



Newsletter of Companion Community Development Alternatives

16 years cooperating with communities in El Salvador and the United States

www.cocoda.org

LAND SECURITY REMAINS ELUSIVE FOR FAMILIES IN RURAL CABAÑAS

In 1994 it seemed land ownership was being resolved for several hundred families repatriated from refugee camps in Honduras to northern Cabañas, El Salvador. They had settled on land abandoned by owners during the war. Discussions for transferring ownership began after the 1992 peace accords.

With the community of Valle Nuevo, CoCoDA and U.S. communities from five religious denominations financed the \$50,000 purchase of *El Picacho*, a rugged tract of land for the crops of 117 families and for some homes.

In the neighboring community of Santa Marta, the Cooperativa Nueva Heróica Santa Marta had just made a \$26,400 purchase of properties from two owners for land where scores of families had made their homes and tended crops.

For both Valle Nuevo and Santa Marta, paying for the land proved to be easier than getting secure titles of ownership.

Santa Marta: Victims of Fraud

Those who travel to El Salvador on CoCoDA delegations always say the highlight is staying in Salvadoran homes. The gracious hospitality of our hosts and the genuine welcome we receive leave a lasting impression. We come back to the U.S. knowing the names and faces of Salvadoran *campesinos*, now friends, with at least a glimpse of the world from the perspective of those who are victims of unjust economic, judicial and political systems.

So the news in October, 2006 that sixty-two families in Santa Marta were threatened with eviction struck many of us personally. We had been guests in their homes, strolled through their well-tended



Santa Marta residents hold a vigil on the road to their community the weekend in April, 2007 they were to be evicted from their homes over a title dispute.

gardens, enjoyed soup and tamales made from beans and corn harvested from the fields under threat.

CoCoDA made an immediate \$3,000 grant to help Santa Marta hire an attorney, Gustavo Pineda, from the *Fundación Salvadoreña para la Aplicación del Derecho* (FESPAD). In an interview in the Santa Marta publication *Abriendo Brecha* by Ramiro Laínez (October, 2008), Pineda summarized the predicament:

"Here in the case of Santa Marta, we're seeing a problem that's come from the armed conflict, that's where you have to get your point of reference, when the people were returning from Honduras, trying in some way to re-establish themselves and find land on which to organize, as with the case of the (Santa Marta) cooperative...The people took their own initiative to find solutions..and they found this land; and when they go to the owner who was Señora Maria Beltrán Bonilla,

the first thing she says is to go work it out with Señor Sigfredo Pleytez..the directiva (community council) goes to Pleytez and talks and agrees on the purchase of the land.

"What has happened in a shady way is that the Señora says she does not have the documents (title) and that Señor Pleytez had registered a 'título supletorio', a title of ownership in his name and not hers. And this is how the purchase and sale was handled in 1994."

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(Land security, continued from page 1...)

Santa Marta paid Pleytez 230,000 colones, the equivalent of US\$26,400, for the land. But four years later, in 1998, Señora Beltrán went to court, now apparently with her original title in hand, and got a ruling that hers trumped the title Pleytez used in the sale, thereby nullifying Santa Marta's title, even though it had been duly registered in the National Land Registry since the '94 sale. By 2006, Ms. Beltrán had an order for eviction of the Santa Marta families occupying the land, now with homes constructed, fruit trees planted and other improvements including community-level investments such as water systems and roadways.

People from Santa Marta and communities across El Salvador mobilized in an around-the-clock vigil the weekend the eviction was to be enforced. Pineda petitioned the Salvadoran Supreme Court to issue a protection order in defense of Santa Marta's constitutional right to be heard in a court of law. That same weekend, CoCoDA with an international network of Santa Marta friends published an open letter to the Supreme Court in *La Prensa Gráfica*, one of El Salvador's two major daily newspapers, in support of Santa Marta's petition. The letter was signed by 274 individuals from the United States, Canada, Spain and Vietnam.

Police forces never arrived to carry out the eviction. The Supreme Court ruled in a split decision (the votes fell along political tendencies) that Santa Marta had not presented sufficient evidence. Over the two years since that ruling Santa Marta has lost an appeal to the Supreme Court and a criminal suit against Pleytez in



Luis Rivas of Santa Marta holds up a newspaper article calling the land title dispute a "bomba de tiempo" (time bomb).

which the judge, after weeks postponing a ruling on the case, declared that Santa Marta had not proven criminal intent on the part of Pleytez. Appeals to the Attorney General and government agencies to rectify the problem they helped create went unanswered. Pineda also presented the case to the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights.

In the meantime, Sra. Beltrán, in her late 70s, died. Her children, now adults living in the U.S., made it clear they intended to pursue their rights to the land Santa Marta purchased from Pleytez.

CoCoDA secured pledges from 20 groups and individuals (*El Grupo de Veinte*) to back Santa Marta in negotiations with the Beltráns to re-purchase the land directly. Our offer is to finance a loan from Massachusetts-based Equity Trust for the value of the land at the time of the sale in 1994. The office of the Salvadoran Ombudsman for Human Rights agreed to mediate the negotiations. The Beltráns, however, have refused to negotiate from their demand for US\$70,000 or eviction of the families.

The *Grupo de Veinte* sent a letter to the Ombudsman for Human Rights Lic. Oscar Humberto Luna in December, 2008, expressing dismay that the Salvadoran justice system had not yet taken any responsible measure to recognize the rights of Santa Marta families threatened by the dispute; that the Salvadoran government had as yet to acknowledge responsibility for having issued duplicate and contradicting titles; and that no justice had been brought against Sr. Pleytez, who received Santa Marta's money using a title that was later nullified. Copies of

the letter were sent to the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador and to 28 U.S. congressional representatives and senators by constituents who are co-sponsors of the Equity Trust loan offer.

In early January, 2009, a public prosecutor assigned to the case by the Attorney General joined Pineda in presenting an appeal to overturn the ruling in Santa Marta's criminal case against Pleytez, and encouraged Santa Marta to also consider bringing a civil suit against Pleytez demanding reparations for damages caused by his fraudulent land sale.

Santa Marta immigrants in Virginia, with the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Maryland, raised \$2,000 last fall to help reimburse more than \$3,000 Santa Marta spent in the six months from May to October, 2008 just for mobilizing the community. Every bus load of residents to the court in San Salvador and back cost US\$225.

Santa Marta leaders say their struggle to defend their land and get secure title is far from over and they have no option but to continue. On the road that leads to their homes during their first of many vigils, Santa Marta banners proclaimed:

"Our communities have not robbed even one centimeter of land; it cost us money and blood...Don't frustrate the dreams of Santa Marta's children."

Valle Nuevo: Dividing the Land

In Valle Nuevo -- where more than 180 families now live -- political divisions, cultural norms and distrust within the community have complicated the possibility of keeping the community land under one collective entity. The *Picacho* land is still held in the names of Salomé Ascencio and Cleofas Rivera, the two leaders of Valle Nuevo at the time of the purchase.

Since 1993, CoCoDA has spent US\$28,000 on legal and survey work and a series of "open forum" consultations with Valle Nuevo residents. This process has involved five Salvadoran attorneys, three Salvadoran community organizers, four successive Valle Nuevo *directivas* (community councils), a specially

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Most of CoCoDA's funding comes from individual members who contribute \$25 or more per year and from CoCo Groups, which are independent groups in the United States that cooperate with CoCoDA and Salvadoran partners in program initiatives. We hope all who read *The Companion* will become members of CoCoDA.

EL AGUITA POR FIN ESTA EN CASA

PRECIOUS WATER IS HOME AT LAST

By Ana Maria González
Writer, Abriendo Brecha
(translation to English by CoCoDA)

Since 1989 the community of El Zapote has been getting its water from spigots they installed in the community of Santa Marta, and from springs near the community by means of hoses some families stretched to their homes.

The fight to get the benefit of potable water began in 1998, when the community presented a request for a water project to Carlos León, who at the time was mayor of the city of Victoria for the ARENA party. The mayor gave them some requirements, one of which was to have a legal community council (*directiva*), and to have title to the land where the water source is located.

Seeing their need for water, tired of carrying it on the head and back, the community sought support from the *directiva* of Santa Marta, who sent as their representatives Juana Laínez and Aída Hernández, beginning a series of meetings with the community of El Zapote. That is how the *directiva* was formed. They asked for support from UCODEVI (*Unión de Comunidades de Victoria*) to legalize the *directiva*, which was accomplished in the year 2000. "Without the support of UCODEVI and ADES-Santa Marta (*Asociación de Desarrollo Económico y Social - Santa Marta*) we would not have been able to accomplish it," says Señora Donatila Hernández.

With the *directiva* legalized, in 2003 they presented the proposal to Juan Antonio Ramos, Mayor of Victoria for ARENA. According to Sra. Donatila, "He humiliated us badly, but that didn't matter to us because we had this need and we continued insisting that they do the project, but he didn't give us any hope."

In July, 2006, a delegation from CoCoDA arrived, coordinated by Brenda Rene Hubbard, which gave a lot of hope to the community, because someone on the delegation promised to fundraise for the

water project. The community was left waiting with this hope.

That same year Sr. Ramos implemented a water project named *Las Arenitas* in the El Zapote community, which only benefitted 11 families, leaving the majority out. When the *directiva* learned about this project, they went to the mayor's office to propose that the two projects be united so all the community would benefit with water. But the mayor turned down the idea of unifying the two projects. Sra. Donatila says, "It was a personal project that only benefitted those who were of the same (political) party". The mayor's office denied El Zapote a basic right for life.

Sra. Donatila, the President of the *directiva*, and María Verónica Escalante, the Treasurer, had a meeting with the Executive Director of ADES, Antonio Pacheco, to whom they mentioned the promise that the CoCoDA delegate had made to the community, to do the project. One day, the women heard from Antonio Pacheco that a representative of CoCoDA was in Santa Marta, an opportunity to remind them of the promise.

At six in the morning Donatila and Verónica arrived at the house of Leticia Beltrán looking for a man they did not know, Iván Villasbôa. Without having any idea of what the women were talking about, not knowing about the promise made by one of the members of the CoCoDA commission in 2006, he promised to look into the situation.

CoCoDA assumed as its own the promise made by someone they weren't sure who, and began looking for the resources to implement the project. CoCoDA asked for two prerequisites to do the project: that the municipal govern-



Among those at the inauguration in El Zapote were (l. to r.) Rosa Laínez (ADES), Wayne Titus (Rotary Club, Michigan), Iván Villasbôa (CoCoDA), Donatila Hernández (El Zapote). Ingeniero Rodríguez Sosa (smiling l. in background) with his daughter, Eva Corina, provided exceptional engineering services for the project.

ment support with a percentage and that the community support with labor.

The second requirement was guaranteed, because the desire to have water in their homes was great and no family was going to refuse to help; but the first one was more difficult because there had already been an experience of the mayor denying them support.

The community began the fight to convince the mayor and assert their right to water. But instead of uniting the projects he went ahead with the *Las Arenitas* project, aware that the water source was not sufficient to meet the needs of the 11 families, causing discontent among the residents. While the *directiva* was seeking to benefit everyone, the mayor insisted on dividing the community.

The *directiva* sent representatives several times to visit the mayor, who at first refused to receive them. The *directiva* insisted, bringing with them more members of the community until they were received and heard. He finally agreed to see them and committed to support the water project, conceding to their demand that the project benefit all those who did not get water from the *Las Arenitas* project and that he write a letter of commitment just in case he changed his mind.

On February 25, 2008 the water project in the community of El Zapote began with women, men, adults and children

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CoCoDA Forum

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

By Richard Holler
Silver Spring, Maryland

Seven teenagers, including myself, and two adults were on a plane to El Salvador on June 14, 2008 (on a CoCoDA delegation organized with the Latin America Parents Association - LAPA). Our tasks were to visit San Salvador for three days to learn about the city, the country and its history firsthand. After San Salvador, we were to head for the community Asunción, where we would help repair a community center. During our stay in Asunción we lived with families. Before heading back to the United States, we would spend a day at a beach. On the plane to El Salvador, we didn't know exactly what we would see, who we would meet, or what we would accomplish.

Simply looking at the country's geography stunned us. During our time in San Salvador, we were able to see what a typical Latin American city is like today. The local cuisine was delicious, especially the *pupusas*. Hiking two miles at a coffee cooperative, playing soccer with friends in El Salvador

and meeting the people of Asunción were probably our favorite experiences on the trip. Everyone in the delegation enjoyed our time playing, working and talking with the people of El Salvador, despite that not all of us could speak Spanish very well.

We were able to refurbish the damaged community center by painting, picking up garbage and debris, filling bullet holes in the walls, and rinsing and sweeping the floors. By the end of the week, the community center was transformed thanks to the delegation with help from

the community. We all developed friendships on the trip and some of us keep in touch with them today. We even made friends within the delegation. Not all of us knew each other from the start but at the end we all were a lot closer. This trip gave us the opportunity to learn and help others firsthand and we believe we did a superb job.

At the beach we all took a look at ourselves and realized how far we all had come. We all learned that you don't need fancy lives to be happy. We learned that you don't need televisions, cars, expensive homes or anything expensive to be happy. We learned that what is most important to a happy life are friendships, family, and the love you share with all of them. We all proudly thank the delegation, everyone who participated on the trip and Liz Hubley for being a wonderful translator, coordinator and friend. This trip to Asunción, El Salvador, will be a memory to cherish for the rest of our lives. ❖

LAPA participant Katharine Holler, CoCoDA Coordinator Liz Hubley, Elevio and another resident of Asunción stand in front of the repaired community center, the service project of the delegation.



LAPA Delegation (2008)

Suffolk University, alma mater of late Massachusetts Congressman John Joseph Moakley, has organized CoCoDA service learning delegations to Salvadoran communities where Moakley made his historic visits in defense of human rights during the war. The trips are sponsored through Suffolk's Organization for Uplifting Lives through Service (S.O.U.L.S.). Clockwise: January 2008 delegates after a discussion on the impact of free trade; SU student organizer Yanitza Medina with kids in a home near Suchitoto; the January 2009 delegation on the bus en route to their next destination.



Suffolk University Delegations (2008-09)



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DELEGATIONS TO EL SALVADOR

2008

Suffolk University - S.O.U.L.S. (January)

DePauw University
Winter Term in Service (January)

Latin America Parents Association (June)

River Road Unitarian Universalist
Congregation Youth (July)

Rotary Club (July)

2009

Suffolk University - S.O.U.L.S. (January)

Tufts University (January)

River Road Unitarian Universalist
Congregation Youth (June-July)

2010

DePauw University
Winter Term in Service (January)

Suffolk University - S.O.U.L.S. (January)

Tufts University (March)

River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Youth (June-July)

Rotary Club (TBA)

To organize or participate on a CoCoDA delegation, contact us at cocodaindy@igc.org or 317/920-8643.

PILGRIM'S NOTES

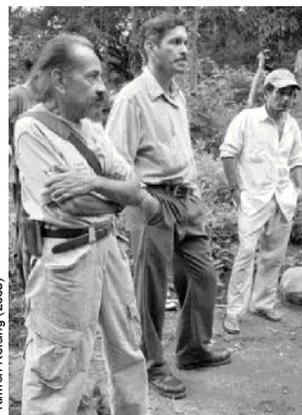
By Rev. Kimron Reising
Evansville, Indiana

The winds of change are blowing through El Salvador, fanning the flames of hope and justice among the *Campesinos*, the people of the countryside.

I journeyed to El Salvador with the CoCoDA-Rotary Club delegation in late July of 2008. I was a pilgrim seeking to better know and relate to my sisters and brothers in this Central American land. I was amazed, bewildered and inspired.

I was amazed at the beauty of the land: the mountain top views of Lake Suchitlán, the unique rock formations of Los Tercios *cascada* (waterfalls), the serene and haunting solemnity of Guazapa, the volcanic mountain that serves as memorial to the freedom fighters of the civil war, lush tropical vegetation and birds, a people warm and welcoming, scarred and surviving.

I was bewildered by the dichotomies of the social - political landscape: evidence of great wealth for a very small minority in the capital, San Salvador, and great poverty most everywhere else, severe political polarization between the two major parties, one (ARENA) whose heritage is the wealthy landowners, the Army and generous U.S. support, the other (FMLN) whose heritage is fighting for justice and the right to exist as the



Kimron Reising (2008)

War veterans on the former battle front of Guazapa mountain give testimonies about experiences in the civil war.

fruit of a truce that ended 12 years of civil insurrection and guerrilla warfare by the *Campesinos* and their sympathizers.

I was bewildered to the point of tears by "The Wall", a public

(*Aguita*, continued from page 3...)

putting their courage to the task, moving material from the soccer field to the water source day after day, until on July 25 came the inauguration with a fiesta filled with true happiness because "*El aguita por fin está en casa*" ("Precious water is home at last"), said Juvencia Rodríguez. Present at the inauguration were representatives of each organization that supported the project: CoCoDA, Rotary Clubs in the U.S. and in El Salvador, ADES, the Presbyterian Church, the Municipal Government and the Community.



Ivan Villasbôa (2008)

El Zapote residents provide labor for their water project.

display that lists the names of tens of thousands of men, women and children who were murdered and massacred for reasons that are hard to understand.

I was inspired by the spirit and hope burning brightly in the hearts and minds of the *Campesinos*, whose "Patron Saint" is Che Guevera, and whose National Hero is Monsenior Oscar Romero.

I was inspired by several individuals who had the courage to share their stories of witnessing and experiencing unimaginable injustice, brutality and suffering, and how they must cling to and re-live these stories in the absence of any national recognition or acceptance of responsibility on the part of many of those who remain in political positions of authority.

I was inspired by the unrelenting adherence to democratic principles as the people organize themselves to provide for the basic necessities of daily living,

The anticipated moment had arrived, the dream of having water at home now a reality, moving Donatila to comment, "This moment will remain recorded in our thoughts...in our hearts, when we turn on the spigot we have to remember the people who supported us." But above all, remember the community's effort and fight to now enjoy this benefit. "When things are hard to get they are appreciated much more, because union creates the strength to achieve the objective," said Iván Villasbôa.

El Zapote has shown that with perseverance and the desire to have water in their homes they could achieve their goal; the community also taught the mayor that projects should be conceived grandly and for all, as stated at the inauguration in a poem by local youth, Rubén Méndez:

"Señor Alcalde que también ha apoyado; vea la obra que ha proyectado..."

("Mr. Mayor who also supported; look at the accomplishment that resulted...")

..the accomplishment of a community that did not give up. ❖

while at the same time engaging the national political process with creativity and perseverance in the face of overwhelming financial, material and political opposition.

I am also inspired and humbled by the accomplishments of the "water project", communities we were privileged to visit and the work of CoCoDA in these communities. This was truly the brightest example of mission "*with*" rather than "*for*" or "*to*" that I have ever witnessed. As CoCoDA accompanies these communities on the journey toward health and independence, they do so with integrity, respect and an overarching eye to sustainability.

Thank you so much for this ministry of justice, this labor of love, this model of appropriate and effective support for a people struggling to be free and realize their fullest potential for sharing their gifts with the rest of humanity. ❖

CoCoDA WRAPS UP YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN

STUDENT PROGRAMS WILL NEED NEW FUNDING SOURCES

Nearly 200 contributors to CoCoDA's Youth Leadership Campaign funded \$65,000 in grants over the past five years (2004-09) to the Salvadoran organizations ADES and the CRC, helping establish scholarship and leadership programs in rural communities of Santa Marta and Suchitoto respectively.

Both programs combine standards of academic achievement with student involvement in their community. In Suchitoto, students come from communities scattered across the valley of Guazapa. They meet four times per year with the CRC scholarship committee to evalu-

Thirty-two students from Santa Marta (a group of them pictured to the right) attended the Universidad Luterana Salvadoreña and the Universidad de El Salvador through ADES' program in 2008. CoCoDA provided \$10,000 in 2008 and will do so again in 2009. A European foundation, DKA, was another major funder of ADES' program in 2008, with support also coming from Doctors for Global Health and Oberlin in Solidarity with El Salvador. Several other Santa Marta students have studied in Cuba, another fruit of ADES' internationally-backed program.



ADES (2008)

ate academic performance. Throughout the year they participate in youth-led economic projects and other activities in their fields of interest, such as the community radio station, Radio Suchitlán.

Beneficiaries of the Santa Marta program are university-level students, graduates of the Santa Marta high school. ADES funds two houses in the city where the students live during the week, then most weekends return to Santa Marta and participate in community activities. The students as a group evaluate their own

academic performance and engage others in the community in interdisciplinary forums. They publish a newsletter on local and national issues (available by email) and produce a weekly radio program among other activities.

The end of CoCoDA's Youth Leadership Campaign will put more pressure on the CRC and ADES to devise long-term fundraising strategies for their student programs. For information about supporting their efforts directly, contact CoCoDA at cocodaindy@igc.org. ❖

With a \$5,800 grant from CoCoDA, fourteen high school students (ten of them pictured to the left) from nine communities around Suchitoto received scholarships of \$420 each to attend high school in 2008. Much of the scholarship goes to off-set transportation costs. The Atlanta Friends Meeting funded nine university-level scholarships with the CRC in 2008.



CRC (2008)

(Land security continued from page 2...)

appointed Valle Nuevo Land Commission, a Valle Nuevo Vigilance Committee, contracts with two Salvadoran development organizations, and continuous coordination by CoCoDA staff, volunteers, and colleagues from other organizations and community groups in the U.S.

Finally, there is cautious hope that 2009 will be the year Valle Nuevo families receive certified titles for the land where they have their homes and, by means of a raffle, lots for farming (not all lots will be of equal quality, so the community determined the only fair method will be a blind drawing of lots).

An assembly of Valle Nuevo residents in 2003 voted resoundingly to title the community lands by family, not as a collective entity as CoCoDA was encouraging (the vote was 98 to 2, and one of the two voting in favor of a community title confessed she only did so in sympathy for the CoCoDA person at the meeting).

CoCoDA conceded to backing the democratic decision of the community.

The *directiva* proposed uniting *Picacho* with all the community's lands, so that the partitioning and titling will resolve Valle Nuevo's land issues in one comprehensive process. To date, the peripheral borders of all Valle Nuevo's properties have been surveyed by the San Salvador-based REDES Foundation using modern GPS equipment. Technical measurements of lots where families have their homes also have been completed.

Lic. Adolfo Ramos, the attorney contracted by the community, reports that the government land registry has certified and registered four of the community's eleven properties. The remaining seven still need to be inspected by officials, certified and registered, then all the properties will be unified in one title, to then transfer to individual families. Two representatives from each family are to be named on each title.

The projected cost to survey and carve out 180 farm lots, then issue individual titles for those and the home lots, is approximately US\$54,000 or US\$300 per family. Valle Nuevo is responsible for covering these costs. Shalom Mission Communities (SMC), a network of four U.S.-based churches, including Reba Place Fellowship and Plow Creek Fellowship in Illinois, have offered to support the community's efforts in this final phase. Reba Place and Plow Creek financed the first payment on the *Picacho* property in 1992, and have organized SMC visits to Valle Nuevo every year since.

CoCoDA's financial commitment to the Valle Nuevo Land Project has concluded (US\$85,000 over 16 years), pending one final payment for attorney fees. Putting titles into the hands of families now depends on the community of Valle Nuevo and their attorney. Support from friends on the outside can accomplish only so much. ❖

Other CoCoDA News...

LA MARIPOSA AND EL FESTIVAL DEL CERRO DE GUAZAPA

Every January hundreds of people come to the rural community of El Sitio Zapotal outside Suchitoto for the Festival del Cerro de Guazapa. The Festival, an annual event now for six years, culminates with a concert in the community's amphitheater, named *La Mariposa* by its architect, José Peña.

Festival activities are held over several days, including eco-tour hikes and camping on Guazapa mountain; male and female soccer tournaments; videos on the culture and history of the region, especially in the revolutionary movement during the war; a poetry gathering; piñatas and clowns; and the feature concert.

CoCoDA delegations from 1993 to 2009, particularly from DePauw University and Suffolk University, have contributed to the phase-by-phase construction of La Mariposa, with both money and labor. A recently updated \$65,000 proposal to complete the facility includes rooms for artists and performers, permanent seating for the audience, and more adequate sanitation and vendor accommodations.

The Festival organizing committee is looking for potential funding sources to complete the Mariposa, as well as indi-



Festival Guazapa (2008)

viduals, groups or businesses to be annual underwriters of the Festival, acknowledged in all publicity. The Cerro de Guazapa and the Festival also make for a warm winter vacation destination!

SANTA MARTA INTERNET CAFÉ!

Nine years ago, with the invaluable support of the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC) in Bethesda, Maryland, CoCoDA began support of a Computer Center project at the school in Santa Marta, Cabañas. Within a year, students and teachers had access to computers and computer literacy became part of the school's curriculum. In November, 2004 a satellite dish was installed, connecting the Center to the Internet. The Asociación de Desarrollo Económico y Social, Santa Marta (ADES) has been the local NGO managing the project.

Throughout the period of establishing and upgrading the Center, CoCoDA was also funding the salary of the teacher at the Center, with a grant from the Wessel Foundation and the on-going support of the RRUUC. The school and ADES lobbied the Ministry of Education, unsuccessfully, to get government backing for the teacher. Every year it became harder to raise the necessary funds to keep the Center open.

This is when the idea of an Internet Café, as an extension of the Computer Center, was born. The objective of the



DFU WTBIS (2008)

DePauw University students help set up the Internet Café in Santa Marta.

Café is to generate revenue to pay for the teacher at the Center while providing access to Internet services in the community of Santa Marta. With limited access to the Center, members of the community, primarily students, had to travel over an hour away to Sensuntepeque, adding transportation, food costs and time for anyone wanting to check their e-mail or browse the web.

A couple of delegations from RRUUC and the Latin America Parents Association in Silver Spring, Maryland worked on the infrastructure for the Internet Café. In January, 2008 a CoCoDA delegation of students and faculty from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana donated and set up the necessary equipment to install 15 computers in the Café and con-

necting to the Internet using the satellite dish at the school. Despite several technical difficulties with equipment, software, and reliability with Internet service, the Internet Café is in operation.

We hope that by the end of 2010 the Café generates enough revenue to sustain itself and pay 100% of the salary of the teacher at the Center. In the meantime, CoCoDA continues to provide funding to cover the short-fall, guaranteeing operations until both the Internet Café and the Computer Center can walk on their own electronic and financial feet.

CHANGES ON CoCoDA STAFF

After years of service, Alfonso Rivas and Tim Crouse are leaving CoCoDA staff. Alfonso has been CoCoDA's Projects Coordinator in El Salvador for eight years, representing the organization in El Salvador and participating on numerous speaking tours in the United States. Tim has been both a Program Coordinator and the Executive Director over the past fifteen years.

Iván Villasbôa, who was a Program Coordinator on CoCoDA staff from 1993 to 1995, and again from 2003 to 2008, has accepted the position of Interim Director.

*We envision
a global
community
founded on
just relationships
among people
and nations,
rooted in the
democratic
sharing of
resources for
sustainable social
and economic
development.*

**CoCoDA
Vision Statement**



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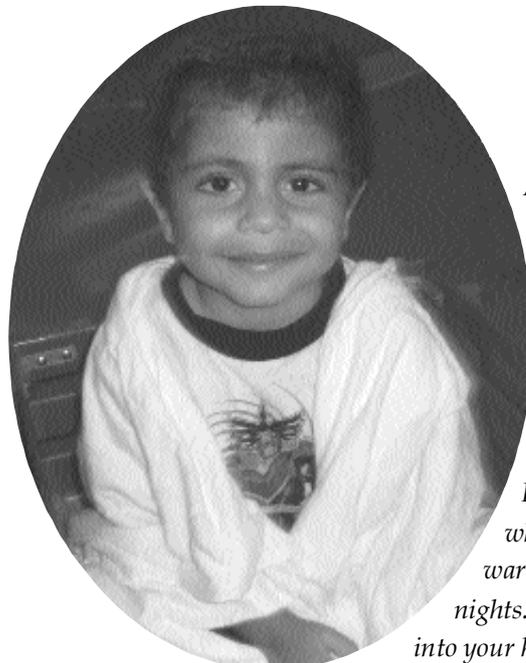
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ALFONSO RIVAS
IVAN J. M. VILLASBOA
TIM CROUSE



Alfredo Jose Lovos Amaya

"Alfredito"

2004 - 2009

The combined efforts of many made it possible to bring Alfredito with his mother, Antonia, to Indianapolis from El Salvador so he could undergo corrective surgery for a birth defect. During their second trip Alfredo suffered complete kidney failure and related complications. After a year fighting for his life, Alfredo passed away in El Salvador on April 20.

Thanks to all the medical professionals at Riley, St. Francis and Clarion North Hospitals in Indianapolis who gave the best possible medical care to Alfredo and warm hospitality to his mother over many long days and nights. Thanks, also, to those of you who welcomed them into your homes and to those who contributed financially.

Iván Villasbôa, who coordinated all the efforts, fondly remembers Alfredito as "the big brown eyed little boy with the heart of a lion who would never give up."