

SPECIAL
PLACES
VISITED:

- El Timal- La Churequita
- Matagalpa
- Granada
- Ometepe
- San Juan de Oriente
- Niquinohomo
- El Arenal

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¡Aló! AKA Hello!

NEWSLETTER 2

MARCH 2011

Academic: “Casa Benjamín Linder”

Casa Ben Linder is a house in which every Thursday there is a talk about different topics that involve Nicaragua or any other current global issues. This house is a house that has been functioning as a center to house weekly talks for internationalists but also Nicaraguans or any visitors. Each Thursday we go as a group to be able to hear about various topics. The house was originally created in the memory of Benjamín Linder who was a U.S. engineer that was in Nicaragua during the contra war. He was in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people during the war and was working on a hydroelectric project to help provide energy to people out in the country. He was tragically assassinated during the Contra war and the house was formed by his U.S. companions. The house continues today to promote social awareness and justice for the Nicaraguan people.



The Group in front of one of the murals at Casa Ben Linder. (That is Ben in the middle!)

Academic: Classes

During our time in Nicaragua classes are one essential thing we do every day. We have officially changed Spanish professors: those that had Myrna now are with Ramon and vice-versa. For History we have been able to discuss about our various readings and we just recently finished

our discussion about Sandino and the myth that was created and is still being played out in the city. We have officially finished our first Theology book and we have started reading the book written by Father Joe Mulligan. For our Culture and Society class we have been discussing CAFTA and

its advantages and disadvantages. Poems were also a big part of our curriculum since we prepared for the poetry festival in Granada. For our Seminar El Salvador has been our main topic lately to better prepare for our visit which will begin on March 17th.

Service: Personal Experiences

Abby: Olla de la Soya

The other day my artistic talents were tested. My 5 yr. old boys were requesting haunted castles, sharks, mummies, piranhas and werewolves. Fun fact: werewolf in Spanish is “hombrelobo.” It took me a while to figure that out.

Anna: Olla de la Soya

The most valuable part of my time at the Olla is when I am able to give individual attention to the kids. Now, when they say me they call out, “Anna! Anna!” I guess I’ve done something right—I have no idea what, but it seems like, in the smallest degree, I’m bringing these kids joy, and for that I feel fulfilled.

Brooke: Quincho Barrilete

I love going to the park on Wednesdays, full of mango trees, and throwing rocks at the branches for hours to collect the most sour green mangoes with the kids. Their enthusiasm makes me so happy that they can just be kids while at Quincho Barrilete without worrying about anything else. Also, it releases so much of their bottomless energy so that they can focus during their afternoon school session.

Eva: Pajarito Azul

I never expected to develop such a strong bond and relationship with the people, but now every day I have a special game that I play with each of the kids (ositos). For example, with Christian (5 yrs) I pretend his monkey toy is kissing his cheek and say “besito, besito, besito!” and then make raspberry noises and tickle his stomach. He loves it and though this is repeated every day, I never get tired of it.

Juan: Aldo Chavarría

After working I have noticed that people do recognize me when I am walking out of Aldo and ask me where have I been. It is just awesome being able to see that people I have helped and remember me. This was one of the fears I had from all the switching Liza and I do, since the switching would not allow us to see the same people all the time.

Katie: Pajarito Azul

I have learned a lot during my experience at Pajarito. I learned that I never have an excuse to complain or be unhappy. Seeing the situation of the disabled can be a challenge, but their ability to express joy amazes me more everyday.

Kayla: La Mascota

I’ve spent a lot of time with Lizdañea, an 11 yr. old with cancer. It’s been very difficult for me to watch her condition rapidly deteriorate, but rewarding to accompany her and her mom through the struggle. We’ve grown close by discussing their pains and fears, and easing the tension by making bracelets, painting nails, and of course lots of UNO. I’m so thankful for the time I’ve had with them.

Liza: Aldo Chavarría

Every 2 weeks, Juan & I rotate to different rooms, and this past week I switched to a new room where despite me disagreeing vehemently, everyone thinks I am a physical therapist. I’ve been analyzing patients, making new exercises for people, and more. I’m having a blast helping people out.

Ryan: Quincho Barrilete

Thus far I’ve learned what it means to humble oneself and just “be there” for someone. My 1st week was difficult; which made it meaningful when, during the 2nd week, the kids came to me to make them a drawing they could paint or to seek for my approval of their creations. I was able to give them encouragement & support, which was an incredibly humbling experience of the meaning of solidarity for me.

Zeke: La Mascota

One notable experience I’ve had was an adventure with a 5 yr. old named Said. He had received a bag of candy from the hospital but was unhappy with it and asked for a mango from outside. So we went to a tree nearby to retrieve one and spent around 20 min. trying to shake a fruit from the tree. After finally getting his mango, Said took a single bite and threw it at a nearby goat. Maverick!

Food for Thought:

“A ship in port is safe, but that’s not what ships are built for.”

Food For Thought:
Solidarity Vs. Charity

Learning: Excursions

El Timal & La Churequita



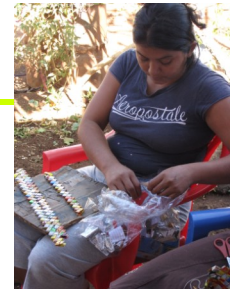
As you might have read in our last newsletter we went to an area called “La Chureca.” Which is a landfill in which people look through garbage to be able to survive. Either looking for things to sell

like plastic or glass bottles or even food to be able to survive. This time we went to a place called “La Churequita”. This new place began as a second landfill and people moved over to this area since the government had said they would provided them with housing and told them they would get other benefits. As of now they have been there for a year and are still waiting



for a lot of the promised things. Some of them only received some materials but were left hanging. Now they are building schools and thanks to outside help they have drinkable water. One of the houses we visited was the house of women who work with “Esperanza en Acción” (Hope through Action) which is a Fair Trade organization that provides workshops and helps to connect artisans with international and local fair trade markets. What the women from “La Churequita” do is make purses, wallets,

earrings, rings and other artifacts out of bags of chips that they collect in the dump. This experience allowed us to better understand the life people live in this type of poverty. We were able to see their constant struggle, but also their hope to succeed with the opportunities they get.



If you want to find out more about “Esperanza en Acción” (Hope through Action) you can log in to: www.esperanzaenaccion.org

Matagalpa

This city in the mountains was a nice change in temperature for the group! Besides a break from the heat, we had many meetings with various groups that help the people of this area. First, the place that hosted our lodging was also a home for pregnant mothers from the country side. The women would come to stay together for around two weeks before the birth and a week or so afterwards in order to be close to a hospital as well as bond with other country mothers. Another inspiring group we met

with was the Mothers of the Heroes & Martyrs, who were all part of the generation that watched their children fight in the Sandinista Rebellion and in the Contra War. Their stories were tear-jerking as they discussed the families and homes they lost during this time period. Finally we met with FETSA-LUD which is a union for all medical personnel of the state. This organization gave us a nice history of union work in Nicaragua and the heavy ties it had to the FSLN especially. We visited a family-owned

organic coffee farm where we listened to the history of their struggle to keep their land, as well as their farming techniques. Another impactful visit was to the gravesite of Benjamin Linder where we read revolutionary journals from Lillian Hall who was a very close friend of Ben’s. Finally we visited Selva Negra (Black Forest) which was a very beautiful place up in the mountains that had a lake. It was a relaxing and beautiful way to end the trip.



Poetry Festival in Granada

On our first visit to Granada it was all about the worldwide Poetry Festival. There was representation from 40 different countries for this week-long celebration with various poets reciting and music. It was an unforgettable night. We were able to listen to Ernesto Cardenal who is a famous revolutionary poet from Nicaragua. There were also poets from Japan, the Ukraine, and the

USA. The wonderful night ended with a concert from Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy. He is the brother of a very well known revolutionary song writer, and he was amazing.

Ernesto Cardenal will be visiting Xavier on April 16, and we highly recommend hearing him speak.



Ernesto Cardenal

Learning: Excursions cont'd

Ometepe



Ometepe was a weekend filled with excitement. It started off with a long drive to Rivas to get to the shore to be able to take a ferry to Ometepe, an island in Lake Managua. After our hour ride to this wonderful island we arrived at Ometepe. Right away we were

Enjoying the sunrise!

greeted by the drivers that took us to the Finca San Juan which was where we would be staying all of that weekend. We started our adventure there with dinner then a nice swim since our hotel was by the shore. The following day was a filled day with tours of Ometepe and some historic sites. The one surprise was that we had a quiz after our journey about all that we had learned. We went to see the petroglyphs and also the statues that were made by the



indigenous tribes that lived in this island. We also learned about the history of Nicaragua which originally was Nicarhualt, meaning land surrounded by water. We went to museums that were filled with artifacts from 2,000 BC. The various sculptures plus the monuments all allowed us to observe history.

San Juan del Oriente, Niquinohomo, El Arenal

The weekend of these visits was filled with many activities. Our day started with our visit to San Juan de Oriente where we got to learn about how the ceramics indigenous to the area were made. We were able to try making pots on the manual potter's wheel. After the demo, we were able to shop here since it is a barrio filled with cultural artifacts. From here we went to Niquinohomo which is the place where Sandino was born. We were unable to visit the house since it was a Saturday but we were able to see the land where he grew up. From here we went to El Arenal where it was amazing to get to see a youth group working for the betterment of their community. It was impressive that they were taking surveys to see what the community needs

most. During this time we were also able to see some folkloric dancing, performed by a youth group. After we heard about their activities, the teens from asked us some questions to make us reflect upon what actions we will take later on once we are back in the United States.



A nice little game!

Academic Service Learning Semester 2011

For more information about Academic Service Learning Semesters, or responses to this newsletter, contact Dr. Irene B. Hodgson, director of the Xavier University Academic Service Learning Semesters, at contactasls@xavier.edu, or (513) 745-3541. Or, visit www.xavier.edu/service-learning.

O A Z C P T B O E R S S J N L
 C M D O H Y I O Y A N P M O O
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Answers from the last Newsletter:

Drum roll Please!!!!

- 1-Eva
- 2-Kayla
- 3-Juan
- 4-Liza
- 5-Ryan
- 6-Zeke
- 7-Anna
- 8-Katie
- 9-Brooke
- 10-Abby
- 11-Tim
- 12-Irene

Word Search

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|--------------|----------------|
| 1-ALDO | 17-MASAYA |
| 2-ARENAL | 18-MASCOTA |
| 3-AZUL | 19-MATAGALPA |
| 4-BARRILETE | 20-NICARAGUA |
| 5-BARRIO | 21-NIQUINOHOMO |
| 6-BOERS | 22-NUEVO |
| 7-CHAVARRIA | 23-OMETEPE |
| 8-CHURECA | 24-OLLA |
| 9-CHUREQUITA | 25-PAJARITO |
| 10-GRANADA | 26-QUINCHO |
| 11-JACINTO | 27-RIVAS |
| 12-JUAN | 28-SAN |
| 13-LEON | 29-SOYA |
| 14-LOMAS | 30-TIMAL |
| 15-LUZ | 31-TISCAPA |
| 16-MANAGUA | 32-VIEJO |