



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



friends_of_batahola



www.friendsofbatahola.org



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Message from the Co-Presidents

It's a rainy Spring day — the kind that makes you daydream, “*I wonder what's happening at the Batahola Norte Cultural Center?*” Let's take a look! In the library, preschoolers laugh and listen with wide eyes during story hour, while elementary students craft book reports under tutors' guidance. Nearby, teens hunch over glowing screens, researching science projects.

In the auditorium, a musical ensemble wraps up a rehearsal of Nicaraguan folk songs, while dancers twirl in bright, flowing costumes, perfecting their lively steps. Following the irresistible aroma of baking bread, we step into the kitchen, where baking classes fill the air with warmth and delicious scents.

In classrooms, one group dives into mastering computer software, while another practices English verb conjugations. In the art space, hands move over

canvases, unraveling the mysteries of light, shadow, and perspective. On the patio, Women's Entrepreneurship program graduates chat about branding strategies.

As your daydream deepens, you pause, wondering, “*How is all this possible?*” The answer becomes clear: your donations bring hope. Hope is alive in the laughter, music, aromas, and possibilities filling the Center. Please continue to support the sights, sounds, and tastes of a Spring day at the Center. Please continue to give hope — and happy Spring!

Amanda Otero and Dave Stickel



22 Women Build Economic Sustainability for Their Families and Communities

The Center is committed to championing holistic education, inspiring women of all ages to become the driving force behind personal and community transformation.

In 2024, they started the “Learn and Launch” project, backed by the P&G Alumni Foundation, which empowered 22 women to begin economic initiatives through hands-on training and motivational and technical support.

Most women were between 18 and 60, facing economic hardship, earning less than \$150 monthly and piecing together income through informal work. This reflects a broader challenge highlighted by UN WOMEN's 2024 data: “**1 in 10 women worldwide lives in extreme poverty (10.3%).** At current rates, approximately 8% of the global female population will still be surviving on less than \$2.15 daily by 2030.”

The women completed technical courses in cooking,

pastry-making, cake decoration, beauty, and sewing to gain skills needed for their new ventures. The project also prioritized personal development, helping participants recognize their strengths and develop financial literacy.

By the end of the program, all participants had viable businesses. The entrepreneurs showcased their work at a women's fair called “DREAM, CREATE, LAUNCH,” where they shared their products with the Batahola community.

This project has fostered local economic development, strengthened entrepreneurial spirit, and enhanced the leadership skills of these 22 women entrepreneurs.



What Happens After Retirement?

The Story of Francisca Auxiliadora Guardado Roa, 61 years old

When someone decides to retire, everything changes – it means creating a new way of life. In this article, we share the story of Basic Education teacher Francisca Guardado, who recently retired after fifteen years of teaching.

In 1983, Francisca graduated with a technical degree in accounting from the National School of Commerce. However, the challenges of motherhood led her to dedicate herself full-time to her two children, who later inspired her to pursue a career in teaching.

At 35, she went back to school to study education, a career that allowed her to work part-time and spend afternoons caring for her children. In 2014, she enrolled in the Latin rhythms dance course at the Center, hoping to learn dance techniques to teach her students for school performances.

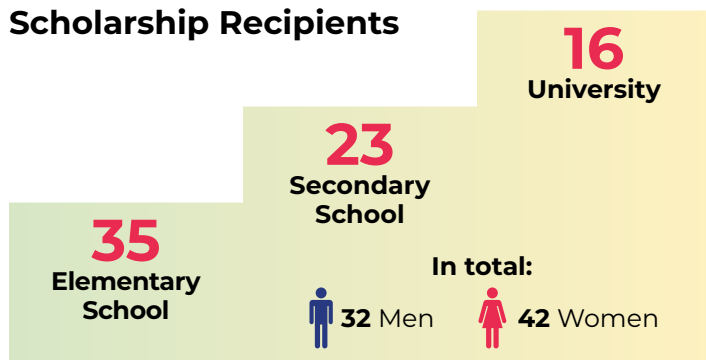
In 2020, she was offered a teaching position in the Center's Basic Education Program, where she supported adults learning to read and write for the first time.



For Francisca, retirement means enjoying her Sundays, sleeping in on Monday afternoons, or dedicating time to cooking. She has learned to accept each stage of her life, and in this new chapter, she's enjoying her time and pursuing her life dreams. She also continues to give back to her community by tutoring neighborhood children.

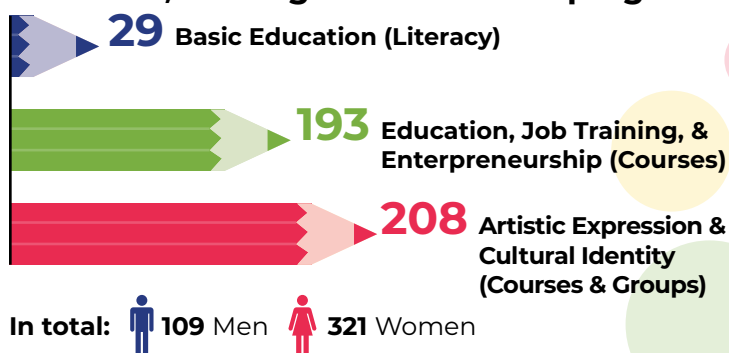
“My eternal gratitude to the Friends of Batahola for their support. Behind each worker at the Cultural Center there is a team of friends supporting our work. What would the Center be without donors? The Friends have been angels sent to protect the Center. May God’s hand and divine protection always accompany them.”

Education Program Scholarship Recipients



Enrollment Process in 2025

Technical, training and vocational program



Friend of Batahola: Kelsey Schrock

I first visited the Center during a 3-month study service term as a Goshen College student. I remember getting excited by the energy I felt there. Though it was a short visit, it was a memorable experience. After graduating, I returned to the Center for a 2-year volunteer term beginning

in 2013, teaching English, living in Batahola, and most importantly accompanying staff and students at the Center. Being immersed in a new culture, community and language was a transformative experience. I learned so much about myself and the importance of holistic community-centered development.

I got involved with the Friends when I became the newsletter editor. Later, I was asked to join the board and got involved with the communications committee.

Last year, I became the committee co-chair. I enjoy staying engaged with the Friends and the Center by thinking about creative ways to communicate their impactful work.

I currently live in Tucson, Arizona where I moved after living in Nicaragua for 8 years. I work at GRID Alternatives. We are ensuring a just transition to clean energy by working with communities that need it the most. In fact, a few years ago our organization was able to install solar on the Center which was a full circle moment for me.