

March 2011

Dear Friends and Family,



It has been a full year so far! In January we hosted a small and wonderful team from State College, Pennsylvania. With their help we filled 518 backpacks and another 317 plastic bags full of school supplies as well as laid a beautiful rock patio area between the computer lab, the library and the Ranchon. They were a hard-working team and when it was time to rest for the day, they were often playing with the kids at the sports center or hanging out with our children.



February marks the end of summer vacation here in Nicaragua, and therefore many children are preparing to return to school. Over the years the scholarship program has given school supplies to many children and youth as well as scholarships to some private schools or technical/vocational schools. In 2005 I began offering university scholarships and had 13 college students. Each year I have slowly increased the number of students because I saw how much need there was for a scholarship at this level of education. I now have 37 college students who are receiving a full or half scholarship. Because this program is run by faith and the money is raised from year to year, my hope in continuing to offer university scholarships is to find individual sponsors for each student. A sponsor would commit to paying for the student's university cost for each year until the student has finished (most average 5 years). An average total per student is around \$2000 for all 5 years. Now I want to introduce you to a couple of my new students...



Karina Bonilla is 16 years old and just finished high school in November 2010. She dreamt of being able to go on to college in 2011 but knew that there really was no possibility. Her mother works as a cleaning woman for about \$55 a month, and her father left years ago and does not help out financially at all. Her stepfather cares more for his 4-year old daughter than for her to the point that her home situation became so bad that she finally asked her aunt and uncle if she could move in with them. They agreed knowing that they could offer her a simple, loving home where she could eat, sleep and be safe but beyond that they did not have much to offer. So Karina moved in with her aunt and uncle and was happy to be in a place where she felt safe. At one point she told Xiomara, her aunt, about her dream to go to college. Xiomara, however, did not have the resources to help her make that dream come true. Xiomara is a friend of mine and someone who has helped me pay scholarships many times in some of the rough areas of Managua. While we were paying scholarships in February, she began to tell me about Karina and her dream to continue studying. As I heard Karina's story, I began thinking, "this is exactly the kind of young adult whom I want my program to be helping." A month later we met at ULAM, Universidad de las Americas, and did all the paper work for Karina to start classes in Marketing that following week.



Oneyda Martinez is 24 years old and is going into her 3rd year of college. She came to me just a couple of weeks ago looking for a scholarship because her uncle, who had been paying for her tuition, was no longer able to and now she is struggling to find a way to continue studying. She is the third of four children and lives with her mom and her brother. Her father died when she was young. Her older siblings have families of their own now. She is majoring in Education, and her dream is to use her degree to work with street kids or kids at the dump. She said that she is not interested particularly in teaching in a school but rather to work with street kids (many of whom do not attend school) in helping them to learn. I am hoping to scholarship her as well; however, funding is becoming tight.



Would you pray about sponsoring one of these university students? Check out our website for more information: www.amandaythomas.com/becas/students.htm Of the 37 students, only 6 are individually sponsored. Please feel free to email me with any questions. The more students whom I can find sponsors for, the more students I can offer scholarships to. Thank you for considering this sponsorship!



Seeking Him for life,

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