

# SISTER CITY UPDATE

Issue 31

Richland Center - Santa Teresa Sister City Project

April 2009

## The State of Health in Santa Teresa's Communities

by Linda Stadler

Our meeting with Dr. Quintanilla, Director Dr. Raquel Robleto, and Dr. Cruz at the Santa Teresa Centro de Salud (public health clinic) was informative and rewarding. The Centro has acquired an ambulance to help with transporting patients. Health promoters in our rural villages have been trained to provide basic care like taking blood pressures, giving injections, and putting in stitches for minor wounds. The communities have built small health care centers in Escalante, El Papalon, and La Poma where Dr. Quintanilla can see patients when he visits the area. La Solera has a new Centro de Salud staffed by a different medical resident and a nurse.

One piece of really good news was that they have reduced the number of infant deaths in the Santa Teresa municipality from five a year to zero in 2008! We are hoping that this trend will continue and plan to support continuing education for the rural health promoters.

We brought along a variety of medical supplies including two glucometers for testing blood sugars, thermometers, resuscitation bags used during CPR, a

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Janet Gee

When an El Papalon man was kicked so badly by a horse that his whole leg turned black, Dr. Quintanilla was afraid the leg would be amputated in a hospital. These two health promoters, daughter and mother, cared for the man under Dr. Quintanilla's guidance until the leg healed perfectly.



Jane Furchgott

Appropriate technology... Brian hitches a ride on Alfredo Reyes's oxcart, heading off to pull a stuck four-wheel drive pickup out of the Escalante River.

## I Learn to Lasso

by Brian David

I was a volunteer intern for the Sister City Project (SCP) for about four months, surveying education in the communities and possibilities for improvement. I had a lot of firsts in Nicaragua, from eating cow tongue to riding on a motorcycle and eating freshly picked beans, to waking up to howler monkeys at four a.m. All in all I had a lot of fun and learned a lot. My favorite memory of Nicaragua was when Don Angel and Jackson Campos (the ag tech) taught me how to use a lasso.

I was accompanying Jackson while he was vaccinating cattle in the village of El Terrero when we arrived at Don Angel's house. Don Angel was, by far, the best cattle handler that I have seen in the communities. Without a corral we managed to vaccinate fifteen of his cows within an hour (others barely managed five in that span of time). Don Angelito never hit the cows, just coaxed them over to the tree where they were injected quickly.

Don Angel's bull weighed over a ton and stood a lot of feet high. The first attempt to corral it sent it running across the river with Don Angel running after it. The big Brahman bull showed no signs of wanting to be coerced, but three people finally managed it. I could see all this as I watched from a safe distance. I don't have a lot of experience with cattle. Jackson managed to inject the bull twice.

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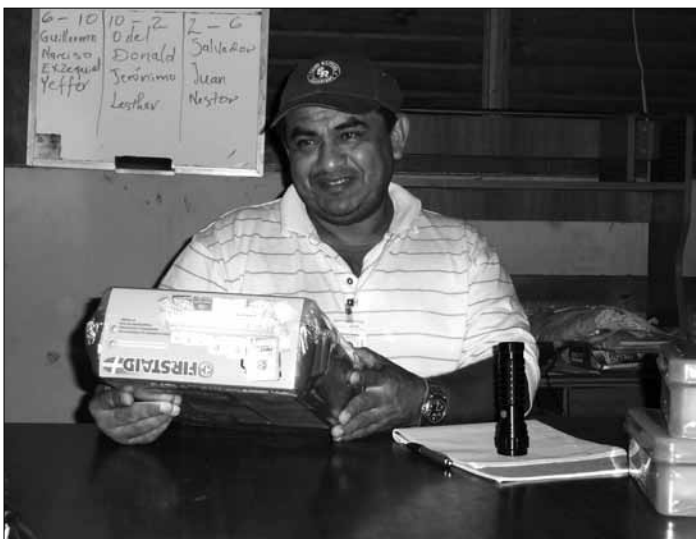
Jane Furchgott

Dr. Robleto and Dr. Quintanilla receive the medical supplies delivered by Linda Stadler.

### State of Health, continued

head lamp, scalpels for minor surgery, suture sets, bulb suction for babies, and some small knit hats for newborns. Dr. Quintanilla identified some additional equipment that is needed including a nebulizer for giving breathing treatments, a pediatric scale, otoscopes, ophthalmoscopes, a water filter for the clinic, and various orthopedic supplies like braces, crutches, and walkers.

Three first aid kits were donated to Chacocente MARENA (Nicaragua's DNR) that director Jeffers Cruz requested last year. The guards carry a first aid kit with them while on patrol, and a larger kit was left at the main office building. ✨



Elizabeth Pflug-Froh

Chacocente Wildlife Refuge director Jeffers Cruz, very pleased with the big first aid kit donated by Phil Stadler.

### I Learn to Lasso, continued

I then asked Don Angel if I could try to wrangle one of the cows. He said sure, pointed to one of them and handed me the rope. This cow was thirteen or fourteen months old, which is why they referred to it as a “ternero.” I believe a loose translation of that would be “calf”.

The calf showed no desire to move away until the rope hit it in the head (my third attempt). Unfortunately that movement made it shrug off my somewhat feeble attempt. Don Angel and Jackson both found this quite amusing.

The fourth time was the charm though, as I stood three or four whole feet away from the beast and lightly tossed the rope over its head. I dug in my heels and prepared to hold it against the charge, but a light tug proved sufficient and it plodded along after me without complaints.

I had a lot of fun getting to know both Jackson and Alma (SCP project facilitator) as well as the members of the communities. I am very thankful for the opportunity to have gone down to Santa Teresa to meet such wonderful people and work with such a great organization. ✨

Our SCP website is [santa-teresa.wccnica.org](http://santa-teresa.wccnica.org) – check it out and see the newsletter photos in full color. All newsletters from the past couple of years are available to read online, along with announcements of upcoming events.

## Elections, Here and There

There were some reports of fraud in last November's Nicaraguan municipal elections. A number of donor countries have cut off their aid programs. No irregularities were reported in Santa Teresa, where Ivan Dinarte was elected Mayor. The former municipal treasurer, Ivan has worked closely with the SCP for the past four years.

SCP Board of Directors elections were held at the March Annual Meeting. Our officers stayed the same: President Derrick Gee, Vice President José Marroquin, Secretary Jane Furchgott, and Treasurer Stein Goering. Current Board members include Janet Gee, Cathy and Jim Pierce, David Rhodes, Linda Stadler, and new member, Elizabeth Pflug-Froh, originally from Venezuela. We all volunteer our time to raise funds and oversee the village projects managed by our Santa Teresa facilitator, Alma Susana Chávez. We thank Maggie Lee and Joe Swanson, who are leaving the board, for their years of dedication.

In his annual report, President Derrick Gee noted the wonderful response of our donors, despite the recession. This past winter's fundraising season was our best ever. We appreciate your confidence in our work. ✨

Everyone is welcome at our monthly SCP meetings. Call Janet Gee at 608 588-3942 for meeting dates, and other SCP information.

# Wells & Rope Pumps

by Jane Furchgott

Clean water is a basic human need. When we begin working with a rural community, wells are the residents' highest priority. The SCP supplies the materials and the villagers provide the labor.

The wells are dug by hand. A man at the bottom of the hole shovels dirt into a five-gallon pail, which is pulled up on a rope and emptied by people at the top. The upper part of the hole, in softer soil, is wider than below, and a ledge is left at the transition point, ten to fifteen feet down, as a footing for the masonry well casing and above-ground well enclosure. These will be constructed from locally made bricks and cement.

Open wells can easily be contaminated by falling debris. Closing the well with a concrete cover that accommodates a rope pump keeps the water clean. The model of rope pump we provide originated in Nicaragua, where over 25% of rural families now use one. They are very easy to operate, and provide a continuous flow of water in the pumping tube.

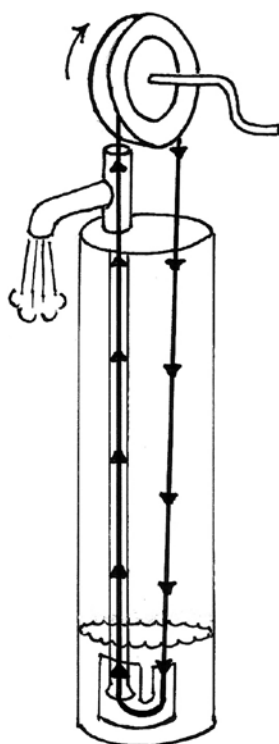


Elizabeth Pflug-Froh

SCP facilitator Alma Susana Chávez pumps water from a Chacocente well.

Last year, the entire El Terrero community made their well covers, which couldn't be installed as long as it was necessary to lower a bucket into the well for water. This year we have promised them twenty-eight pumps for their wells, which will allow them to install the covers. The pumps cost \$110 each.

The SCP board recently decided that, in the future, the materials for a well, cover, and rope pump will be



offered as a package rather than separately. The cost is higher, but wells can become contaminated if not covered soon after construction. The combined cost will be about \$320. A well alone costs \$160 - \$215. ✪

## Rope Pump (not to scale)

The pumping elements of the rope pump are the molded polypropylene pistons and the endless (circular) rope, which pull the water to the surface through the PVC pumping pipe. The pistons fit snugly into the pipe to prevent hydraulic loss. The pulley wheel is made out of two internal rings cut from truck tires. A concrete guide box at the bottom of the well leads the rope into the pumping pipe.

Donations to support the work of the Sister City Project are always gratefully accepted. They may be sent to our treasurer Stein Goering, %SCP, PO Box 483, Richland Center, WI 53581.

## Spring Fling, continued from back page

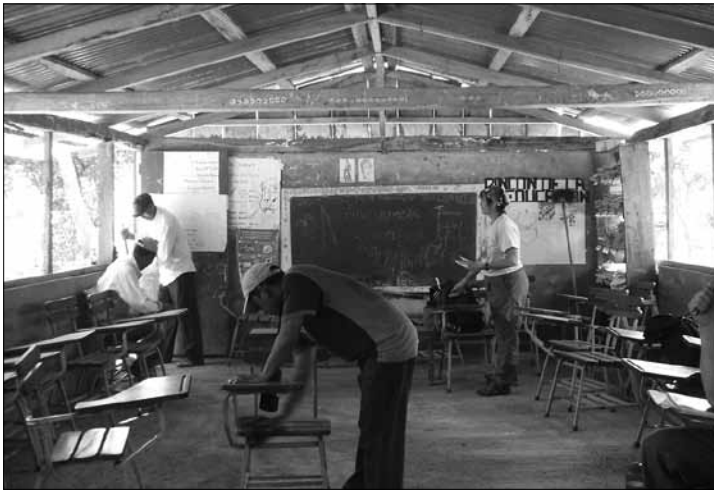
Money raised at the Spring Fling will go for:

**Sister City Education Projects:** Money is raised for families to build and repair schools, provide schoolchildren's and teachers' supplies for 5 communities, for the school lunch program and for environmental education

**Kickapoo Valley Reserve Education Programs** offer hands-on learning opportunities that promote positive environmental values to students of all ages. The Reserve offers naturalist-guided programs to schools and groups on a year-round basis. The Reserve also offers year-round programming for adults, geared for life-long learning opportunities, including some for university credit.

For more information see the Friends website: [www.kickapooofriends.org](http://www.kickapooofriends.org) or call Maggie and Jack Lee at 608 625-2252. The grilled brats and burgers will come from the Lee's grass-fed Texas longhorn cattle. ✪





Jane Furchgott

*The El Terrero school's beautiful new roof and floor, funded by the SCP and constructed by the community*

## Two Steps Forward: Our Progress in 2008

by Janet Gee

As we contemplate our global economic woes, here is a summary of some good news from 2008 that the SCP is very happy to report. In the five communities we serve, Escalante, El Papalon, La Poma, La Chota and El Terrero, we have donated the funds for the following projects which the villages have themselves built or installed.

### Water:

- 4 wells
- 29 well lids
- 7 latrines
- 34 water filters

### Education:

- Materials to replace a leaky school roof, cement the dirt floor, and build a sidewalk around the school building.
- School supplies for 220 grade school students and 8 teachers.
- Twenty-nine books for grade schools.
- Funds to enhance basic government supplies for the school lunch program.

### Health:

- A small stipend each month to Doctor Quintanilla, who visits each of the five communities one time a month for consultations. In addition, once a month he trains about twenty volunteer "health promoters" from these communities in basic first aid and midwifery.
- Money for educational materials and a snack for the health promoters to encourage them to travel the distances necessary to attend the medical training.
- Escalante Health Center completed and repairs for the El Papalon center.

### Agriculture:

- 40 farmers received needed materials and sustainable agricultural training from technician Jackson Campos.

### Environment:

- Support for 16 workshops for students throughout the Santa Teresa municipality on environmental education, especially as it relates to protection of the sea turtles and the dry forest.
- Financial support to pay and equip beach guards (during the turtle nesting season) and forest guards.

### Alcaldia (Mayor's Office):

- Money to tidy up and paint the main town park in Santa Teresa.

The Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua (WCCN) which is based in Madison "adopted" a community for 2008 through the SCP. La Solera received funds to build 12 latrines, 14 well lids and 4 wells.

These projects were all requested by the communities and they continue to be extremely grateful for our help. Each year when we visit, they say that we are the one organization they can count on to do what we promise to do. 🌿



Phil Stadler

*La Solera midwife Juana Pabla Peña stands behind her new well cover, formed in a stone circle on the ground. This concrete cover will be used on the well in the background.*

### A Quick Recap...

*In 1997 Santa Teresa's mayor asked the SCP's help for the sea turtles and the poor communities in Chacocente Wildlife Refuge. This Nicaraguan national reserve, mostly in the southern part of the Santa Teresa municipality, borders the Pacific Ocean. Since then, our projects have focused on Chacocente's villages, turtle beaches and tropical dry forest. We are starting to work with communities in the Refuge's buffer zone as well.*

# Thoughts on Nicaragua

by Elizabeth Pflug-Froh, new SCP Board member

Before I set out on a trip with the Sister City Project this past January, the only thing I knew about Nicaragua was that it was another poor Latin American country. It had been embroiled in years of war that had caused untold suffering to its people. Luckily, the people were resilient and optimistic. With just a little help from a friend, they could begin to rebuild their lives. Along came the SCP in 1987, reaching out to the Santa Teresa municipality and forming a bond...

Here we are now in 2009, 22 years since connecting with Santa Teresa, and the work continues.

The town recently elected a new mayor who is enthusiastic and hopeful for the future of Nicaragua and has many plans on how to lift his people out of poverty. Unfortunately, like in most third world countries, the needs of his people far exceed his budget. That is why he is so thankful of any assistance the SCP can provide.

Just a day trip to one of the remote hamlets in Santa Teresa municipality is proof of that. These hamlets have no services. NO electricity. NO water. NO sewer. NO medical facilities. The inhabitants are hard working individuals trying to eke out a meager existence in a land that suffers from frequent floods and droughts.

That's why what the SCP does is invaluable. Over the years, the SCP has sponsored medical care for the villagers. It has provided building materials for latrines, wells, schoolhouses and clinics. It has provided school supplies and farming education.

It has not always been easy to achieve these lofty goals. After all, the villagers have to dig the wells by hand. Same goes for the latrines. The schoolhouses and clinics have to be built by the villagers when they are not busy farming. Or when it's not flooding during the rainy season.

So, is it worth all the effort and money that the SCP puts into some remote area in far away Nicaragua? The villagers must think so because we now sponsor five villages. They are grateful for the assistance we give them in their quest to improve their lives and those of their children. Other villages are frequently asking to be included in our sponsorship.

I like to believe that this is the true meaning of a global community. That if I was in their place, there would be someone out there in this great big world who would reach out and give me a hand. I believe this is what makes us human and it makes me proud to be part of the Sister City Project. ♣

# Sea Turtle News

by Jane Furchgott

When we visited Chacocente in January, Jeffers Cruz, director of the Refuge, took us to see a new olive ridley hatchery set up on the beach of El Astillero, the fishing town next to Chacocente. This educational hatchery, sponsored by FFI (Fauna & Flora International), will involve El Astillero's young people and children, helping change local attitudes towards sea turtles.

Cruz told us the arribada season was going well. The number of olive ridley turtles nesting at Chacocente was down slightly from last year, but still high. While spending the night on the beach, we saw hundreds of baby turtles emerging from their nests in the sand to head for the ocean.

This year, the SCP will be helping fund the equipment (such as red flashlights and rain ponchos) used by the Chacocente park guards, local community members working for MARENA. These guards monitor the forest as well as the beach. Cruz thanked us for our help and

expressed a need for fire-fighting equipment, specifically boots and backpack water tanks.

José Urteaga, in charge of the FFI leatherback hatchery at Veracruz, was not optimistic about the critically endangered Pacific leatherback. Only 21 leatherback nests were laid in the 2008-9



Alma Susana Chavéz

*Santa Teresa schoolgirls watch hatchling turtles emerge from the sand.*

season, the second year of very low nesting numbers. There is a pattern of two years of low leatherback nesting rates followed by improvement, so we are looking forward anxiously towards next winter's nesting season. It takes the turtles 15 years to mature, and Urteaga hopes that in eight years or so leatherback hatchlings from the early years of the hatchery will return to nest.

We are again participating in FFI's "I don't eat turtle eggs" national campaign. This year the campaign will visit schools all over Nicaragua. A website is planned that will expose illegal sellers of turtle eggs and tortoiseshell. ♣

**Richland Center-Santa Teresa Sister City Project**  
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Derrick Gee

*Carrying water in El Papalon*

## **Spring Fling!** *by Maggie Lee*

Spring is here - time again to celebrate!! It is the year of change and our **Kickapoo Brats, Burgers, & Beer** event has a change, too. This year it will be held at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve north of La Farge, S3661 State Hwy. 131. It will be a day for fun, friendship and learning walks, on this beautiful Reserve. It will be a joint event co-sponsored with the Friends of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. The proceeds

of the event will be split equally between the Kickapoo Reserve's education program and the Sister City's education program in Chacocente Wildlife Refuge, Santa Teresa, Nicaragua. (See page 3 for details.) ✨



Janet Gee

*Students in the La Chota community grade school*

### ***Come to the Kickapoo Reserve*** ***Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>***

- 4-5 pm BIRD WALK with Barb Duerksen & Cathy Pierce.  
PLANT WALK with Darcy Kind
- 5 pm RAPTOR EXHIBIT with Maggie Jones
- 5-7 pm BRATS & BURGERS, salads, homemade desserts, and the "brew canoe." Meal is \$8.00, beverage by donation - beer, soda, water (kids drink soda or water free)
- 7-9 pm CAMPFIRE AND MUSIC featuring Sinister Dane (Bring your instruments and join in!)

***WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE !!***  
***REMEMBER THE DATE: MAY 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009***

*Newsletter Production: Jane Furchgott and Sue Furchgott, with help from Stein Goering and Charles Munch*