

## Scholarship Report 2006

### Intro

The scholarship program has grown again this year in numbers of students being scholarshiped as well as donors and the total amount of donations raised. A number of people here in Nicaragua have come to me this year to see if it would be possible for them to pay a scholarship for a certain individual but to have the funds and the school payments run through this program so that they could stay somewhat anonymous from the student. As of now I have four university students that are being sponsored this way and it looks as if that number will only increase next year. Since I pay the schools directly and only do so in January and July (for primary and secondary schools), I opened up an account with ING Direct, an online bank account, in order to make better use of the money that would be used for the second half of the year. This year a total of \$16,452 was raised for the scholarship program and through ING Direct, \$139.08 has been earned so far in interest. Three churches, the preschool from my home church and 12 individuals were involved in donating these funds. Below is a summary as to how the scholarships were distributed for 2006.

### Summary

Here is a brief summary of the scholarship fund:

1. Primary and Secondary school
  - a. 186 scholarships given
  - b. 153 complete scholarships
  - c. 32 half scholarships
  - d. 74 in Christian schools
  - e. 39 in Private or Tech schools
  - f. 73 in semi-public schools (no scholarships were given to public schools)
  - g. Average scholarship for the year = \$37, monthly = \$3.08
  - h. Range of monthly costs at different schools = \$1.13 - \$12.75
2. Nicaragua Christian Academy Nejapa
  - a. 3 children were given scholarships
  - b. Cost per year is \$760 which does not include transportation
  - c. Each family agreed to pay their part by paying for transportation
3. University
  - a. 21 university scholarships
  - b. 18 scholarships were at regular universities
  - c. 3 scholarships were at job training locations, i.e. 2 taking a year-long mechanic course and 1 studying construction
  - d. Average monthly scholarship = \$23.20
  - e. Range of monthly costs at the various university or tech schools = \$5.68 - \$45.00

#### 4. Backpacks

- a. 357 backpacks were given out to children
- b. 54 children received school supplies but without a backpack
- c. 277 children were in rural areas
- d. 134 children were in Managua or surrounding areas
- e. Backpacks contained 5-8 notebooks, pad of paper for drawing, pens, pencils, eraser, sharpener, crayons, glue stick, scissors, and a ruler set; some backpacks contained a uniform (shirt, shoes and skirt or pants)
- f. Average cost of a backpack = \$7.62, with uniform = \$15.24

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> year and still going...**

This is my third year writing up this report and I'm constantly amazed at how this program continues to grow. Overall this scholarship program does not take a ton of work but at the same time I have to be constantly on top of things – making sure I've given copies of receipts to families, checking in with the university students to make sure everything is fine to be able to pay for the next semester, receiving new requests for scholarships in the middle of the year, etc. And each year that I have done this, it has become smoother and at the same time a bit more complex.

A couple of changes that were made this year were the launching of a website (check out [www.amandaythomas.com/becas](http://www.amandaythomas.com/becas)) and the opening up of a bank account online with ING Direct. My brother offered his services as a very skilled web designer. Now I have a site for the scholarship program which has these yearly reports as well as a page specifically for trying to raise support for scholarships for university students. As for opening an account with ING Direct, I realized last Fall that the amount being raised for 2006 was probably going to exceed the years prior and since I only use a portion of the funds during the first half of the year, the rest was only going to sit in some bank account somewhere. Here in Nicaragua if you have a bank account with over \$5000 in it, the government takes out a small percentage of the interest that is earned each month. Even though it really isn't that big of a deal because the interest earned isn't all that much, I realized that one of the smartest moves would be to open up an account that actually had a better interest rate. Since opening the account in December 2005, the scholarship fund has earned \$145.33. That is about 18 backpacks or 2 full scholarships at a local tech school.

At the end of 2005 Christ for the City International (whom I used to serve with) decided to restart a scholarship program focusing on some of the schools based within churches that they had worked with. That meant that 3 of the schools where I had been paying scholarships in 2005 were going to be taken over by them. Kelly Kivet with CFCI and I worked together in the beginning of 2006 to work out the details with those 3 schools. Since I had been expecting to do scholarships again this year with those schools, that change meant that all of a sudden I had a lot more funds available to be used than I had been expecting. So this year's scholarships were broken into 9 different areas.

1. **Nicaragua Christian Academy Nejapa** – 3 students received scholarships to a new and upcoming private Christian school where English is being taught as a second language. This school's curriculum and style is a mixture between that of Nicaragua and of the United States. One of the big differences is that kids attend school from 7:30am until 2:30pm whereas most schools in Nicaragua have 2 sessions - 7am – 11:30am and 1pm – 5:30pm.
2. **La Viña** – a small Christian school that is struggling to survive or so it seems because they are located in a fairly poor area and almost hidden from site. I had first been to La Viña 5 years ago when I came on a short-term team to stay at an orphanage. The orphanage and school were located on the same piece of land. The orphanage has since moved on to a better location but the school remains trying to serve the local kids. In working with the director and treasurer, they picked out 14 different students whose families had hardly paid for the 2005 school year.
3. **Arms of Love orphanage** – this is the orphanage that used to be on the same land as La Viña school but has made some great changes for the kids in moving them to a much safer and more family-like area. There are 28 kids in the orphanage and all attend private schools within their area.
4. **Los Quinchos** – a good-sized school whose heart is to serve street kids or children from poor families during their morning school session while using the afternoon session as a private school to bring in the funds needed to continue the morning session. The director and treasurer picked out 70 students from their morning session to be given scholarships. Since what they charge for the morning session is \$0.58 per month, it makes the scholarship funds go a long way!
5. **Loma Linda** – this is the neighborhood where my husband, Thomas, grew up and is also the only group that has been a part of the scholarship program all three years. The first year I had worked with the pastor of Thomas' church in order to find families that had real needs in the area of education. I continue to sponsor some of the same children as well as having added some new ones in 2005 and again this year for a total of 22.
6. **Helen** – Helen is a missionary who works with a group of women who have radically changed their lifestyles over the past years and are now trying to find work that will help sustain their families. Some of the women have received scholarships in learning how to cut hair or sew clothes. Their children have also received scholarships in order to be able to attend small Christian schools in their areas. All together there are 14 with scholarships.
7. **April** – April is another missionary who is working with women to help them change their lives as well. Many of the women whom April is working with have only recently stopped being involved in prostitution. This year 24

children of 15 different families received scholarships. Many of these families live in some of the rougher parts of Managua so paying at each of the schools was always a bit of an adventure!

8. **Cedro Galan** – this is a neighborhood where Halle and Kathy August (my partner's in the sports center ministry) have a feeding program and preschool. Over the past year or so I've gotten to know a number of kids and young adults in that community. Of the 12 students with scholarships 9 are young adults who had expressed a lot of interest in being able to take a course in computers. They will finish their course in January of 2007. Some have found the course very trying whereas others have become very excited about possibly learning more. One of the girls, Miriam, is constantly telling me how excited she is when she passes the latest exam.
9. **Chiquilistagua** – this is the neighborhood where the sports center is located. In getting to know more of the children in this area, I have discovered that most of them attend the public schools in the area which are technically supposed to be free according to the Dept. of Education here in Nicaragua. Some of the kids attend a local private Catholic school but are given a scholarship through the school. So only 3 scholarships were used for youth from this area – 2 for students who wanted to attend a Christian school in another neighborhood and 1 for a young gal who is attending an accelerated high school program.

In 2005 there were two new areas of growth for the scholarship program – giving out backpacks with school supplies and giving university scholarships. Both have continued again this year and have grown in size. Looking back on last year's report I had hoped to be able to give 300 plus backpacks. Well, this past January 357 backpacks filled with school supplies were given out to kids most of whom were from rural areas. I was also able to give out 54 packets of school supplies without backpacks. One of Thomas' aunts helped me with the purchasing of all the supplies by taking me to a much better distributor of school supplies. It was in the *Mercado Oriental* which is probably the largest market in Central America. I was able to buy more for less and at one point in January I had bought so many supplies that we could hardly make it through our front door.

As for the university scholarships, I have continued with 10 of the students that were given scholarships in 2005 and have given 11 more scholarships this year. One of the more complex parts of this program has been figuring out how each university runs their school year. Some have divided the year into semesters; some have trimesters while others are on the quarter system. And to make it even more confusing some of the universities start their school year in January, some in February and others in March. Since most universities expect that students will be paying month by month (since that is easier economically), many of the accountants have found it odd when I come to pay for three to four months at a time. Some of the universities even have a discount for paying months in advance! Slowly throughout the year I have learned the different systems and start dates for all 11 universities. The most exciting part of this part of the program is hearing from the students or touching base with them from time to time. Just the

other week one of them came out to visit the sports center and gave me a folder advertising his university. On the front was a picture of 12 students posing in front of the main entrance to the university. He told me that the university had picked some of its top students to be in that picture. I looked again at the photo and sure enough there he was in the back row! Another student just recently gave me a letter which he had written in broken English expressing his thanks for those who are supporting this program. If you are interested in reading it, please check out the website: [www.amandaythomas.com/becas](http://www.amandaythomas.com/becas)

### **Ideas for the Future**

In beginning to think about next year I hope that this scholarship program will be able to continue as it has for the last three years. Since the program has grown each year, I have given more and more scholarships to students. In looking to a new year I constantly hope that I will be able to continue at least with the students that I had given scholarships to the year prior. Most of the families and schools know that this program is based on yearly gifts so it is never a definite that the scholarship will be renewed. However, with the university students, many of them would not be able to continue their studies if it were not for their scholarship. I definitely hope that the program will not only continue but also grow in this next year and the years to come!

One idea I have for next year is that if we are able to raise more than \$16,000 then to put some funds aside in ING that will not be used for the 2007 school year but rather begin to build a fund that will continually earn interest.

### **Conclusion**

I hope this report has been informative of this year's progress. Please feel free to email me your thoughts and ideas for the future of this scholarship program. I would also appreciate your prayers for me as this program continues to grow. Pray for the overall education system here in Nicaragua, pray for the families of these children that they would make education a real value in their lives and pray for the university students that they would take very seriously their studies knowing that it will prepare them for a better future.

Donations can be sent to:

NEO Foundation  
22301 SW 110th Place  
Tualatin, Oregon 97062-8159

On behalf of all the children, their families, and the university students as well as Thomas and I – a huge thanks for being a part of this effort to help change lives through education! May God continue to bless your lives as you have been such a blessing to many children and young adults here in Nicaragua. Muchas gracias!

Below you will find a list of names of the students that received scholarships for the 2006 school year.

**From Nicaragua Christian Academy**

1. Aaron Ezequiel Davila Somarriba
2. Katerin Allana Mayorga Gutierrez
3. Denia Jahoska Gutierrez Lopez

**From La Viña**

1. Jose Jairo Centeno
2. Deyling Elizabeth Hernandez
3. Carlos Gustavo Lopez
4. Junner Uriel Hernandez Herrera
5. Ronierd Ariel Mena Canales
6. Eduardo Antonio Rivas Gutierrez
7. Gladys Mercedes Davila Castillo
8. Moises Orlando Rios Mayorga
9. Sergio Antonio Ocampo Hernandez
10. Luis David Sanchez
11. Amanda Rios Mayorga
12. Nestor Norois Mayorga
13. Jocasta Norois Mayorga
14. Juan Jose Sanchez Flores

**From Arms of Love**

1. Juana Maria Gutierrez Espinoza
2. Marling Yesenia Contreras Gutierrez
3. Maria del Pilar Contreras Artiaga
4. Catiana Aurora Espinoza
5. Katherin Vanessa Collado
6. Katherine Valeria Gonzalez
7. Luz Esperanza Maradiaga
8. Yezica Jazmina Torres Hernandez
9. Diana Teresa Tellez
10. Scarleth del Carmen Mendoza Collado
11. Catherin Carolina Romero Perez
12. Diana Maria Lacayo Altamirano
13. Valesca Lisseth Coolado Alvarado
14. Derling Francisco Medina Soza
15. Eliezer Collado Alvarado
16. Hector Collado Alvarado
17. Juan Maradiaga
18. Kaffir Daniel Marquez Lopez

19. Wilder Alejandro Collado Alvarado
20. Jerry Alexander Cortes Orozco
21. Francis Marcel Contreras Artiaga
22. Ronny Francisco Cortez Averagesma
23. Lester Antonio Cortez Orosco
24. Marcos Aurelio Contreras Artiaga
25. Eduardo Francisco Martinez
26. Juan Jose Martinez
27. Luis Eduardo Davila

### **From Los Quinchos**

1 – 70 I don't have the names of all of these children.

### **From Loma Linda**

1. Jahoska Jiron Obregon
2. Gustavo Adolfo Jiron Obregon
3. Tania Elena Cortez
4. Jerry Javier Molina
5. Jarold Armando Molina
6. Daniela Dayana Molina Garcia
7. Larry Antonio Molina
8. Aldo Omar Molina Hernandez
9. Karina Yuvelka Molina Herrera
10. Nara
11. Elvin Josue Hernandez Romero
12. Lester Antonio Vallecillo Meza
13. Oyanka Raquel Martinez Diaz
14. Jarol Obed Ruiz
15. Flavia Isamar Aguilar Fajardo
16. Kevin Lennin Rodriguez V.
17. Kathia Iveth Rodriguez V.
18. Jalisca Dinora Acevedo Rivera
19. Katy Rebeca Solorzano Ruiz
20. Bianca Pahola Araica Reyes
21. Olga Raquel Parrales Calero
22. Jessenia Sanchez Molina

### **From Helen**

1. Candida Rosa Castillo Garcia
2. Xiomara del Socorro Cruz
3. Marcela de los Angeles Morales Useda
4. Israel Jose Pineda Gaitan
5. Alison Morales

6. Adan Isaac Alfaro Cruz
7. Jose Armando Alfaro Cruz
8. Michael Daniel Alfaro Cruz
9. Josselyn Lisset Paguaga Cardenas
10. Wanda Maria Cisne Saballo
11. Moises Isaias Pineda Gaitan
12. Dania Castillo
13. Meyling Castillo
14. Jenifer Castillo

### **From April**

1. Maria Jose Perez Varvas
2. Jamileth de Socorro Perez Varvas
3. Adonis Issachar Cuarezma Miranda
4. Jorge Luis Moraga Hernandez
5. Moises Abraham Reyes Barrios
6. Junior de los Angeles Reyes Barrios
7. Blanca Cristina Matamoro Gaitan
8. Blanca Maria Matamoro Gaitan
9. Carlos Alberto Meza Rostran
10. Jose Luis Meza
11. Adonay Meza Rostran
12. Reynaldo Ismael Orozco Gutierrez
13. Jean Diefer Molina Arguello
14. Angyie Lisseth Molina Arguello
15. Isayana Farha Massiel Gomez
16. German Daniel Joao Gomez
17. Maria del Carmen Navarro Marin
18. Jose Luis Navarro Marin
19. Mery Patricia Lopez Acensio
20. Angela del Socorro Altamirano
21. Vilma Vanessa Vasquez Miranda
22. Hazel Junieth Davila
23. Lillian Yolanda Gonzalez Loaisiga
24. Christian Anielka Sanchez

### **From Cedro Galan**

1. Laura
2. Miriam
3. Geovanny
4. Jessenia
5. Gilbert
6. Rudi
7. Ibeth

8. Kenia Vega Gonzalez
9. Gregoria Vega Gonzalez
10. Axel Ramirez
11. Lester Jose Lopez Salazar
12. Victor Alexander Mora Lopez

### **From Chiquilistagua**

1. Maria
2. Claudia Esquenía Sanchez Vargas
3. Carlos Alberto Sanchez Vargas

### **University Students**

1. Cristopher Ariel Amador Hernandez
2. Tanya Yadaris Gago
3. Martha Lorena Gonzalez Araica
4. Isayana de los Angeles Carranza Garcia
5. Josue Lopez Orozco
6. Leana Isamar Espinoza Lanuza
7. Fabricio Jose Mendoza Avelares
8. Claudia Garcia Lainez
9. Jose Manuel Davila
10. William Oliver Gonzalez Sandino
11. Melvyn Gilmore Garcia Coe
12. Raul Antonio Hernandez Herrera
13. Karen Maria Molina Lopez
14. Jairo Alberto Espinoza Garcia
15. Olga Deynira Flores Blanco
16. Walkiria Maritza Sanchez Flores
17. Yvonne
18. Aldo Molina
19. Dervin Guerrero
20. Oscar Leonardo Mora Olivaqr
21. Jose Maria Gutierrez Martinez