

Friends of Batahola



Marching Into 2018 with Goals and Plans for the Future

The Center rang in 2018 with exciting plans for the future. Every department and employee has goals, and all are marching into the year with their eyes on the horizon. Here are some of their dreams:

- "I plan to recruit 160 men to learn about Gender-Based Violence." —Marvin Cajina, Gender-Based Violence Prevention Psychologist
- "I plan to improve our accounting processes." —Gleris Ruiz, Center Accountant
- "I want to see my students constantly progressing, which is the greatest satisfaction for a teacher." —Daysi Álvarez, Sewing Teacher

(Continued on page 2)



Claudia Mercado (front row, far left) and Mora Garcia (back row, second left) are working to take the Art and Culture program at the Center to even greater heights in 2018.

Message from the President



Dear Friends,

In this issue, you will read about a determined cosmetology student who turned a dream into reality through the Center, a devoted music teacher who had an idea to foster music learning for the young teens who play at the Center's Mass every

Sunday, a new volunteer who is inspired by the Center and the community it serves, energetic students and staff at the Center who worked hard on a successful fundraiser, and the forward-looking staff at the Center sharing their goals and dreams for 2018. The connection to all of these is the Center. Each story is different yet very much the same. Each individual has been helped, lifted up, or inspired by their connection to the Center, through the great, life-changing work it does educating and empowering all.

One final thought and a challenge for 2018...without your generous support our work and the work of the Center can't continue, so please consider a donation, understanding that no gift is too small, and your generosity is greatly appreciated. What else can you do? We need to grow the number of people who know about and support the Center. Share this newsletter, visit our web site, like us on Facebook, share our Facebook posts, and tell your friends about us. Thank you, and here's to a great 2018 working together!

Blessings,
Mark Overley

**Save paper costs, receive the newsletter online!
Go to friendsofbatahola.org, click About Us/FOB Newsletter. Scroll to bottom of page to add your email address.**

Mission Statement

Friends of Batahola supports, sustains, and promotes the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte in Managua, Nicaragua, through prayer, financial assistance, solidarity, and building community, thereby responding to the call of the Gospel.

2018 Goals and Plans (continued)

- "I plan to keep all of our scholarship students excelling in school."
—Gretchen Martínez, Scholarship Program Coordinator
- "I want to take a class to learn more about customer service, in order to better myself and my work performance."
—Lizeth Velasquez, Receptionist
- "We will bring about Art and Culture's New Dawn."
—Claudia Mercado and Mora Garcia, Manager and Coordinator of the Arts and Culture department, respectively.



Daysi Álvarez, Salom Rueda, Daisy Osorio, and Maria Antonia Centeno, teachers at the Center, encourage prospective students to register for 2018 classes.

Newest FOB Volunteer



Hello! My name is Teresa Fuller, and I will be volunteering at the Center for a year. I'm with the Mennonite Central Committee SALT program, an organization that sends young people around the world for a year of service and learning. I'm from Vancouver, Canada, and was recently graduated from college with a BA in Justice Studies. I started my work

at the Center volunteering in the library, helping children with reading and playing educational games.

I'm so thankful for the opportunity to get to know this amazing Center! Being here makes me feel hopeful for the surrounding community and for the difference the staff is making in the lives of everyone who comes in contact with the Center.

How You Can Help

If you'd like to contribute to the ongoing mission of the Center, please make a donation today in the enclosed reply envelope. Our students need your support. Thank you!

Friends of Batahola is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. 97% of all donations go directly to the work of the Center.

Students and Staff Organize Annual Fundraiser

By Kelsey Overley, FOB Volunteer

The entire Center came together recently to put on its annual Kermes Fair fundraiser, netting an impressive \$1,650! Many of the Center's cooking students worked hard to prepare 17 delicious dishes and drinks. The cosmetology students used their skills to straighten, cut, and curl hair. The natural medicine students gave massages and sold homemade oils, creams, and incense.

This year, the fair also included music and a danceathon organized by the Center's dance instructor, Karla Zamora, who led participants in the Zumba, Salsa and other fun dances.

An estimated 1,600 people attended the fundraiser. Proceeds will be used to fund projects for students at the Center.



The New Dawn dance group strikes a pose after finishing its performance at the fundraiser.



Beloved music teacher, Nineth Larios, serves up tacos with a smile during the fundraiser.



Young dance students perform Son de Toro with pride at the fundraiser.



A local band donated its talent to help raise money.

Our Devoted Nineth Takes Young Musicians under her Wing

This is a beautiful story on so many levels, as it truly reflects the spirit of dedication and selflessness that is so alive at the Center. It's about a devoted music teacher who offers extra classes to young teens at no cost. And, it's about faith-filled young teens who are on the Mass team at the Center. In return for their dedication, they receive even more than they give. And all of it circles back to Fr. Ángel, one of the Center's co-founders, now deceased.

The story begins with music teacher Nineth Larios. "I came to the Center when I was seven. By the time I was 10, I already knew how to play five instruments," Nineth said, recalling her early days at the Center and Father Ángel's generosity with his knowledge as her music teacher. Last year, seeing former students whose dedication and excitement about music reminded her of her young self, she decided to replicate Father Ángel's spirit for them.



The guitar and marimba group visit the National Plaza, after participating in a guitar workshop at the National Palace in Managua.

"These are the students who come to every Mass to play music," Nineth explained, "They all want to keep learning, and I want to incentivize them to stay on our Mass team."

Nineth gathered together the young adolescents last February and began a guitar and marimba group, offering extra classes free of cost. A year later, they now not only play at all of the Masses, but at cultural events all around Managua. Each student can play at least two instruments with the goal to learn five. The goal is both individual and collective: If one student knows more than another, he or she teaches the student that needs help.

"For me, the more instruments a child learns, the better. They have so much energy, and I'd much prefer that they invest that energy here, safely, at the Center," Nineth said.

You can watch the group's performances on YouTube.



Nineth Larios and the student guitar and marimba group

We Hate to Beg, But...

It's 2018, and we still don't have many of your email addresses. That makes us sad. 😞 We'd love to send you the newsletter online, saving us paper, printing, and postage costs. That would make us happy. 😊 Because we're a not-for-profit, every penny makes a difference. To make it easy, we've included a reply card in this newsletter, so you can send off your email address to us. Please don't throw the card away. Send it back to us in the envelope provided. Thank you!

P.S. Of course, you can also go to friendsofbathola.org and click About Us/FOB Newsletter. Then, scroll to the bottom of the page to add your email address.

READ MORE Online

friendsofbathola.org/newsletter/winter-2018.

- James Johnson and Judy Doyle of Strings 'n Things have been helping the Center with its music program since the '90's. They are our featured "Friends" this issue. You can read their inspiring story online.
- We love our volunteers and value the work they do to further the mission of the Center. We have a great reunion photo to share online of past Friends of Batahola volunteers.
- Students and chaperones share their impressions of the Center after visiting. One writes, "It was not just a trip...it was a blessed journey led by God to help me understand the true meaning of peace and kindness." Read the powerful experiences of others online.
- See how you can help us achieve our goals and mission: *7 Ways You Can Help the Center*.

Donate Now

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

Contact Us

friendsofbatahola.org
bataholavolunteers.wordpress.com

Email

president@friendsofbatahola.org
secretary@friendsofbatahola.org
treasurer@friendsofbatahola.org
info@friendsofbatahola.org



Like us on
Facebook

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

Information in Nicaragua

Sonia Oliveras
General Coordinator
sonia@centrobatahola.org
011-505-2266-7737

Newsletter Volunteers

Editor: Mary Pommert
mwppommert@aol.com

Layout: Photonics Inc.
photonics-inc.com

2364 Heather Hill Blvd., N.
Cincinnati, OH 45244

PRESORT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
CINCINNATI OH
PERMIT NO 1294

Board of Directors

President

Mark Overley

Honorary President

Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

Honorary Vice President

Sr. Sandra Blanchard, CSJ

Secretary

Jeannine Blatt

Corresponding Secretary

Sue Keefe

Treasurer

Andi Newton

Board Members

Pat Berning
Richard Gruber
Michael Keefe
Nancy Kleespies
Amanda Otero
Mary O'Toole
Tony Perazzo
Rebekah Sapato
Virginia Serio
Anna VanHaverbeke

Student Success Story: Fatima del Socorro Gonzalez Castillo

When anyone in the Batahola Norte neighborhood needs a haircut or color, they know who to call: Fatima! Fatima's home business began with a dream that started at the Center. She didn't have many options available to her, having only finished elementary school. But when a friend who was studying basic adult education at the

Center told her about its programs, Fatima decided to investigate.

After being approved for a scholarship, Fatima enrolled in a cosmetology class. She wanted a skill that would lead to a job where she could be her own boss, have a flexible schedule so she could care for her son, and earn an income. The class schedule was perfect. She could drop off her son at the school next door to the Center, attend class, and finish on time to pick him up.

"I'm grateful for the Center's mission," Fatima said, "I saw that it supported women who were mothers and women who maybe had never had a chance to finish their studies. The Center helps women continue moving forward with their lives."



Fatima (far right) and her peers participate at the Center's vocational fair