**Sister City Project- Richland Center Annual Meeting,**

March 15, 2021 via Zoom 7:30 pm

Attendees- Marilyn Rinehart, Maggie May, Marcia Carlson, Janet Gee ,LInda Stadler, Linda Gentes, Jose Marroquin, Stein Goering, Gina Auel, Aaron Wunnicke, Jane Furchgott, Alma Susana Chavez Narvaez- Nicaragua coordinator and other guests.

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**Minutes from last years’ annual meeting**- Marcia C. Last year’s minutes were reviewed. No additions or corrections were noted. Motion to approve was made by Marilyn and Linda Stadler second. Motion carried

**Nomination of elected officers and 2021 board**- Linda Stadler and Jane F.

Board Officers proposed:- with no changes from previous year.

Rinehart, Marilyn - (President)

Marcia Carlson- (Secretary)

Goering, Stein - (Treasurer)

Maggie May- (Vice-President)

Other members:

Jane Furchgott, Janet Gee ,LInda Stadler, Linda Gentes, Jose Marroquin, Gina Auel, Aaron Wunnicke (Chelsea Wunnicke backup)

Motion to approve- Jane. Linda Gentes second. Motion Carried.

**Treasurer’s annual report for 2020** - Steln.

| Expense | Coordinator | Salary & Expenses | $11,050.00 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Coordinator Total |  | $11,050.00 |
|  | Overhead | Bank Fees | $256.05 |
|  |  | Fees & Assesments | $64.00 |
|  |  | Printing & Postage | $2,248.42 |
|  |  | Services | $410.99 |
|  |  | Transfer fees | $482.00 |
|  | Overhead Total |  | $3,461.46 |
|  | Project Funding | Chacocente | $36,320.50 |
|  |  | Emergency | $8,104.00 |
|  | Project Funding Total |  | $44,424.50 |
| Expense Total |  |  | $58,935.96 |
| Income | Contributions | Donations | $61,680.17 |
|  |  | Grants | $1,000.00 |
|  | Contributions Total |  | $62,680.17 |
|  | Earnings | Interest | $2,761.83 |
|  | Earnings Total |  | $2,761.83 |
| Income Total |  |  | $65,442.00 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **2020 Net Income** |  | **$6,506** |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Assets** |  | Jan 1 | Dec 31 |
| Endowment Fund |  | **$50,019** | **$54,882** |
|  |  |  |  |
| WCCU Long Term Savings |  | $45,905 | $35,403 |
| WCCU Short Term Savings  |  |  | $9,765 |
| **Total Savings** |  | **$45,905** | **$45,167** |
|  |  |  |  |
| WCCU Debit Card |  | $1 | $2 |
| WCCU Checking |  | $20,350 | $16,074 |
| Pay Pal |  | $2,893 | $9,549 |
| **Cash Accts Total** |  | **$23,244** | **$25,625** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total Assets |  | **$119,168** | **$125,674** |
| **Net change** |  | **$6,506** |  |

**President’s Report on Projects**

Thanks to the generosity of so many friends and donors, we were able to complete the following

projects in 2020 for the people of Santa Teresa and in the area of Chacocente: Escalante, El

Terrero, La Chota, El Papalón, La Poma and Aguas Calientes.

**Health** - $12,500

-21 Latrines.

-12 Wells, 2 well covers, 2 well rope pumps, 2 accessories or repairs for the wells

-77 water Filters

Medical supplies for the La Pita Clinic and the visits to communities

Support of health promoters,

Medicines to MINSA for the people in our communities

Dental materials

**Education** - $11,500

School supplies and assistance with school lunches for 204 elementary students

Materials and support for the 10 elementary teachers

Hand-washing stations and disinfectants for communicable disease precautions

Scholarships for 54 secondary students

**Sustainable Agriculture** - $2500

Support for 95 farmers for sesame seed production

Trees for reforestation - 95 families

**Environment** - $5800 (some pass-through for earmarked donations)

Visits to the turtle nesting beach for students of the 5 schools

Workshops of environmental education to teachers and students of 5 schools

Training sessions for the study of migrating birds and bird banding at MoSI station

Boots, backpacks, rain ponchos, Flashlights, pens, batteries for park guards

**New Village** - Aguas Calientes - $3,600

-5 latrines which will serve 9 families

-5 water Filters

Sesame seeds for 3 farmers

Support for the planning for a community well project

Emergency Aid - $8,100

Food and water for disaster relief

**Vision for 2021**

• Continue to rebuild areas affected by Hurricanes Eta and Iota

• Maintain income growth through (donations, grants, gifts, fundraising activities)

• Strengthen relationships with government departments and NGOs

• Complete La Pita clinic repairs with the grant from the Bader Family Foundation

**Current political and health situation in Nicaragua** - Jose

Facts about Nicaragua

Population: 6,403,441

Today Nicaragua has a stable and growing economy. Yet, it is still one the poorest and least developed countries in Central America. Poverty is concentrated in rural areas, where access to basic services is often nonexistent. With limited employment opportunities and inadequate infrastructure, incomes of the poor in Nicaragua remain at low levels.

Women in rural areas, in particular, are among the most disadvantaged in Nicaragua. Despite close to a fifth of rural households being run by women, a small percentage hold titles to the land they work. In addition, most farm-based households cannot survive on farming income alone and depend on at least one family member who works off of the farm.

24.9 % living below poverty level.

$5,885 Annual per capita income.

69 % Are financially excluded.

In 2017 Nicaragua maintained a good growth rate of 4.6 percent. Due to the social and political unrest that the country has experienced since April 2018, the economy contracted to -4.0 and -3.9 percent in 2018 and 2019, respectively. According to the latest forecasts, for 2020 growth is expected to fall to -5.9 percent, and would recover slowly to 1.1 percent by

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic plus the violence that has prevailed in the last years, job losses, a fall in consumer and business confidence, and a decline in labor intensive sectors such as construction, commerce and tourism have taken a social and economic toll, further halting progress achieved in poverty reduction since 2005.

Poverty – defined as living with an income below $3.2 per person per day in 2011 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) – will increase to 15.1 percent in 2020 (from 9.7 percent in 2017), adding more than 350,000 people into poverty. Meanwhile, remittances increased by 9.9 percent year over year in the first half of 2019, supporting household consumption and mitigating deeper poverty increases. The pandemic, however, has the potential to lower this level of remittances in the short term. 2021.

Currently, the pandemic is expected to adversely affect Nicaragua through declined remittance inflows, reduced trade, paralyzed tourism, and increased risk premiums, partially offset by lower oil prices.

Nicaragua is still one of Latin America’s least developed countries, where access to basic services is a daily challenge.

The World Bank has supported poverty reduction measures in Nicaragua through the [International Development Association (IDA)](https://ida.worldbank.org/), the World Bank’s fund for the poorest countries.

To better reach the country’s vulnerable families, [IDA projects](https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/projects) leverage local initiatives that stretch limited resources further and deliver sustain. Nicaragua’s economic freedom score is 56.3, making its economy the 125th freest in the 2021 Index. Its overall score has decreased by 0.9 point, primarily because of a decline in trade freedom. Nicaragua is ranked 23rd among 32 countries in the Americas region, and its overall score is below the regional and world averages.

Nicaragua’s economy remains mostly unfree this year as it has been for more than a decade. If market-based democracy is ever restored in Nicaragua, the first step needed to resuscitate economic freedom will be a complete overhaul of the country’s rule-of-law institutions to protect property rights, establish a transparent and reliable judicial system, and expunge the many forms of corruption that flourish under an authoritarian and socialist system.

IMPACT OF COVID-19: As of December 1, 2020, 10,778 have been infected and 2,780 deaths had been attributed to the pandemic in Nicaragua, and the economy was forecast to contract by 5.5 percent for the year. Inflation in Nicaragua: So far 4,03% for 2021 and for 2020 was 4.37%. In 2019 was 5.38%.

Price of the Cordoba as 3/13/21 : 35.1350 = 1 Dollar. ($ 0.029)

Education

 Only about 70% of children in Nicaragua attend primary school. Therefore, the number who complete secondary school or college is low. Without an education, young people have limited opportunities to fulfill their potential and become financially independent.

Weather.

In recent years, there have been constant changes in weather patterns in Central America. Recurrent periods of drought have had devastating effects on food and nutrition security and access to water. In the Dry Corridor region, which includes Nicaragua and Honduras, drought events have been damaging and are eroding the fragile livelihoods of families that are especially exposed.

The situation in Central America has remained vulnerable to socioeconomic, environmental, and climate shocks, resulting in greater political insecurity and instability. In Nicaragua, the current socio-political crisis has impacted livelihoods for a large part of the population, contributing to the forced mass migration of young people. In this context, the space for action by civil society and humanitarian organizations has been reduced.

Impact of the November 2020 Hurricanes

In November, Nicaragua was battered by two back-to-back hurricanes, including Category 4 Hurricane Eta, the most catastrophic storm since 1998’s Hurricane Mitch.

 Mitch was the most devastating in terms of damage and lives lost in Central America’s history, with more than 10,000 fatalities in the region. Initial evaluations after the 2020 storms place the economic damage in certain parts of Nicaragua higher than that of Mitch. According to the Nicaraguan government, more than 43,000 houses, schools, and health facilities were damaged or destroyed, and 98 percent of the country’s roadways were damaged. Flooding and landslides caused widespread damage to crops and agriculture facilities, a key source of Nicaraguan livelihoods and top source of export earnings. Nicaraguan officials estimate damages totaling around $738 million and the United Nations is claiming that losses and reconstruction could equal nearly 6 percent of the country’s GDP.

 Over 1 million of Nicaragua’s 6.4 million people were affected by the hurricane.

Next Nicaraguan election

2021 Nicaraguan general election. General elections will be held in Nicaragua on 7 November 2021 to elect the President, the National Assembly and members of the Central American Parliament.

Candidates include incumbent [Daniel Ortega](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Ortega) of the [Sandinista National Liberation Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandinista_National_Liberation_Front) and challengers including farm worker leader Medardo Mairena, journalist [Miguel Mora](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Miguel_Mora_(journalist)&action=edit&redlink=1), political scientist [Félix Maradiaga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Maradiaga), economist [Juan Sebastián Chamorro](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Juan_Sebasti%C3%A1n_Chamorro&action=edit&redlink=1), journalist [Cristiana Chamorro](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cristiana_Chamorro&action=edit&redlink=1) and former rebel leader [Luis Fley](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Luis_Fley&action=edit&redlink=1).

**Other accomplishments**

 The group worked to increase our internet and Facebook presence.Stein worked to expand the email contact list and implemented improvements to the website. Gina has been updating the Facebook site and adding photos.

We held our annual retreat virtually. Linda Stadler organized and led this meeting.

Marilyn mentioned there is an increase in population in the area, which could lead to more need for educational and health aid.

There is a plan to continue sustainable agriculture projects and women’s initiative small business grants for 2021.

The meeting was adjourned and discussion continued with attendees via zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Carlson, secretary 3/18

/2021