ENTREFE: NICARAGUA PROJECT

Handbook
Statement of Faith

We believe that everyone is part of God’s creation and that every person has a right to have basic needs met: food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, education, clean water, and opportunities for employment. As followers of Christ, we are called to share our blessings with others who are in need of help, and work to lessen poverty through empowerment.
Interfaith Nicaragua Mission Trip:

We are very disappointed that because of political unrest in Nicaragua our 2018 trip has been canceled.

Dear Interested Traveler,

In 2018 we are embarking on our fourth trip since Pastor Abe Gonzalez, a founder of the ENTREFE-Nicaragua Project, retired from our board after 15 years of faithful service. Pastor Abe is a native of Nicaragua who had led the average of at least one mission trip a year. Because of his leadership, nuanced knowledge of the country, personal guidance and leadership, the Nicaragua Project is what it is today, and we will remain always grateful for the firm foundation he established for us to continue to be active in changing lives and forming relationships in Somoto, Nicaragua.

Since Pastor Abe’s retirement, our focus on the mission trip has changed. We no longer run medical clinics due to a number of factors, including improved community delivery of health services within the country, Granby Mission’s ability to provide clinics with expanded services to many of the same communities that we served, the difficulty with getting medical supplies through customs, and the desire to be able to focus on other aspects of our mission. Also, the children’s project we built now provides Christian focused activities, worship, and education for all ages on a daily basis and does Christian outreach into the community, so that they themselves now run the VBS. Our primary focus is on developing personal relationships. In the process, we continue to check on the now financially independent Mother’s House we built for birthing in Telpaneeca, our children’s center Niños y Niñas del Futuro, house construction, water filters, protective roofs, microloans, a new sewing cooperative, and scholarships that enable youth to go to school and attend the university.

We are under the auspices of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont, Colorado. Our participants through the years have and continue to come from a wide variety of faith backgrounds, churches, and even other states and we receive financial support from a number of area churches as well as a wide variety of donors.

Our basic projects on the trip will be to build a minimum of one home in the town of Somoto, continue our water filter projects, support operational costs for Ninos y Ninas del Futuro (a children’s project we started), meet with and continue to fund scholarship and micro loan recipients, provide roofs over shacks, and distribute clothing, used computers, and school supplies. Additional projects may be added if a grant is secured and donations are generous. Additional projects may be added if donations are generous.

Our mission provides hope to the people and relationships are built. It is our intention that, as we work with the people of Somoto, we learn about their joys, hopes, dreams, and daily struggles. Jobs that are done are varied.

We are in special need of people able to interpret. The construction work can be hard labor, and temperatures will be high, so if you have health issues, please let us know. There are possibilities for working with the schools, helping in the preschool of the children’s project, or teaching English as a second language. In the past, everyone has found they are able to contribute to the projects, even if they had some doubts before the trip. The mission work is guided by the participants on the trip, and there are opportunities to create new ways to serve the Nicaraguan people.
Various jobs may be assigned to participants (or volunteers) in preparation for the trip, and in Nicaragua. Jobs may include overseeing packing before we leave, overseeing distribution of donations at the sites, overseeing school supply distribution, overseeing communications to everyone, coordinating lunch at the various sites, problem solving, picture and/or video taking, bookkeeping for project expenditures, bookkeeping and fund collecting for trip expenditures, leading devotions, trouble shooting, new project development, etc. It is hoped that needs that are seen by participants will be voiced, and participants will volunteer to help meet those needs whenever possible.

We will be in Managua the first night of the trip. The following day we will travel to Somoto, which is 12 miles from the Honduran border, and about 160 miles north of Managua. The Somoto area is at a higher altitude than Managua and lies in an open plain, surrounded by mountains. After we are settled in the small hotel there, we will attend a ceremony at Ninos y Ninas del Futuro to be greeted by the community.

We trust that God will be guiding and directing us in our efforts. You will discover that this trip will be a blessing to the people of Somoto, but it will be a greater blessing to us. YOUR LIFE WILL BE CHANGED FOREVER. DO PRAY THAT THIS TRIP WILL BE A SUCCESS AND INVITE THE PRAYER SUPPORT OF YOUR FRIENDS AND CONGREGATIONS.

--TheNicaraguaProject Board
“The Hershey Bar Principle”

The project is based on the “Hershey Bar Principle,” in that the most important thing we give the adults and children when we go is HOPE. A member of the team in 2002, Dick Forshay, wrote about his experience in post war Germany 25 and even 55 years after the war. He wrote that despite the tremendous rebuilding that went on, every person, men and women, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, said that the thing they remembered most vividly was the chocolate candy bar given to them by an American soldier....Everyone would get choked up and misty eyed talking about the few cents of candy they got 25 years ago. They said that it was great that the country was being rebuilt, but the thing that gave them HOPE was the chocolate candy bar....We do not know (in Nicaragua) what effect we are having on people. But we do know that we are giving some HOPE to many of them.

Board of Directors 2017-2018

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Communications and Technology Specialist: Dave Twait. drtwait@yahoo.com Bethlehem Lutheran, Longmont, CO

Business and Travel Consultant: Kim Goodman, kimberlygoodmankim@gmail.com Boulder, CO

Newsletter: Lance Pulliam. pulliam_lance@comcast.net

Organizational Chair: Rob Sears. searscubs@msn.com, First Lutheran Church, Longmont, CO
Collection of Supplies

We will take some baby and preschool clothes, layettes baby blankets, and Beanie Babies. Used lap top computers and new quilts may also be taken.

Churches and organizations are asked to collect both non gummy adult and children vitamins, tooth brushes and tooth paste.

PLEASE report funds and fund drives to Cathy Goodman at cegood47@aol.com.

Travel

We will fly from Denver to Managua. All participants are requested to arrive in Nicaragua as a group. Departure times in Managua for the return trip may vary, allowing members to seek the most reasonable air fare.

After the group flights are chosen, you will be notified and each participant is responsible for paying for their own ticket. We have found that most participants receive a much better rate than when we purchase group tickets.

Luggage

Each participant pays for the second checked bag if only one is allowed. Mission supplies will be packed in the two bags allowed per passenger prior to our departure. Mission bags will have numbered identifying tags attached to them. This helps us identify our Mission baggage throughout the trip. In Denver, each person will check in two of the Mission bags assigned to you. To prevent customs problems, please check the list to determine the contents of the Mission bags you will be transporting.

Due to the large amount of Mission material we transport, and luggage weight restrictions, we ask that you pack your personal items in a carry-on bag. Any items that are indispensable to you, which are not allowed to be carried on, will be combined with others and packed in a Mission bag. Each carry-on bag has a size limit of 45 linear inches (length, width and height added together) and 40 pounds. Make sure you have your name and address tags on your carry-on bags.

On the return trip, empty bags will be consolidated into as few bags as possible. Some participants may be asked to be responsible for one checked bag. While a participant may desire to return with no checked luggage, or to check their carry-on, it may be necessary to request your help in returning the empty bags to Colorado. Consideration will be given to those needing extra baggage to return with purchased items.

Packing of Supplies

Approximately two weeks before departure, we will meet to sort and pack supplies. Before any bags are packed, the group will set priorities for packing, in case more has been collected than can be transported. Priorities will be packed first. The Mission bags are packed to just under the 50-pound limit. Each bag will be assigned a number tag, and its contents recorded. After priorities are packed, the group will decide what of the remaining items will be packed. Bags with items that do not have priority will be marked so last minute changes can be made if necessary.
Departure

Please have a contact phone number on the day of departure so that your progress, arrival, and location at the airport can be tracked if necessary. Each member of the team will have the contact number for every other member.

We should arrive at the Denver Airport three hours ahead of flight time since checking in supplies takes additional time. The group will help unload the luggage and each person will claim two bags of Mission supplies for check in. If any bags are slightly overweight, items will be removed and added to bags that are slightly underweight. Please do not check in at the airline counter until all travelers have arrived and you have been assigned your two bags of Mission supplies.

Arrival in Managua

When we arrive at the airport in Managua people will be designated to gather the luggage while others watch the bags as they are taken off. Carry-ons need to be watched at all times.

A representative of the hotel, or other “expeditor”, will consolidate our baggage at the airport to speed our luggage through customs. A hotel representative will collect the baggage claim tags from you so he can present them to the person helping us expedite our luggage. If needed, a hotel shuttle bus will be waiting for us outside the airport to take us to our hotel.

Storing of Supplies

In Somoto, you will be asked to store some of the supplies in your hotel room. You will be responsible for informing the person who heads the general supplies as to the contents you are storing.

Cost of Trip/Money to Take

The cost of the trip can be divided into 3 categories: Airfare (varies – approximately $825), shared expenses in Nicaragua (approximately $550), and personal expenses ($200). The figures are estimates based on history. Airfare can vary widely depending on when you make your reservations. Shared expenses include meals, hotels, transportation, etc. Your share is the total cost divided by the number of people traveling, to be collected when bills are presented. Most shared expenses will be due at the end of the trip. It is suggested that you keep the money intended for shared trip expenses separate from your personal spending money, to make sure you have enough to pay the bills at the end of the trip. The personal expenses include buying meals while traveling, drinking water, snacks, visa, gift shopping, and emergency money if a departure flight is cancelled etc.

All bills must be in excellent shape: no tears, marks, or bent corners, or they may not be accepted for payment in Nicaragua. The money for all trip expenses must be carried with you at ALL times, even in the hotels. Bring a money belt or neck purse for under your clothing for your money and passport. It helps to put your passport and money in Zip-lock bags.

Suggested denominations for the cash taken:

- Shared expenses ($650): (2) $100’s, (7) $50’s, (4) $20’s, (2) $10’s;
- Personal expenses ($200): (11) $10’s, (13) $5’s, (25) $1’s.

There are places in Nicaragua which accept credit cards. Use them with great caution. Some choose to leave them at home. Leave any expensive jewelry or anything that is of extreme value to you at. Do bring a watch and camera or a small video camera. Some like disposable cameras. You may be asked to carry project funds in addition to your expense money.
Hotels

The group will stay at the Best Western Hotel across from the airport in Managua for three nights, one upon arrival and two upon returning. The total cost for this hotel will be part of the shared expenses, and includes breakfasts.

The group will stay at a small hotel in Somoto. It is clean, and there are cold showers only. Bring flip-flops to wear in the shower to protect from foot diseases. The water at the hotel may not be available during midday to allow the city reservoir to be refilled. Please bring disposable cleaning wipes and antiseptic hand gel. No conversion is needed for electrical appliances. Rooms will be assigned, usually two to a room, upon arrival. Assignments will consider family groups, age, handicap accommodations, and health needs. Youth must be in a hotel room with at least one adult in that same hotel room. Some find ear plugs and sleeping masks useful. The church bell rings frequently and loudly through the night.

Laundry

Laundry services are available. By paying someone a few dollars to do laundry, we help the income of that family. It may take several days for your laundry to be returned, so pack necessary clothing items accordingly. Sometimes clothing items may be lost during laundering, so it is suggested that you do not put clothing of important value to you in the laundry.

Passport

You need a passport to enter Nicaragua. Take the original to carry plus a copy in your suitcase with you. You are required to purchase a visa at the Managua airport for approximately $10.00. Before you leave the U.S., give copies of your passport and birth certificate to a friend or relative. Naturalized citizens also need to bring a copy of their naturalization certificate; and leave a copy with a friend or relative.

If you do not have a passport, you can get one through the post office for $140 (2014 cost). (Take an identification card and birth certificate.) To issue a passport takes six to eight weeks. If you need to just renew a passport, the cost is $110. Your passport is good for ten years and can be renewed within two years after it has expired. Be sure to check the expiration date of your passport.
Sign-up

People interested in going are asked to fill out the attached “Nicaragua Interfaith Mission Project Interest Form.” towards the end of this handbook and send it to the co-secretary, Cathy Goodman, cegood47@aol.com or 4553 Canterbury Drive, Boulder, CO 80301.

It is recommended that participants express their interest in participating as soon as possible, but not send in any deposits (see below) until after Jan. 1 (to facilitate church bookkeeping). Participants are selected on a first come, first serve basis. Due to transportation issues, we are limited in number. To secure a spot, a deposit of $200 must be received by March 31, of which $100 will be non-refundable. The entire deposit will be non-refundable after April 15, because we have to contractually commit to a certain number of participants to the hotels and to the transportation company. If someone cannot go, we are still obligated to pay these expenses. Send the deposit made out to Bethlehem - Nicaragua and mark “Nicaragua Trip Deposit” on the memo line of your check to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont.

Itinerary

Keep in mind that things may happen that are out of our control (such as weather changes, road construction, bus breakdowns, etc.) that affect our daily plans. Because of this we need to be as flexible as possible. Our schedule may change from day to day or even hour to hour. It is important that those who have not gone before take the same flight to Managua as someone who has gone. Return flight is can vary with your plans. The following is the recommended airline and flight numbers for our June 2018 trip.

We are very disappointed that because of political unrest in Nicaragua our 2018 trip has been canceled.

Keep in mind that the airlines may change these flight numbers and/or times.

The prices fluctuate quite a bit, but it usually better to book flights earlier rather than later. Price as of 1/19/2018 was $974.
Language
Very few living in Nicaragua speak English. Translators are needed at each project site if possible. Previous participants recommend learning at least a little Spanish, though this is not a requirement.

Safety
Parents not going with those under 18 are to provide a permission slip. BE SAFE. ALWAYS BE WITH SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT GO OUT AT NIGHT ALONE, ESPECIALLY IN MANAGUA. IF YOU WANT TO GO SOMEWHERE MAKE SURE TO CHECK WITH AN ASSIGNED GROUP LEADER BEFORE YOU DO IT. DO NOT FLASH MONEY IN FRONT OF PEOPLE. Carry all money with you at all times. There are no hotel safes. Watch all your personal items.

The exception to the above rule may be to go to the corner store diagonal to the Somoto Hotel (for water, pop, candy, soap), or to the internet café. Somoto is generally a safe place, but take all the precautions necessary to make your experience an enjoyable one and follow the above safety rules. No one is to leave the area surrounding the hotel alone.

Attached is an “International Travel Liability Release Form” that we ask each participant to sign and turn in with your deposit. Again, return signed form to Cathy Goodman, cegood47@aol.com.

Food and Clothing
While we are in Somoto, our hotel will prepare and serve our meals. In previous years, much of the food was Americanized. Our group contracts for meals with the hotel, so the meals are a shared expense. We strongly suggest you avoid eating raw vegetables or fruit that is not peeled, as a health precaution. You will buy bottled water to avoid sickness but we can't guarantee that you will not get sick. You may experience stomach upset, so anti-diarrhea and stomach medication should be packed. Snacks, such as trail mix or energy bars, can be helpful for times between meals or when traveling.

Bring comfortable work shoes, and sandals and casual clothes for after work hours. It is recommended that sandals be worn only at the hotel and shoes be worn elsewhere to protect from scrapes and cuts, which can become infected. Some travelers prefer to wear long sleeve shirts and long pants to lessen risks of bug bites, especially at night. It is okay to wear pants and shorts. Provocative clothing should be avoided. You may want to bring a swimsuit as there are opportunities for swimming at the Managua hotel.

Liquor and Cigarettes
The drinking of alcohol should be limited and be done only in the hotel. Don't offer drinks to those outside our group. Those who have purchased liquor and cigarettes to take home should not ask others to help carry extra items back to the U.S. and through Customs.

Contact with Home
Somoto has Internet cafes. One of them is near the hotel where we stay and wifi is available at the hotel. If you need to contact your family in the USA, call from an internet café; calls are very inexpensive. Avoid making collect calls from Nicaragua since they can be expensive.
Medical Considerations

Although no immunizations are required for travel to Nicaragua, the Center for Disease Control recommends several, including Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid as well as being up to date on Tetanus and Measles. Check their website (www.cdc.gov/travel) for further information. The CDC also sometimes recommends malaria prophylaxis. Consult your personal physician as soon as possible to determine which immunizations and medications are appropriate for you so you'll have time to receive them before June.

Malaria, dengue fever and a handful of other preventable diseases are spread by infected mosquitoes and other insects, so we strongly recommend that you use an insect repellent containing a high concentration of DEET regularly while in Nicaragua. Dengue fever has been increasing, so take all the precautions necessary to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Travelers' Diarrhea is common and the causes are bacteria, viruses or parasites, spread through food and water. We recommend that you wash your hands often and well with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially before eating. Eat only cooked fruits and vegetables unless you can peel them yourself. Avoid buying food from street vendors. Avoid milk and ice cream unless you know it has been pasteurized. You should plan to buy bottled water (in sealed bottles) for drinking and for brushing teeth. (And drink plenty of water every day to stay hydrated.) Imodium (or generic loperamide) works quite well to stop diarrhea. Taking Pepto-Bismol, four tabs four times a day may prevent diarrhea, but it may turn your tongue and bowel movements black and must not be used if you take aspirin or certain other medications regularly. Your physician may consider prescribing an antibiotic (such as Cipro) to take for moderate or severe diarrhea, but antibiotics are only effective against the bacterial causes of diarrhea.

Take shower shoes for the shower to avoid athlete’s foot, and don’t go barefoot anywhere. Also take sunglasses, sun-block and a hat that will shield you from the sun. We are outdoors most of the time and the sun can be brutal. Take any prescription medication in their original container, and a note from your physician may help to avoid any problems with customs. If you wear prescription glasses, consider carrying an extra pair.

In addition to the items listed above, you may want to carry the following in your personal health kit: multivitamins, pain reliever, eye drops, first aid cream, band-aids, cortisone cream for rashes or itching, antifungal cream, spray or powder and Kleenex. See the attached exhibit for a list of recommended items to take with you.

Find out if your medical insurance covers you in Nicaragua and purchase trip insurance to cover medical expenses and medical evacuation if needed. (One source is www.travelguard.com).

A health form will be added for you to fill out at a later date.
Children’s Games and Culture
Kids are curious about foreigners. It is okay to play games with them. BUT DO NOT PLAY THE NOSE GAME WITH KIDS (THE ONE WHERE YOU PUT YOUR THUMB BETWEEN YOUR FIRST TWO FINGERS). THIS IS AN OBSCENE GESTURE IN NICARAGUA.

Gifts
You may bring balloons, and/or some candy or gum to share with kids. Adults like small bottles of hand lotion or nice smelling soap. Perfume samples are always a big hit. Chocolate melts, so it is best taken in the form of M & M's. Beanie babies and any small stuffed animals work great. Bring toys small enough to hold in your hands. Do not bring toys that need batteries or have small parts that can cause choking, since very young children may get a hold of them. Batteries are expensive in Nicaragua; most families can't afford them for toys.

Bring clothes in good condition to give away to families or church clothing banks at the end of the trip, if you wish. Our rule is, “if you are not willing to wear it do not give it away”. Some have purchased good clothing from a thrift shop for the trip, intending to leave it behind. Keep in mind that most Nicaraguans are neither tall nor overweight. Make sure to bring summer clothes and DO NOT include winter clothes, which are not useful in the Nicaraguan climate.

Be polite. If you are unable to eat or drink something that is offered to you, talk to the translators so that we can explain to people why you cannot accept it. If at the end of the trip a gift is offered to you, please accept it.

Participation
The mission is a volunteer operation. Undue pressure to participate will not be applied to anyone. Anyone is allowed to rest at the hotel instead of going into the field to work, whenever they wish, for any reason. Self-care is encouraged and is essential.

In the past, some have wondered if they have any skills that can be of any help; we expect that you’ll come back feeling you were truly able to contribute.

Housing Construction
Construction is expected to occur on a minimum of two houses this year. If additional funds are raised, more houses will be constructed. Those participating in construction will want to bring work gloves, sunscreen, a sun-shielding hat, and perhaps extra clothing since the work can be dirty. There is likely to be down time at the construction site when a limited number of people are required for the task at hand. Wet weather can be a factor. However, the presence of each person builds positive relationships with community members, so be patient. The project hopes to have the construction of a house underway before we arrive and completed while we are there this year, but this is not guaranteed. Even though we want to be as helpful as possible, we will be working with local contractors and laborers and do not want to interfere with their making a living. We provide the funds to build the houses but use local workers as much as possible.
Devotions/Planning Meetings

Devotions will be held after dinner each evening and led by volunteer participants. We encourage you to participate. People of any religious background are welcome to participate. Participants have the option of not attending devotions, but are expected to be present at the hotel for the evening meetings to discuss the activities of the day and plan for the next day.

Trouble Shooting

Good team work is essential for the success of the mission trip. Each participant needs to be prepared for possible changes in plans, activities, and disappointments if they occur. **BEING FLEXIBLE IS KEY TO THE MISSION'S SUCCESS AND YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE TRIP.** Activities and plans can change unexpectedly.

On the trip, there will be board members who can receive reports of any issues for discussion/concern. Please share your concerns with one of them, so efforts can be made to properly address them. Remaining calm and providing constructive ideas for improvements to team members contributes to a pleasant experience.

The project is team led. No one person is responsible for its success or failure. The team as a whole is responsible. Due to language and cultural barriers, time limitations, finances, weather, unexpected events, human limitations, not all can be done the way every person would find ideal. Each year, attempts are made to correct problems that arose in previous years. Many things improve. Some do not. Despite this, almost everyone finds the mission to be an extremely rewarding experience, and many have returned for subsequent trips.

The evening meetings are intended to reflect on what happened that day and what is planned for tomorrow. Participants will be encouraged to comment on how their day went and area leaders will report on events of the day.

At the end of the trip, written evaluations will be distributed so ideas for improvement can be considered by the board. Please bring a copy of them. They are at the end of this hand book.
Giving to People in Somoto

It is strongly recommended that no money or items be given to people in Somoto, or at sites where you will be returning, until the last day and a half of the trip. Once items are given to some, other people hear of the gifts and begin to beg for them. Large crowds can form around the bus, hotel, and work sites. This upsets the hotel environment and creates chaos for the group. At this time, all trip activities are phased down. It may be difficult to refuse to give money to obviously poor people, but it is necessary to avoid chaos, having project activities come to a halt, and being overwhelmed with people who are asking for help. On the whole, the people are gracious and grateful.

Donating in Nicaragua

Some people choose to donate money while they are on the trip for special projects that arise while we are there. Some participants have bought shoes for those who have none, or purchased ice cream for children. In one year some donated baseball uniforms to a disabled youth baseball team. In another year some paid for a roof for a hotel worker, some helped improve the crumbling floor of the preschool, one provided a micro loan needed by a single mother and one bought kitchen supplies for the preschool. Some leave clothing they have brought to wear to distribute to those in need. Bringing money to donate, buying for the needy, or giving away clothing and other items is strictly optional.

Requests from Individuals

For all requests related to the children’s project, we want to check the individual or family out with local ANNIFU leadership. They get to know the individual and also are alert to those who ask for help from various individuals and groups that come to Somoto. Sadly, there are many, many needs and we really wish we could help everyone.

For Houses:

- We let them know that they must apply through ANNIFU (the Somoto name of the Children’s Project).
- We also let them know that ANNIFU then passes their ideas for recipients onto us and we decide from there. (This is to take some pressure off of local ANNIFU leadership who are in a difficult position choosing from so many who are needy and deserving.)
  Note: It is very important that we take final responsibility for the decision. Two years ago we had a scholarship recipient cry in front of us asking for a house.
- We also can tell them they need to have the approval of Mayor Marcio, papers for the land, and an evaluation from the engineers in the Mayor’s office for the feasibility for building on their land.

Note: These requests often come in the form of letters. Recently, it was asked if one of our scholarship recipients may be a good candidate and local personnel replied that they have to look carefully at each of a number of applications they already have.
For Scholarships:

- Most importantly, they must be vetted through local ANNIFU leadership. We will wait until this vetting happens and we hear back from them before telling the individual they may have one.

- Local ANNIFU leadership will let them know
  - That they must give a minimum of 5 hours of volunteer time at ANNIFU each month and they do not get a scholarship even for that month if they do not. (Almost all give much more than this. Only the two medical students cannot.)
  - That they need to regularly worship at ANNIFU.
  - They need to be good examples in the community with their behavior.
  - They need to remain in school, have good attendance and maintain good grades.
  - They need to be able to work well with local ANNIFU leadership and the ANNIFU community.
  - Their scholarship may be ended by us at any time for failure to meet the above requirements. (Local ANNIFU leadership will alert us to any issues and, again, we make the final decision to take the pressure off of them.)

Note: This is based on my experience when four years ago we told someone they could have a scholarship because we knew the family and child, and local ANNIFU leadership afterwards said “NO” because he had been doing things like throwing rocks at the school.

For Individual Help

For example, for shoes, money, medicine, etc., we always refer to local ANNIFU leadership first. NOTE: This is from one person’s experience where she gave $100 a number of years ago to a family she had known for a few years. Local personnel then told her that she should not have done this since this family requested money and various types of support from everyone who came.

For unusual requests take the request to the board and not make a decision as an individual, since relationships involve all of our board and project.
Learning About Nicaragua
It is strongly encouraged that you learn about the country, people, and culture of Nicaragua before the trip. A couple of helpful web sites are:

http://berclo.net/page01/01en-nicaragua.html
http://www.ersla.org/

SUPPLIES TO COLLECT
Toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, small hairbrushes, pencil sharpeners, pens, pencils, crayons of all sizes, safety scissors, money for notebooks to be purchased in Nicaragua.

MONETARY DONATIONS
We will use monetary donations for our projects. If you know of an individual or organization willing to help, please let us know. The more money we raise, the more projects we can complete.

Each home will cost approximately $5000.00 to build this year. Water filters may be distributed in a village to each family for $50.00 each. Student scholarships and micro loans will be provided, with scholarships ranging from $240 to $360 and microloans from $50 to $200. A roof for a shack costs approximately $100 and we hope to provide at least five of them.

One hundred percent of monetary donations go toward projects for the mission. All donations are tax deductible and checks should be made payable to Bethlehem - Nicaragua. Please make notation on the check that it is for the Nicaragua Project.

Please notify Cathy Goodman at CEGood47@aol.com
Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont raises substantial funds each year, and other individuals, churches, or organizations are encouraged to participate in fund raising. There may be funds available to match some donations. Contact Cathy Goodman to check for matches available.

Informational Meeting
An informational meeting will be held early next year at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont. There will be a presentation and an opportunity for people to ask questions and talk with previous volunteers. The date and time will be posted to our web site when it is available.

Orientation Meeting
There may be an orientation meeting prior to the trip. Questions concerning the trip can be addressed to any Board Member listed at the beginning of this handbook.

Thank you for your interest in the Nicaragua Project.
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

I, _________________________________ (name), understand that . . .

- Participating in a mission’s trip to Nicaragua is elective and that I could encounter health and/or safety risks as a result of that decision.
- It is my responsibility to assess all of the risks associated with traveling to Nicaragua and that I am at liberty to change my mind about participating at any time before departure. I affirm that I have completed that assessment and have decided to participate in this mission trip.
- It is my responsibility to maintain a current knowledge of travel advisories, medical advisories or other risks until my departure and while I am on location (for more on this, go to www.gomissiontrip.com). I have been advised that certain local foods and drinking water may be unsafe for us to eat and drink, and agree to follow the directions of the leadership to minimize risks to myself and other members of the team.
- It is my responsibility to notify the team leadership if I learn of anything that would alter the risks to others or myself at any time.
- The team leaders, individuals in our group, or the staff in Nicaragua may not be able to intervene or rescue me if I become involved in acts of crime or violence.
- Medical care and medical facilities might not be readily available and that they probably will not meet the standards expected in the United States. To the best of my knowledge my health is good enough to undertake the trip. If I have any question about my health, I will visit my physician and discuss this trip before I go. I understand that I will be traveling to places where little to no health care will be available. In addition, I understand that I may undergo types of exertion that I am not used to.
- I have been made aware that I can purchase a comprehensive short-term, travel policy at www.gomissiontrip.com and I have considered this option.

I agree to . . .

- Act in a responsible way while in Nicaragua and to follow the directions of the leadership to minimize risks to myself and other members of the team.
- Release and hold harmless the Interfaith Nicaragua Mission (the mission) and all officers, agents and staff of the mission organizations for any and all claims and costs due to any liability, injury or damage which might occur as a result of my international experience, associated travel and living arrangement.

Because it could be in my best interests, I agree to allow the team leadership to release personal information about me to the US State Department or other agencies if they believe that it would be in my best interest.

_________________________________  ____________________________
Signature of mission volunteer              Printed name of mission volunteer

_________________________________  ____________________________
Signature of witness                      Date
Interfaith Nicaragua Mission Interest Form

Name______________________________________________________

Address______________________________________________________

Home Phone____________________ Work Phone____________________
Cell Phone____________________ Passport Number ______________________

E-Mail Address (please print plainly)_______________________________

Emergency contact: Name________________________________________
Phone____________________ Cell____________________
E-mail Address __________________________
Address______________________________________________________

Primary Doctor: Name________________________ Phone_____________________ 

Medical Conditions/Allergies: _____________________________

Church/Religious Affiliation, if any:_______________________________

I (circle one) have / have not sent in the $250.00 check to reserve my place to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont. (Not recommended until after Jan. 1)

Please comment on your Spanish speaking skills:
(Speaking Spanish is not a requirement to participate.

Medical training, if any ________________________________

Area(s) of interest (circle all that apply.)

Work at the preschool
Construction
Interpreter
Help with videos & photos
Relationship building
Where ever needed

Other: __________________

Please send this form to:  
Cathy Goodman, 4553 Canterbury Dr., Boulder, CO 80301
cegood47@aol.com
Suggested Items to Take

1. Flip flops for shower (to protect from foot disease)
2. Sturdy shoes to wear at all times outside (cuts on the feet could become infected)
3. A hat to protect from sun
4. Sunglasses
5. Malaria medication
6. Individually wrapped wipes to clean hands and body
7. Small bottle of hand sanitizer
8. Anti-diarrhea and stomach medication (e.g. pepto, immodium, cipro)
9. Sun screen/sun burn medication
10. High Deet content mosquito repellant, non-aerosol; to spray clothing & bed
11. Poncho (rain protection to keep with you)
12. Flashlight (electricity can go off, pocket sized is handy)
13. Money pouch(es) to keep money on your person at all times
14. Money for shared expenses and spending (no torn or marked bills)
15. Pen/pencil/notepad
16. Passport that is not out of date
17. Copy of your passport to keep in your luggage (leave one with your family or friend as well)
18. Locks for your suitcases (should be locked at all times)
19. Prescription meds
20. Nothing of great value

Optional items

- Light weight clothing that covers arms and legs (REI has a good selection)
- Work gloves if you are thinking about doing construction
- Hand fan
- Small pillow to use on the bus
- Gum and/or hard candy to give to kids
- Money to give for special needs (e.g. scholarship, roof, travel to medical care)
- Clothes that can be sprayed with cloth insect repellant (found at REI)
- Sleeping sack (single sheet sewn up the side)
- Camera (some take a disposable for back up)
- Small snacks (you may be able to find locally, but just in case)
- Back pack for personal items you take during the day
- Plastic bag for dirty clothes
- Extra towel and wash cloth (we have not found washcloths in Nicaragua)
- Travel alarm clock
- Swimsuit
- Ear plugs
Nicaragua Trip Evaluation Form

Name (optional) __________________________________________ Date: ____________ (Use the back for additional space/ additional comments)

1. _____ Rate your over all experience with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst.

2. What was your favorite part of the trip?

3. What had the most meaning for you on the trip?

4. Ideas you have for improvement

5. _____ Rate the chance you will go again (1 never to 10 for certain)

   Circle One:

6. **Yes  No  Maybe Already on** Would you like to be considered for serving on the board?

7. **Yes  No  Maybe** Would you consider making a donation of any amount or helping with fund raising in the future to continue the projects? (building houses, putting on roofs, supporting the children’s project, providing scholarships, water filters, or ?????)

8. **Yes  No  Maybe** Would you be interested in helping spread interest in the trip to other congregations, individuals, or organizations?
   Which ones/who?

9. Is there any other way you would like to participate in the project? How?

THANK YOU EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE PARTICIPATION.
WITHOUT YOU, THIS PROJECT COULD NOT HAPPEN.
Reflections: Interfaith Nicaragua Trip
Name_______________________Date ______

1. What have you learned from your experience?

2. What did you learn about yourself?

3. What did you learn about others, including those in the world as well as team members?

4. How did your involvement in the mission impact you?

5. How are you going to apply what you have gained to your daily life?

6. Will you share your experiences and what you have learned with others? If so, how?

7. Any additional comments, thoughts, or reflections:

8. Would you like a copy of this sent to you? Yes  No
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