

RIGHT TO PHYSICAL, MENTAL & MORAL INTEGRITY



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



friends_of_batahola



www.friendsofbatahola.org



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Message from the Co-Presidents

As Mary and I begin our service, we are humbled by the job of our predecessors, Pat Berning and Sue Keefe, and will do our very best to lead the Friends of Batahola as well as they have.

I live in Cincinnati with my wife Dianna and we have two daughters, Clare and Kate. I visited the Center in 2014 and again in 2016 with my daughters and have been involved with the Friends ever since. I am a partner in the CPA firm, BKD, LLP.

Mary also lives in Cincinnati. She is married to Peter and they have three children, Joe, Brian and Mary Ellen. Mary has served on the Board for many years

and knows from conversations with her daughter, who visited the Center in 2015, what a special place the Center is. Mary is a senior investment consultant with Diastole Wealth Management.

While neither of us met Sr. Margie or Fr. Angel, we know through their successors the power of their service to the most vulnerable of Managua. We look forward to our next two years giving support to the Center so they can continue their work developing art, cultural and educational opportunities. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Center.

Tony Perazzo & Mary O'Toole

A Life Free of Violence

The Center's strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence includes a cycle of workshops for 15 women from the Acahualinca neighborhood. The training allows women to gain skills in emotional management and the ability to identify violent situations, so they can assist other women in crisis.



"I have been helping other women for many years, as others helped me before, so it never felt forced. On the contrary, I am committed to supporting other women that are in the same situation that I was."



"Through my knowledge and experience I can help other women who want to come out of the cycle of violence and accompany them during the process, it is definitely gratifying."

Once they complete this series of workshops, graduates may go on to become legal facilitators in their community. The women who complete the program will have information on laws that protect their constitutional rights to a life free of violence.

A special thanks to Ileana Zúniga and Cándida Martínez

The Center family and Friends of Batahola would like to sincerely thank Ileana Zúniga and Cándida Martínez for their professional and spiritual accompaniment during this 38-year trajectory of serving the community. They leave behind so many rich experiences and stories in every corner of the Center. They were always walking

side by side to guide the Center in times of sadness and joy.

Thank you to both Ileana and Cándida for teaching us to share and keep alive Angel and Margarita's legacy.



Success Story: Abraham Pineda



Some young people invited Abraham Pineda to participate in an informative meeting in the Acahualinca neighborhood, and from that moment on, he has been actively participating in the Integrity Program.

According to Mr. Pineda, the divorce process with the mother of his son marked his life. This event was a difficult time to process emotionally and made him question his male privilege.

Participating in the masculinity workshops has allowed him to heal his emotions and not to hold onto grudges or negative thoughts in relation to the decision made by his ex-partner to separate.

“These workshops have helped me remove a huge burden in my life. I thought I was going to solve all my problems through abuse and cursing...but thanks to God I have learned my lesson and I don’t need to mistreat anyone. The changes I have achieved are radical.”

Likewise, he recognizes that men are burdened with machismo from childhood. He now practices assertive communication with his 9-year-old son. Mr. Pineda claims that a good relationship with your child should be based on respect and affection.

“I invite all men to free themselves of machismo because through mistreatment we will never do something good; violence only begets more violence.”

Starting a Business to Grow

A typical day for Ana Cano begins at 4 am with the housework, helping her 11-year daughter get ready for school and preparing special shakes for her son diagnosed with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome. She also prepares three big buckets of natural juice to sell at the local market.

Currently Nicaragua has a very high rate of unemployment and in most of the Nicaraguan families there is only one breadwinner. This means, women are always in charge of the housework and taking care of their relatives without the opportunity to get formal loans to start a small business.

For this reason, the Center started an entrepreneurship

program to provide women with loans and professional mentorship to launch their own business.

As part of this program Ana Cano was granted with \$500 to start her sausage, meat and natural juice business.



“An advantage of having my own business is that I can manage my own time. This business is a huge support for my family because before only my husband earned an income. Now being my own boss and having money in my hands, makes me feel empowered.”

Friend of Batahola: Kurt Nicaise

My connection to the Center began with Gerardo, the Center’s art teacher. He came to be an artist in residence at St. Ursula Academy where I teach art. Getting to know Gerardo helped me put my heart into the work that is happening in Batahola. I have created a few different reciprocal art pieces for the Center and traveled there to install them. I also regularly collect art supplies to send to Gerardo for his students and I’m a member of

the Communications Committee for the Friends of Batahola.

I have been teaching for 15 years and I am a true believer in experiential, hands-on learning which is very much aligned with the Center’s work. St. Ursula also provides this type of learning through immersion trips which in the past have involved trips to the Center. Traveling outside your home area to a place beyond your

borders brings so much perspective to life in so many positive ways. I feel very lucky to be a part of these experiences and I hope St. Ursula students can continue coming to the Center in the future. I’m constantly amazed by the magnitude of programs the Center offers and the passion, creativity and love that the teachers dedicate to their students.