

IN THIS ISSUE

See what's in store for 2006!

Read about Kathy's January & February trip at www.EmpowermentInternationalkathy.blogspot.com



Trosanna Kingston from Give a kid a Backpack Foundation

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love."
- Mother Teresa



Kathy Adams with long time beneficiary

Year in Review

Without a doubt, 2005 has been the most successful and amazing year ever for Empowerment International. In 1998, we started with just 8 children. By 2005 we had over 50 volunteers spanning all three countries assisting with a variety of assignments and time spans. Many hearts have been directly touched by 'our' children.

After a year of laying down the groundwork in 2004, we successfully placed 76 children in school in Nicaragua in 2005. Meanwhile 99 children were placed in school in 2005 in Costa Rica for a grand total of 175 in both countries.

This year (2006 school year begins in Central America in February), we were able to place a total of 286 children in school in both countries! This new high-water mark for Empowerment International would not have been possible without your support, as well as the generous collaboration with the Give a Kid a Backpack Foundation.



Our 2nd annual Fiesta de Esperanza FUNdraising event was a GREAT success. Guests raved about the event in the days after. We had great sponsors, attendees and volunteers. Gorgeous Nicaraguan pottery was auctioned. Delicious cuisine got rave reviews thanks to generous donations from Cilantro Mary's, Canyon Café, and Q'doba and we had the tastiest 'postres' thanks to Bloom.

Many of the event participants took full advantage of the salsa lessons and practiced with live music by Senor Gato. We are shifting our annual event to a September weekend so stay tuned!

As a new way to know EI and Nicaragua, we are offering a unique tour that will be sure to leave your hearts warm long after you return home from the Nicaraguan sun. (See our website for more info). Our Board of Directors and volunteer staff continue to grow with extremely talented, passionate, and motivated individuals. We look forward to a new year of deepening our roots in Nicaragua and continuing our efforts in Costa Rica and strengthening our overall programs. As always, without YOU we could not make the gift of education to these children. Thank you from all of us at Empowerment International.

Sincerely,

Kathy Adams
Director/Founder

Charity Begins at Home (by Bob Saar)

Saber es poder. Knowledge is power.

Anielka Gutierrez knows that when you get down to the first-person level, Americans are as human — and humanitarian — as anyone, anywhere. Gutierrez is the Granada facilitator for Empowerment International. EI provides the otherwise-unaffordable shoes and clothing required to attend public school in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.



Gutierrez has an infectious, thousand-watt smile that brings the kids running when she visits the barrios, and she couples that with a no-nonsense directness and sense of leadership that brings an unruly child back into line without harsh words or voice.

Gutierrez, who has taught in Nicaraguan schools for the last ten of her 27 years, believes that in addition to learning basic academic subjects, children need to develop the skills

"My time spent for Empowerment is priceless, giving opportunities to anyone and everyone is beyond words. I find comfort in knowing that in each opportunity I find for myself I am able to create many more opportunities for so many others. This is partly because I am passionate about the exchange of opportunities as creating a rewarding life but also because it kills me to know of so much poverty and injustice that simple opportunities could alleviate."

- Marshall McCormick, Volunteer/Student

Marshall will be returning to Granada for his second summer to intern with EI.



Nicaragua street scene

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mahatma Gandhi



EI Students in school

Empowerment International is a 501(c)3 tax deductible organization

that enhance self-esteem, empowerment and community.

"I want to do as much as I can for these children," Gutierrez said. "Teaching them in school is not enough." Anielka Gutierrez is ready to help the Americans help her children. Are you ready to help Anielka Gutierrez do that?

Beauty Without Fear (by Bob Saar)

There are three questions your friends will ask you when you come home from Nicaragua: Was it beautiful? Was it safe? What was it like?

The buildings, the wildlife, the oceans and lakes and jungles — yes, yes; these are of the beauty that photographers yearn to experience. But it's the people you will love and remember when you come home. The people of Nicaragua, the children of the barrios,



the old women in the market, the boatman on the lake — you will never forget them

And how could a place with such beautiful people be dangerous? I would rather walk the night streets of Granada than stroll alone in broad daylight in any of a hundred well-known places in America.

You will understand this beautiful safety when you come home to answer these same questions for yourself.

Nicaragua is like nothing you've ever experienced before. The physical world of the country cannot be

reduced to words or images; it must be experienced as its own self. It is literally beyond description, if you have only words and pictures with which to describe.

When your listeners can see your face, watch your hands, live through your eyes - only then will they know what Nicaragua and her children are like.

Note: Bob Saar, syndicated columnist, videographer, and photographer joined founder and director Kathy Adams on her January/February 2006 trip to film and write for Empowerment International.

Diving In: (by Darcy Phillips)

I have been volunteering with EI for the past month in Granada, Nicaragua, and have learned a great deal about the children and families in Villa Esperanza. Whether you are in the 'barrio' to meet people, out for a walk to see how people are doing, or gathering children for a soccer game, the people eagerly greet you with the Nicaraguan greeting of "Adios."

Anielka, the one paid employee working on the project in Granada, has created personal relationships with each and every family in the barrio since she began her job in October. She knows where every child lives, goes to school, the grades they receive, and the stability of their families.

I look forward to working more with the children and families over the next year so I can create personal relationships as well. Creating relationships not only helps us to know the children and families better, but also enables us to assess their needs and determine what we can be doing as an organization to create lasting change.

EI is delighted that Darcy Phillips has joined us for the next year to work with the projects in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Darcy has a masters degree in non-profit management and a background in statistical analysis. Equally importantly, she is a great sports enthusiast and will be setting up a recreational program for the children of Villa de Esperanza. To keep up on Darcy's year long adventure and service, to check out her blog go to <http://empowermentinternationaldarcy.blogspot.com>

EI Wish List

- 35,000 Frequent Flyer miles (Continental, American, Delta, Taca, or America West)
- Your old but usable digital camera
- Laptops

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