

# **The New Dawn Endowment Fund**

**Spring  
2008-2013**

**Presented  
by  
Friends of Batahola**  
[www.friendsofbatahola.org](http://www.friendsofbatahola.org)

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## The Journey We Share

*“Perhaps the biggest influence of the Center is the mentoring of kids. As a result, these kids as young adults are doing some pretty remarkable things.”*

Jefferson Shriver, formerly with the Lutheran Brotherhood in Managua

*“I visited Batahola for the first time in January 2001; it was love at first sight. I was so impressed with this oasis in the midst of such overwhelming poverty. But what impressed me most was the joy and the faith of people of Batahola. Witnessing the impact the Center had on the lives of people it serves was truly an inspiration. I am honored to serve on the board of The Friends of Batahola.”*

Pat Berning, Friends of Batahola Board Member

*“People often have this interest in social justice in an abstract way, I know I did. But when you visit and see it, then you know it personally.”*

John McManus, Friends of Batahola Board Member

*“I recall listening to our translator while touring a computer class. An eighteen-year-old girl sitting at a computer desk said, “Tell everyone back at your church thank you very much. I would still be working at the clothes factory if I did not have this opportunity to learn this trade.”*

Paul Lake, Adult Chaperone, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cincinnati

As Sister Helen Prejean, Board Member of Friends of Batahola, writes *“It is no small thing to be a survivor in Nicaragua, but the Cultural Center of Batahola does more than help people survive. A welcoming community of faith and educational programs help them lift themselves out of grinding poverty.”*



Board Members & Friends



Jennifer Marshall – Coordinator of Cultural Center  
Terri Holman – President, Friends of Batahola

# The Hope

*“Tomorrow is a new dawn.”*

*Sr. Margie Navarro*

## **Cultural Center of Batahola Norte**

The Cultural Center of Batahola Norte (CCBN) is a community center in Managua that empowers women and educates adults and children. Courses are offered that cover practical skills training for underemployed and unemployed adults, as well as music and art lessons to children. Scholarships are available to the college bound. The Center has a community library and is a cultural oasis for the community.

The priority of the CCBN is to develop self-esteem and provide skills that facilitate entry into the labor market to impoverished women, men and children. The Center offers more than 15 courses including basic adult literacy, sewing, cosmetology, cooking, typing and micro business management. Through a system of minimum requirements, the Center’s educational program emphasizes the importance of primary education, which can be acquired free of charge at the Center. The National Technological Institute approves all the courses. The average student is a young woman, in many cases a single mother, who is struggling to improve her own life and the lives of her children. More than 500 women, men and young people come to the Center each year to receive classes.

The Center also seeks the integral development of youth through art, with courses in folkloric dance, music, painting, and theater. In these courses young people learn to value their cultural heritage, to work as a team, and to develop alternative forms of expressing themselves. They learn to perform with dignity and strength before an audience. After basic training, youth can join one or more performing groups: the Margarita Navarro Youth Orchestra, advanced groups for painting, theatre and folkloric dance, and the Angel Torrellas Chorus of Batahola, which is nationally and internationally known.

For some, the skills and confidence acquired at the Center are sufficient to improve their household finances. For others, their experience is just a first step in a journey of growth and learning. The Scholarship Project helps this second group of people who want to continue their studies within or outside the Center. Scholarships exempt students from paying the Center’s nominal course fees, focusing especially on adult women. Other scholarships provide financial support to students in primary, secondary or university level education. All scholarship recipients provide social service hours to the Center as a means of developing their social consciousness and their connection to the Center’s mission. Currently the project finances the studies of 280 students. Students who have benefited are counted among the teachers, homemakers, lawyers and doctors of Nicaragua contributing to the overall development of an educated socially minded citizenry.

The Center's library was founded in 1997 to provide a reading and study space for young people in the community. Today the Center has a collection of 5,000 reference, research and literature books. The library registers an average of 1,500 visitors per month. The majority of these visitors are young students from the neighborhood who do not have resources to buy their own textbooks and depend on the library to complete their coursework and achieve their academic goals. The library is also a place of personal development for children and teenagers in the community. Library visitors -- from the students who compose the library's work group to the children who come to participate in story time, study circles and workshops on social themes -- all find the perfect site to grow into healthy and responsible adults.

For families who live with poverty, the struggle for each day's bread often postpones or overrides education and the hope for a better future. The Cultural Center of Batahola Norte helps put an end to this deferral, giving both priority to the personal development of each student and an immediate answer to the basic necessities of a full life.



Staff Members and Visitor

## Mission Statement

### Cultural Center of Batahola Norte, Nicaragua

*To live a humane and just lifestyle with a preference for the poor, according to the Gospel. Together with the poor, working through cultural and holistic educational experience, we will be enabled to appreciate the gifts of human rights, self-esteem and equality. We believe in the empowerment of people and in the value of sharing who we are and what we have in order to transform society into the Kingdom of God.*



"The New Dawn" Mural

# The Struggle

## Nicaraguan Realities

1. Nicaragua, one of the Western Hemisphere's poorest countries, has low per capita income, widespread underemployment, and a heavy external debt burden. Distribution of income is one of the most unequal on the globe.

	<b>Nicaragua (2005)</b>	<b>USA (2005)</b>
2. Per capita income:	\$2,900	\$34,586
3. Unemployed and underemployed:	51%+	6.1%
4. Population living below poverty line:	50%	12.6%
5. Infant mortality per 1,000 births:	28.1	6.78
6. Fertility rate – children born per female:	2.75	2.09
7. Natural hazard: earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, hurricanes		
8. Environmental issues: deforestation, erosion, water pollution		
9. High oil prices helped drive inflation to 9.6% in 2005, leading to a fall in real GDP growth to 4% from over 5% in 2004.		
10. Religion: Roman Catholic 72.9%, Evangelical 15.1%		
11. Illiteracy rate: 33%		

Source: CIA World Fact book, July 2006, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/nu.html#Intro>



Students of the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte

# The History

## History of the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte, Managua, Nicaragua

The Cultural Center of Batahola Norte (CCBN) was founded on March 3, 1983 with the arrival of Sister Margarita Navarro, a Sister of Saint Joseph of Cincinnati, Ohio and Father Angel Torrellas, a Dominican Priest of Spain. Until Margarita's death in September, 2001 and Angel's death just four months later, these dedicated people had labored, along with local leadership, to develop a Center which has become truly an oasis of culture and capacitation in the midst of great need.

The barrio (town) of Batahola Norte is situated on the western end of Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. The barrio was originally founded in 1981 by the Nicaraguan Sandinista government in an effort to provide housing for factory workers and other persons of scarce resources, and to encourage model community living. Some 1200 houses had been built, all equal in size and design: small and constructed of cinderblocks, brick and wood. The year 1982, however, saw severe flooding near Lake Managua and hundreds of displaced people from that area flocked into Batahola Norte, taking up residence in makeshift dwellings on any land available. The original plans for schools, clinics, and parks were also shattered when the war situation (called the "Contra War") became more severe and government monies were diverted to that effort. This was the situation when Angel and Margarita arrived in 1983.

It was calculated at the time, that approximately 15,000 people lived in Batahola Norte with nearly 60% of that number being children under 14 years of age. (There are now estimated to be at least 25,000 inhabitants.) With minor exceptions, the majority of the adult population worked as maids, cooks, or did laundry for minimal salaries in hospitals, factories or private homes. Many earned their living as street vendors of food and trinkets. Because of the severe poverty and lack of confidence among the people, there was little organization of the barrio. Other Dominican priests from a nearby parish church did have a presence there for several years by having reflection groups and liturgical celebrations held in open air or in private homes.

Margarita has left several writings with yearly documentation of the various struggles and accomplishments of the Center during those early years. In one such paper she speaks about the stages of the Center's development:

**State of Insertion Into the Community:** Angel and Margarita go door-to-door, visiting over 800 homes, to learn of the needs and hopes of the people, and to understand the social and political realities of the area. A simple structure of cement floor, tin roof and no walls was constructed on a piece of land donated by the Ministry of Housing to the Dominican Fathers, as chapel and meeting room. Catechetics are taught to children; communion classes draw together multiple families as Margarita and Angel start to become integrated into the community.

**Expansion of Activities and Initial Growth:** Two small prefabricated classrooms are erected initially. Women began to attend, in ever increasing numbers, the classes in

sewing, cooking and natural medicine. The story is told by Margarita that sewing classes began when a woman of the barrio offered her services to teach other women how to sew. Margarita announced the date and for that first class some 60 women appeared. A children's chorus was begun by Angel, whose professional preparation was in the area of music. (He held degrees in music from some of the finest universities in Madrid, Spain.) This rapidly became one of the principal activities of the new Center. Angel and Margarita admit that they were as yet with the mentality of "just wanting to help the people." They supported the construction of a local government primary school, currently the Carlos Fonseca School, with whom the Center maintains a close relationship to this day. Funding for this project was obtained from a Spanish organization and from the Sisters of St. Joseph. This project initiates them into the community and to the political reality of the day.

**The Stage of Diversification of Activities and Personal Development:** The process of institutionalizing the Center began as more courses were offered in diverse spheres: multiple musical instruments, typing, theater, painting, etc. The Center grew in size and complexity. The great need for better preparation of staff professionally and personally was seen and addressed. The teachers of most of these many courses were residents of the barrio and had themselves attended the initial classes and continued on to study at higher levels. In 1985 both the courses in literacy and in dressmaking were started. They continue uninterrupted to this day. Cosmetology began in 1988 and, likewise, continues to be taught as does culinary arts which began in 1989. Communication Skills was first taught in 1989 by Sister Jean Miller with the first typewriters donated by the Quixote Center of Washington, DC. Twenty new ones were purchased in 1992 with donations from Manos Unidos of Spain and from the Presbyterian Church of the US and Canada. Computer Science was first taught in 1993 with the help of donations of computers, again by the Presbyterian Church of the US and Canada and from Manos Unidos of Spain. The computer lab was updated in 1999 and in 2000 with help again from Spain. The computer classes, which comprise multiple subjects from professional ethics to PowerPoint and Excel, are perhaps the best attended of all courses offered and have done much to prepare the youth to take their places in the present day work force.

As the Center became more structured, Margarita and Angel saw the need for sharing responsibility for the overall functioning of the Center. From the many instructors and staff who had been loyal participants through the years, five people were elected to form an "Administrative Team," each with a specific area of responsibility. After the death of both founders this Team has carried on the work of the Center with remarkable professionalism and dedication to the original mission.

A Coordinator was named after Angel's death. His nephew assumed this task for the first two years and currently Jennifer Marshall from the US holds the position and has made many creative and visionary changes.

Structural changes in the Center have taken place over the years. The one room cement structure without walls has given way to a large open auditorium where liturgies, rehearsals, meetings and performances are held. There are administrative offices, classrooms of several sizes and configurations, a two story library with air conditioning, a small café with outdoor seating, storage rooms for musical instruments, an air-

conditioned room for meetings, and a receptionist room where the Xerox machines are also held. One cannot speak about the structural development of the Center without mentioning the many magnificent murals which were painted at various times over the years. The one most treasured is on the stage wall of the auditorium called: "The New Dawn" which was done by a group of artists: the collective, Boanerges Cerrato of Spain. The last mural was painted on a wall overlooking the garden of memories. It appropriately depicts the sun rising to commemorate Margarita's oft-repeated phrase "*Tomorrow is a new dawn.*"

In spring 2001, before Margarita left New Orleans for the last time to return to Batahola to spend the remaining months with "her people," Sr. Helen Prejean and other friends of Margarita began the process of establishing a 501(C)(3) corporation in the U.S. When Margarita knew of her impending death, she asked several of her friends, both Nicaraguan and US citizens living in Managua, to form a Board of Directors to assist and cooperate with the work of the Center's Administrative Team. Some changes have been made in both groups since 2001, but the Mission remains unchanged. On Sr. Helen's last visit with Margarita in Batahola, two or three weeks before her death, she could assure her that Friends of Batahola (FOB) would work with the teams in Batahola to keep her Center functioning. The month after Margarita's death, October of 2001, the IRS granted tax exempt status to FOB, and FOB held its first board meeting in November 2001, with friends of Margarita's making up the first board. The goal of the organization is to provide resources, solidarity and friendship for the growth and sustenance of the Cultural Center of Batahola. Without doubt, Margarita and Angel would be pleased with what the Center has become, and with the enthusiasm and commitments of those whose lives are touched by the wonderful work they began in 1983.



Cultural Center of Batahola Norte Administrative Team

# Cultural Center of Batahola Norte

## Finances

The Cultural Center operates with an annual budget of approximately \$245,000, which grows by approximately 10-15% each year. Increase in budget reflects growth (enrollment doubled since 2004), increase in staff benefits, renovations and inflation.

In 2006, the primary funding sources were:

- \_ Organizations that were formed exclusively to support the Center (27%)
- \_ Other groups and organizations that support the Center (30%)
- \_ Grant-making institutions (24%)
- \_ Locally generated funds (14%)
- \_ Individual income sources (5%)

# Programs

## 1. Integrated Popular Education (Teaching)

The Cultural Center of Batahola Norte's (CCBN) priority is the holistic education of disadvantaged women and youth in the community. To build self-esteem and develop marketable skills, the Center offers **more than 15 courses** approved by the Ministry of Education and the National Technological Institute. These courses correspond to three categories: Basic Adult Education, Women's Empowerment and Technical Training.

A new project of the teaching area is training in **small or micro-business administration**, to support the majority of students who want to convert their new skills into income-generating activity. In coordination with the Business Development Program (PRODEM), the Center offers an intensive workshop for current students and graduates that covers the topics of: Personal and Business Motivation and Effectiveness; Marketing; Production and Costs; and Control and Finances.

## 2. Artistic and Cultural Promotion

Art and culture have been part of the Center since its inception. Our artistic program focuses on **holistic youth development**, helping young people discover their talents and giving them the opportunity to share those talents with the community.

In 2006 the Center undertook two new art projects, supporting educational centers in disadvantaged neighborhoods to help them integrate culture into the classroom. The "Human Rights on Stage" project, financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), seeks the creative dissemination of human rights education through the teachers and students of 5 schools. This project generated new short plays that present human rights issues, including one play that was staged to generate discussion on the problem of childhood prostitution.

The "Youth to Youth—Developing" artistic knowledge and appreciation of national culture among children and teens trained 150 primary and secondary school teachers in the use of art as a teaching tool.

## 3. Scholarship Program

To support the desire to study and combat the economic and social pressures that force so many people to abandon their dreams of education, the Center coordinates a **program of internal and external scholarships**. Internal scholarships exempt students in any of the Center's classes from paying the minimal course fees. External scholarships provide economic support to primary, secondary and university level students. All scholarship students must maintain a good grade average in their classes and fulfill a social service project in the Center, helping to develop their social work, their conscience and their identification with the Center's mission.

#### 4. Library

The Center's **Library** was founded in 1997 to provide adequate space for reading and studying in the community. Today it boasts a collection of nearly 5,000 reference, research and literature works. The Library receives an average of 1,500 visits each month, mainly from local students who do not have the funds needed to buy their textbooks and rely on the Library for their academic success.

#### 5. Outreach

The community of Batahola reaches out to its neighbors on a daily basis and during times of emergency and disaster. They supported persons affected by Hurricane Felix by collecting donations of needed items – enough for 41 family packages that included water, medication, food, clothing and cooking oil.

#### 6. Spiritual Formation

Weekly Sunday Mass is a hallmark of the Center providing liturgy and music for the staff, community and many visitors from far and wide. The staff has weekly bible reflection which sets the tone for the coming week. Retreats are also provided for the staff on an annual basis.



Cake Decorating Class



Spiritual Reflection Time with Staff and Board Members

# The Friends of Batahola Mission

Inspired by the vision of Sr. Margarita Navarro, CSJ and Fr. Angel Torrellas, OP to empower the Nicaraguan people and in unity with the people of the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte (CCBN), the Friends of Batahola strive to answer the Gospel call by affirming and supporting their mission. We share who we are and what we have through friendship, prayer, solidarity and financial support.

## **Plan**

The Friends of Batahola, incorporated in 2001, have begun a five-year campaign to fund an endowment for the benefit of the CCBN.

## **Problem:**

It cost \$245,000 a year to operate the Center currently. That includes all salaries, benefits, materials and plant maintenance. More funds would be needed to expand programs and the facility. The Friends of Batahola are committed to contributing \$60,000 a year in support of the Center although the need has grown to \$85,000. Ongoing fund raising is successful but a more permanent solution is needed.

## **Strategic Plan**

**Goal:** To increase our assets to \$2 million

## **Friends of Batahola Five-year Action Plan:**

1. Continue to leverage resources to increase our contribution to \$85,000 annually to support operational funding of the CCBN.
  - Annual appeal
  - Faith-based partnerships
  - Nurturing our relationships with our donors
  - Management of existing investment portfolio (financial details available on request)
2. Expand the Student Scholarship Program to maintain levels previously met by other organizations.
  - Project Education \$44,000
3. Establish a \$2 million endowment, permanently restricted, to support the CCBN.
  - Pledged gifts
  - Grants and foundation support
  - Bequests and planned gifts
  - Personal visits, public presentations, published articles
  - Proceeds from upcoming non-fiction book by Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ, Orbis Books

## **Budget**

During the calendar year 2007 assets of the Friends of Batahola (FOB) operating account increased from \$696,010 to \$845,000 – an increase of 21%.

During 2007 FOB received \$187,000 in funding from donations, \$32,000 in interest, \$2,000 in dividends and \$4,000 in return of original investment.

Some of the donations received by FOB are restricted by the donor to specific uses such as to acquire computers, to help pay a portion of the insurance costs and for Project Education. The donor advised funds received in 2007 were \$72,000.

FOB uses some of the income and donations to meet commitments made and to pay operating expenses to the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte (CCBN). In 2007 the transfers to the CCBN totaled \$61,000. In 2008, the FOB are committed to transfer at least \$60,000 to the CCBN.

All funds received but not used in any period are deposited into the operating account for investment or held for liquidity purposes.

Board Members and Friends



**Friends of Batahola  
Board of Directors**

**Terri Holman, Minnesota  
President**

**Sandra Blanchard, CSJ, Louisiana  
Vice President**

**Helen Prejean, CSJ, Louisiana  
Honorary Chair**

**Jeanne McManus, Louisiana  
Secretary**

**Mary Ann Antrobus, Louisiana  
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**Pat Berning, Ohio**

**Mary Aileen Dame, MD, Massachusetts**

**Gail Herbert, Louisiana**

**Michael Keefe, District of Columbia**

**Sue Keefe, Ohio**

**John McManus, Louisiana**

**James O'Beirne, Louisiana**

## Donor Benefits

1. **Tangible results** that make a difference in a world where tangibles are difficult to achieve.
2. **Recognition**, if desired, in Friends of Batahola website, annual report and annual meeting.
3. **Living** your moral values by investing in a proven success story and allowing a solid, lasting expression of faith.
4. **Tax benefits**, as per advice from your financial planner and tax advisors. “Friends of Batahola” is a registered 501(C)(3) agency.
5. **Adventurous** opportunity for a planned visit to the Cultural Center to witness the investment in action.
6. **Reciprocal** visits from the Cultural Center’s director or board member if you desire.
7. **Contribute** to the future of the Center by supporting the programs and classes that prove their merit.



Board Members

## Pledge Page – Enrollment

*Yes, we pledge our support for the "New Dawn Endowment Fund" of the Friends of Batahola!*

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 Worldview Partner Covenant pledge spread over five years  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000 Foundational Partner Covenant pledge spread over five years  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 Angel & Margie Partner Covenant pledge spread over five years  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5,000 Sustaining Partner Covenant pledge spread over five years  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 1,000 Amigo & Amiga Partner Covenant pledge spread over two years  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### For Questions:

Please contact (presenter): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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