



FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

RIGHT TO PHYSICAL, MENTAL & MORAL INTEGRITY



Friends of Batahola (English) / Centro Cultural Batahola Norte (Spanish)



friends_of_batahola



www.friendsofbatahola.org



P.O. Box 36159, Cincinnati, OH 45236-0159

Message from the Co-Presidents

"Time Flies!"

How many times have we heard — or said — this cliché? Employees return to work on Monday and wonder, "Where did the weekend go?" Students head back to school and ask, "Where did the summer go?" As we write this, we find ourselves asking, "Where did the last two years go?"

Serving as Co-Presidents these past two years has been an honor. We've been privileged to witness the incredible work of the dedicated staff at the Center up close, as well as Friends of Batahola volunteers and donors.

When we began this journey, we set three goals:

1. Sustain the quality of the FOB Board by recruiting new and younger members.
2. Strengthen the bonds of community and accompaniment between the FOB and the Center.

3. Maintain or increase the FOB financial support of the Center.

We're proud to say we've made significant progress on all three fronts. Our Board continues to impress with their energy and enthusiasm. The Friends-Center connection has been enriched through "Batahola Talks" and exchange visits. Thanks to you — our generous donors — we can continue supporting the Center now and into the future.

Each of you is a true gift to the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte, to the Friends of Batahola, and to us personally. May God bless you all.

Amanda Otero & Dave Stickel



Motivated Children, Supported Children!

A Holistic Path to Educational and Social Development in Batahola Norte

The Motivated and Supported Children project is funded by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and designed to focus on the cognitive and socio-emotional development of 100 children and adolescents participants, by strengthening their skills and abilities through a play-based learning methodology. Through play, children are encouraged to feel, think, and question.

A key part of the initiative is involving families, especially caregivers. Through educational and emotional support sessions, they learn to recognize that it's their job to provide a stable foundation for their children's academic, personal, and emotional growth.

Motivated and Supported Children promotes an interactive educational approach that breaks from

traditional models, bringing families in as fundamental partners in their children's educational and emotional journeys. The program centers on recognizing that education is more than just transmitting knowledge; it's a holistic process that addresses each individual's physical, emotional, and intellectual needs.

Gretchen Martínez, the Scholarships Coordinator, shares, **"We work together with families to prevent dropouts and foster access to the formal education system. We also help families recognize their role as protectors, ensuring the psychosocial and academic development of their children and creating meaningful emotional connections."**

This project is enabling young people, in partnership with their families and community, to build meaningful and transformative lives. This work represents hope — strengthening communities and solidifying children's fundamental right to comprehensive education.



Building Networks of Collective Change

The Batahola Norte Cultural Center is leading the “Weaving My Networks of Change” project, which aims to provide holistic training and community awareness. The goal of this project is for participants to gain knowledge to prevent violence, recognize warning signs of sexual abuse, and learn about the path to justice for women and girls who have been victims of violence.



Beginning in 2024, the first phase of the initiative centered on strengthening individuals, including working on self-esteem, gender, personal goals setting, and recognition of the risk signs of violence. Participants have already shown significant changes.

Social worker Gabriela Zamora shares: “One boy in the workshops I’m leading told me that his biggest change has been that he’s learned not to be mean and share with others.”

The second phase centers on collective action, creating support networks where young people and women are trained to become peer educators on gender-based violence prevention.

“Everyone goes through a training process. I tell them that they’re not going to be alone, because I’ll accompany them. The idea is that they can share what they’ve learned with other women in the neighborhood after completing the workshops,” shares Sofía Romero, a psychologist at the Center.

The project is empowering people to face their reality with resilience and hope.

The Center’s Library Gets a Facelift

Since 1997, the Center has run a community library with the goal of promoting the right to education and culture by allowing young people to access a space that promotes reading, imagination, learning, and socialization in a safe environment.

The library is one of the most significant and symbolic spaces at the Center. It contains around 7,000 books, including Nicaraguan, global, classic, and children’s literature. Each year around 120 children and teens from Batahola and surrounding neighborhoods come to

the library. Activities include storytimes, craft activities, movies, and cooperative games.

This year, thanks to funds from the Immaculate Heart of Mary’s Project Education, the facade of the building was renovated, with the goal of modernizing the library while maintaining its wooden structure. The business Mondo S.A. was contracted to make adjustments to the original design structure, transforming a building full of old memories into an updated, friendly and welcoming space.

This renovation project reflects the collective will of the Batahola community to ensure that this vital library remains a space where education and culture continue to transform lives.



Before



After

Friend of Batahola: Dave Stickel

My journey with Friends of Batahola began as a teacher, while chaperoning students from Saint Ursula High School in Cincinnati on trips to the Batahola Norte Cultural Center in 2014, 2016, and 2017. One of my favorite memories from those trips was dropping in on a student taking a French horn lesson. I was drawn in because I play French horn as well. The student and I ended up taking a lesson and playing several songs together.

When I retired from teaching in 2018, I was asked to join the Board. I’ve been on the Development Committee since I joined. In that capacity, I work with the Center to apply for grants from Foundations to fund special projects. I’ve spent two years as Co-Vice-President with Amanda, and now two years as Co-President with Amanda.

I believe the Center is the most effective organization I’ve ever been involved with that truly changes

lives for the better. How can anybody not want to be part of that?

These days, I am still living in Cincinnati. Now that I am retired, I have lots of time to read, play golf and ping pong, and spend time with my wife, Terry, and our 8 grandchildren.

