

Alongside Ministries en Nicaragua

A.M.E.N.

Evangelism Through Relationships

Halle and Kathy August, Missionaries

amen@ibw.com.ni

www.alongsideminstries.org



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Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this month's newsletter I'm finding it difficult to know what to say. Sometimes those big "WOW!!" kind of activities just don't always happen month to month. So this month we'll share some of the little "wow" activities that have been happening in our life.

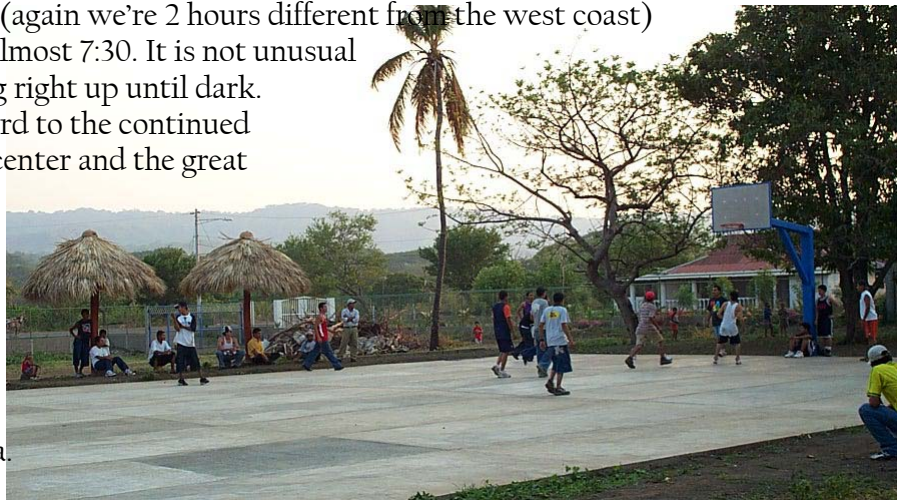
It seems to go in spurts but from time to time we are asked by our neighbors and acquaintances for gifts – usually money. Just in the last couple of months Jaqueline, the preschool teacher in the little preschool down the road in Cuahachillo needed 180 cordobas (approx. \$11) to get her identification card out of some administrative office in the city (perhaps a fine – I'm really not sure). Without her identification card she was unable to collect her pay from the Ministry of Education for teaching preschool – which I understand is about 200 cordobas, or approximately \$13, a month. Another lady who many of the Woodinville church folks know, Nora, who also lives in Cuahachillo, needed 600 cordobas (almost \$40) to have her refrigerator repaired. After that we heard about a women's prayer retreat that Jessenia, Kathy's assistant at the preschool, and Laura, our maid, wanted to attend. It cost 350 cordobas, \$22, for each of them to attend. They both returned from the retreat with softened hearts for God and a renewed commitment to live for Him. Wouldn't you know it, Jessenia's husband wanted to attend the same retreat for men so they needed another 350 cordobas. He, too, had a great experience at the retreat and we feel that Jessenia and Juan are growing in the Lord and becoming a family strongly anchored in their faith. We hope they will continue to grow and become a strong example for the Lord in their neighborhood. Laura's husband who is not yet a Christian has expressed some interest in attending a retreat. We are waiting to hear if his interest is sincere and if he decides to attend, before knowing he might receive assistance with the cost, we will likely help him to attend as well. Jessenia's husband Juan and Laura's husband are brothers and they all live in the same area. They could very well be the start of a great movement for Christianity in their neighborhood. And then there was one last request – the hardest of all. Our next door neighbor and former maid (some of you may remember when we wrote about our difficulties with missing money and how we associated it with her but never had any hard proof) came by to talk to Kathy (she knows who the softy is) and asked for some money to buy food for her family. Her husband has been out of work and apparently they were down to nothing. They have 5 or 6 children – plenty of mouths to feed. For some reason this request was harder to fulfill even though the need was probably even greater than the others mentioned above. We don't like to give money out for something that we don't know much about or for something that can't be substantiated with a receipt. We've told many, many folks that we simply can't give to every request – we're not a bank. As I was shopping the following day for the feeding program I went ahead and bought rice, beans, salt, oil and some vegetables

for this family. Rather than giving money this seemed like the right thing to do and I had enough extra in the feeding program budget to purchase these few items.

As you can probably imagine all these little requests, in addition to the many over time that you haven't heard about, add up and combine to make us feel very overwhelmed. We are so small in a community that has such big needs. We are so rich in a community that is so poor and yet our resources are not endless. The giving that we are able to do as in the examples above is due to your support and giving. It is through your support that we are able to help out some of those who ask. Please pray for those we've mentioned above and pray for us as we daily meet up with someone else who has a financial need that they would like fulfilled. Pray for our decision making and our attitudes and pray that we always remain fully aware that we are here by the grace of God and it is with grace and mercy that we want to give as God would have us to do. Perhaps in some of our encounters we are actually meeting up with angels and in all ways we are serving God. Matthew 25:40 "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers of mine, you did for me."

We'll close with a slightly bigger "wow"... it seems that the basketball court here at the sports center, El Salero (www.salero.org) in Chiquilistagua is the hottest spot in town. Every afternoon and evening since the hoops have been up there has been a crowd gathered on and around the court. We are very pleased with the response to the court and with the young folks that have come to play. There haven't been any notable incidents of fighting or problem behaviors of any kind. All of the balls that we have loaned out have been returned. Often we'll be sitting at the dinner table when we'll hear someone call out, "Halle!" and then we'll hear the bounce of the ball as they toss it over to our side of the fence. Until we establish a regular check out system for the sports equipment it seems like this system works. With our recent switch to daylight savings time (again we're 2 hours different from the west coast)

it is staying light till almost 7:30. It is not unusual to have people playing right up until dark. We are looking forward to the continued growth of the sports center and the great opportunities it will provide to develop relationships and friendships with the youth and families in our community as well as with churches from around Managua. Thank you for your support for this ministry.



Serving Together, Halle and Kathy August

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22301 S.W. 110th Pl.
Tualatin, OR 97062