

Visiting the children of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos



Friends of the Orphans[™]
Raising children. Transforming lives.



Mission Trip: Nicaragua

Country Overview

A Brief History

Since the arrival of the Europeans in the early 16th century, and especially over the past 100 years, Nicaraguans have endured civil wars, brutal dictatorships, struggle and hardship. Even after the country won independence from Spain in 1821, a power vacuum led to civil war. By the 1920s, the U.S. detracted its presence and the Somoza family dictatorship began its domination, which would last for more than 50 years. It was finally uprooted in 1979 by the Sadinista revolution.

Poverty, homelessness, illiteracy and staggeringly inadequate health care are just a few of the widespread problems brought upon by government instability, war and low employment rates. In 1990, Nicaragua held the first free election.

Nicaragua has a great socio-economic divide. A small number of the rich controls most of the wealth while the majority of people are immersed in poverty. The government is often corrupt and the criminal enterprises seem to be on the rise. Many children are orphaned, abandoned or neglected and live a life of malnutrition, begging, stealing, prostitution, and early pregnancies.

When Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos Founder Father William B. Wasson decided to open a home in Nicaragua, he chose to build the main home on Ometepe Island in Lake Nicaragua. The site's isolation protected the children from the nation's widespread crime and violence. He also wanted the children to learn to swim and fish.

In August 2005, an earthquake and volcanic activity on Ometepe Island caused a temporary evacuation of NPH's homes. Due to safety issues, property for a new home on the mainland was acquired in late 2006. As of January 2011, all children will be relocated to their new home on the mainland

Population

There are approximately 5.8 million people living in Nicaragua. It is the poorest country in Central America and the people there face widespread poverty and unemployment.

Geography

Nicaragua is slightly smaller than the state of New York, making it the largest country in Central America. Its interior is covered in mountains surrounded by both Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Climate/Environment

Nicaragua is mostly tropical in the lowlands while there is cooler weather in the highlands. It faces natural hazards including volcanic activity, landslides, earthquakes and hurricanes.

Education

In Nicaragua only 29% of children complete primary schooling. The government pays educators' salaries and for minimal school repairs. Families are responsible for paying the rest of the expenses: books, uniforms, transportation and electricity for the school. These costs make it impossible for many children to attend school.



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Mission Trip Guide: Nicaragua

At the Home

On May 11, 1994, NPH Nicaragua became the fourth NPH home in Central America. With the arrival of the first four children, a small house was rented in the town of Granada, 35 miles southeast of Managua, the capital. More children arrived every week, and the small house was quickly outgrown. To protect the children from the violence in and around Granada, land was purchased on Ometepe Island located in Lake Nicaragua. Due to activity of Volcano Concepcion in 2005, property for a new site was acquired on the mainland.



As of January 2011, all children will be moved off of the island and into their new homes. The land on Ometepe island will continue to be used for farmland.

New Site

Casa Padre Wasson is home to children over age 8. It is located near the town of Jinotepe on the Pan American Highway and is about 45 minutes from Managua. It has rolling grassy hills, a steep ravine at one end, many trees, and a consistent



fresh breeze in a normally hot climate. The site includes a decentralized wastewater treatment and water recycling system. Construction is expected to take approximately five years to complete with an estimated cost of \$5,682,520, including taxes. The property will include a medical clinic that serves the home as well as external patients, a chapel, vegetable gardens and on-site schools are in the process of being built.

Student Houses

The oldest *pequeños* live in four houses in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. They attend local technical and high schools, and some study at university. Managua offers a wider range of opportunities than more rural areas, ensuring optimal career choices. The youths learn to live more independently, with staff to help them with the transition from living at NPH to being on their own.



Babies House

Located on the mainland shore of Lake Nicaragua near the town of San Jorge, *Casa Asís* is home to *pequeños* up to age 7. The pre-

school prepares the children to attend a nearby primary school. With the support of a psychologist and two therapists, all of the children have been evaluated and continue to receive help as needed.



NPH Nicaragua's National Director, Marlon Velasquez, is a former *pequeño* who grew up at NPH Mexico.



At the Home

Daily Life

- The curriculum for preschool students (ages 3 - 7) consists of English, reading, math, music, religion, Spanish and physical education.
- There are vocational workshops for carpentry, computers, electricity, sewing and welding.
- Each home site produces its own meat, eggs, fruits and vegetables.
- The folkloric dance and music group performs at the home, locally and in the U.S. for fundraising events.
- A “big brothers” program assists *pequeños* who have left the home without having finished basic education, vocational studies or university due to various reasons. The program helps the *pequeños* pay their school fees, books, basic materials and transportation with the goal to stimulate their economical independence and professional development.
- In a typical year, NPH Nicaragua employs over 100 local residents to work as caretakers, teachers, farmworkers and medical and family service professionals. Currently with the construction of the new home this number is much larger.

Responsibility

Responsibility is one of the most important values that NPH tries to instill in their children. This is why each child is expected to not only be responsible for him or herself, but to contribute to the family. This includes traditional chores such as:

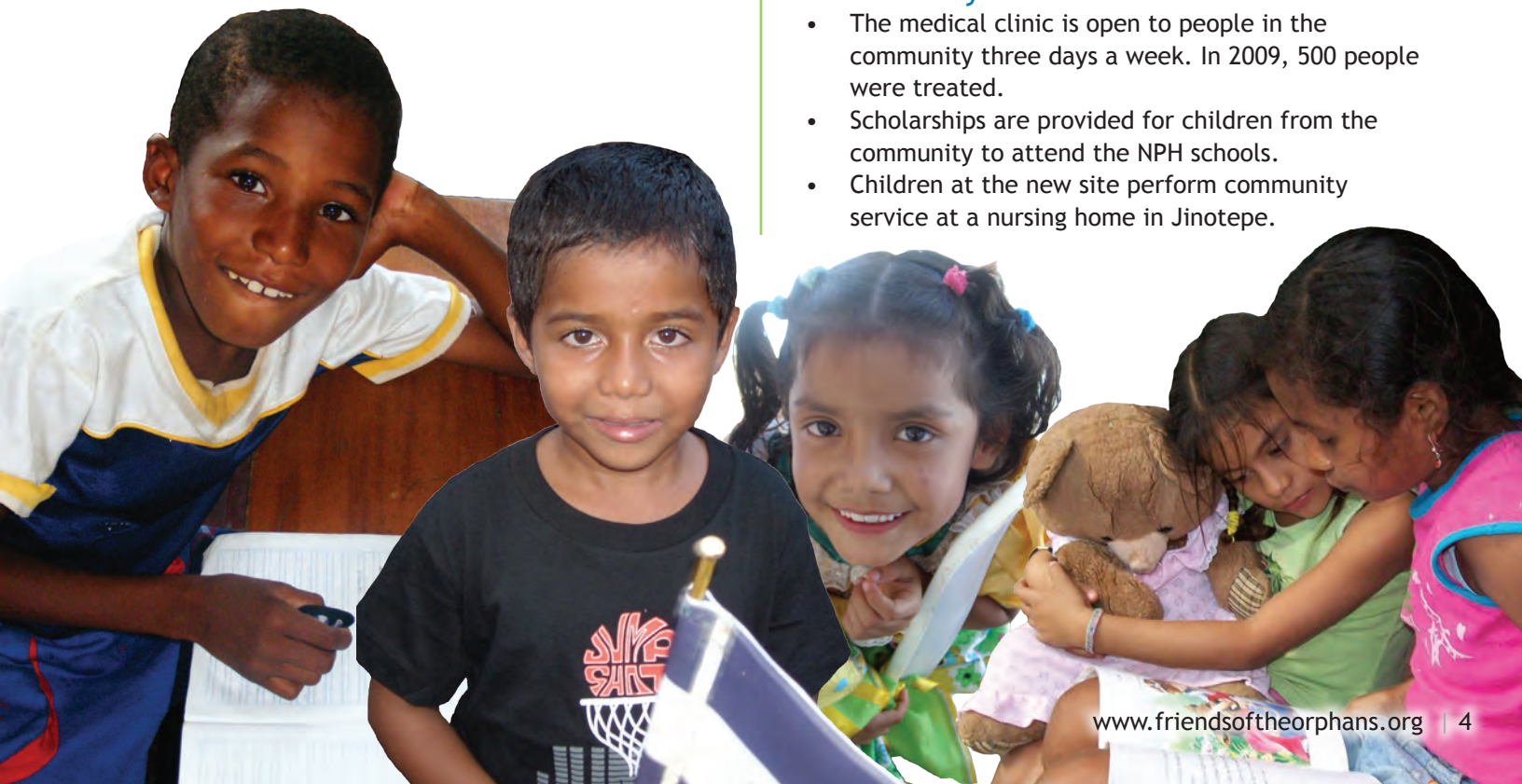
- Washing clothes
- Making beds
- Serving food

Each child also has additional responsibilities after school and during the weekends. Some work in the gardens, while others care for the grounds and clean common areas. Everyone knows how much effort goes into caring for their home and all the people who live there.

All *pequeños* are asked to give a year of service back to NPH before attending high school. During this time the *pequeños* work with their younger brothers and sisters, providing love, care and support. The year of service prepares the *pequeños* for their future by reinforcing leadership skills such as responsibility, compassion and hard work.

Community Outreach

- The medical clinic is open to people in the community three days a week. In 2009, 500 people were treated.
- Scholarships are provided for children from the community to attend the NPH schools.
- Children at the new site perform community service at a nursing home in Jinotepe.



Contact Information



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Terms to Know

Good morning/afternoon/evening! -
¡Buenos días/tardes/noches!
See you later! - *¡Hasta luego!*
How are you? - *¿Cómo está?*
Fine, thank you. - *Bien, gracias.*
Please - *Por favor*
Excuse me - *Permiso*
Do you speak English? - *¿Habla inglés?*
Yes - *Sí*
No - *No*
Thank you - *Gracias*
You're welcome - *De nada*
How old are you? - *¿Cuántos años tiene?*
How much is this? - *¿Cuánto es?*
More - *más*
A little bit - *poquito*
House - *casa*
Home - *hogar*

School - *escuela*
Backpack - *mochila*
Office - *oficina*
Kitchen - *cocina*
Water - *agua*
Food - *comida*
Rice - *arroz*
Beans - *frijoles*
Spoon - *cuchara*
Fork - *tenedor*
Cup - *vaso*
Plate - *plato*

Local Words/Phrases

Nicaraguans - *Nica*
Right on - *tuanis*
You - *vos*

NPH-Related

Pequeño/a - literally "little," but it is the term used for all NPH children
Tío/a - literally aunt or uncle, but at NPH it is a caretaker
Fr. Wasson - *Padre Wasson* (Founder of NPH)
Godfather - *Padrino*
Godmother - *Madrina*
Godchild - *Ahijdo/a*