



# JUNTOS ADELANTE

TOGETHER FORWARD

[juntosadelante.org](http://juntosadelante.org)

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ISSUE 1 VOLUME 1

## CURRENT PROJECTS

The Mama Licha Clinic

The Cervical Cancer Initiative

The Rural Nursing Project

The Musawas Midwives Project

Art for Health and Human Rights

## WHAT YOUR DONATION COULD DO

- \$50** Provide pap smears for 20 women.
- \$100** Cover the monthly salary of a healthcare provider.
- \$250** Provide prenatal care and a natural birth at Mama's clinic for one patient.
- \$500** Stock the clinic's pharmacy with basic medication for six months.
- \$1000** Provide a nursing scholarship or a health promotion mural.

## HOW TO DONATE

All donations are tax deductible and can be made out to "Institute for Central American Studies/Juntos Adelante" and mailed to the address below. Make your donation go even further with employer matching!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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[juntosadelante.org](http://juntosadelante.org)  
[mamasclinic.org](http://mamasclinic.org)

## JUNTOS ADELANTE CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS

Angie Rogers, FNP & Bethany Golden, CNM

It is hard to imagine that five years have passed since we first met Mama Licha - when she was seeing patients in a makeshift clinic in her kitchen, using a headlamp for pap smears because the lighting was so poor. Now, her clinic is thriving, providing much needed services to the women and families of her community in a loving, dignified way. Mama tells us that she sometimes looks at the clinic and pinches herself because she can't believe it is a reality, that her dream really came true. As much as we have helped change Mama's life, she has changed ours. She inspired us to start ICAS/Juntos Adelante, a not-for-profit organization that strives to make change in the lives of those who need it most through community initiated grassroots projects. What started out as two women determined to build a clinic for Nicaragua's most beloved midwife has organically evolved into multiple projects including the Cervical Cancer Initiative, the Musawas Midwives Project, and Art for Health & Human Rights. Over the course of our five years in Nicaragua, we have established a trusting relationship with the community, and are honored to have been approached for collaboration by local leaders. Please read on page two about our newest initiative, the Rural Nurse Training Project, which together with your support will bring education and healthcare to the women of rural towns through an innovative collaboration with the local health system.

Working in Nicaragua is so rewarding because, while the need is great, so is the opportunity to do something about it. Seemingly small actions make big differences in the lives of the people there, and once you witness those changes your life will never be the same. Thank you to all our donors, supporters and volunteers who have made change possible. Please share in our celebration of five amazing years completed and many more to come.



THE INAUGURAL MURAL FOR JUNTOS ADELANTE'S NEW PROJECT (p. 4)

## What IS ICAS/Juntos Adelante?

Juntos Adelante is a project of the Institute for Central American Studies, a not-for-profit organization. The project promotes the just distribution of health, financial, intellectual, and artistic resources, abundant in the developed world, to women-owned and operated organizations and businesses in developing nations. The goal is to encourage self-sustainability of women-initiated organizations dedicated to health and human rights in their communities by sharing the wealth of services, products and resources.



## BRAND NEW PROJECT TRAINS NURSES TO WORK IN RURAL AREAS

Bethany Golden, CNM

The director of Nursing for the Centro del Salud in Estelí, Ramona Alfaro, or “Monchita”, approached Juntos Adelante this past July with a problem. As migration to larger cities with higher wages and more job opportunities has grown, rural villages have increasingly been left without trained nurses to serve their populations. To overcome this human resource deficit and ensure the continuation of community health services in a sustainable manner, Monchita developed a solution complementary to Nicaragua’s new public health plan, Modelo de Atención Integral en Salud (MAIS) that aims to provide free, quality healthcare coverage to the entire country’s population. Monchita’s solution will focus on providing nursing training and education to village residents who have already received their high school diploma and desire to stay in their village and will be guaranteed employment by the municipality upon graduation.

The program will train nurses in two phases. During the first semester the students will have lectures, and during the second they will work in their communities while attending classes on the weekends. Graduates will be able to continue their education towards a professional nursing degree if they choose while continuing to fulfill their new capacity as “auxiliary community nurses.” The auxiliary community nurse’s scope of practice, according to MAIS, includes the following: routine home visits; family assessments for each home; basic community and home based medical assistance; and the development of health promotion, disease prevention, and environmental hazard reduction programs, including provision of clean drinking water and proper waste disposal. Their duties will also include the collection of population censuses and other statistical data.

These rural nurses will be trained at the department of nursing at the Leonel Rugama Health Center in Estelí and certified by the Association of Polytechnic University Departments of Nicaragua, Estelí Division (Recinto Universitario Unidad Politecnica de Nicaragua sede Estelí). Currently, the development of each auxiliary community nurse student will cost approximately \$1,010. **Our hope is to raise funds to provide nursing education for a group of 30 qualified applicants for a total cost \$30,300. If you are interested in contributing to this project, please write in the memo of your check, “Rural Nursing”.**

## LARGE-SCALE DONATIONS ADVANCE LOCAL HEALTHCARE

E Jane Richardson

In July of this past summer, in front of nurses, doctors, three radio stations, and one local television station, Mama Licha, along with co-founders Bethany Golden and Angie Rogers, delivered a portable ultrasound to the Centro de Salud Leonel Rugama, in Estelí, courtesy of SonoSite. This portable ultrasound is the first available to women in the community free of charge. Prior to this donation, women were forced to pay up to \$15 (about 30% of the average woman’s monthly salary) to receive an ultrasound at a private clinic. Often women opted not to spend the money, which sometimes resulted in complications with the pregnancy as serious as maternal or fetal death. With this generous donation, the gap between care received in Nicaragua and the United States is closed a little bit more.

Juntos Adelante has been lucky enough to receive many large-scale donations from corporations, nonprofit organizations, religious affiliations, and



individuals that benefit the communities it serves in a clear and measurable way. In the past year it has received a colposcope to investigate the cause of irregular pap smears and prevent cervical cancer, a LEEP unit to treat cervical dysplasia, and medical supplies, in addition to the SonoSite portable ultrasound and transducers (see a detailed list of donors p. 4). Equipment and supplies are given directly to the community, for use by the community, in the manner it deems appropriate so that advancement of the community is encouraged, without making it reliant on assistance from outside sources.

The success of Juntos Adelante in achieving its goals is based not only on the passion of its volunteers, but also on the generosity of its benefactors. Your donation, no matter how small, can have a huge effect on the lives of women and children in the second poorest country in the western hemisphere, and we are continually grateful for your help.



# THE MUSAWAS MIDWIVES PROJECT

## PROJECT BRINGS TRAINING AND SUPPLIES TO REMOTE VILLAGE

Maraya Friedman, CNM

In March of 2006, Juntos Adelante co-founders, Angie Rogers and Bethany Golden, visited the remote village of Musawas, located in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve in North Central Nicaragua, and home to the Mayanga people. This indigenous community is inaccessible by car, and thus isolated geographically as well as linguistically and economically from the rest of Nicaragua. After walking for hours through mud and rainforest to the village, Bethany and Angie met with local midwives and learned the dangers of giving birth in an area without access to western medicine or technology as basic as stethoscopes and scissors, and the high resulting maternal mortality rate. The result of this meeting was a promise by Juntos Adelante to assist the community's current and future midwives with training, equipment, and supplies.



For the next five months, Juntos Adelante collected donations and enlisted volunteers from the United States and Nicaragua, including Maraya Kennedy Friedman, a certified nurse-midwifery student at Yale University; Ramona Alfaro "Monchita," the head of nursing and midwifery for the Ministry of Health in Estelí; Dalit Gulak, a nurse-midwifery student at Georgetown University; and Dana Rogers, Director of In-Kind Donations. In this short amount of time, Juntos Adelante was able to collect a portable stretcher for the community, as well as a backpack for each midwife filled with a headlamp, batteries, a thermometer, a blood pressure cuff, a stethoscope, rubber boots, a sweater, gauze packets, alcohol swabs, antibiotic cream, condoms, a notebook and pen, a poncho, string, a

metal placenta bowl, scissors, and a bulb syringe. They also assembled a pictorial midwifery guide for the midwives who are largely illiterate, and worked with Monchita to plan the two-day training seminar.

The volunteers met in Bonanza, Nicaragua, and transported the 500 pounds of supplies up to Musawas in motorized dugout canoes. After a day of travel, on August 27, 2006, they arrived in Musawas and began the instruction. On the first day, the midwives learned about basic anatomy, the stages and progress of labor, and nutrition during pregnancy. The second day's topics included the menstrual cycle, childbirth, and preventing infection. The women were then given their backpacks and taught how to use each item. At the end of the training, the midwives expressed their gratitude for the training and the supplies, and their desire to learn more and practice. The project was particularly successful because it was conducted in a culturally specific manner, and this success will hopefully inspire similar projects in the future.



### JUNTOS ADELANTE WOULD LIKE TO THANK COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

Richard Fox at Cooper Surgical for a colposcope ([www.coopersurgical.com](http://www.coopersurgical.com))

Mark Fox at Utah Medical Products for a LEEP unit and supplies ([www.utahmed.com](http://www.utahmed.com))

Andrew Haring at SonoSite for a SonoSite180Plus portable ultrasound ([www.sonosite.com](http://www.sonosite.com))

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' Humanitarian Program for ultrasound transducers

Amy Hewitt at International Aid for a discounted Welch Allyn colposcope ([www.internationalaid.org](http://www.internationalaid.org))

Matt Knight at Globus Relief for discounted medical supplies and equipment ([www.globusrelief.org](http://www.globusrelief.org))

Dan Neal at Heart to Heart International for discounted medical supplies ([www.hearttoheart.org](http://www.hearttoheart.org))

Listen to Angie and Bethany on Chicago Public Radio talk about the health and human rights activities of ICAS/Juntos Adelante

<http://www.wbez.org/content.aspx?audioid=13283>

# THE CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING INITIATIVE

## MURAL CONTRIBUTES TO SCREENING AWARENESS AND LOCAL TRADITION

Pennilee West, Yale University nurse-midwifery graduate student & E Jane Richardson

Nicaragua has one of the highest levels of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection, a virus that can cause cervical cancer or genital warts, in Latin America, second only to Haiti. This phenomenon has been attributed to a variety of factors, including socioeconomic status and education level. However, one of the simplest causes seems to be a lack of knowledge about HPV, the purpose of Pap smears, and the link between HPV and cervical cancer. In fact, in Estelí, the location of Mama Licha's Clinic, only about 10% of women receive Pap smears.



In July 2007 a group of Yale Nursing students visiting Estelí devised a creative way to increase awareness. There are over 100 murals in Estelí, primarily created by a nonprofit organization called Fundación de Apoyo al Arte Creador Infantil (FUNARTE) that seeks to empower children through art. Juntos Adelante met

with professional muralists to plan a mural to spread their word. While the muralists finalized sketches, the students sought out funding sources for the project. Center Church in New Haven pledged \$1,000 to support the project. As soon as the director of the Health Ministry gave site approval, painting began. The mural depicted the community's need to support women's health: grandparents, spouses, children, families and health care providers. The inscription read, "Together We Can Prevent Cervical Cancer." Work proceeded quickly and within two weeks the muralists, students and citizens of Estelí gathered to cut the ribbon on the first mural promoting women's health in Nicaragua. This activity was such a success that founders Bethany Golden and Angie Rogers decided to create a new project for Juntos Adelante, "Art for Health and Human Rights." Currently, we are seeking patrons for the next mural dedicated to women's health. Please contact Juntos Adelante at 646-734-3625



### What is the Cervical Cancer Screening Initiative?

Stephanie Cox-Batson, Director of Cervical Cancer Project and Head of Women's Health at Near North Health Services Corp

In March of 2005 Juntos Adelante expanded its efforts to improve the health of Nicaraguan women. Recognizing the startling fact that cervical cancer is the leading cause of death for women over 35 in Nicaragua, it launched "the Cervical Cancer Screening Initiative" to provide screening in the form of pap smears, diagnostic, and preventative measures to Nicaraguan women, at no cost.

Currently, though Nicaraguan women have access to pap smears, few women have access to treatment once an abnormality is identified. As a result, either the disease progresses, or the woman undergoes a hysterectomy at an exorbitant cost, which eliminates fertility and exposes women to unnecessary surgical risks. This is in stark contrast to the United States and Europe, where women with abnormal pap smears undergo a simple office procedure called a colposcopy to diagnose the abnormality, and then, if necessary, a simple treatment called a Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure (LEEP) to eliminate abnormal cells and prevent cervical cancer. In these countries, women's fertility is maintained and they return to their family cured after a 15-minute procedure.

Mama Licha opened her home and her clinic to allow this effort to flourish. With her assistance and the work of volunteers, the clinic has already screened over 300 Nicaraguan women. These women come great distances, often taking buses for hours, and walking for miles to seek care. The clinic has helped women from as far away as Costa Rica. Undeterred by the rugged terrain, heat and distance, the women come in their "Sunday best" to receive treatment.

2007 was a particularly exciting year for the Cervical Cancer Screening Initiative. Dr. Amy Schroeder, Kathy Kahn, and Dr. Gina Smith all funded their own trips to Estelí and donated their time and expertise to the project. In the past two years the Initiative has prevented over 20 hysterectomies. But this is only the beginning. The goal is to have a cervical cancer screening clinic that runs year-around, and to that end, local doctors are being trained to use donated LEEP and Colposcope machines on their own. The success of the Initiative thus far is due to generous donations from individuals and businesses, and continued donations will help achieve the goal.



# VOLUNTEERS

## STUDENTS

**Laura Jenson, Oregon Health & Science University  
Nurse Midwifery & Public Health Graduate student**

**R**efrescos y gallo pinto y quejada, ¡Qué bien! This summer, I spent six weeks in Nicaragua as a nurse-midwifery and masters of public health student. I went to research cervical cancer screening in Nicaragua by analyzing Pap smear results, but the focus of my time in “Nica” was much broader than simple data collection.

I started off in Managua where I met with various officials and public healthcare providers. Ana Cecilia Silva, the program director of the Alliance for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer at the *Ministero de Salud* (MINSa), explained that their greatest challenge is a lack of resources—they have enough money to develop and implement screening programs or to treat women with advanced stages of cancer, but not enough for both.

After Managua, I moved into Mama Licha’s house in Estelí. I observed her clinical practice and the regional public health clinic, Centro de Salud Leonel Rugama. At the Centro, I gathered data on over five hundred Pap smear results.

The impact of the work Juntos Adelante is doing in Nicaragua is astounding and inspiring. My time there taught me about developing programs that are truly beneficial: It’s not just about good intentions, it takes long-term commitment and meaningful collaboration to develop sustainable programs that truly nurture the communities they intend to serve. Juntos Adelante is doing it, and this summer, I got to be one tiny part of it all. ¡Qué suerte tengo!



**Elise Resch, Yale University nurse-midwifery graduate student**

**I**n July of 2006, I arrived in Estelí, Nicaragua with seven other students. Each of us had ten months worth of accelerated nursing education, fifty pounds of donated medical supplies, and a copy of *Spanish for Medical Professionals*. We were the fourth group from Yale to be selected for this popular community health rotation and spend four weeks scattered across Estelí’s public health system.

In these clinics, we participated in immunizations, prenatal care, and family planning. We went into neighborhoods and distributed anti-parasitics to schoolchildren. We saw the emergency room of the city hospital full everyday with diseases that are treatable or eradicated in the United States.

We came eager - full of the latest science and newly honed skills, much of which was irrelevant in the absence of resources and equipment. The frustration was often overwhelming – to be without electricity to run an EKG on a heart attack victim or without a doppler to listen to the fetal heart in a laboring woman. We watched well-trained physicians and nurses show up every day, knowing they would often be without means to effectively treat their patients. We learned the impact

of poorly distributed health resources and saw an example of a successful redistribution. Because of this experience, I know I left Nicaragua, not only a better nurse, but with a desire to bring about meaningful action in the world.

## HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

**Amy Schroeder M.D., Family Physician, Erie Family Health Center**

**M**y welcome to Nicaragua was a weekend “Pap Festival” in Mirafior, a remote and mountainous region north of Estelí known for its coffee fields and lush cloud forests. It was a good introduction to Nicaraguan healthcare. Patients who had walked miles through the mud waited happily for their annual pap smears performed by the beloved Mama Licha, but among them was an elderly woman who complained of chest pain -- the kind that in the US automatically means an ER visit. The only intervention I could offer was a bottle of Aspirin.

My official reason for visiting Mama’s clinic was to perform colposcopies, an exam done to evaluate for cervical cancer after a woman has an abnormal pap smear. It requires specialized equipment and training, which, until Juntos Adelante became involved with Mama’s clinic, was available in Nicaragua only through private doctors for a prohibitive fee. The women began arriving to Mama’s Clinic at 7AM for their colposcopies; some having taken several-hour bus rides from faraway rural communities. Many had worried for years that they had cancer, unable to pay a private doctor \$50. One woman had, as a last resort, boarded an 11-hour bus to Estelí, unaware, until she heard a radio news report about Mama Licha’s clinic, that a visiting doctor was there that day doing exactly what she needed. While on the exam table, she thanked God for bringing her to Mama’s clinic.

After performing about 40 colposcopies and taking almost as many biopsies, I left Mama’s with something rare in modern medicine -- the knowledge that I had truly made a difference. Mama’s Clinic reminds me everyday that small actions can have far-reaching effects.

# A MESSAGE FROM MAMA

## WHO IS MAMA LICHA?

**A**licia Huete, or "Mama Licha" as she is known in the community, lives in Estelí, a town in the northern highlands of Nicaragua. Her mission is a selfless dedication to her community, working to provide needed services to those with few resources. As a human rights activist she has always seen all patients regardless of their ability to pay. She is beloved by the community and has worked as a nurse and midwife for 34 years, persevering through the Revolution and then the Contra War. Just like many midwives throughout the world, she believes that a healthy community starts with healthy women.

Her vision has always been clear and her resolve unmatched. Understanding the critical need for improving access to reproductive health services in Nicaragua, Mama teamed up with Juntos Adelante to build a freestanding clinic for women's health and natural childbirth. Here is a special message from her:



*This was a very busy year for my clinic, with many activities and classes in addition to prenatal care of women, including adolescents, who were referred to me by other agencies or who came on their own accord. I referred several of them (primarily those who were high risk) to the hospital or Centro de Salud so they could get specialized attention. I held group prenatal classes twice a week, with good attendance, to prepare pregnant women both physically and psychologically for birth. These were especially positive experiences because family members, friends and spouses often accompanied the pregnant women.*

*This year I also gave talks to more than 250 workers in the local tobacco factories about health topics including cervical cancer and sexually transmitted infections. There I led discussions, passed out educational pamphlets, and distributed more than 500 condoms (which were in high demand!). After the talks, many of the women who worked in the factory came to my clinic for pap smears, testing for sexually transmitted infections, birth control, and to talk more intimately about sexual and reproductive health. I also gave a formal presentation of the clinic and my practice at the "Birth Without Borders" conference in Costa Rica, this past May.*

*I would like to express my gratitude to all of the people in the United States who have made this beautiful project possible for all the women and people in need here. If it wasn't for your help and moral and economic support this project would not exist. Thank you to the kind hearted women and men for their continuing support, may God bless you who have compassion for others. All of the people who have been taken care of here thank you with all of their heart and hope that you will continue helping them. My family also is very grateful for your incredible gesture of humanity.*

*Thank you and may God bless you,  
Alicia Huete, "Mama Licha"*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDERS

**Angie Rogers, FNP & Bethany Golden, CNM**

**T**his year marks the fifth year of our teaching as courtesy faculty for Yale University School of Nursing (YSN). Each July we have brought first year students (GEPNs) to Estelí, Nicaragua for an international community health clinical rotation. It has taught students ways to serve effectively in communities (both domestic and international) where poverty, high unemployment rates, malnutrition, and disease trump local resources by demonstrating the strengths and weaknesses of Estelí's public healthcare system.

In our program, students work side-by-side with community health nurses and health promoters at small outposts throughout the town, take part in vaccination campaigns and rural health fairs, learn about natural medicine, and participate in traditional midwifery events. They review research articles about particular health issues pertinent to Nicaragua including infectious disease, occupational and environmental health, and domestic violence. When the students are not at work, they take intensive Spanish. Each student is also required to bring 50lbs of medical supplies to be donated to the local clinics and the hospital.

The power of giving students a global health nursing opportunity early in their careers should not be underestimated. The exposure to living and working in a community with few resources gives students an understanding of how to create grassroots solutions that are culturally competent and community-generated. And it shows that one or two people can make a sustainable difference. Our students have gone on to plan maternal health clinics in Ghana, provide clinical services in Afghanistan, train midwives in Haiti, develop collaborations with acute care institutions, and choose PhD topics in global nursing. YSN's continued enthusiasm for expanding global programs and creating leaders who have a clear vision of how best to serve the world's underserved is what makes this exchange unique. We are so grateful for this opportunity to teach and share our work with future leaders in global nursing.