



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



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www.friendsofbatahola.org



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Message from the Co-Presidents

Forty years! This issue of the Friends of Batahola newsletter is a celebration of the dedication, love, and fellowship of the founders, administration and staff members of the Center. It is a celebration of the thousands of children, adolescents and adults who have placed trust in the Center to provide education and support when they needed it most.

On September 24, 2023, we hosted a beautiful online celebration, Forty years Accompanying Communities, hosted by FOB Board Member Joe Connelly and Center staff member Claudia Mercado. For those who have been associated with the Center for a long time, it brought back some wonderful memories, and maybe a few tears. For those with less history, it provides an excellent perspective of the grit and hard work it took to bring the Center to the

beautiful place it is today. If you weren't able to attend (or would like to go back to watch again!), you can watch here:



We are so grateful to all who support the Center through your generous donations, prayers and support. The needs of the Center are more than ever. We ask for your continued generosity, prayers and support as we enter the next forty years of service to the people of Batahola Norte.

Mary O'Toole & Tony Perazzo



Celebrating 40 Years of Service

This year, the Center celebrates 40 years of personal transformation and comprehensive community development of the Batahola Norte neighborhood.

In these 40 years, the organization has positioned itself as a safe and protective environment for Nicaraguan families. We have been able to accompany thousands of young people to complete their college degrees and children and adolescents to find a space for healthy recreation through a community library and artistic training.

The staff celebrated collectively with two recreational



activities, hiking in San Marcos and being able to enjoy a visit to the beach. In both spaces, employees managed to take a break and embrace hope.

Janeth Báez, representative of the Management team, shares with us how these spaces have allowed us to strengthen the links between staff in order to sustain institutional work:

"I am grateful for the open arms that welcomed me 14 years ago, I am grateful for all the training I received at the Center for my personal and professional growth and I am grateful to be part of this labor of love for the training and transformation of other women."

The Center family in Nicaragua appreciates all the support received from our Friends of Batahola, thank you for every prayer, message and call to feel that we are not alone.



Keeping our Community Vibrant and Joyful

The hallways are full of young people running around among the sounds of violins, guitars and flutes, because it is the day to celebrate the 40th birthday of the Batahola Norte Cultural Center. This place has instilled several generations with education, purpose and faith in the heart of Managua.

“In thinking of what we wanted to do for the 40th anniversary, we decided to emphasize gratitude by having a big birthday party! We are celebrating the legacy of the founders by focusing on the present: keeping our community vibrant and joyful!”

—Mora García, Art Coordinator

The repertoire of the festival was carried out by the three main art groups, the Nuevo Amanecer dance



group, the Margarita Navarro ensemble and the Ángel Torrellas choir. Their performances were a tribute to the cultural and artistic expression that Father Ángel and Sister Margarita kept alive.



Along with music and dance, the celebration also honored all of the women who are part of the collective memory of this community and have contributed to the growth and transformation of the Center over the years.



“These 40 years have been full of progress in teaching and learning. I am grateful for the love and commitment Father Angel and Sister Margarita showed to the youth of this community, which in turn has fortified their commitment to keeping the culture of this country alive.”

—Daysi Alvares Vargas, former teacher

Words of Thanks

I thank all the people who have accompanied us in these 40 years of service. The journey through the history of the Center is a way to celebrate and remember the cultural and religious roots of the Center and Nicaragua. Listening every afternoon to the musical rehearsals of the children and adolescents performing the Nicaraguan Peasant's Mass,

the Salvadoran Popular Mass and the traditional Nicaraguan folk music root us to our identity and the diversity of the Nicaraguan people.

On March 3, 1983, Father Ángel Torrellas and Sister Margarita arrived at the community of Batahola,

visiting around 800 houses to meet with the families of the neighborhood, identify their needs and contribute to community development through spiritual accompaniment, from knowing a closer and more just God.

Margarita, with that beautiful smile always willing to share out of love, created spaces for women to learn. Ángel began to carry out the first catechesis in the neighborhood and, committed to music, he began to teach hundreds of children and adolescents until forming the Batahola Children's Choir.

Ángel and Margarita accompanied the personal and community development of the people of a Batahola Norte neighborhood, but they also accompanied all of Nicaragua in the search for a New Dawn. Ángel and Margarita's legacy lives on. What they have planted has multiplied. We are proud, RESILIENT, and grateful each day for being here.

Happy 40th Anniversary!

Sonia Olivares, General Coordinator of the Center

