



Brookline-Quezalguaque Sister City Project

www.brooklinesistercity.org

Annual Report 2010

This Year in Quezalguaque & Brookline

In Quezalguaque, the new Brookline-financed Urgent Care Center was completed and opened. In February, Brookline Sister City members began work on a shipment of library furniture and medical equipment to Quezalguaque. This was a complicated task. Many people here in Brookline worked on this project, raising money for the shipment and doing the hard physical labor of gathering the material and loading it into the 40 foot container.

In mid June the shipment arrived in Nicaragua. It took much work on the part of the Mayor of Quezalguaque and visiting Brookline residents to get the shipment through customs. Finally in early July the furniture and equipment arrived.

The furniture has vastly improved the appearance of the library. The medical equipment is being installed and will make a great difference in the delivery of care to Quezalguaque residents.

Our continuing support of a gasoline fund makes it possible for medical staff to travel to and from a remote health center. This fund also ensure the ambulance is able to bring emergency cases to the central health center from the rural areas. The medical supply fund we initiated last year has been a great help for the purchase of needed minor equipment and other medical supplies. These two funds are vital in assuring access to good medical care in Quezalguaque.

In its community room, the Library has added a Tele-Center with 5 computers available for the public to use. Each of the new computers offers access to the Internet. The town provides a technical assistant to help users, who are charged a modest fee to use the equipment and the Internet. Besides the Tele-Center, there are 3 computers in the main library with Internet access. Because of our support these computers can be used free of charge by students working on a school project.

Thanks to the Friends of the Brookline Public Library and the Brookline Library Foundation all library programs continue. Monthly visit of the mobile library to five rural area schools remain popular.

We continue to sponsor art classes in the library. This year the students painted murals on the benches in the library courtyard. We have new paintings from the class that will be displayed in the window of Brookline Bank for the month of November. In January the paintings will be on display for 2 weeks at the Main Library on Washington Street. The paintings will be sold. The proceeds will be used to purchase materials for the class.

Every year our costs and needs in Quezalguaque increase. We want to continue to our work and help with other mutually agreed on new projects. To do this we need your help. All the money we raise goes to support programs. Please consider a generous donation this year.

Thank you,

Brookline-Quezalguaque Sister City Board

Health Committee Report

Container of Medical Supplies

In 2009 Brookline Sister City paid for an urgent care wing for the health center. The 3-room addition also has a bathroom and sleeping facilities for overnight staff.



This year we obtained medical equipment for the new urgent-care wing. The equipment came from IMEC, International Medical Equipment Collaborative, in North Andover. IMEC collects used medical equipment and supplies from hospitals and medical institutions in Massachusetts. Volunteers refurbish the equipment and pack pallets of equipment for examining rooms, emergency rooms or supply rooms. The health committee raised \$18,000 to ship the equipment to Nicaragua.



For \$12,000 plus the cost of shipping the container, IMEC supplied medical equipment that would have cost more than \$147,000 if it were new. In July the container arrived in Quezalguaque and the urgent care wing now has a defibrillator, an EKG machine, suction machine and new furniture and equipment for 5 rooms.

With the shipment we were also able to include the donated library furniture.



Library to be named for Carlos Fonseca : Founder of the Sandinistas and a librarian.

Student Summer Project

Building on our previous work in Quezalguaque to identify the causes of the epidemic of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), the health committee planned a campaign with local health center to screen adults for high blood pressure. If a person with CKD has high blood pressure, treatment of hypertension can prolong life. Similarly if a person has hypertension without CKD, treatment of high blood pressure can prolong life.

This July three medical students and conducted a hypertension screening program in Quezalguaque. Alejandra Barrero MD, Boston University School of Public Health, Alessandra Calvo-Friedman, Cornell Medical school, and Joseph Reardon, Harvard Medical School screened nearly 1000 adults for high blood pressure in all the townships in Quezalguaque. while providing prevention information and making referrals. Joe, Ale and Alessandra worked on this project with three people from Quezalguaque: 1 medical student, 2 nursing students. They also had the support of the health center and community leaders.



Seventy-two people screened positive for high blood pressure and were referred to

the local health center. Twenty-seven others were referred for other medical problems. A month after the screening only 11 out of 44 positively screened patients had kept an appointment. Most said that they did not have enough time to make an appointment. We will discuss with the health center staff ways to follow up on these people. The team identified depression and urinary symptoms as major health issues.

Changes in Quezalguaque



Sayda Hernandez has been named the director of the Health Center in Quezalguaque. Many of us have worked with Sayda over the years and know her as a very dedicated person. We look forward to her working with her in her new role. We plan to send a group to Quezalguaque in January to meet with Sayda and the health center staff to mutually determine priorities—whether it is to help with treatment of hypertension, refurbishing of outlying health centers, rebuilding the community health base house program.

Patricia Chacon has been appointed the director of the library. Patricia has served as assistant librarian for many years and is an enthusiastic support of library programs. She is replacing Oneyda Osejo, who had served as library director for almost 3 years. Oneyda has received her USA resident visa and will be moving to San Francisco to join her husband. Like Sayda, Patricia is an old friend of Brookline Sister City. We look forward to working with her.



Yany Munguia, has been named assistant librarian. Yany brings many years of experience as a teacher and an administrator in the schools in Quezalguaque. Among other duties she will work on programs to increase the collaboration between the library and the schools.

World Bank Study

The 2008 Brookline Sister City's careful epidemiological study on Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Quezalguaque played a very important role in Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) being chosen by Nicaragua Sugar Estates Limited (NSEL) and ASOCHIVIDA (a group of approximately 1800 former workers of the company) to lead a study to try to determine the causes of CKD in a neighboring area in Nicaragua. Dr. Dan Brooks and Dr. Bruce Cohen of the BUSPH team are members of the Sister City Health Committee. Many residents of Quezalguaque are current or former workers at NSEL. Now in its first year, the study, which is by far the largest of its kind, holds promise that it will find the cause of this unusual and serious epidemic.

Housing Campaign Continues in Quezalguaque

The town of Quezalguaque has an ambitious project to build 500 units of new housing over the next few years. We have helped families that could not raise the \$200 they need to participate in the program. Since the program began 3 years ago we have helped more than 50 families. We hope to continue with this project.



Brookline Sister City Project

The Brookline Sister City Project is a totally voluntary organization. We have no paid employees in Brookline and we receive no government support. When volunteers travel to Quezalguaque, they pay their own travel and living expenses. When graduate students in public health travel to Quezalguaque (as they did this past summer) they also pay for their own travel and living expenses.

The funds that we raise through the generosity of the Brookline community and friends go directly to support our programs and services for the citizens of Quezalguaque.

In the past year, donations from our community have been used to

- Build a new urgent care wing in the community health center
- Secure and transport medical equipment valued at approximately \$147,000
- Transport furniture for use in the library
- Purchase drugs and medical supplies for the health center in Quezalguaque
- Purchase gasoline for the transport of medical workers to an outlying satellite health center
- Employ community outreach workers to assist in the identification and treatment of persons with high blood pressure
- Support a computer center, art classes and other programs in the library

Please consider making a generous tax-deductible contribution to the Brookline Sister City Project. Your funds will be well used in support of needed programs and services in our Sister City.

The **DONATE** button in left hand column will take you to a secure server at *Just Give* for making donations to non-profit projects.