

2013 projects

PALAN-BILAMPI

System designed in the municipality of Rio Blanco and financed by Rural Water Ventures.

SAN MATIAS AND YAULI

Both financed by Res Publica (a French and the sanitation division of La Chocolate.

EL QUEBRECHO

System financed by Rotary International and two Rotary Clubs in Colorado. Work began in October and is expected to be completed in 2014.

budget considerations

APLV's annual budget is close to \$600,000. Our expenses include materials for our water and sanitation projects, salaries for our 15 paid Nicaraguan staff, and operating expenses for our technical school. We would like to fund even more projects that we currently do - the need is great - and are constantly looking for more funding partners.

Our work can continue with ***your help!***



Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____ Email _____

get involved

- I would like to receive this newsletter via email
- I would like to support APLV in bringing clean drinking water to the people of Nicaragua.
Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:
 - \$75 – material cost for drinking water for one person
 - \$100 – material cost for 500 seedlings for reforestation
 - \$250 – sponsorship for one APLV technical student for one month
 - \$500 – material cost for a latrine for one family
 - \$750 – material cost for drinking water for one family
 - \$1000 – cost of drinking water, latrine, and health education for one family

Agua Para La Vida is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. Make checks payable to Agua Para La Vida (APLV). Donations can also be made online at: www.aplv.org



December 2013

Board of Directors:

Gilles Corcos
Anne Corcos
Charlie Huizenga
Bill McQueeney
Kelly Naylor
Debbie Parducci

ideas turned into action

The history of Agua Para La Vida is a record of ideas turned into action. When Gilles and Anne Corcos, and Charlie Huizenga set out in 1987 to help a rural village in Nicaragua build a gravity flow water system, they described the sometimes dangerous work as "fun" and everyone was delighted at the success of the mission. That initial effort grew bit by bit. Word then went out to many of you, who, for 27 years have supported our efforts that have resulted in 80 functioning water systems and a technical school in the Rio Blanco region of Nicaragua. Your support has been invaluable and we hope and trust that it will continue helping to end, village by village, the scourge of water borne disease and the toll it takes, not only on the quality of life but on life itself.

In 1996, in his annual letter, Gilles wrote,

"We believe strongly that the development of drinking water in Nicaragua cannot forever depend on the sustained availability and interest of foreign technicians. Our objective is not merely to assist the communities in building their water systems but also to help the region develop the human resources it needs to become self sufficient in this undertaking."

The establishment of our technical school (ETAP) emphasized the serious goal of sustainability that has permeated our plans ever since. In our 25th year we announced the creation of the Nicaraguan branch of APLV, recognized as a Nicaraguan NGO. Today we are excited about our new Board of Directors of APLV Nicaragua as well as the General Assembly, concerned with the pressing practical problems arising every day at APLV's water center.

These are big and important changes. APLV has transformed from a few volunteers helping out as best they could to a professional organization staffed by skilled Nicaraguans that is addressing all aspects of water and sanitation for rural communities. This is the definition of sustainable development.

One important aspect of our sustainable approach is continued contact with all of our communities. One of our recent ETAP graduates is carrying out an evaluation of the status of all 80 water projects. His detailed findings are forming the basis of a long-term improvement plan, some of which has already been undertaken. There are nine pages of questions to be addressed for each project and this will probably take two years to complete. Some of the funds for this work came from the Laird Norton Family Foundation — an example of the kind of financing we must seek to maintain, repair, and extend existing systems in addition to funding new projects for which there is an ever present demand. We look to you, our donors, to continue your generous support. You should be pleased and proud of all we have accomplished together.

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF

Agua Para La Vida

more on the Board in Nicaragua



Members of the APLV Nicaragua Board, General Assembly and Staff, 2013. Front row, left to right: Martha Espinoza (Board Secretary), Lucia Aguirre (Board treasurer), Gilles Corcos (APLV Executive Director), Aynn Setright (Board Chair), Jaime Rodriguez (Nicaragua Technical Director). Back row, left to right: Sergio Gamez (General Assembly), Arturo Zamora (General Assembly), Jorge Icaza (General Assembly), Jorge Rooses (General Assembly), Felipe Gonzalez (Board), Alberto de Diego Gómez (Technical School Instructor). Not Pictured: Martha Chavarria (Board), Francisco Gonzalez (Board).

Part of a recent grant from the Laird Norton Foundation helped to fund our efforts to develop a Board of Directors and a general Assembly for our Nicaraguan organization. The Board is tasked with shaping the overall direction of the organization and will gradually be taking on increasing responsibility for all activities in Nicaragua. The General Assembly is a mechanism to engage a broader group of people and to develop connections with professionals who can provide assistance with specific issues that arise for our staff in Rio Blanco. The General Assembly will also serve as a means of recruiting new Board members.

a letter from Gilles

Gilles Corcos is Executive and Technical Director of Agua Para La Vida.

I returned to Nicaragua after a four-year absence and the welcome I received was heartwarming. Their embrace energized me for the serious work ahead. One of the first initiatives was to meet with the new Nicaragua Junta (Board) and the next day with the equally new General Assembly, which is made up of the Nicaraguan volunteers willing to give a hand to the field group in Rio Blanco. I outlined what I saw as the chronology necessary for an orderly transfer of the decision-making authority from the present Executive Director to the Nicaragua Board and its Executive agent. Later I entered into a dialogue with Board Chair Aynn Setright to impart to the Board members knowledge of the many practical issues that it will have to face and of the nature of the field group in Rio Blanco. The next day at a meeting of both the Board and the still-limited General Assembly's members, further steps were discussed to engage the mostly Managua crowd with the Rio Blanco field group. The suggestion was made that small groups of General Assembly members, each one with a narrow focus dictated by the needs of the Rio Blanco working team would have a representative sitting in at the meetings of the Board of Directors or co-opted by the Board. One such group made up of two Nicaraguan engineers is already operating in this mode.

The El Quebracho project, financed primarily by two Colorado Rotary Clubs and Rotary International, and plagued by multiple problems, was started on Oct. 15 and good progress is being made. The problems are related to attributing water rights to the community, to weak community governance, excessive workload per family, and difficult access to some of the present housing. In a single day of intense discussion, three of us, Carmen, Jaime Alonso (technical head in Rio Blanco) and I,

favorably changed the odds of completion by bargaining with some of the more wealthy residents of the village for the use of a back hoe to help with the enormous length of the pipe trenches to be dug.

The internal evaluation of all our 80 projects, was referred to in last year's newsletter as well as this one. Some remedial action is already being taken, i.e. replacing latrines with those that are better designed, longer lasting, and ecologically beneficial. Other questions that must be dealt with have to do mostly with the inadequacy of the maintenance by the villagers. This necessary component of the longevity of water and hygiene projects—a chronic problem the world over—awaits the possibility of a more general (and necessarily gradual) development of rural governance. It has also caused us to conceive for the future a more integral form of water system development that would answer the problem of the present lack of funding of several activities that we judge part of our charge. We envision a closer association with selected municipalities that would be the proponent of the development.

There are two requirements to make this plan a reality: really dynamic and active municipal governments and fund providers able and willing to provide more inclusive and broader financial support. So far we have identified one municipality that appears to be a valid partner and we are going to test its mettle in the near future. The most likely fund provider we will attempt to enroll in this endeavor is the European Community.

This is an exciting and challenging time. With gratitude for your past support, we urge you to help us meet the continuing challenge. Happy Holidays and a peaceful and joyous New Year.