



DECEMBER 2021
FRIENDS OF ESQUIPULAS
c/o 1226 WEST OAK STREET
LOUISVILLE, KY 40210



Thanks to you, our generous donors, the community in Esquipulas, Nicaragua continues to improve in nutrition and access to healthcare. As 2021 draws to a close, good things are happening there despite serious obstacles. The positive outcomes are due to the dedication and resilience of our Nicaraguan partners. Their achievements occur despite political oppression, economic distress and a pandemic! We'd like to share a snapshot of the current situation:

| New Offices and Clinic | This summer we shared the news that the ministry in Esquipulas is now structured as a non-profit entity recognized by Nicaraguan law. As part of this change, they moved to a new location. They are very pleased with the larger space; there is adequate room for staff offices and the clinic is more visible to the public. Meetings of the expanded board of directors have been limited to avoid viral spread, but the executive committee is able to meet often with staff, developing a strong rapport.

| Health Clinic | Covid-19 was widespread in Esquipulas this fall. Although November cases declined and the vaccine recently became available, hospitals in the area are still at capacity. The Clinic has been a key resource in managing the outbreak; in recent months patient volumes increased significantly. As before, the Clinic does not charge for consultations, injections or routine tests, and continues to fill prescriptions at reduced cost, waiving fees for those unable to pay. Price increases are a concern, some drugs rising by one-third. The physician who capably staffed the Clinic the last five years (including helping Friends of Esquipulas visitors!) resigned for personal reasons. She referred Dra. Dali as her replacement. Our partners in Esquipulas were pleased with her work during a trial period and offered her the job on a permanent basis. We look forward to working with her.

| Nutrition Project | 76 extremely low income women with children under 6 are currently participating in this project, receiving training and materials to grow kitchen gardens. Their fresh vegetables significantly enhance their families' diets; surplus produce is shared with neighbors or sold to supplement the household income. In addition, 10 women whose children exceed the age limit are receiving seeds to allow them to continue their healthy diet. Participants receive medical exams and follow up treatment as needed. Childhood anemia and HPV have been diagnosed recently, and with your help care is being provided. Staff also teach Covid prevention measures and provide protection materials. The mothers receive training and materials needed to manage savings circles (mini-banks). By saving small amounts and pooling resources, they are empowered to help each other with microloans while accumulating funds for future needs.

| Organic Project | Community leaders in Esquipulas initiated this project to counter the trend of parents leaving the country to find work, and all the attendant issues of family disintegration. The project has never been more needed than now. The Nicaraguan economy is in crisis, battered by both disinvestment following civil unrest and the effects of Covid-19. Unemployment, increasing food prices, and increased costs for farming supplies are significant issues; out migration has become much more common. However, the 32 families in the Organic Project have an economic alternative. They receive seeds, tools, irrigation and fencing materials, allowing them to grow healthy produce which can be sold at a premium. Participating parents are able to provide for their families without leaving the country. The farmers will diversify their production by growing Tahiti lemons, a new crop for them.

We hope you will consider including the Friends of Esquipulas in your year-end giving plans. Through the kindness of many supporters, making gifts large and small, so much good is accomplished for very hard working, severely impoverished people. All administrative expenses are paid by our board members, 100% of your gift will benefit the people of Nicaragua. If you are able, please help us continue the blessing! Checks made payable to Friends of Esquipulas c/o the address above or using our PayPal here: [friendsofEsquipulas.org](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https%3A%2F%2FfriendsofEsquipulas.org).

As outgoing and incoming Chairs of Friends of Esquipulas, we are grateful for our donors, supporters, and Board, and for the honor of helping to strengthen and grow our relationship with our friends and communities in Nicaragua. On behalf of this small community in the Nicaraguan Highlands, we close 2020 with profound gratitude for your help. May you enjoy many blessings in the coming year!

Tina Blincoe Diana Pantalos

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Somos Familia – We are Family!