



wavesofhope

A non-profit community development program in Nicaragua

Background

The Waves of Hope story begins with three close friends who studied together at the University of Ottawa, and in 2005 decided to reconnect on a backpacking adventure across Central America. This trip brought about the dream of opening a small eco-friendly beach resort in Nicaragua that would focus on projects that benefit the local community. In November 2007, we came across the small beach-side town of El Manzano #1 and felt right away that there was something special about this town.

A couple of years later, on July 23, 2009 Waves of Hope was founded in Toronto, Canada with the mission of improving the quality of life in our community through strengthening local education, health, and infrastructure. Early donations came from friends and family to support this new venture, which provided over \$13k in donations over that first summer season.

Initial meetings were held within the community to discuss how best to utilize the donated funds and the initial projects were identified.

On December 31, 2009, the other half of our dream was realized as Coco Loco Resort celebrated its grand opening. Today, Coco Loco plays an important role in the relationship between Waves of Hope and the local community by acting as a vehicle for employment and opportunity; by hosting guests and social tourism based groups that bring funding, ideas and awareness to the community; and by providing a community center for the local youth to come and enjoy.

In early 2013, Waves of Hope welcomed a fourth partner to the management team and over the past seven years approximately \$400,000 has been raised and invested into the local community through various projects and initiatives.

Our Vision: Educated, healthy and prosperous communities.

Our mission: To improve the quality of life in our community through strengthening local education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The Community of Manzano #1

Waves of Hope is located in a small community named El Manzano #1. Our community is located about 35 minutes northwest of Chinandega, in the El Viejo region.

The population of El Manzano #1 is comprised of approximately thirty-six families and just over two hundred residents. Many extended families live together so it is not uncommon to have ten or more people living together in one home. A few families have running water but most just have a hand dug well with a bucket system.

Most families subsist on a basic diet of rice, beans, tortillas and eggs; however, many suffer from malnutrition due to a lack of money to buy these basic provisions or other nutritional foods such as fruits and vegetables.

The local school is at the heart of El Manzano #1. It serves as a primary school for the community (preschool and grades 1-6) but it is here that many important social and town gatherings take place. This year we have 70 children attending classes daily.

Before Waves of Hope there was no full time high school in the area, but students did have the opportunity to attend high school classes once a week on Sundays at the elementary school. In January 2014, Waves of Hope completed the construction of a local high school and has now over 240 students attending classes daily.

Our partner resort, Coco Loco Eco-Resort is the main source of employment within the community. Coco Loco currently employs 27 locals full time and also supports over 13 additional women through jewelry programs and spa clubs in addition to many others who are employed through our various projects at the resort and around the community. Others work in fishing and some seasonally in agriculture. A major goal of Waves of Hope is to support education and increase employment and income generation in these surrounding communities for generations to come.

Waves of Hope Major Projects to Date

1. Building a local high school

In partnership with Surf for Life (a US based NGO) and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education, Waves of Hope broke ground on the construction of a high school in January 2013. We completed the construction in late January 2014 and opened the school just a few weeks after in February 2014.

Last year in 2016, we received word from the school board that we would be facing a problem of over-enrolment at the school with over 240 students registered for the 2017 school year. We began a fundraising campaign and with the incredible support of the Toronto based non-profit, Artbound, we started construction on 2 more classrooms in Dec 2016, which were completed for the new school year in Feb 2017. The high school now has 10 classrooms plus a library, computer lab and teachers room, and has had great success in the community since opening the doors in January 2014, with approximately 250 students now attending daily classes. The total construction cost on the project to date is approximately \$175,000 USD.

Additional highlights include:

- A government accredited 5 year high school education program
- EFL (English learning) classes for children, youth & adults
- A multifaceted arts program providing classes in visual arts, music and dance
- A performance stage

We are currently in the planning stages of constructing a multifunctional sports court at the high school!



Breaking ground on the additional classrooms built in 2016 to accommodate a continuously increasing student enrollment



High school students getting ready to kick off a new year of learning

2. Fransisco Laguna School

Francisco Laguna is a small town of about 70 families that is located about 3 kilometres from our community. It is, sadly, amongst the poorest towns in our area. There is very little employment and most families are forced to grind out a very tough life. Despite these challenges, a few years ago they pushed hard to persuade the government to provide teachers for an elementary school if the community agreed to build the structure. They did what they could and built a simple structure that was shared among 120 pre-school through grade 6 students attending classes daily. The problem was that the school is little more than some posts, a tin-roof and barely a wall or two — no floors, no power, no walls and very few supplies. They had one blackboard about the size of a small dinner table and only about 60 desks. Half the students sat either on the floor or on benches.

We broke ground on the school in March 2014 and opened the doors in June 2014 with currently over 170 students attending classes daily.



Francisco Laguna elementary school before the Waves of Hope reconstruction project



Small gardening project outside the completed Fransisco Laguna reconstruction project



Students outside the school enjoying a musical performance from volunteers

3. Clean Water Initiative

Many families within our community and our neighboring communities do not have access to clean water. Each family home typically has a hand dug well. Some of these provide a decent quantity of water but the majority of them run dry with a month or two before the rainy season. However, this often causes a secondary and, in many cases, much larger issue: the contamination of the wells with both human and livestock waste. This leads to a variety of serious stomach and health ailments often causing sickness and severe weight-loss and in some of the worst cases even death.

In May 2015 we drilled 180ft deep water well that tapped into the Leon-Chinandega aquifer that rests well below us. We then installed a large water tank for the community and ran high-pressure water pipes to each home in the community. The tap was turned on in December 2015 and the water project is now providing the community with clean fresh water!



Members of the community rallying together with Waves of Hope to lay the water pipes



Surf for life volunteers working hard alongside volunteers from the local community to complete the water pipe trenches

4. School Rehabilitation and Resource Support – Manzano #1 Pre-School

We often speak about Building the Culture of Education at Waves of Hope, but we also realize that we need to provide students and teachers with the proper facilities and resources in order to be able to provide a proper education.

Our school rehab program began with our local elementary in El Manzano #1. When we first arrived we found a school that had been built by a very large US NGO, but we use the term ‘built’ loosely. The school had no doors, no windows, no power, no water and no resources. Over the past four years we have provided all of this and more — adding on a second classroom for grades 4-6 and clean bathrooms. Attendance has risen from 27 to 77 students during this time and our students are thriving! In early 2016 we worked with service groups to completely re-renovate the elementary school with new floors, improved irrigation, improved bathrooms, new paint and refurbished desks and furniture.



New desks ready for class in the newly refinished Manzano #1 elementary school



Students and volunteers outside of the new classroom block at Manzano #1 school

5. School Rehabilitation and Resource Support - Manzano #2 Elementary School

The Manzano #2 elementary school is in horrible condition and with over 120 students attending classes is in desperate need of renovations to ensure a clean, comfortable and most importantly safe learning environment.

The school was originally built over 30 years ago and has not been well maintained. There has been significant corrosion from the proximity to the ocean and the roof had many holes that leaked water throughout the wet season and the structure was no longer considered stable and is not safe for students and teachers. The toilet facilities were unsafe and unsanitary and needed to be replaced with a septic system build on the school grounds.

The project was successfully completed in March 2018, with a new roof, walkways, windows and doors, fresh paint, new desks and school supplies, and new washrooms and septic. Total budget?? The school looks and feels like new and the kids studying there couldn't be happier in their new learning environment.



Elementary students in the old classrooms at Manzano # 2 elementary school



Elementary students in the new classrooms taken in March, 2018



Completed of two of the three completed classrooms

6. Manzano #2 Pre-School

The old pre-school was in a state of disrepair and lacked a floor. During the rainy season a current would form and flood the pre-school after each hard rain causing the frequent cancellation of classes. Thanks to the work and generosity of Surf for Life volunteers, GWU Alternative Breaks students, our own Waves of Hope team and all the generous donors, the El Manzano community now has a safe school for the children. Here is an excerpt from an interview with Silvia, the Preschool Teacher: “Before, the preschool was like a storage room. The dirt floor was horrible, especially when it rained. Now I feel better because the school is in really good condition and the children feel better too. I was so afraid that the roof was going to fall in on us. Now we are so happy! ” – Silvia Medrano, Manzano Preschool Teacher



Opening of the new school building with the old structure in the foreground

7. Scholarship Program

In December 2016, Waves of Hope was proud to see the first graduating class at the Waves of Hope high school in Manzanillo. To see these 15 students proudly walk up on stage and receive their graduation certificate was an incredible experience for all of us, which is why we wanted to continue their education support through a post-secondary scholarship program. Each student who is going on to university in Nicaragua is receiving a \$40 / month scholarship to help make post-secondary education more accessible for those who are struggling to afford it. The scholarship helps to cover registration fees, materials and monthly tuition costs. Most of our students study once-a-week in private academic institutes. These are intensive programs held for 6 hours each Sunday. Courses include English, mathematics, agriculture, tourism administration, medicine, pharmaceuticals and computer administration.

Each month our students visit us at El Coco Loco to discuss their progress and any challenges they are facing. English students are also required to attend our free community EFL classes and are also encouraged to come to El Coco Loco and practice their English with us and our guests. Recipients are also required to help out with our ongoing initiatives, including our literacy and tutoring programs.

So far we have committed these programs to 14 of the 15 from the 2016 graduating class who are now entering year two of post-secondary education. We are evaluating applications from the 2017 graduating class and will be supporting as many as possible moving forward. We are proud to see our scholarship students studying hard and realizing their dreams. We will be continuing to find donors to help support future graduates that meet a grade criterion to be eligible for the Waves of Hope scholarship program.



The first graduating class from the Waves of Hope High School enjoying a celebration dinner at Coco Loco Resort

8. Sea Turtle Conservation Project

Coco Loco beach, like many others in northern Nicaragua, is a turtle hatching area for Olive Ridley Sea Turtles. They begin arriving in late May and continue coming until early November. Most nights you will find at least one female making its trek up the beach to lay its eggs. Unfortunately egg poaching has had a significant impact on the populations of these turtles, and with poverty so prevalent in this area it was showing no signs of letting up. Although we didn't agree with the practice, we also understood that these poachers used the eggs and the revenue derived from them as a source of livelihood.

Our conservation model is quite simple; we pay a stipend to the poachers (turned 'conservationists') that is less than but almost equal to the price for which they can sell the eggs in the market. The cost to us is \$1.25 USD per dozen turtle eggs. We also pay a bonus equal to 5 cents for each egg hatched. Jaime is a local who manages the hatchery project and has since trained the other poachers on proper handling techniques.

We have now hatched and released over 27,000 turtles!



The Waves of Hope sea turtle hatchery under construction



Freshly hatched baby turtles heading towards the ocean



The final stretch until the open ocean

9. Vocational Training

Over the past 5 years Waves of Hope interns have mentored and trained over 13 women from our community in the arts of jewelry making, manicures & pedicures and massage therapy. We are very pleased to report that all of these trainings have successfully helped to transform the lives of these women, creating incomes and helping to support families. Our Jewelry Club, named Artesianias Del Mar, now includes 11 women who produce high quality jewelry from local materials, many of which are found locally on our own beautiful beaches. The ladies began selling their jewelry at El Coco Loco Resort but have successfully expanded into other resorts across Nicaragua and even into some shops in the closest major city, Chinandega.



Local women of the Artesians Del Mar jewelry club



Massage training sessions at the Coco Loco Resort massage studio

10. Youth Programs

Waves of Hope provides a variety of youth programming for elementary school students and young adults in our community. Our programs include:

- Kids Club – A program focused on engaging children and youth through sporting games, arts & crafts and various other activities
- Literacy & Tutoring Program – Founded by our scholarship students, this literacy focused program features young local adults who are giving back by mentoring and helping to educate the local children and youth
- EFL Classes – Waves of Hope interns offer English language classes to local children, youth and young adults three days per week



Kids club arts and crafts day at Coco Loco Resort

11. Arts Programs

Introducing an arts program into the school system in our surrounding area has been a dream of Waves of Hope since we first broke ground at the high school in 2013. All forms of art are deeply ingrained in the Nicaraguan culture from dance to music to various methods of visual arts. Unfortunately with an underfunded education program comes little to no school programs focused on the arts.

In November, 2016, Waves of Hope began a partnership with Canadian based non-profit Artbound, to help finance and implement arts programs here at the Waves of Hope high school. With Artbound's support we have introduced a three-part arts program that has been running classes twice a week for music, visual arts and dance based out of the local high school classroom facilities. We sourced teachers specializing in these three arts from local communities and from the nearest city, Chinandega. These programs have been a

great success since their inception in late 2016, and are continuing to nurture the many creative minds in the surrounding communities.

We strongly feel that the successful implementation of a long-term sustainable arts program will no doubt have profound impact on future generations. After witnessing the positive changes that the introduction of surfing had on the youth culture here, it became clear to us that encouraging and facilitating extracurricular activities in poor rural areas can create something important for the youth on which to focus their energy and creativity. This can have a significant positive impact on the individual development and the lasting social dynamics of a community as a whole.



Getting into the guitar basics during music class at the Waves of Hope High School



Renowned Nicaraguan Artist, Salvador, leading the visual arts classes

Upcoming projects for 2018

1. Year two of the Artbound sponsored arts programs

With the welcome return to Nicaragua of Artbound this December 2017 we plan to continue another year of success with the High School arts programs. Additional funding will go towards teachers' salaries, visual arts supplies, dance class equipment and transportation for dance rehearsals and performances.

For this coming year we plan to open additional arts classes at the Manzano #1 elementary school that are focused on the younger artists.

We are forever grateful to our continued partnership with Artbound and their support towards this important education focused initiative!



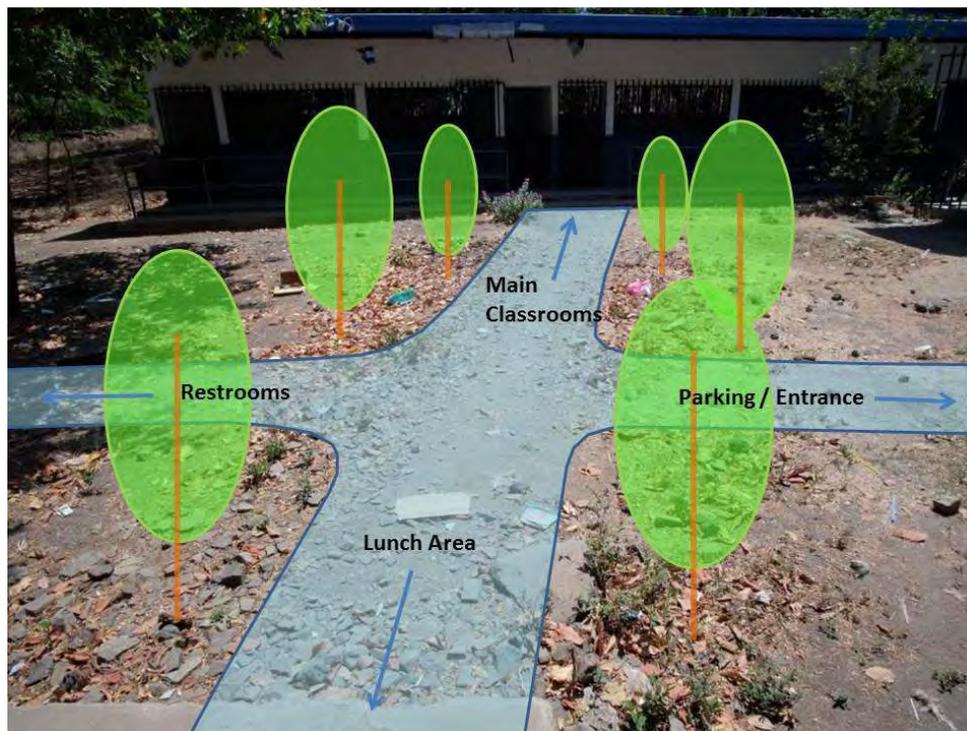
Artbound volunteers hosting community children for visual arts and creativity sessions at Coco Loco Resort

2. Waves of Hope High School Improvement Project

This is a two part budget and proposal that outlines prioritized work necessary for the Manzanillo High School, completed in 2013 through the collaboration of Surf for Life and Waves of Hope. Although functional, the school necessitates a number of improvements such as walkways, stairs, bathroom facilities, garbage facilities and outdoor space.

Phase one of this project is proposing to build walkways in high traffic areas where there is currently only dirt that is dry and dusty in the dry season and muddy in the wet season.

The toilets in back are in need of repair and painting, while the main footway area could really use some walkways, planting and repair.



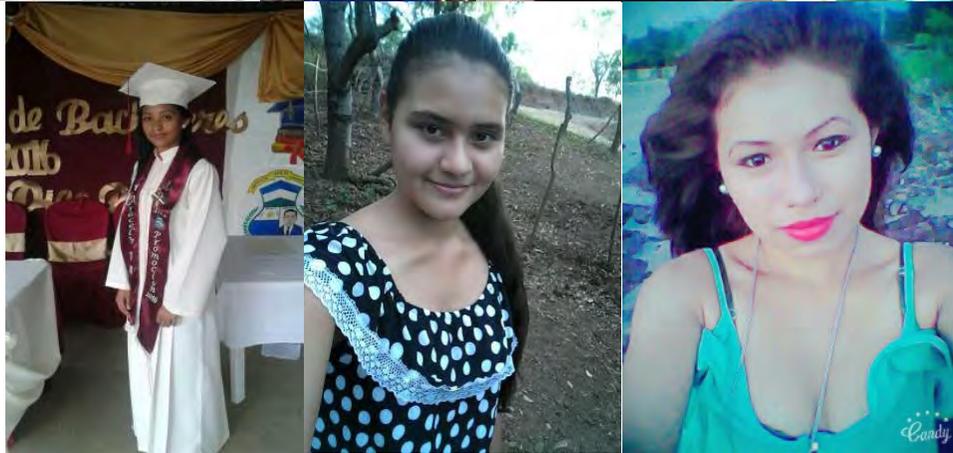
Conceptual plan of some of the proposed walkways and planting

The second phase of the Manzanillo High School improvement project is a proposal to construct an outdoor plaza seating area. As most of the school grounds is open dirt, the majority of the outdoor areas are dusty in dry season and muddy in the wet season. We hope that by constructing an outdoor area using the same blocks as the walkways we will be able to reduce the amount of mud and dirt that is tracked throughout the school and provide an aesthetically appealing area for social congregation, studying and lunch breaks. The trees in this part of the school provide a natural shaded area that is currently not being utilized.

2. Continued scholarship support for Waves of Hope High School graduates

This graduating year Waves of Hope will commence another round of scholarships for eligible students from the 2017 graduating class. The students will have to meet a certain grade criteria and be attending post-secondary education to be eligible for the \$40 USD / month scholarship fund.

The 2016 graduating class from the Waves of Hope High School



On behalf of our community and Waves of Hope, we are grateful for all the support in helping to bring this dream to a reality!

