



An unofficial Newsletter supporting

Rags

Volume 8 September 2010



Mustard Seed Communities & Christ in the Garbage Ministries

Centro de Costura : is dedicated to the **Empowerment** of people who live or work in & around the dump communities of Managua, Nicaragua. Through **Education and Spirituality** they acquire **Marketable Life Skills** to Enrich their lives while **Caring** to help in other lives for generations to come.

For photos & more information visit www.ChristInTheGarbageMinistries.Shutterfly.com

Christ in the Garbage Ministries Managua begins Phase II!!...



Cell Phone Bags ~or~ Lockbox
Key Bags suitable for
Real Estate Agents!



The 'Anna' Bag.... Similar to a
mailbag, with a slightly
Bohemian feel!

Sometimes creativity is
the daily work of helping
others to see a problem
in a different way.

Joseph Bararacco

Phase II is all about the empowerment of the individuals to achieve self sufficiency through the 3 tenants of Mustard Seed: Caring, Sharing & Training. In March 2010 a council of seven women graduates were elected by their peers to take on new leadership roles. Their responsibilities include: *Inventory Management, Marketing & Sales, Quality Control and Student Representative*. These ladies also serve as mentors to new students and provides guidance and leadership for the sewing center.

The council proves a wonderful concept but ...

the implementation on a day to day basis necessitates further guidance. It became apparent that the council leaders were struggling with juggling their time mentoring, fielding concerns or questions, and tracking inventory which left them less time to sew their own projects. We discussed the concepts of 'time management' where questions were handled only at specific times each day. Time management is difficult for most people and often trial and error is the best teacher. Taking ownership in solving issues promotes growth, creativity, and independence.

Our little sewing center is now ready to 'explode' in the design department! One Atlanta donor gave us plenty of fabric from rejected products from her company. Now these ladies are recycling the fabric into some wonderful new designs! We have a creativity / design contest which will continue through the end of 2010 with certificates given to the winning designs based on uniqueness, utility, and marketability. (see photos on page 3 for some samples) Our hope is to create an atmosphere of empowerment, where creativity is always encouraged.

We returned home with 2 suitcases filled with handbags to sell via our "Trunk Show" Tuesday, September 21, 2010 from 4:00 P.M.—8:00 P.M.. For more information please contact Janet@WeidmannGroup.com

This page shows some sample bags for the trunk show ... and... Custom orders are always welcome!



Reversible 'Slouch Bag'
in Faux Leather



Marta's original design



Tapestry Bag for Traveling

... It is True, We never stand as tall as when we reach down to bring someone up!



Student Spotlight :

Erlinda,

When Erlinda arrived at our sewing center in 2006 she was turned away 3 times. At that time our focus was solely on helping the residents of La Chureca, the city dump. Coming to Managua for the first time, in 2006, we only knew how desperately poor were the residents of this 70 acre city dump. The irony is that those who live outside the city dump or even in the countryside are often more desperately poor. This irony is not very evident to a 'newbie' of this region. You see, dump dwellers are often times recipients of 'free rice and beans', free medical care, and other donations from the many global nonprofits whose generous donations become more apparent upon further inspections.

When Erlinda arrived a 4th time knocking on our door, this time with a neighbor named Lincoln to petition on her behalf we stopped and listened with open hearts. We learned that for several years Erlinda has been eking out a living cooking and cleaning for pennies a day. Her home was a hovel with sheet metal and dirt floors. Two small children, a husband who could not find steady work, and an unhealthy mother depended on her for food and care. She spoke with cast down eyes, timid from years of being shut out in society. Yet, her determination brought her to our doorstep each day in hopes of learning a new trade. It was her tenacity that touched a cord with us, as well as our realization that we are sometimes too quick to judge. Her enrollment to the center allowed us to be more insightful and paved the way for other desperately poor individuals residing outside of the dump.

Flash forward... March of 2010 Through hard work and perseverance Erlinda has sold enough handbags to start her own 'pulperia'. A 'pulperia' is a small neighborhood store often found throughout Nicaragua. She sells rice, sugar, beans, and eggs as well as other small items like candy. What we soon discovered however, is that she now feared for her safety as her home didn't have the requisite iron bar gate or door in which to conduct business. A used door is between \$25-50.00. While in Nicaragua we arranged a meeting for Erlinda to explore the potential of a micro loan. We had heard many success stories throughout the world of small business loans for women. Unfortunately, micro loans only work when you have several other women to share the loan responsibility and you must have a steady income flow. Erlinda was not a good candidate for this type of loan since her income stream was still erratic.

Upon returning this August 2010, we met up again with Erlinda.... She had managed to save more money from selling more handbags and now has a new 'used' door to secure her home store. She is managing quite well. Excitedly she showed us the receipt from the handbags she sold which allowed her to purchase this door. She says she has done this without owing anyone any money. She couldn't be more proud! Next, she wants to earn money for a window and later perhaps more inventory. Her home is still a hovel but it is filled with hope and dreams. Erlinda's success has inspired many other women in desperate need of learning a trade to help their families. Here are some snapshots of Erlinda and her pulperia. She knows our donors are instrumental in her success. Erlinda says she prays for you every day.



Erlinda w/ Eggs to sell



Anne & Donna shopping at Erlinda's 'Pulperia'



This is the 'new' used door & daughter Jeralynn

Update on Yahaira: She is doing well. Since last March, Yahaira began renovations on her home. She is slowly replacing the cardboard outer walls with cinder block. Presently, the walls stand 3 ft. high. As Yahaira earns additional money she will continue to add cinder blocks to complete her home. Her children have also learned some sewing skills designing pillows to sell, and macramé creating and selling friendship bracelets.

Thanks to all of you who help in this ministry.

Janet Weidmann (on behalf of **all the missionaries** and Sewing Sisters: Diane Rochford, Denise Brew, Lucianne Agate & Donna Malloy)

First Annual Fabric Giveaway

A Multiple Celebration in the Sewing Center!!!

..Sometimes spontaneity merges with serendipity.....

Such was the case when collectively we decided to cull through some of the fabrics and organize which fabrics work best for different projects. This would normally be a monumental task. But with the help from Denise and her eagle eye for color and design we were able to not only make sense of the multitude of fabrics but also afford a give-away of sorts to the students. This give-away would allow the ladies the freedom to create something for their homes or to sell.

Anne and Jean, our team members from Chicago who joined us on this trip, also cleaned out their closets of rarely used or gently used clothes. Not knowing what to expect they assumed the clothes might benefit someone in need. So, they loaded up their suitcases for Nicaragua!

Together the clothes and extra fabrics made for a festive 'give-away' extravaganza. One by one the ladies first filed past the table of goodies to see what was available. After drawing a number from a paper bag to designate their position in the lineup they eagerly but carefully chose one item of value ~ clothes or fabric. The energy level heightened as they clung to their package. Fifty women benefited from this give-away.

But the one woman that stood out from the others was Celina. Recently, she adopted her sisters 3 children after her sister and spouse died in a bus explosion while on a visit in Guatemala. The youngest child had just celebrated his 3rd birthday last week. Celina had promised him a pair of shoes for his birthday but the promise was broken due to a lack of money. Celina carried with her a template of the child's insole in her sewing journal hoping to find a pair of shoes someday. As Celina rounded the table of goodies she spied a pair of children's shoes and chanced the size was right. After searching her bag where her journal was hiding she pulled out the template and discovered that it was the perfect shoe size! What a wonderful sight this was!! She cried with happiness for this serendipitous gift.

So, here is the rest of the story.....

It seems that while in Chicago, Anne and Jean came upon a children's pair of shoes that they just *had to buy*....they were cute and very inexpensive. On a whim they purchased them, packed them for Nicaragua and the rest is 'history' Little did they realize that moment of spontaneity would be a dream come true for a little 3 year old and his new mom.



Celina w/ the insole template, carried around in her sewing journal



Yahaira's daughter, Jocelyn, making friendship bracelets to sell



Devin comforting an orphan



Samples of cosmetic bags



Janet's wedding gown recycled and sewn into a christening gown!



Donna gives a baking class on Biscotti



Stylish cell phone bags or lockbox key bags



Donna, Anne & Jean painting the daycare center

RECYCLE, REDESIGN, RENEW a LIFE

Call Diane to arrange pickup of your Donations:
C# 770-826-0541

- **Donate Fabric Remnants;** designer fabrics, notions, buttons, zippers, and thread
- **Draperies;** If you are redecorating your home please consider donating your drapes to our center. Landfills are a waste (no pun intended!).... We will gladly come out to assess the utility of your fabric.
- **Laptops and printers** ~ Our English classes and administrative help are desperately in need of functioning laptops and printers. Tourism is the future in Nicaragua and English is the key to future jobs in the tourist sector.

~Other Ways to Help~

- **Visit the Sewing Center** ~ Come down and join us on either the Summer Mission Trip in August or the shorter trip in February each year. We will tour the sewing center, orphanage, & the city of Managua as well as outlying areas while learning the history of this fascinating country. You may build a wall or shelves, entertain children through games or song as well as simply just 'being'. When you leave Nicaragua you will better understand the origins of this abject poverty as well as witness the power of love.
- **Spiritual Support** ~ The power of prayer is profound. Please continue to remember us all in this ministry. The students pray for their sponsors every day.
- **Financial Support** ~ If you are called to serve in this capacity we would be forever grateful. Please earmark your check for the 'Sewing Center'. Checks are made out to *Mustard Seed Communities* ~ Mail Checks to the following Address:
Diane Rochford at 220 Chasen Wood Way, Roswell GA.30076 ~ OR ~
Donate online at www.MustardSeed.com/SewingCenterMissionTrip2010



Sewing Center & tie dyed backpacks
drying on the fence

RAGS

110 Georgian Manor Ct
Alpharetta, GA 30022

Luke 13:19 "It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air make nests in its branches."

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea, ' and it would obey you."