



Roots of Change Foundation
Source de développement
19 Years of bringing hope to people in need



2024 Volunteer facilitators for the Youth and Children Education and Development Program

Spring 2024
Newsletter

Roots of Change Foundation Spring Fundraiser 2024



A gift opens the way and ushers the giver
into the presence of the Great

Gift Proverbs 18:16

Saturday June 1, 2024 Holy Family Parish Hall
Mass 5PM - Cocktails 6PM

Tickets \$80/each (\$50 tax receipt with each ticket purchased)
available online May 1st to the 26th
at www.rootsofchange.ca or call 780-405-8084

~ Door prizes include a trip for two to Nicaragua ~

This event is an important part of our fundraising efforts for
the year.

Please plan to attend and invite your friends!

Youth & Children Education and Development Program

FUNDACCO's longest running and most successful program - established
by founder Father Denis Hebert in 1997

The program is delivered during Nicaragua's 'Summer Holidays' in the
month of January each year. 280 children (ages 6 to 11 years) from 3
of the poorest barrios in Managua participated this year with 22 youth
volunteers who acted as facilitators during the program.

Every year the summer program has a different theme. This year it was
'Well Being - Maintaining a Healthy Mind & Body' and contained the
following topics: **managing emotions, assertive communication, healthy
living in a digital society and healthy eating.**

Throughout the 2-week program, learning is experienced through
activities and hands-on workshops with the children.

Starting in the spring, FUNDACCO spends a great deal of time and effort
training the youth volunteers to facilitate the learning activities prior to
the start of the program. The commitment of the volunteer youth group
plays a large part in the success of the program. Cont'd on page 4



Children of the Edgard Lang Barrio

2024 Annual General Meeting

All are welcome to this
online event

Thursday June 13th at 7:00 pm

For those wishing to attend please send an email by June 6th to
info@rootsofchange.ca

Bringing hope to people in the true spirit of our founder continues in 2024 with FUNDACCO's yearly visit to the Boaco nursing home.

Staff at FUNDACCO give back what little they have to help the elderly. This commitment, which is NOT funded by the Roots of Change provides residents with a dental check-up, hair dressing, physiotherapist and general medical checkup.



President's Message

Greetings to each and everyone. Once again, I am so humbled by your generosity.

Indeed a few weeks ago I sent an appeal via e-mail to help us meet our commitment to FUNDACCO until the spring fundraiser. You answered generously and we are able to fulfill our promises. Thank you wholeheartedly!

The Spring Fundraiser will be held June 1st at Holy Family Church Hall in St. Albert as in the past. The theme this year is The Gift Proverbs 18:16 'A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the Great'. Please join us for a time of fellowship and renewed commitment to serve our Lord through the poor. We will explore the meaning of gift giving and the surprising gifts received by the gift giver.

To go along with this theme, we will have numerous door prizes including a grand prize of a trip for two to Nicaragua where they will experience first-hand the transformational gift that the poor give us.

À tout nos bienfaiteurs francophones, je vous remercie de tout coeur pour votre grande générosité depuis le début de l'oeuvre de notre fondateur le Père Denis Hébert jusqu'à ce jour et je suis confiant dans le future. Vos dons donnent l'espoir aux désespérés. Cette espoir est notre cadeau et en retour ils nous donnent le plus précieux des cadeaux, celui de se savoir aimé de Dieu. SVP venez nombreux nous appuyés à la soirée prélèvement de fonds le 1 juin à St Albert pour goûter de cette amour et recevoir des cadeaux extraordinaires. Scrutez ce bulletin pour les détails.

Bien à vous

With a grateful heart, **David Fréchette**

We first approached Roots of Change in October of 2023 to see if it was possible to volunteer for a project sponsored by them. Unbeknownst to us, they had never sent a couple before, only groups of people. FUNDACCO was contacted to see if this would be feasible. The project of painting the Santa Fe church came about.

Our understanding is that the church has been a FUNDACCO project for four years now. The body (brick) was done a while ago, the roof completed in September 2023 and the tiling inside followed. So, painting it was.

After a few days in Managua visiting the medical and dental clinic, a pre-school, and participating in a Coop meeting in San Benito we made our way north to Santa Fe. On the way, we stopped to see water projects in La Carreta and in El Portillo, new electricity in the La Carreta school and the repairs and upgrade to their church. They were also notified that a new water system replacement was to come and be installed in April. In Santa Fe, we were warmly welcomed by a contingency of the community. A meeting occurred with Harol who gave instructions for the painting project.

Phil (my husband) and I painted almost every day from 7am to 12:30 pm with usually 2 helpers who had never painted before. We ran out of primer and paint. Where we would have gone to Home Depot to get more paint and interrupt our work for an hour or so, it was more difficult there. The supplies came from Managua and transported to Somotillo (3+hrs). There it was picked up by two volunteers (56 and 76 year-old men) from Santa Fe who left at 6am, traveled to Cinco Pinos with a friend then bussed from there to Somotillo. Upon their return, they put supplies on a horse and walked back the 5km or so from Cinco Pinos, in the 35C sun to arrive around 1pm. We painted that afternoon to make up time. Total time from order supplies to receipt was 3 days! The rest of the painting went well including the 2 main walls on the outside of the church.

The community got together to take us swimming at the bigger river, 3km away, by foot. We had Way of the Cross on Friday afternoons and on Thursdays they hold a mass. The service is actually a lay service as the priest does not come but 3-4 times a year. Our hosts took us to Cinco Pinos a couple of times, introduced us to her family there. The community got together to organize a farewell party the night before our departure with a meal, music and dancing. The day of our departure, Sunday, when it was time for the sign of the peace during mass, we were told to stay in our places so everyone would come to give us peace, most of them with hard warm hugs and some said blessings to us. This was one of the highlights of our stay.

The most challenging for Phil and I was not being able to speak Spanish but we were lucky that our host family had WIFI and we used Google translate a lot at the house. We had no running water and showering was with a bucket. Outdoor latrine. Our host washed our clothes by hand and hung them on the barbed wire. She cooked all the meals which consisted of rice, beans and tortillas every meal she supplemented with meat, fried bananas, cheese, squash etc. The weather was 35+C every day, down to 23-25C at night, and no rain. We woke up one morning and it was 17C so our hosts were in their winter jackets... not us. Our host did a lot to make us feel comfortable from a fan in our room, to buying an inflatable pool to installing a hammock outside, stopped putting sugar in the coffee etc.

After Santa Fe, we spent a couple of long days traveling between 4 small communities to visit their school and deliver school supplies as part of the back pack project. This was another highlight for us: the smiles of the children, some older ones even said "thank you" in English, the parents expressing their thanks.

As long as you can tolerate dust, heat and a few animals, and that you are not too fussy in food choices, this is a trip that everyone should experience in a lifetime. We have so much and we do not realize it: where we get our water, how we wash dishes and clothes, how we travel, what is available in machinery and tools etc. There are great needs in those small communities and that will not change anytime soon.

We are planning to go again!



Phil and community members painting



Outside Painting Complete



Marie prepping interior walls



Interior of Community Centre

Nicaraguan Backpack Project 2024 Update



Phil and Marie Schmidt assist in the distribution of school supplies in Las Marias



Preparation of school packages



Las Lajitas School Students



La Honda Community School receiving their school packages

The Backpack Project in Nicaragua, a collaboration between the Roots of Change Foundation and FUNDACCO, achieved significant milestones this year. Our original goal was to provide essential school materials directly to students in El Rodeito and El Nancital schools. However, the project evolved to encompass five schools in four different communities.

The generous support of donors, including students from École la Mission and Alexander Taché from St. Albert and St. Martha School from Edmonton Catholic, was instrumental in the project's success. Despite facing logistical challenges, such as the need to adapt our distribution strategy, the impact on Nicaraguan students was profound.

Our project created an environment where students could thrive academically, thanks to the essential materials they received. As we celebrate this success, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all supporters. Your belief in our mission has transformed lives and contributed to building a brighter future.

To learn more about our efforts or to make a contribution, please visit www.rofc.ca. Every donation, regardless of size, makes a difference. **Thank you for your unwavering support!**

Living the Legacy Part 3 - Charla LeBlanc



As a founding member of Roots of Change, I am often asked how our organization came into being. It's a story of serendipity, inspiration, and unwavering commitment to making a difference in the world.

It all began when I was just 17 years old. Our school had planned a delegation trip to Guyana, but last-minute circumstances led us to redirect our journey to Nicaragua. Little did I know that this seemingly small change in plans would set the stage for something much greater.

During that trip, I had the privilege of meeting Father Denis at Casa de Benjamin Linder. His dedication to serving the community and his vision for a better future for Nicaragua left a profound mark on me. And as fate would have it, I discovered a personal connection to Nicaragua through my great aunt's brother, Father Denis, who was a missionary there. Cont'd on page 4

Internship opportunity



Are you wanting to live an experience of a lifetime doing volunteer work for a few months? Are you looking to do something before starting a new life chapter or a university student looking for a work placement or internship for your program?

If you or someone you know is interested in doing an unpaid internship to Nicaragua in the fall then we are accepting applications from interested individuals.

Please contact Danielle at danielle@rootsofchange.ca for more information.

~Project Update!~ Santa Fe Community Church of Cinco Pinos



In November 2023, final touches were underway in the Santa Fe Community Church.

This donor sponsored project completed plaster of the outside and inside walls, installation of a ceramic floor, and the electrical system for the building.

Funding was provided by a group from Innisfail and Rocky Mountain House.

To all donors who contributed to this project, a sincere thank you from the Cinco Pino community and the Roots of Change.

Project Budget \$7200 (USD)

Living the Legacy Part 3- Charla LeBlanc cont'd from page 3

Fast forward to a year after my high school graduation, I embarked on a journey to visit Father Denis in Nicaragua. Witnessing firsthand the incredible projects he spearheaded, from youth programs nurturing future leaders to satellite clinics serving neighboring communities, ignited a fire within me.

Upon Father Denis's return to Canada for a visit, I extended an invitation for dinner, eager to reciprocate the warmth and hospitality he had shown me in Nicaragua. Little did I know that this dinner would mark the inception of Roots of Change.

Over a meal shared with family and close friends, Father Denis unveiled his vision to establish a non-profit organization that would ensure the continuity of his projects, even beyond his tenure.

His passion and determination were contagious, and it was clear to all of us gathered around the table that this was an opportunity we couldn't pass up.

And so, with a shared commitment to creating positive change and empowering communities, Roots of Change was born. What started as a humble dinner conversation evolved into a thriving organization dedicated to sustainable development in Nicaragua.

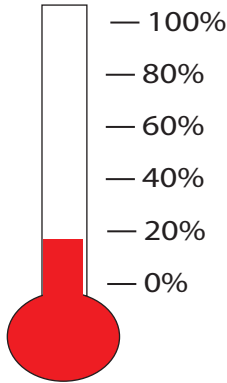
As we reflect on our journey from humble beginnings to where we are today, I'm filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our community and the tireless dedication of our team. Together, we continue to sow the seeds of change, nurturing sustainable development and fostering hope for a brighter tomorrow.

In the spirit of our founding principles, let us remain steadfast in our mission, guided by the belief that every small action has the power to catalyze transformation and create a world where all communities thrive.

With gratitude and determination, Charla LeBlanc

Board Member and Founding Member, Roots of Change Foundation

Fundraising Goal 2024 \$140,000



Donations to Mar 31

\$24,023

17% of Goal

A sincere thank you to all who continue to support our **Mission of Hope**

Scholarship student letters of thanks and marks for 2023 academic year

Those donors who have not received the above information by email may request information on a specific student.

Overall, students have been diligent in sending letters of thanks in Spanish.

The average marks for the students on the whole in 2023 were in the high 80% to high 90%, very impressive. There were a few students whose averages were in the 70% to 80% range but still satisfactory for continuing in their programs.

Send your request to: John.Schile@rootsofchange.ca

Youth & Children Education and Development Program Cont'd from page 1

Closing ceremonies in each barrio are the high point in the program where the main topics are summerized through song, dance, and dramatizations by the children. At the end of the ceremony, each child receives a school supply package to financially assist their poor families.

Costs for the program come from our general operating budget which is funded by non-earmarked donations. This year program expenditures totaled US\$ of 10,319.83 (approximately \$50 CND per participating child).



School supply packages for children in the Los Martínez Sector D Barrio

For more information www.rootsofchange.ca

Please help by supporting this ministry of hope

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Would you like to get involved or have a talent to share?

We are always looking for people who would like to help us in our **Mission of Hope** for the Nicaraguan people.

If interested, contact us at info@rootsofchange.ca to learn more about how to get involved.

The goal for our 2024 campaign is \$140,000.

The estimated cost of printing and mailing 3 publications per year is \$2,400.

For information contact Jocelyne Durocher at 780.405.8084

PayPal Giving Fund

PayPal Giving Fund Canada provides a method to make a credit card donation that eliminates the fees the Foundation would normally be charged which is between 2- 3% of the donation - and every penny counts!

Search for "PayPal Giving Fund" in your browser, click on 'Donate Here' then search for Roots of Change Foundation.

PayPal Giving Fund Canada will provide a Charitable Donation Receipt for your donation and we will be notified once it is processed.

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