NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF ESQUIPULAS

PARROQUIA DE ESQUIPULAS, NICARAGUA

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A Rich and Relational Time

From May 12-21 we had the honor to host a group from Esquipulas. Our visitors included Elba Espinoza and Mario Baldizon, both members of our peer sister parish committee in Esquipulas. Accompanying them were Ceferino Hernandez representing the Organic Farming Project and Jeronima Orozco, an organizer with the Nutrition with Vegetables Project. Mario's wife, Maria Elena accompanied the group.

The time together was well planned and full of opportunities to share with new and old friends here. Members of North-South delegations to Esquipulas had met these folks before. In addition to a lot of fun activities including a zoo visit, a baseball game, there were times for serious conversation and learning from each other. These encounters happened during dinners and community visits to agricultural projects, schools, immigrant outreach projects, social service agencies. The group also enjoyed a civil-rights tour of Louisville as well as a visit with Louisville Archbishop Kurtz. Two liturgies, with Spanish interpretation, were a shared pleasure.

We hope and pray with each other that these visits will continue through the years and that the relationship and spiritual bond continues!

Esquipulas and Projects Update

During the delegation visit in May, the Board of Friends of Esquipulas had an excellent opportunity to spend time with Mario and Elba. They are both members of the St. William Committee in Esquipulas with their colleagues, Juan Gea and Francisca Martinez. The distance between our communities, technology limits and language barriers complicate communication between us obstacles. But face-to-face we were able to "get down to business," resolving questions and making plans in a trusting, casual and very productive way.

Just a few of the highlights from that discussion:

- A new "farm school" property has been secured. This is where the project beneficiaries go for training, seedlings are planted, and many other activities. The new site has a better location and water source than the site previously used.
- Our dear friend Pablo Diaz Hernandez, who was the coordinator of the projects in Esquipulas for nearly 20 years has left for a good position with Catholic Charities and working out of Matagalpa.
- Pablo will be missed but the Committee is using this as an opportunity to assess the work load of the various project technicians. They are planning to add another technician to help with the stretched capacity in the Nutrition Project, to assist Leonardo Cisñeros and the women farmers.
- New plans are forming for the Market Stall Project which has become an important way to sell healthy produce in Esquipulas. They are doing very well and becoming sustainable!
- Clinic Doctor Yulisa Mairena Lopez is planning ways to expand her work with the projects in the communities including additional diagnostic tests and data analysis.
- Project budgets and reports will become the responsibility of the St. William Committee in Esquipulas (previously completed by Pablo).

Friends of
Esquipulas
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Thank you Pablo Diaz Hernandez!

An Outreach Ministry of St. William Community

How to donate!

Simply make your check payable to Friends of Esquipulas and place it in the collection basket or mail to:
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Donate with Paypal on our website:
friendsofesquipulas.org

Register your Kroger Plus card to help us earn Kroger rewards!

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Thanks for your support!

100% PROMISE

The Friends of Esquipulas Board provides funding for internal administrative costs (including this newsletter) so that 100% of donations go directly to benefit the projects in Nicaragua! Thank you!!

Praying for Nicaragua

As many of us know, an uprising has been occurring in Nicaragua, demanding that the current president Daniel Ortega and his vice-president wife step down from power and that new elections be held. The situation is complex, but the bottom line is that many innocent people have died, with a majority at the hands of the government, security police and paramilitary groups.

Personally, we heard from our visitors how difficult their visit to us was in May, leaving their families and friends, concerns about safety travelling (there are many blockades and armed actors). While there has been no rioting in Esquipulas itself, there is an increased sense of insecurity and some random violence. The country is rapidly becoming decimated from the economic losses for businesses and tourism.

To learn more about what is happening in Nicaragua, check with these respected sources:

- Washington Office on Latin America - https://www.wola.org/
- North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) - https://nacla.org/

And of course, we offer our prayers. At St. William we hold them with us during our prayers of the faithful at each liturgy. Join us.

Solidarity Supper Continues the Tradition

On April 14, approximately, 180 people gathered at Trinity High School Convocation Hall to celebrate and learn more about Friends of Esquipulas. Eighteen table hosts invited guests to come and share in the celebration. There were a total of 22 tables which included one for last minute guests.

Dan Driscoll Shaw and Julie Driscoll provided an inspiring presentation that included reference to their rich history and connections with Esquipulas and what is happening now.

Inviting people to pledge at their level of comfort was again effective. 92 individuals/couples made contributions/pledges with a number of first time donors. At the supper we received $19,344 with pledges now totaling over $65,000 over the next few years This was our most successful solidarity supper so far and 100% goes directly to funding Esquipulas projects!