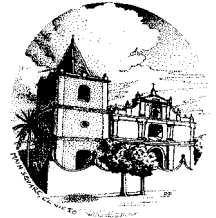




THE NORFOLK AND NORWICH - EL VIEJO FRIENDSHIP LINK

Founded 1986



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To: Headteachers of Norfolk Schools.

January, 2008,

Dear Headteacher,

For the last five years, with the help of generous donations from individuals, schools, trade unions, churches, and from organised events, the Link has enabled over three hundred children in our twin town of El Viejo in Nicaragua to enjoy Primary School education. The Link gives them uniforms, exercise books, pens and pencils, and schoolbags and gives their schools money to buy education material – things their parents could not afford because of the extreme poverty of the area. As one of the parents said at a recent distribution of the uniforms and other material – *'We give thanks to those people in a land across the sea who give us friendship and make it possible for our children to learn'*.

We have now been asked if we can give further help to enable the eight primary schools in our project to improve the education of their children. They would like each school to have a computer. Most schools in Norfolk are now well provided with computer facilities which are taken for granted and children are able to learn in new ways. Very few schools in Nicaragua, especially primary schools, have them. Even one computer in a school would enable the teachers to access and use modern education material. As a school Governor myself I am well aware of the impact that computers have had on education.

To give each school a small computer, complete with operating system and basic programmes, would cost about £400. The benefits would be long lasting and enormous for the children in the schools and the Link is launching this appeal to schools and organisations in Norfolk to help us raise the money to buy at least one computer for each school.

The Link is also seeking to fund the provision of electricity to two of the schools, who at present have no electricity supply to power computers. Based on experience elsewhere this will be done with solar panels and batteries and will cost about £500 for each school,

Will, you, your school, or organisation, help the children of our twin city to improve their education by making it possible for them to benefit from the technological age that most of us now take for granted? All donations, however small, will be greatly appreciated by the children and their families.

Some facts about education in Nicaragua.

- Some 80% of people in Nicaragua live on less than \$2.00 (£1) per day.
- Out of a population of 5.5 million, almost 50% are under 15 years of age.
- There is a shortage of schools and teachers – most primary schools teach 'double' classes, i.e. one teacher teaches two classes at the same time.
- It is estimated that 500,000 children do not go to school.

About El Viejo

El Viejo is a municipality which is comparable to the county of Norfolk. It is about 1,300 sq kilometres in area. Like Norfolk it is very rural in character with many small villages and communities. It is an agricultural area with large plantations of sugar cane. Rice, beans, maize, sorghum and sesame are also grown and there is some cattle rearing. Fishing and shrimp farming also take place in the coastal areas. Also, like Norfolk it has the sea on three sides.

El Viejo City, like Norwich, is a historical city dating back to the early 1500s. It is a religious centre with an important basilica. The population is about 95,000 divided equally between the city and the rural areas.

There the similarities end. The climate is sub-tropical with average temperatures of 28°C. The area is subject to climatic extremes suffering from hurricanes and tropical rain storms which cause flooding and extensive damage. In three days in October 2007 El Viejo received 23 inches of rain, about as much as Norfolk gets in a full year. Many small communities are remote and can be reached only via dirt roads which become impassable in the rainy season.

I shall be grateful if you will pass a copy of this letter, and the attached leaflet, to the Chair of your School Governors.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Link Secretary', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke underneath it.

Link Secretary.



A typical rural school in El Viejo. This one is in a very remote and scattered area, no electricity, few books and equipment and not enough teachers.

How will computers help the children in these schools?

Text books and other educational materials are in very short supply. With at least one computer in each school teachers could use educational CDs to introduce much more learning material to their children. They can use Internet Cafes to download modern and up to date education programmes.

So, please, we ask you to do what you can to help the children of our twin city in a part of the world that suffers from a great deal of deprivation and hardship. Give Victoria and her friends a little of the benefits that our children enjoy. They will be eternally grateful.

How you can help:

Perhaps your school or organisation could organise a fundraising event, or make a collection at your workplace. Individuals could arrange a coffee morning. We guarantee that every penny raised will be used to provide computers and education material to the schools in our project – send your donations to: The Treasurer, Norfolk & Norwich – El Viejo Friendship Link, 4 Church Road, Tasburgh, Norwich, NR15 1ND



The Norfolk and Norwich - El Viejo Friendship Link

School Computer Appeal



***Nuestra escuela desea una computadora. Por favor, ustedes puede ayudamos?**

****Our school would like a computer. Please, can you help us?***

Victoria and Isabella - two pupils at the Norwich Settlement school in El Viejo.

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to buy education material - things their parents cannot afford. As one of the parents said recently - ***We give thanks to those people in a land across the sea who give us friendship and make it possible for our children to learn.***

We have now been asked for more help. They would like each school to have a computer. A new way of learning that Norfolk children take for granted.

To give each school a small computer with operating system and basic programmes, would cost about £400. The benefits would be enormous for the children and the Link is launching this appeal to schools and organisations in Norfolk to help us raise enough money to buy at least one computer for each school.



**A small computer,
including
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The Link would also like to provide electricity to two of the schools to power the computers by providing solar panels and batteries, costing about £500 per school.

Will you help the children of our twin city so they can benefit from the technological age that most of us now take for granted? -all donations will be greatly appreciated by the children and their families, (see back page)

Some facts about education in Nicaragua

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- Out of a population of about 5.5 million, almost 50% are under 15 years of age.
- There is a chronic shortage of schools and teachers – most primary schools teach 'double' classes, i.e. one teacher teaches two classes at the same time.
- Text books and other educational materials are in very short supply.
- It is estimated that almost 800,000 children do not go to school.

About El Viejo

El Viejo is a municipality similar to the county of Norfolk. It is about 1,300 sq kilometres in area. It is very rural with many small villages and communities. It is an agricultural area with large plantations of sugar cane. Rice, beans, maize, sorghum and sesame are also grown and there is some cattle rearing. Fishing and shrimp farming also take place on the coast. Also, like Norfolk it has the sea on three sides.

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Many small communities are remote and can be reached only via dirt roads. The climate is sub-tropical with average temperatures of 28°C. It regularly suffers hurricanes and tropical rain storms causing flooding and extensive damage.