

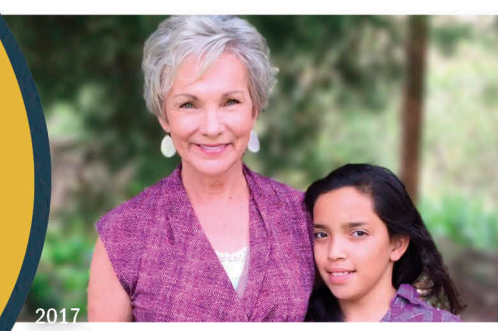


# 20 years serving & beyond

## NICARAGUA

### Children of Destiny

*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,  
For the rights of all who are destitute.  
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the  
rights of the poor and needy."  
Ps. 31:8*



Dear CODN Family,

It was a perfectly normal Monday afternoon. The children were outside, enjoying one hour of play time between homework and devotions. Suddenly, four double-cab pickup trucks appeared at our gate and demanded to be let in. Several Ministry of the Family officials came onto the front porch. "We are taking everyone out for supper tonight!" But quickly added, "Pack whatever you can get into your backpacks and we will tell you which truck to get in."

It was clearly a well-organized plan. Some of the children were crying when they got into the back of the trucks. All were confused. The trucks delivered each child or sibling set to various family members; they simply dropped them off without even properly informing the relatives ahead of time. Most of our children did not know their relatives, people who suddenly became their caregivers. Additionally, ninety percent of our children are now living in extreme poverty conditions.

Later that night a document was delivered to our empty orphanage stating that the Nicaraguan government had officially closed our center.

### The list of reasons for the closing were vague:

Children should not be raised in an institution but rather with a family member – even distant family was better for the child than a group home with no family. They quoted a new law: a bill about integration of children with family.

Also, the document stated that in our home, the children had love and privileges that most Nicaraguan children did not have.

We were not told where the children were taken. My staff immediately began a search. As of this writing, they have located about half of our children. Twelve are living in the Jinotega area. Last week we secured permission from their families for the children to return to our property every day, Monday through Friday, for breakfast and lunch. While with us, they will do Zoom classes at our virtual school. They will be able to shower and wash their clothes. They will also have plenty of time every afternoon to play or work in our garden.

Our driver, Chico, has established a "route" to pick up the children in the morning and drop them off at their homes in late afternoon. The children's new relatives are happy to receive some help caring for their new family members.

CONTINUE ON BACK



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As you can imagine, our hearts are broken – this home has been my joy for 22 years! Initially, I was in denial but now the reality is sinking in. I feel like God is giving comfort and direction for us as we move forward. Our hopes and prayers are to create an “action plan” for each child. While we are not allowed to operate an orphanage right now, we are able to help each child where they are placed.

Because of the impoverished conditions in which they now must live, the children will need food, clothing, school supplies, and basic essentials of life. In most cases, the new homes do not even have a spot for the child to sleep. Most don't have bathrooms, and in some cases, the homes do not even have access to an outdoor latrine.

This will take time. I am trying to Facetime regularly with the children who are living close by Jinotega. I can see the relief in their faces as they hear that we will not abandon them. We are committed to stay the course with each and every child.

On a positive note, we are now hearing that the children are sharing their testimonies with the new families. They are praying with them and inviting them to church. One young lady has taken it upon herself to send me an encouraging scripture every day via “Whatsapp”!

I would have never chosen this path for these children. But, I can see God's hand in it. Now our influence is not only with the children in our home but with their families and communities. In essence, even in what feels like an injustice, they have been sent out as shining light to their new homes.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky."  
(Philippians 2:14-13)

I know God has a plan for our beautiful facility. Right now, we are using it as a “Day Center” for the children in the area. But, I somehow believe God has a greater purpose for our future. We have just begun doing a Feasibility Study to explore needs in our community. We have retained a professional Nicaraguan consultant who is a deeply connected social worker. She loves God and Nicaraguan children. She will help us research the greatest areas of need, both in our community and in the state of Jinotega.

Based on prayer and what we learn, we hope to use the facility for a broader purpose. The work of CODN continues, but now on a broader scale. We will continue to serve our children directly through your sponsorships. This new focus will be costly, both in time and money. Your sponsorship means even more now than ever. Next month I will give you more details as things unfold. In the meantime, please call us or email any questions you may have.

Thank you for standing with us – in prayer and support – in this challenging time. We greatly appreciate you! God will see us through! He will take care of His children!  
With much love and appreciation for your partnership,

*-Sandy Britnell*



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