

June 2015

Dear Friends and Family,

Here is a little of what we have been up to the past couple of months...

#### From Nicole

**I am almost two years old, have a full head of curls and a cute dimple;** something about all that seems to make people really like me. Everywhere I go I have learned that people love to be greeted here in Nicaragua, so to add to all my cuteness, I wave at people everywhere...at the grocery store, the market, the universities where my mom pays scholarships, at the sports center, at my grandma and grandpa every day while they were here for a visit, at the cooks at the feeding program, even to the guy who wants to wash the windows of my mom's car. It has made me lots of friends! Most recently I made new friends with a bunch of girls that just showed up one day and started living in Halle and Kathy's dorms. Every morning we would join them for breakfast, and the next thing I knew I was being carried around by Maddy or Ery or Kellie or Romana while my mom was off doing all that she does. That was fine with me since I prefer to play and climb things anyways. It was so much fun for two weeks, and then the girls had to leave. So I waved at them too!

#### From Anthony

**I had a great year in Pre-K 2 with probably one of the best teachers** I could have asked for! It was a great year full of learning, becoming more social, playing lots of sports and discovering my love for and gift at math. Just recently I wrote that when I grow up I want to work with computers, maybe because my dad and my grandpa both work with them. I had lots of fun with my grandparents while they were here for a visit back in April. Now that we are out of school for the summer, we get to enjoy new activities like hanging out with the teams that come to help out at the sports center.

The high school team that was just here held an indoor soccer tournament. One of my jobs was to run and get the balls that were kicked out of bounds. Some days that meant going out in pouring rain, and I mean POURING down rain. I love soccer and love being able to watch the boys of our neighborhood play since they are so talented. I also enjoy keeping score so I was able to help my mom keep up the scores of each game. Throughout the week I really enjoyed playing ping pong with Luke and Caleb and tagging along with some of the other boys from the team as they did work projects or played sports with all the kids in the afternoons.

#### From Samantha


**First grade was lots of fun and learning to read was a great accomplishment,** but boy was I ready for summer vacation! I love when the teams are here. I am always up way before the breakfast bell and love to tag along with the team in whatever they are doing. With this past team I helped paint beams for the sports center and watched as the team painted three new murals. Many of the team were very artistic and Sophie and Thamara taught me some new drawing techniques. I even did some translating when I joined some of the girls on the nights that they ate dinner in the community.

I also love days between teams when we get to hang out at home with mom, play games and relax. I enjoy going to the feeding program and seeing my friends there, since when I am in school I get out too late to be able to go. At the feeding program we get to earn stickers for prizes when we help with jobs like sweeping, wiping the tables, drying cups, leading songs or prayer. I hope to earn another prize during my summer months.



Before school ended my grandparents came for a visit. We always love it when they come because they spend so much time playing games and reading with us plus we often take fun trips to show them different areas of Nicaragua. This time we travelled up north to the mountainous area where a lot of coffee is grown. They also went on a school field trip with me to the zoo. It was a really special time, and it is always hard to say goodbye!

#### From Thomas

**My soccer league is on a break for now** so recently, besides all of the work at the end of the school year, I have helped Amanda organize an indoor soccer tournament and worked with my friend Carlos to start a new business. The short-term team that came earlier in June had the idea of running an indoor soccer tournament while they were here. I knew that they guys in the neighborhood would love this, and we ended




up with eight teams. We held a six-day tournament which we call in Spanish, “un relampago,” which means lightning since the tournament is so fast. The youth loved it and even though it was raining the night of the final game, we had over 80 people show up.




As for my new business venture, Carlos and I have been talking for a while about how we could help missionary families deal with some of the challenges they face living in Nicaragua--like how would you feel if you were stopped by the police, given a ticket for something that you did wrong but that you did not understand and then have your license taken away? Or how about being told that all cars must have the new sticker for the year or you will be fined, but you have no idea where the Mayor’s office is where the sticker has to be purchased? Or which lawyer to call if you had an accident or which mechanic you could trust to repair your car? For these kinds of challenges, Carlos and I have begun to use our many contacts to help people get services done faster, understand the correct procedures and/or find trusted professionals to help with services needed. It is the beginning of a business dream that we hope becomes a way for us to train young men in different areas of work so that they can find steady employment. We appreciate your prayers in this endeavor!


### From Amanda




**The end of the school year and the beginning of summer** are always busy times of year for us. On one hand my kids are finishing up their academic years while the Nicaraguan school system continues so that means still continuing to pay university scholarships. Once my kids are out of school our days are much less structured but full nonetheless. In June we received a group of 21 high schoolers from Maranatha Prep School in Pasadena, CA. They worked hard moving dirt piles around the pool, painting three new murals, acting out Bible stories for the children at the feeding program, playing in the indoor soccer tournament and hosting youth group nights. Overall, it was a hard-working and fun group of high schoolers.




Yet while all was going well with the team, Halle and Kathy had received word that Halle’s father’s health was failing quickly. With about four days left for the team, Halle and Kathy decided that they needed to go be with Halle’s father and the rest of his family. In less than 24 hours they made plans and left for Seattle. They arrived after midnight and made it to Halle’s parents’ house in time to be with his dad for about 20 minutes before he passed away. What God timing! Back in Nicaragua we were all so glad that they made it back in time to see each other. While it was a busy next four days for me, I really wanted Halle and Kathy to go, and I could not have asked for better leaders of a team to work with as we made those last four days work out smoothly!



However, the same day that Halle and Kathy were travelling, we found out that one of our night guards suddenly had a heartache in his home and died. It was very tragic and much of the neighborhood was out in the rain that night helping support the family as they decided how to deal with this loss. At times like these I am often at a loss of what to say, but God reminds me of His goodness and faithfulness even amidst the difficult moments and gives me the words to pray with those who are struggling.



While there are tragedies and struggles, there are also good moments like going out to dinner last week with the couple Thomas and I had counseled and been praying for. It was such a joy to hear them talk of changes they have made in their relationship with God, with each other and with their daughter. Also, to see the twinkle in their eyes as they looked at each other and whispered back and forth spoke volumes. To have gone from such anger and separation to such love and intimacy is a testimony to how God can take what looks impossible to the world and mend it together again! This same couple has offered to share their story at a small marriage seminar we are holding this weekend. We covet your prayers for that event.



As always, we so appreciate your support—financial, prayer, and encouragement. We could not do what we are called to do here without your support.

Seeking Him for life,

*Thomas, Amanda, Samantha, Anthony y Nicole Gutiérrez*

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