry. We have also cleared the brush from a moderately forested hillside area (which contains significant shade) where we plan to plant a combination of 100 coffee and cacao trees in the next few months. We are also exploring the possibility of raising pelibuey, a short haired sheep popular in the tropics. We have raised several pigs over the years for our own consumption, but we are interested in small-scale commercial possibilities.

We are looking for volunteers, or an intern, with some training or experience in sustainable farming practices to work with us on this project. If you are interested please contact us.



Volunteering *Special*

Over the last many months we have enjoyed and appreciated the help of quite a few international volunteers. We really love this part of our program because it allows for a cultural *intercambio* (exchange) between our children and the rest of the world that they would never otherwise have. We are currently working to make this program even better and we continue to work in partnership with other organizations in town in order to expand the volunteer presence and therefore the opportunities to both the town of Camoapa and the volunteers themselves.

If you would like to learn more about the opportunities we provide, please visit our website at www.thesunrisefoundation.org and go to *get involved* then *volunteer*.

Theater Class!

Last winter and into spring, we were blessed with two incredible volunteers from Colorado, Drew and Jordan.

Drew, a high school drama teacher, worked very hard with our kids to develop their creativity in a way that the kids had never seen or experienced. And Jordan (our play-group specialist, who ran play groups with the younger children in *Ayudame a Crecer*) supported Drew and contributed to the class using her own theater experience and child development know-how. They began with basic theater games, moving to charades and finally ended their six-month stint working with both the adolescents as well as the younger kids to write and perform plays



which they did finally perform for the Hoger Luceros community.

The older kids actually wrote their own version of *Beauty and the Beast*! Most of the youth, especially the adolescents, began this process feeling uncomfortable acting and performing in front of each other. Many of them goofed around, some chose to sit out altogether. But with persistence and allowing them time to let their guards down, they eventually warmed up to each other and to their theater teachers. Drew and Jordan were the best of the best, they brought a new form of energy and creativity to our program. We miss them and hope they come back soon.

More “World”-Class Visitors



Clockwise from top-left: Nadine from Germany, Andrea from England, Sonja from Sweden, Jocelyn from the U.S. leading a yoga class, a group from Poland playing Pin the Tail on the Donkey and musical Chairs and Debora from Switzerland.