

These Nicaraguan Teachers Need Your Help !



In rural Nicaragua 16 to 24 year olds with a 6th grade education and only 4 months of training are teaching elementary school. In the León-Telica-Quezalguaque area where I live and work there are more than 40 of these young people mixed in among the 500 or so teachers in 163 rural schools.

They want to be good teachers. They are continuing their education on week-ends. But it's difficult.

THEY NEED YOUR HELP

They are called the Georgino Andrade Brigade (after a teacher who was killed by the contras) and they were formed in 1985 to take the place of the Cuban teachers who were sent home as a concession to the United States when the Congress was voting on its first contra aid package. President Reagan's response to this gesture, if you remember, was an economic boycott of Nicaragua!

Back to the teachers. They are dedicated and enthusiastic, but undereducated and undertrained because the teacher shortage is so acute. A year earlier 1500 normal school (teacher training school) students were recruited for the 50th Anniversary Brigade to bring education to the war zones. So far 30 of these young people have been assassinated by the contras!

What Can You Do To Help Them ?

The Ministry of Education for the sub-region Leon-Telica-Quezalguaque has a team of a half dozen "tecnicos" who go from school to school providing these teachers with on site supervision and training, but THEY HAVE NO VEHICLE! They go on foot! They don't reach many teachers that way. The school I teach in, for example, is a one-room schoolhouse 8 kilometers (nearly 5 miles) from León -- a good hour and fifteen minute walk each way!

If they had a vehicle these teachers could receive more on site training and more help.. Elmer Zelaya, the delegado zonal (roughly translated superintendent of schools) says it's the greatest need in his area.

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Help Us Buy A Jeep !

We are trying to collect \$10,000 to buy a 4 wheel drive (the roads are awful!) diesel (gasoline is scarce) jeep for the Ministry of Education. That's our long term goal. Our short term project -- which we hope to collect the funds for before I return to Nicaragua on July 25 -- is a motorcycle so these teachers can get help now.

Thanks!

Maxine Shaw

Maxine Shaw (longtime Brookline resident and 13 year bilingual teacher in the Boston Public Schools) and the Muddy River Affinity Group of the Pledge of Resistance.

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