



Notes from Nicaragua



Our mission team made it back from Nicaragua and our trip went very well! Thank you for your financial support and prayers during our time of preparation & travel. We thank God for the countless ways we were all blessed during this trip and we wanted to give you more insight into what we did and what we experienced during our mission trip.

The United Methodist Volunteers in Mission group we went with is named "Missionary Friends". This group of missionaries, mainly from NC and SC, have been going to Nicaragua for over 10 years. We stayed at a place called El Ayudante (EA). Translated, it means "the helper". It is a Christian humanitarian organization based in León, Nicaragua, dedicated to partnering with the Nicaraguan people to transform the nation—one child, one family, and one community at a time. You can learn much more about this place at eanicaragua.com. We were what they call a "short-term" mission team that comes to EA. During the week we had multiple sub-teams travel to nearby communities to provide humanitarian services and share the love of Christ. Sub-teams included medical, construction, VBS, water filtration and food bag distribution, as well as large animal veterinary services. In particular, Mitch participated with the medical team, Michelle mainly did construction but spent one day on the medical team, Richard did construction, and Nicole did VBS, a nursing home visit, and first aid training.

Following are some personal thoughts regarding our trip:

"I was particularly moved by the genuine for whom graciousness of the Nicaraguan people. I met Evelyn a precious little girl, Missionary Friends is building a house. She was so outgoing and her eyes sparkled. Her joy and enthusiasm will stay with me forever. Also, I was moved by the people on the team that have been so many times to serve our Lord in Nicaragua. Doug from Main Street Methodist in Dillon has been on this trip 12 times. He has a heart for doing service for the Lord and is an inspiration to me. There are many ways to serve our Lord if you feel this is for you please don't hesitate to ask one of us for more information." -Richard Murrell

"Imagine a country where 80% of the population lives on less than 2 dollars a day. Imagine a country where families live in homes made of sticks with plastic tarps for walls and where plumbing is a luxury. Imagine a country where many

schools have no desks, chairs, or books, but consist of only a concrete slab covered by a piece of sheet metal for a roof. Imagine a country where your ability to get any medical treatment is based on your ability to pay. This is Nicaragua. But also imagine a country where the population takes great pride in whatever work they do no matter how small the job is. Imagine a population of people who realize their need for God because He is all they have. Imagine a population who love and welcome strangers into their homes, however meager they are. Imagine a population, whom despite their poverty, are filled with joy because of the lack of concern for material possessions. This is also Nicaragua and I can't wait to go back!" - **Mitch Grunsky**

"This was my second trip to EA and it was so wonderful to be back among the people of Nicaragua! It is a humbling experience to be around so many people who live 1 Thessalonians 5:18 every day. One of the ways I saw Jesus at work was in the face of Abuela, the grandmother of the little girl for whom we were building a house. The family had been living in a house made of sticks, tarps and scrap wood which was infested with termites and then burned down two years ago. They had been living outside since then. After our team prayed over the house on our last day there, Abuela first thanked God for the house and then thanked us. She went on to say that she was praying for us...praying that God would continue to bless our team so we could come back and continue to be a blessing to the people of her community. " -**Michelle Snyder**

I wasn't sure what Mitch had gotten us into when he signed us up for our first international mission trip but now that we are back, I can honestly say the people of Nicaragua will remain in my heart & soul forever. The poverty is staggering & difficult to see. Their way of life is so different than mine and they don't speak the same language. The barriers of witnessing to these people seemed insurmountable yet we were all connected through the body of Christ. Peering into the eyes of children & reminding them of God's great love for them was an experience I will never forget. Their smiles, hugs, and laughter have given me a renewed sense of joy, discipleship, & gratitude. I am humbled to be a servant of the Lord and to live out his commandment to love others. -**Nicole Grunsky**

Please feel free to ask us about our trip. We would love to share even more with you! We hope to have a presentation & fundraiser for future trips very soon. Again, thank you for your love & support.