WCCN Celebrates Wisconsin/Nicaragua Sister City Project's 30th Anniversary

The Richland Center–Santa Teresa Sister City Project celebrated its 30th anniversary on October 27th in Richland Center, Wisconsin with a community supper and dance performance by the Hijas de Maiz (Daughters of the Corn) Dance troupe from Managua, Nicaragua. WCCN had the privilege of sponsoring the dance troupe and also volunteering at the event.

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Daughters of the Corn (above) dance troupe is comprised of young women ages 13-20 from Nicaragua. Most of the young women are from the La Primavera settlement, one of the poorest neighborhoods of greater Managua. The dance troupe is part of the Women in Action health and education programming, organized and delivered by 40 women from La Primavera for the benefit of younger women and their agency and self-esteem promotion.
Dear Friends,

As we enter the holiday season, we share some gifting experiences with you in this issue. This year, staff at our microfinance partner IDESI Grau in northern Peru shared their stories of how they helped client families and community members rebuild after severe floods wiped out roads, homes and businesses for several weeks. IDESI Grau's response was both immediate and needed, saving lives and livelihoods for those working poor families already vulnerable to falling backwards into poverty. WCCN is making an appeal to send a gift contribution this year to IDESI Grau, as part of our show of support and thanks for their community relief efforts.

We also share with you the story of El Buen Socio, in Mexico who is helping transplant damaged beehives for 40 beekeeper families that are losing their bee populations after climate change induced droughts occurred earlier this year. With our WCCN gift of support, you are making a difference for those 40 families that depend on seasonal honey production income, when they thought all was lost.

Read the story of Katerine Daniela Solorzano and her six girlfriends and dance troupe companions from Nicaragua. Katerine fulfilled a life-long dream when she came with her dance troupe to the US to perform traditional folkloric dances, showing off long hours of practice with pride. A small gift of support from WCCN made it possible for Katerine and her dance troupe to come to Wisconsin this past October.

We are proud of the gifts we receive and we give, day in and day out, in our effort to make this world more livable with basic dignity, and with opportunities created for others today and tomorrow. We use donations to help us respond and extend support to our partners when loans are not a good fit. Your gifts of support are invaluable and much appreciated by WCCN and all the partners and persons, like 13 year old Katerine. For her and others, without your support, these opportunities would not be possible. On behalf of all of us at WCCN, I thank you for that ongoing support and ask you to consider a gift to WCCN this year-end. Every gift counts, and even a little means a lot to those you help.

Sincerely,

Nancy Metzger
Executive Director
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(Continued from Cover Story)

The Sister City Project began in 1987 after a group of concerned citizens, with the help of WCCN (back then, the Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua), petitioned the Nicaraguan Embassy to pair Richland Center with a city of similar size in Nicaragua. They were granted their petition and paired with Santa Teresa, a farming community south of Managua. Since then there have been dozens of fundraising events, trips to Nicaragua, humanitarian projects and people to people exchanges which have enriched the lives of hundreds of people in each community through the Sister City Project.

The 30th Anniversary event was a culmination of the countless hours and tireless work of volunteers, employees and every day citizens in both countries. The event was sold out as 200 people from the Richland Center area dined on tacos, burritos and homemade treats for dessert. Dinner was followed by a folkloric dance presentation by the Hijas del Maiz dance troupe which is a collective of teenage dancers from Nicaragua who are chosen once a year to travel throughout the US for one month in order to promote cultural exchange and give the young participants an experience in international travel.

The celebration raised $5,000 for the Sister City Project, which will go towards their work in Nicaragua. See santa-teresa.org for more information about their great work. The Sister City Project is also an investor in WCCN.

Las Hijas del Maiz danced the night away for a crowd of over 200 people. Many of the members of the audience have traveled to Nicaragua over the years through the Richland Center-Santa Teresa Sister City Project, and enjoyed reconnecting with the people and culture, if just for one evening. There were many children in the audience who had what may have been their first Latin American experience that evening.
WCCN Supports Beekeeping Project in Mexico to Mitigate Adverse Impact of Climate Change

Beekeepers' livelihood is inextricably linked to climate. In Mexico, most smallholder beekeeping families are indigenous and located in climate change affected areas. These poorer beekeepers are the ones affected most by climate change yet are the least able to cope.

Beekeepers in Chiapas suffered from severe droughts during this year's honey season resulting in lower incomes for poor indigenous families. Chiapas is the poorest state in Mexico and home to 1.3 million indigenous people. This fall, WCCN provided a small grant to our partner, El Buen Socio Foundation, whose providing technical assistance and funding support to a cooperative of 40 indigenous beekeepers. El Buen Socio will help the cooperative member beekeepers migrate 200 beehives from Chenalho to Villaflores in Chiapas, Mexico. By placing the beehives in mango orchards that bloom in December, beekeepers will obtain a second honey harvest in the year and mango producers will benefit from increased pollination.

El Buen Socio has established collaborative relationships with 4 mango orchards willing to welcome the beehives, who understand the benefits they could receive from increased pollination and the importance of beekeeping. Migrating the beehives began in mid-October.

By carrying out this pilot demonstration project, El Buen Socio seeks to encourage thousands of other indigenous honey producers and smallholder farmers to collaborate to adapt to climate change, while improving their production and income using sustainable practices such as transhumance (moving beehives). El Buen Socio, with support from WCCN, is making sure that poverty does not have to mean lack of opportunity in Chiapas. Results from the project will be available in spring 2018.

A participant in El Buen Socio's beekeeping program checks his hives for signs of colony desertion and honey production. Beekeepers around the world are working to understand the threats posed by global warming, pesticides and disease.
Catholic Foundation Makes Investment for Social Justice

The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Saint Cloud recently made a $32,000 investment in WCCN through its Father John Kaiser Social Justice Fund. The Foundation started the social justice fund with help from Father Tony Kroll, an investor and ardent advocate for WCCN over the past twenty years.

Father John Kaiser grew up in Northern Minnesota, but worked in Kenya for close to 40 years. He was passionate about social justice issues and locals referred to him as “Rhino” due to his tough and stubborn nature, and his refusal to let injustices go unspoken. He was beaten, jailed and followed on multiple occasions which eventually ended in his murder on August 24, 2000.

Father Kroll, who never met Father Kaiser, is also passionate about social justice issues but served in Latin America for most of his career. Father Kroll encouraged The Catholic Foundation to start a fund honoring Father Kaiser, and was the main fundraiser for the fund. The Catholic Foundation has decided to invest the bulk of the Father John Kaiser Social Justice Fund in WCCN, with the interest earned on the fund going to scholarships for young people to learn about social justice issues.

Illustration of Father John Kaiser, The City Pages, Minneapolis, MN

Interested in making a gift in someone's memory or honor? Contact us at info@wccn.org to arrange your gift today!
Help Us Grow Our Impact

DONATE: Every $1 contributed leverages $6 in loans to the working poor of Latin America. Please donating today by visiting www.wccn.org/donate, or send a check made out to WCCN to our offices at 517 N. Segoe Rd, Suite 209, Madison WI 53705.

INVEST: By investing in WCCN you create opportunities for the working poor and help build a more equitable world. To invest, contact us at 608.257.7230, or write info@wccn.org.
Donation Appeal Notice
Help Our Peruvian Friends of IDESI Grau in Piura

In March of this year, Northern Peru was subject to torrential rainfall and widespread devastation. With borrowers temporarily displaced, living in tents and makeshift housing, the road to recovery will be a long one. That’s why, with your help, we seek to raise $7,500 in donations for IDESI Grau to help them support costs of rebuilding their community. Any money left over from this campaign will go to help WCCN fund its other costs and future grant-making efforts.

Whether you’ve supported WCCN’s mission of improving the lives of the working poor for the past thirty years or are just starting today, please give by returning the enclosed donation envelope or visiting wccn.org. Every gift helps, no matter the size.
We're Moving...Close By

At the end of 2017 we will be moving to a new location in Madison, WI. We look forward to serving you and the working poor in Latin America from our new space at:

330 South Whitney Way, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53705-4638

As always, to keep up to date visit our website at wccn.org or write info@wccn.org for more info.

Founded in 1984, Working Capital for Community Needs (WCCN) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit impact investing fund whose mission is to create opportunities for access to microfinance, services and markets to improve the lives and communities of the working poor in Latin America.