



November 1, 2015

Dear Friends of Batahola,

I returned to the United States last year after spending five years at the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte teaching English, working with the youth, serving as the communications liaison, and coordinating visitors who came to the Center to see for themselves the great work that is being done. But I found that the most powerful part of my time in the community was how I was transformed by the experience and how I found Christ truly present among the staff and students. They were ready and waiting to accompany me on my faith journey. And, I thought I was going there to support and help them!

During my stay in Nicaragua, I witnessed how the harsh realities of poverty and violence fester and spread in a place historically ravaged by war, foreign economic intervention, corruption, and gender-based oppression. I was continually challenged to grow by recognizing that I couldn't solve all the problems, as much as I wanted to. And yet, I was inspired every day by the hope I witnessed at the Center:

Hope in the way a community, forgotten and oppressed, is living with *dignity*, by making themselves seen and heard.

Hope in the women gaining job skills to support their decision to say "Ya basta!" or "Enough!" to the violence in their homes. As one student, Elena, said, "We don't have to live like dogs in the rain in this world."

Hope in the scholarship students who are finding their way to a better life through sustained education.

Hope in the men and women taking literacy classes, overcoming years of silent shame for not being able to read or write.

Hope in the young children filled with pride and joy for playing in their first orchestra concert, displaying their artwork, or performing a native folk dance after months of practice.

It is your prayers and financial commitment that sustain this hope. Because of friends like you, the Center continues to thrive and live out its mission of empowering the marginalized. Every year, the Center reaches out to more than 3,500 students in need. By teaching skills and values that put an end to soul-numbing cycles of poverty and violence, these students' lives are changed forever, and the impact on their families is felt for generations. *None of this would be possible without your support.*

When we look beyond our borders and reach out, we are saying, "**Yes, we see you, we hear you, we join with you in your struggle.**" I care deeply about the Center's staff and students; after all, they have become a part of who I am. So, I'm writing today to ask you to make a



generous donation to send a message of affirmation and love that will allow the Center to continue its life-changing work.

Sincerely,

Amanda Otero
Friend of Batahola

P.S. Your support is more urgent this year than ever, as the Center hopes to continue its gender and generational violence prevention workshops for women like Virginia, whose testimony follows this appeal. Your support is their hope.

Virginia del Socorro Motiel Monge

My name is Virginia del Socorro Motiel Monge. I am 32 years old. I first came to know the Center through my daughter who is taking dance classes here. I want you to know and understand that my life has changed completely since I was invited to participate in the gender violence against women workshops led by psychologists from the Center. Before the workshops, I was timid, and I didn't share my opinion, but now I'm not afraid to say what I think, and I make my own decisions.

For example, I made the decision to enter a cooking class at the Center. I've always loved to cook, but I didn't have much skill. Now that I've completed my class, I've found a job at a restaurant. Before, my husband was the only one who worked. Now, I also work to help support our three children. My husband also participated in the workshops on masculinity and gender, which has helped him support my right to work. My goal is to keep studying. I would love to specialize in international cuisine someday.



Virginia del Socorro Motiel Monge

We're on the Web...

friendsofbatahola.org • bataholavolunteers.wordpress.com • Facebook: Friends of Batahola (English)/Centro Cultural Batahola Norte (Spanish)

Friends of Batahola • P.O. Box 36159 • Cincinnati, OH 45236-0159 • www.friendsofbatahola.org

Friends of Batahola is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing resources for the growth and sustenance of the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte, Managua, Nicaragua.