

## Newsletter from United Methodist Missionaries, Nan and Miguel



*And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the most high; for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for him...because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace. Luke 1: 76, 78-79*

*Dearest Friends:*

*December 1, 2011*

This Advent season we are grateful for your faithfulness in your efforts to follow Christ's example. We hope you are doing well and are able to help others here at home and far away who are having problems.

**We give special thanks for your Covenant support**, given in our names, that goes to Global Ministries to help cover the costs of the entire missionary community. In order to support all our missionaries around the world Global Ministries needs about 7 million dollars a year and currently only is receiving about 5.5 million. They have asked the missionary community to ask you – the church – to continue your missionary support through the ADVANCE for Christ and even increase it. Please support missionaries, in Miguel Mairena's name and number: 12877Z; or in Nan McCurdy's name and number: 10801Z, thank you.

We are currently visiting churches and will return to Nicaragua in the spring. If we have not contacted you yet about visiting your church, please forgive us. Please email us at [nanmig1@yahoo.com](mailto:nanmig1@yahoo.com), or call us at 240-242-8056 or 202-500-6482. **We want to hear from you and share the story of the mission work in Nicaragua with your church!**

Women and Community's work shows God's love to the people of San Francisco Libre and brings hope to them in this life. **We want to share one story with you about one person in one of the W&C programs:**

Marlin Berrios and her brother were raised alone by their mom. Marlin was studying her first year of college on Saturdays in Managua when she got pregnant. She was seventeen. Her family made her stop studying and sent her to another county so people wouldn't know she was pregnant.

But Marlin was very unhappy and came back. She says people were really cruel and discriminated against her for getting pregnant out of wedlock. Think of her as a modern day Mary of Magdalene – Marlin of San Francisco Libre. She came to the Youth Network Festival in 2010 and was amazed to see teenagers teaching their peers about gender equity. She asked to join. Now she counsels other youth about the importance of not getting pregnant – and about the use of condoms to also prevent illnesses. She recently shared her story with over 300 youth at this year's Youth Network Festival where the topics were teen pregnancy and HIV AIDS. Marlin is now an active member of the Youth Network Against Violence. She works hard teaching her peers by multiplying workshops about violence, gender equity, reproductive health and rights and other themes. Marlin's daughter is a year old and Marlin began studying Biology again in February. She is already a great peer teacher and soon will be a fabulous high school teacher. Marlin's story is a sign of hope in this life.

Thank you for your prayers, visits and messages and thanks to the churches who have already hosted us.

We encourage you to consider an **alternative Christmas gift** to someone by giving to one of the Women and Community programs through ADVANCE for Christ #13285A. 100% of your gift will go directly to help people like Marlin. Please see below for a brief summary of programs and pictures.

Just as in that time long ago when they were awaiting the arrival of the Messiah to guide them to peace, today we also have hope of seeing more clearly the light that illuminates the path of peace for all people in the world. Let us not allow peace to be used as an excuse to make war. Peace can be achieved through love and solidarity with others as Christ commanded

***With much love, in Christ's example,***

*Nan and Miguel*

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*Miguel and Nan are United Methodist Missionaries assigned in Nicaragua. They thank you for being in Covenant Relationships with them. Your Covenant helps support all the United Methodist missionaries around the globe. Nan and Miguel are assigned to the Women and Community Association, San Francisco Libre, an ecumenical farm women's association. They help women, youth and children have a more abundant life with less violence and more equity. Please see brief summaries of programs below.*

### **Alternative Christmas Giving: Give the gift of life!**

*You can give to these programs through ADVANCE for Christ #13285A, Women and Community. Your church writes a check to your conference and earmarks:*

*Women and Community #13285A.*

*Please consider this as an alternative way of giving to family and friends this Christmas!*



Yessenia, son Jorge, cow and calf

### **Cows in Women's Hands**

*\$300 covers the cost of a cow, \$120 covers the cost of a workshop in a village about cattle-raising, nutrition, human rights or women's health; \$400 covers the cost of one month of salary and benefits for the agronomist.*

More than 80 women have become empowered through training and no-interest loans for a cow. The women from the first two years (2005/2006) have between 4 and 8 animals which is an incredible success rate! The women feel empowered to have their own animals and a bit more economic independence. They are able to provide milk and cheese much of the year for their kids and as more of the calves grow they can earn money from selling cheese or they can sell a cow to cover other family expenses. This is a great alternative to Heifer! 100% of your giving goes to this program.

### **Women's Health and Work with Pregnant teens**

*\$120 covers costs of a workshop with 20 girls on self-esteem, pre and post natal care, parenting, reproductive health, prevention of violence, etc.; \$100 covers the cost of ten cervical screening readings by a pathologist; \$100 covers the cost of repairing the woman's cervix if she has abnormal*

*cells; \$400 covers one month of the nurse/educator's salary and benefits; \$120 covers a year of birth control for one woman.*

The Clinic provides attention to women by a female physician and nurse and focuses on prevention of cervical-uterine cancer, sexually transmitted illnesses, family planning and monthly check-ups for pregnant women. Due to years of promoting cervical screening exams we now rarely see full-blown cases of cervical-uterine cancer in San Francisco Libre.

Maura Delgadillo, the nurse/educator facilitates reflections with pregnant teenagers and with teenagers who gave birth in the last year from the 35 villages. The girls reflect together on their situation to help them better understand themselves, relationships between men and women, relationships in their families, reproductive health, gender equity, family planning and a number of things to promote an increase in their self-esteem. Only 5% of the girls have gotten pregnant again.



Teenage pregnant girls at a workshop

### **Human Rights and Prevention of Violence Against Women, Youth and Children**

*\$200 covers one of the workshops with ten women survivors of violence where they learn strategies to plan for a better future without violence; \$100 covers the cost of five mutual support groups (once a week); \$120 covers four trips to the forensic institute for survivors of violence to be evaluated for physical/psychological violence as evidence for trials.*

This program focuses on prevention of violence against women, youth and children and promotion of gender equity. Attention to survivors of violence and the educational component in villages are carried out by a psychologist, two lawyers, a social worker and legal advocates (trained farm women) in each village. They also attend victims of violence who come to the W&C center looking for counseling or to denounce violence, usually by their husband, partner or boyfriend. This W&C program also trains women in violence prevention and gender equity so they can do this work in their

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communities and accompany victims of violence in their legal and healing processes. The team also trains teachers and students, health workers, police and others to understand the roots of violence against women, the laws that prevent and sanction violence and how to use them. There are ten mutual support groups of women in the villages that meet weekly.



Reflection/support group in the village of Laurel Galan

### Youth Scholarship Program

\$650 covers a college scholarship for a year to study on Saturdays; \$240 covers a high school and \$180 covers a primary school scholarship. \$400 covers one month of salary and benefits for the program coordinator, Gloria Mayorga.



Students with the Mullins- major supporters for years!

This program provides scholarships and other learning opportunities for kids from impoverished families in remote villages of San Fransisco Libre. The program prioritizes the children/teenagers from remote areas and from families without a dad. This year we had 46 primary, 50 high school and 12 college scholarship students. W&C also provides a larger scholarship to a teenage girl, Yubelca, who is completely hearing

impaired and studies Monday through Friday in Managua.

The high school students tutor grade school children in their villages in order to give back to the community. Gloria Mayorga facilitates monthly training workshops with the high school and college students. Every other month she facilitates workshops with the parents. We need more for gifts for college scholarships!

### Youth Network for Gender Equity and Against Violence.

*This program received \$8000 in 2011 from International Ministries with Women, Youth and Children, a program of Global Ministries and the Women's Division. It also receives donations from churches and individuals but is not part of the ADVANCE. To give to this program you need to make your check payable to Mujer y Comunidad and mail it to APDO 4169, Managua, Nicaragua. \$300 covers costs of a main workshop in town with 50 youth. \$500 covers a weekend of peer education with youth in another department. Women and Community works with teenagers and young adults in human rights education (especially gender equity, reproductive health and rights and the right to live without violence). The youth then multiply the workshops with other youth in their villages on the same topics they've learned about.*

Youth learned to make community videos about the lives of the youth and to make radio spots to educate other teenagers throughout Nicaragua. You may have already seen the video they helped Nan and Miguel make. You can find that by going to "United Methodist missionary Nan McCurdy, biography" on the internet - it's at the bottom of the bio. Their youth festival this year with 350 youth was on teen pregnancy and also HIV AIDS. The youth spent a weekend doing peer education with other youth in the area of Matagalpa.



Youth Network Festival on Teen Pregnancy; HIV and AID