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ANNUAL REPORT 2014



What a difference four new classrooms make!

See Inside!

SCSRN

Sister Communities of
San Ramón, Nicaragua



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San Ramón Nicaragua
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A Letter From Our New (and first) In-Country Executive Director

I'm happy to join the efforts of Sister Communities of San Ramon as its new Executive Director. What first attracted me to SCSRN was the work that it does to improve rural education. I have been a teacher in Nicaragua since 2008, when I came as an English teacher trainer with the Peace Corps. As such, I know very well what educators here are up against. I know how far teachers have to stretch their resources, how precious every pencil and notebook can be, not to mention what it means to have a good roof and a place to sit in a classroom. Nicaraguan teachers are my heroes, as are the mothers and fathers who come together as a community to ensure that their kids get an education. I admire their hard work and their commitment to their community, and that's why I'm excited to work for an organization that supports their endeavors. One goal I have as Executive Director is to help both communities, North and South, develop practices of strengths-based assessment – identifying what our strengths are and making that our starting point for growth and development. I look forward to serving this organization and the people of San Ramón.

Anjie Price
Executive Director

A Trip That Changed My Life

I first went to San Ramón on a high school service trip that truly changed my life. I found myself completely in love with everything Nicaraguan: the people, the rich cultural heritage, the food, and the breathtaking natural beauty.

But most of all, I was in love with the town of San Ramón. After a series of difficult goodbyes, I promised myself that I would return as soon as I could. This past summer, my brother and I packed our bags and embarked on a journey that was unlike anything we had ever done before. We spent most of the month of July teaching English to about 100 students in the Instituto Nacional de San Ramón. I had absolutely no real teaching experience. Nevertheless, SCSRN shared my vision for what I wanted to accomplish and provided the necessary resources to make it happen. I remember how much of a blast the first day of teaching was. I felt like even in our limited time in San Ramón, my brother and I could actually make a difference in the lives of some of these students. While not every day proved to be as easy as the first, each day I saw progress – in the students' work and in my teaching. As much as this trip served students of San Ramón, it truly served me and helped me become a better person.

I still keep in touch with many of the students on a regular basis. I frequently log into Facebook to see "Hello teacher!" messages in my inbox. Thanks to SCSRN for helping me create such an unforgettable experience.

Jonathan Schwartz
East Chapel Hill High School Graduate

Our Year in Review:

Our major accomplishment this past year was constructing four new high school classrooms. Eight primary schools feed into the high school, called *Instituto*. Each year a greater percentage of students continue their education past the eighth grade.



- These new classrooms are used 7 days a week. 576 youngsters attend Monday-Friday. 1160 young adults attend on weekends.
- Six school kitchen gardens grow vegetables for student lunches.

- Over 1,000 children benefited from attending schools with water filters, first aid kits, cleaning supplies and eating school lunches on plastic dishes all furnished by SCSRN.

We added two new rural schools to our Rural School Partnership Program, which brings our total to 16. During the academic year, 1078 children receive two packages of school supplies.

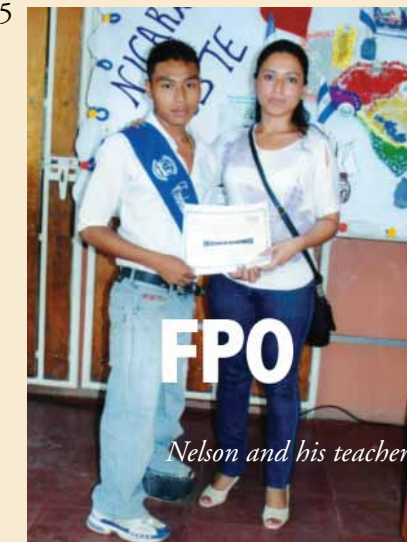
We supported 45 families through our on-going commitment to children with special needs served by *Los Pipitos*. Last year five children improved sufficiently to be able to attend pre-school. Similarly, five adults reached milestones to cease physical therapy.

New construction,
Winter 2014;
High School classrooms



Los Pipitos has an Angel!

Rebecca Grant graduated with her Doctorate in Physical Therapy in 2009 and was looking for an exciting way to jump start her career. As she is from North Carolina originally, she learned about **Los Pipitos** through the Sister Communities of San Ramon Nicaragua and its work in San Ramón. She heard about their need for a physical therapist and decided it was a perfect fit. Rebecca traveled to San Ramón in September, 2009, and has maintained a relationship with the Director of Los Pipitos, **Doña Lilian**, as well as her Nicaraguan patients and families, ever since. Rebecca returns to San Ramón each year, bringing fellow physical therapists and supplies with her. In between trips she sends needed supplies, including orthotics, wound care supplies, and therapy equipment. Recently Rebecca learned that one of the first patients she treated in 2009, **Nelson**, was in need of a custom shoe lift. Nelson lost a significant portion of his leg to a bone infection several years ago and as a result requires a 10.5 centimeter shoe lift in order to walk. Rebecca was able to work with the orthotists of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where she is a pediatric physical therapist, to create the shoes. The orthotists generously adapted the shoes pro bono, and they were delivered to San Ramón in April by a visiting school group. Nelson is now able to walk without a cane and attend school, where he is excelling and was recently awarded a certificate of academic excellence.



Nelson and his teacher.

My name is Kristine Markatos-Soriano,

I am the new International Education Coordinator for SCSRN.

Last year was a success, as students from Appalachian State University installed solar lights in two community buildings. East Chapel Hill High School and Greensboro Day School also enjoyed bonding with their Sister Schools, where they helped cultivate their school kitchen gardens. During my recent trip to Nicaragua, I met our new Executive Director, Anjie Price, as well as the rest of the San Ramón staff - all extremely impressive! This upcoming year promises to be a busy and successful one, with 3-4 student groups and 3-4 adult groups gearing up to go!

If you'd like an adventure and wonderful memories, contact me at Kristine@san-ramon.org, as there may still be space or additional trips being formed.

"The new classrooms are very comfortable, and the students are happy to be in them, because they no longer have to travel to a different school to receive their classes."

- Blanca Nubia Rojas,
teacher and committee member

SCSRC Mission Statement

SCSRN, a collaboration between San Ramón, Nicaragua and its partner communities in the United States, provides educational opportunities and people-to-people connections through developing education projects which address community-identified needs in San Ramón and promoting Eco-tourism, hands-on cultural immersion travel, community service and experiential learning.