

The Gotita de Amor preschool in Estelí, Nicaragua continues to be a thriving multi-purpose center serving the Arnulfo Romero neighborhood and the surrounding community. The 2011/2012 remodeling project, sponsored by the Stevens Point Noon Rotary, resulted in tremendous improvements as you can see below.....



Early childhood education isn't fad -

Wisconsin State Journal, Tom Still

Madison – The numbers are hard to dispute: Kids who attend organized but relatively inexpensive preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school, to earn more as adults, to stay off welfare and to avoid spending time in jail.

Current evidence shows early childhood education is the least expensive way to create the largest number of productive citizens.



Over the past three years, a theater group called Colibri (hummingbird) has formed under the direction of Maria de Jesus Centeno. Maria enjoys working with youth and believes the classes encourage human values they can incorporate into their daily lives. 15-25 children attend class 2x week and participate in organized performances.

Maria, Sergio Acuna and the parents of the children organized a community fair in May, receiving 200 visitors from the area of Estelí. The children put on an outstanding performance that motivated new enrollment. The group incorporated issues such as domestic violence into their drama scenes as a way to help educate others about the serious problems that can result. (i.e. about 40 women have been killed by their husbands or partners in 2014, and many other incidences of domestic violence affects families.)

Fund raising activities such as parents selling products or food has been helpful to provide funds for costume materials and performance equipment that the group needs. The Colibri initiative is a good example of keeping projects going and not giving up even with the adversities. They may lack resources, but they have a lot of will to keep doing their work at the Gotita de Amor Preschool/Learning Center.

Another group also meets at the building, youth at risk (to prevent drug and crime). They have different activities to keep them incorporated into the social work and education about laws, rights and to learn about human values. Maria recognizes the nice complex remodeled with funds from Rotary of Stevens Point. Sergio and his wife Petrona Galeano coordinate activities with other organizations to provide handcrafts and sewing skills. Sergio helps seek out funds such as support from an organization called INPRUH (Human Promotion Institution). When funds are available, they provide the teacher salary for workshops and materials for classes.

Background information & Description of the Project: District Project Fund Application District 6220

Gotita de Amor Pre-School, Estelí, Nicaragua, was developed in 2001 out of a community effort to provide early childhood education. The initial building grew out of a donation of land by the city and a concerted effort of Kerry MacKenzie, Peace Corps Volunteer, the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners (W/NP) and the Stevens Point/Estelí Partner City Committees, along with the Estelí Mayor's office and a NGO in Switzerland. The building now has electricity and working indoor plumbing and restroom facilities. The school serves 45 children, ages 3-5 years of age.



The proposed project would further enhance the uses of the current building. The proposal includes building interior walls as room dividers, two new classrooms, utility upgrades (electric, water, sewer, internet), kitchen area and computer lab and painting, etc. The buildings would serve a dual purpose for the community. During the day they would be used for the pre-school programs, computer-learning modules, and lending library for the children and facilities to serve nutritious snacks. During the later afternoon/evenings, the buildings would be used as a lending library for older children



and adults, and/or computer training area.

The Rotary Club of Stevens Point became involved in this project through W/NP and the Stevens Point/Estelí Partner City Committees and Ms. Amy Wiza, Program Director of W/NP. Our city has had multiple successful exchanges including projects with the Stevens Point Fire Department, YMCA, and Youth Ambassadors that have personally touched many of our club members. Through W/NP, we are able to connect with Rotary members in Nicaragua and plan to develop a proposal for a matching grant through "The Rotary Foundation" for furnishings for the classrooms, along with appliances, possible use of solar energy and playground equipment. Three committee members from Nicaragua attended one of our Rotary Club meetings and Mr. Moises Guillen attended a planning session for this project and agreed to assist with translation of budget and communication with the Stevens Point/Estelí Partner City Committee in Nicaragua. The Rotary Club of Stevens Point members plan at least one trip to Estelí and the Gotita de Amor Pre-School. Pedro Vargas & Fredman Perez from Estelí will oversee the project along with several Nicaraguan Rotarians including Luis Gutierrez, W/NP Vice President. Another trip is tentatively planned for the second phase of the project.



**Thank you
Stevens Point Rotary for
helping our preschool**

