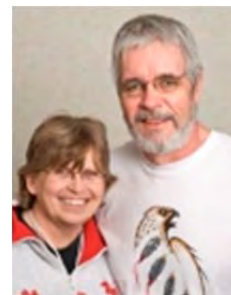


Letters from Overseas

Deborah Elliot and Don Gibson Write from Nicaragua

September 14, 2011

It is Independence Day in Nicaragua. For weeks we have heard nothing but the pounding of drums as the local school bands practice for this day. The Warriors marched as a group for the first time. We all had new red shirts to indicate members of the group. The school board had a discussion about how to show the Canadian presence in the group. Carrying the Canadian flag was not an option because today is a national holiday and so the only flags are Nicaraguan flags or school flags. So it was suggested we get a banner made, and we did. We were so proud of the boys. It was an exciting time.



The Warriors was started about six months ago because we became aware of the fact that many boys live in homes of single moms and grandmothers, who themselves are busy trying to make ends meet. Plus we had concern that these boys are on the edge of manhood in a community where high youth unemployment prevails and there are few opportunities to get engaged in the community and actively participate in the advancement of one's life.

So, together with the help of Elvis, a young Moravian theological student who speaks Miskito, Spanish, and English, Don started the group. This group learns self-discipline and a better understanding of what it is to be a Christian through ritual and games, and the concepts of brotherhood and taking care of each other are stressed. The boys love it and now we have a long waiting list of boys wanting to be in the group. The number of boys is limited due to time, energy, and resources.

These boys are growing and learning. Enough time has gone by that we are noticing the little things. One is that now they are often in our living room wanting to watch soccer. So the bonds have been formed and we get a lot of joy working with this small group.

It is an awesome feeling to know that one can make a difference in the life of a child. There are 13 boy Warriors and at times we are moved to tears when we watch them. We could not do this without your support from the Mission and Service Fund. We like to think about the Mission and Service Fund as being the language of love: thank you for your gifts of love.

Visit our global partnership photo site (<http://unitedchurch.smugmug.com/Nicaragua>) to see Deborah and Donald's photos.

Deborah Elliot and Don Gibson are United Church of Canada overseas personnel serving with the Moravian Church in Nicaragua. The work of this ecumenical partner and the work of overseas personnel are made possible through your gifts to the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada.