

December, 2007

Nicaragua Base News

Adventures in Missions

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In partnership with Entrega, a 501(c)3 Charitable Organization

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Prayer Requests:

- *Thanks for the base site acquisition.*
- *Projects for men coming out of rehab.*
- *Help for children caught in abusive or neglectful homes.*

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El Puente closer to becoming a reality.

We are happy to report that we signed a contract in the first week of December to purchase the property discussed in our last newsletter. As AIM's mandate has moved it away from direct ownership of its bases, our charity, Entrega, in partnership with another Christian ministry, is moving forward to purchase the property and begin renovations. Word has filtered through the barrio and we are seeing a great deal of excitement, particularly from the nearby churches, about our plans for the area

During the title search we discovered that this property occupies an historically significant site in Granada. The main building is considered a local treasure by many Granadinos. Our



El Puente base, Granada

intention, during renovation, to respect the historical traditions of the area has been well received. Our first project will include repairs to the roof, which leaks like a sieve.

To you whose prayers and support helped make the first stage of this dream a reality, we are thankful. The closing is scheduled to take place in January, and we are hopeful that we can begin programs from the site in the first half of the year.

Empowering Nicaraguans for Ministry: Roberto Bravo.



Our friend Roberto at Peniel

Perhaps because we have come to ministry later in life, we find that much of our work is in empowering the next generations to get involved. This is the cornerstone of AIM's work with American youth, but it is also critical for Nicaraguans to get involved in ministry to their own countrymen. Part of our strategy is to identify local people and projects that, with help, can transform lives here.

Through the Swans, who will be joining us in January, we have begun working with Roberto Bravo, a native Granadino. Known for many years as a tough on the street, Roberto's life was transformed through a substance abuse rehab center. Since that time he has been repairing his life and relationships and has developed a deep compassion for other men struggling with substance abuse and hopelessness. The street kids flock to him, attracted because they know what he was like before and see the difference in his life today. Through Roberto, many men have asked us to help them change their lives. Roberto is unabashed in telling them that he is willing to help get them into a rehab center, but the real answer to his addictions was a relationship with Jesus. Roberto's dream is not only to open a center here, but also to build out the post-rehab part of the equation. In addition to developing a vocational component, Roberto would like to establish Christian fellowship programs to redirect and reinforce post-rehab lifestyles.

Roberto Bravo, continued.

A trip to Peniel

Roberto took us to Peniel, the rehab center where his transformation took place. Nestled in the hills about an hour and a half from Granada, this 40 acre farm is home to about 100 men and youth looking to get straight. While we were there with Roberto it was like watching the pied piper. Many of these men knew him because he'd been there for 2½ years. Although the normal stay is 6 months, Roberto stayed on to help teach and run the farm, responding to a vision that someday he would be in charge of a center like this. We talked to participants in the program whose stories ran from the kid who was

part of the toughest gang in Nicaragua to a former Sandinista soldier who had lost a leg in the war and everything else to drug and alcohol addiction. Although they had vastly different stories to tell, they all had the same thing to say about their time at the center and how a relationship with Jesus was transforming their lives.

One young man, a former gang member who has spent time in jail, asked if he could be part of our ministry when he gets out in a few weeks. This type of request excites us, as it testifies to deeply changed lives. How-



Peniel rehabilitation center



ever, it also highlights one of our greatest challenges. With unemployment in the 40% range, where do these guys go to get work, especially given their history? Limited resources will only stretch so far. How far can we depend on these men within our community? We ask for prayer in finding the wisdom and answers as we go forward.



Update on the El Puente Soccer Team.



Thanksgiving party for the kids

The El Puente soccer team is steadily developing a relationship with the youth mentors from Pastor Flores' congregation. We organized a celebration for both groups the day after Thanksgiving in Pastor Flores' barrio church. Featuring VeggieTale's *Jonah* in Spanish, we shared an afternoon of pizza and music with the *Bridge* wor-

ship leader, Erick Barbarena. The event was a big draw in the barrio, bringing together over 100 kids of all ages. It has helped launch a deeper level of interaction with the team of 9-12 year old boys, revealing more of the hardships in their lives. One boy introduced us to his little brother who was recently abandoned in Managua for two weeks. This undersized fellow wouldn't let go of his older brother's hand.

Alcoholism, drug abuse and child neglect here often merge with exploitation, and the effects are devastating. Transformation in family life is a slow process, but with-

out it, the cycle will never be broken.

Through open social events such as these, we are beginning to know and reach the parents as well as children in the barrio. We're planning a Christmas party to include both groups, centered around *The Nativity Story* video, and the traditional piñata, a local feature of celebrations in the Christmas season.

We hope that your Christmas will be blessed by the love of the Lamb, and the peace of the Holy Spirit.

Charles, Sarah, Banks and Willa.

Transformation in family life is a slow process, but without it, the cycle will never be broken.



Carlitos, Sarah, Willa and Banks