



Durham - San Ramón Sister Communities

Hermanamiento News

Durham, North Carolina - San Ramón, Nicaragua

Spring/Summer 2005

Published biannually

Volume 8, Number 2



Cerro Grande Primary School students and teacher welcome John and Matthew Chase to their humble school.

Cub Scouts Adopt Cerro Grande School

By John Chase

Cub Scout Pack 451 of Durham is very pleased to be participating in the Rural School Partnership Program. The scouts and their families have made a year-long commitment to raise funds for the Cerro Grande Primary School, located 10 miles from the city of San Ramón.

The school includes grades one to four and has 42 students enrolled but only 32 desks. The school building is 340 square feet, made of stick and mud construction with a tin roof and a dirt floor. The building has no windows or electricity, with the only light coming from the doorway and one translucent panel in the roof. The schoolyard has a flagpole, but no flag and no play equipment. The building is used in the afternoons for adult education.

In February, I and my 13-year-old son Matthew visited Cerro Grande School during a week-long eco-tour. After a 15-minute truck ride from San Ramón, we were met by Estanislado Perez, father of several of the students, who led us on a 15-minute hike up a steep mountain trail. In a clearing at the top of the mountain, we found the school surrounded by beautiful views of Nicaraguan countryside. We were graciously met by the teacher, Sergio Antonia Molina Celedon, who is in his third year of teacher training. He carefully explained the school resources and warmly thanked us for coming to meet the students.

The school is very small and crowded for the 32 students in attendance on the day of our visit. One student was using the teacher's desk and there was very little space to walk. Despite the cramped quarters, we observed friendly, energetic students practicing reading and writing using government-supplied workbooks. While there, we were able to distribute notebooks and pencils that were provided by Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities. These supplies were eagerly accepted by the students and greatly appreciated by the teacher.

Cub Scout Pack 451 will raise funds through car washes, yard sales, donations, etc., and hopes to build a new school building for the presently crowded and poorly lighted Cerro Grande School. The Rural School Partnership Program will help us keep track through letters and pictures of progress at the school. The Cub Scouts will likewise send letters and pictures to the school as a way of furthering understanding and friendship.

At the end of my visit to the school, Professor Celedon asked, "please do not forget us." The Cub Scouts do not intend to forget.

John Chase is Cubmaster of Pack 451 located in Durham. To learn about our Rural School Partnership Program, contact Sally Poland, 919 828-2607, sapoland@earthlink.net. Also visit our web page: www.durham-sanramon.org, click on "Get Involved."