

2011 projects

- LA ESPERANZA — \$42,129
System designed for population of 173 people
- PALAN BUENA VISTA — \$34,027
System designed for population of 113 people
- SAN FELIPE — \$10,861 (partial)
System designed for population of 649 people
- LIRIO DEL VALLE — \$43,356
System designed for population of 152 people
- BARRIO NUEVO — \$26,445
System designed for population of 265 people
- PALAN BILAMPI — \$45,908
System designed for population of 169 people
- CANO SECO — \$115,285
(TO BE COMPLETED IN JANUARY 2012)
System designed for population of 445 people

upcoming projects

- The villages being prepared this year for water projects after positive assessment of adequate springs are together with their municipalities include:
- WANI (SIUNA)
 - WALANA EL ACHIOTE (RIO BLANCO)
 - SAN MATIAS Y LA LUNA (ESQUIPULAS)
 - COPERNA (SIUNA)
 - EL VARILLA Y LAS VEGAS (NUEVA SEGOVIA)
 - SAN FRANCISCO (RANCHO GRANDE)
 - EL CHILE (WASLALA)
 - EL SOMBRERO (SIUNA)

These projects can be completed with **your help!**



Agua Para La Vida
2311 Webster Street
Berkeley, CA 94705

Randy Fay
848 Montclair Dr
Palisade, CO 81526

get involved

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

- ☐ 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:
 - ☐ \$50 – material cost for drinking water for one person
 - ☐ \$100 – material cost for 500 seedlings for reforestation
 - ☐ \$200 – material cost for a latrine for one family
 - ☐ \$250 – sponsorship for one APLV technical student for one month
 - ☐ \$500 – 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 2011

Board of Directors:
Gilles Corcos
Charlie Huizenga
Anne Corcos
RJ Bunnell
Bill McQueeney
Kelly Naylor
Debbie Parducci

APLV’s 25th birthday! APLV Nicaragua is born!

2011 was a year of milestones: APLV’s 25th birthday, a quarter of a century of water projects completed and still functioning, and the recognition by the Nicaraguan government on July 28, of APLV as a Nicaraguan non-governmental organization. Carmen Gonzalez, the Executive Director and a Nicaraguan Board of Directors will manage the administrative, technical and financial affairs of all Nicaraguan entities. These include the Water Center in Rio Blanco and ETAP, the school that trains water technicians. This shifting of the center of gravity to the locale where gravity flow water systems are needed is the essence of sustainability. Gilles Corcos’ dream of autonomy for APLV-Nicaragua was essential to insure that our 25 years of helping poor rural villages construct their own water systems would be continued by Nicaraguans. With this transition to autonomy for the Nicaraguan team—Managua, Rio Blanco and ETAP—the goal has been met. It is time for the parent to let the adult offspring become independent. This is a big challenge. We hope and pray that all goes well.

Shifting the center of gravity does not diminish the work of the US NGO nor that of the French branch. In our new role, projects initiated in Nicaragua and presented to us for funding, will be carefully scrutinized and accepted or rejected based on the requirements we have already set in place.

Charlie Huizinga put it well...

“Our fundamental mission remains the same - to help rural Nicaraguan communities develop clean water and sanitation systems. We will continue to seek grants and gifts to support our mission and all of these funds will support the work of our Nicaraguan team.”

As we go to press, we would like to thank two foundations for their generous support:

- **May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust:** \$35,000 for Latrines in Negrowas
- **Laird Norton Family Foundation:** \$20,000 for Institutional Strengthening

Thanks everybody!!!

news from ETAP



The fifth class of Escuela Technica Agua Potable will complete its course in March of 2012 but will stay on to participate in the spring projects. They will receive their diplomas in June. The new sixth class will be installed before that.

APLV has bought the building that houses ETAP. This purchase was necessitated by the sale of the building we were in and the lack of other rentable space. See the Barea’s summary for details. It is interesting that they speak of one of the students who could not meet the standards and had to leave. On the other hand, another student was considered so superior, he is being urged to go to the university on scholarship to study engineering! We are looking for a contract that will ensure that he become a teacher at ETAP when he receives his degree. This is an idea worth studying.

APLV Water Center in Rio Blanco is now staffed almost entirely by graduates of our school who can do all the steps necessary to carry out projects, from design to execution. Technical help will always be available from the Berkeley APLV and others who become available.

We would like to point out the versatility of some members of our Nicaraguan team:

Alfonso Bracamonte, an excellent mason for ten years is forced to stop because of back pain. He has switched to the different and difficult work as organizer of the villages before and during the construction of projects.

Gregorio Espinoza, our head social worker is suffering from a progressive lung disease and is no longer able to endure the long and difficult commutes between widely dispersed houses and villages. She will now be much appreciated as a coordinator in our Rio Blanco office.

Other interesting happenings:

Denis Barea has created a triannual publication in Spanish aimed at local friends of APLV. His goal is that these friends will lend a hand in specific domains in local areas they know. The name of the publication is Ojo de Agua which means Focus on Water. Anyone interested can write to Dbar32@gmail.com. Knowledge of Spanish is not necessary.



THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF
Agua Para La Vida

thoughts from the Bareas

After 18 months, ETAP fifth class is really making good progress. The theoretical bases are now really well understood. The students are now able to make a full survey, to map, to draw with AutoCAD, to design the main line and the water tank by themselves. They are currently learning to design the network distribution system. They are making good progress in the field as well. Unfortunately, one student was not able to maintain the required level of proficiency and left the program after 6 months. At the end of October 2011, the expenditures are around \$3,300 less than planned. We will finish paying for the building in December 2011. According to those results, the training will be fully completed at the end of July 2012 and 7 new ETAP water and sanitation technicians will be ready to work as professionals.



a letter from Gilles

It is clear that our most challenging undertaking has been our firm intention to hand autonomy to the Nicaragua team. Autonomy does not mean that the new NGO won't need external contributions of various kinds but that it will become entirely responsible for technical, administrative, and financial affairs. This transition is difficult for multiple reasons and in particular:

- The long term success of the group depends on the commitment of the local Board of Directors (which can't be remunerated to avoid conflicts of interests) and of its executive representative. What is required is that the spirit and enthusiasm that have propelled APLV for nearly 25 years be caught by the new team.
- In Nicaragua as in a lot of poor countries corruption is found at all levels of society, including at nearly all governmental levels. Hence the new administration needs to be especially vigilant and inflexible on this score even though corruption is part of the culture.

The French volunteer couple, Denis and Cecile Barea came to Nicaragua two years ago to facilitate transition as well as to head our technical school ETAP.

They are slated to leave us at the end of March. Although their departure will not signal the end of the transition they will have made a useful contribution to it.

This year, on July 28 the government of Nicaragua granted official status to the new Nicaragua ONG (Agua Para la Vida - Nicaragua). This was an essential step taken towards the desired autonomy.

It does not seem to me that once transition has been achieved, the role of our US Organization should be profoundly modified. In so far as the financing of the activities of APLV-Nicaragua is concerned, including the construction of its water systems, we shall assess, like other fund providers, the merits of the proposals submitted to us by the new ONG and when these proposals seem well thought through, we shall endeavor to find them funds. I think we can also keep on providing useful technical help, (to them and other groups) by continuing to develop pedagogical tools and designing computer programs. We can also be a resource in other areas to that Rio Blanco team that is remarkably welded by many years of work in common.

a moving testimonial

We asked one of our social workers if she would talk about her experiences working for APLV. Here are her thoughts:

"My name is Lillian Obando Huete. I am one of the Social Workers charged with the hygiene and health programs of APLV. I have worked for this priceless organization for more than 14 years. I would like to say a word of my previous work experience. Very young, as a nurse, I concerned myself with primary care of infants and women suffering from the common ailments afflicting the poor rural villages and prescribing basic medication. I did not understand why when the patients came back month after month, the same difficulties remained, as if they were chronic; stomach ache, diarrhea, and foot problems.

Working with APLV has helped me understand that the origin of these persistent communal maladies is the absence of essential services like clean water, latrines, and proper hygiene. To help these families acquire these essentials is to empower them to bring about the changes that will keep them well.

For me, it has been a veritable joy to enter into a dialogue with the village women during which we share with each other our experience as mothers and I appreciate the devoted efforts of these women to raise their children in spite of the obstacles and under the "machismo" to which they submit.

In the course of my work with APLV I have observed two different aspects of our work. The first appeared during the initial phase with the early efforts toward hygiene and sanitation. We have to face up to the hard reality of how these families live: traveling long and difficult distances from their homes to fetch water for cooking, washing clothes and bathing. Here for example is the family of Justin Torres from the village of Palan Buena Vista. They live in a zone at risk and must tumble and slide down a 50 degree slope to the only water source. The need to get this water gives to the women and children the strength to carry the water on their heads and hardens their feet. They must balance their pails on their heads with their hands climbing back up these steep slopes, and arriving at their homes with a sigh of relief, their faces marked with their effort. The first days that I spent with this family they described to me where the spring was that I could bathe. The first time I tried the route, I was sure it was a mistake, and I turned back. With that, the family started to laugh and accompanied me. Arriving at our destination, I had to wait, not only for those ahead of me, but for the time it took for this little spring to be renewed at the source.



The second side to this coin came after six months when the water project was in place. Justin Torres could not stop looking at his own water tap, his latrine, smiling at my pleasure, as if to say, smiling, "see what you have brought about here." What impressed me the most was to see how they had put into practice all the recommendations about hygiene, the cleanness of the latrine and of the ditch they had dug.

The truth is that the projects of APLV which have effected these changes in the lives of these villagers could not have come about without the workers of APLV, nor without your generous gifts. To you all, a giant thank you and blessings."

