

# Olympia/Santo Tomás Update

**US/Nicaragua Solidarity—Since 1989**

**Spring 2015**

An update  
from the  
Thurston–Santo Tomás  
Sister County  
Association

## Greetings:

We wanted to share some upcoming events with you and to profile two more of our scholarship recipients. Thanks to some very generous donations over the past year or so, we have both increased the stipend the scholars are receiving to \$40 per month (from \$30) and given the go-ahead to support three more scholars. We expect to see some graduations this year among the current group of recipients. We hope the increased stipend will better enable the 16 students to have access to the internet for their school work and to save a little toward the final certification cost that they each encounter at the end of their studies. (We have committed to about half the fee for each credential, the cost of which varies by school and by the major field of study)

We thank you for your on-going support. We are not enclosing a return envelope with this mailing but we are hoping you will still consider a donation mailed to TSTSCA, Box 561, Olympia WA 98507. We have found that some folks are happy to have a donation sent periodically through their bill payer account at their financial institution and that works great for us. Saves a stamp and you have a ready record of your donations at the end of the year.



## Celebration in Santo Tomás!

On April 11, 2015 Mol, Belgium and Santo Tomás will celebrate their 30th anniversary of being official sister cities, sanctioned by their governments. There will be over 80 Belgians in attendance at impressive festivities in Santo Tomás, while six college students and the liaison from Olympia will concurrently celebrate our 25th anniversary (TSTSCA incorporated in November 1989) with the Committee for Community Development. The TSTSCA relationship is not supported by our government and may be best understood as two non-profit organizations connected to our communities. People from Mol and Olympia went to Nicaragua during the *contra* war and established ties that have endured for decades. Together, we have contributed labor and finances for the construction of the *Escuela Hermandad* and the *Casa de La Mujer*, repairs to the *Clinica Popular*, the *Comedor Infantil*, *Escuela Rubén Dario* and the *Preescolar de barrio Pancasan*. Delegations travel to and from the sister towns, exchanging perspectives and experiences, strategies and commit-

*Continued on next page*

## What we do...

### Projects in Santo Tomás

TSTSCA works with a sister community organization in Santo Tomás, the *Comité para Desarrollo Comunal* (Committee for Community Development or CDC) on projects that support basic needs, education, and human dignity. TSTSA provides on-going financial and other support for these CDC projects:

- ▶ **Comedor Infantil:** Children's Free Lunch Program
- ▶ **Biblioteca:** Library
- ▶ **Becas:** Scholarships for Higher Education

### Sister School Relationship:

TSTSCA helps facilitate a sister school relationship between Lincoln Elementary School in Olympia and

*Escuela Rubén Dario* in Santo Tomás. Students and faculty from both schools correspond and families, teachers, and administrators have been part of exchange delegations. The Lincoln Site Council sends periodic financial support and materials.

### Delegations

Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association has led self-supporting Olympia area student and community delegations to learn, volunteer, and build mutually supportive friendships in Santo Tomás—over 130 people from the Olympia area have personally visited Santo Tomás. We have also supported and welcomed ten delegations of 30 *tomasinos* to learn, educate, and build mutually supportive friendships in the Olympia area. For more information, see our website at <http://www.oly-wa.us/tstsc/>

## Annual Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, May 2, 2015

Please help support sixteen students in our sister community of Santo Tomás Nicaragua by supporting our campaign to partially fund their college scholarships. On Saturday the 2nd May 2015 from 9 to 3, we will have our third annual perennial plant sale on Olympia's Westside. We'll have over 50 varieties of native and non-native flowering plants and shrubs, some edibles too (organic strawberry and

kale starts). This is the perfect time to get some more interesting colors, textures and lovely smells into your garden, and Mother's Day is also coming right up: great gifts!

Come on over on Saturday anytime between 9 to 3pm at 117 Thomas St NW, between Harrison and 4th. Thanks for your support; and please help us spread the word.

For further information or to help with the sale please email us at [tstsca@gmail.com](mailto:tstsca@gmail.com)



## Celebration!

*From page 1*

Our Evergreen Student Delegation will deliver a rousing speech on behalf of TSTSCA, drawing on the context of our history (and our country's history) and long term people to people connections with our sister community. We expect to print excerpts in our next newsletter and include photos from the celebrations, so stay tuned!

## Travel with a Purpose during Summer 2015 Visit to Santo Tomás

According to the co-leaders, Emily and Grace, there is still time to join the Community Delegation this summer. There are two and three week options beginning June 22nd. Folks staying for the third week will visit Bainbridge's Sister Island, Ometepe.

If you are interested, please email the Emily and Grace at [santotomasdelegation@gmail.com](mailto:santotomasdelegation@gmail.com). You can also talk with them at the March 15th potluck and send-off party.

## Material Aid Requests

With each delegation, we try to send 50# suitcases filled with materials being requested by each of the projects connected to the *Comité para Desarrollo Comunal* (CDC) and so earlier in the day on the 15th March we will be packing donated supplies. If you would be interested in helping us collect materials and you have not gotten a copy of the list, please email to [TSTSCA@gmail.com](mailto:TSTSCA@gmail.com) and we will send it out to you. We are also looking for more upright, rolling suitcases with which to carry supplies to Santo Tomás this spring and summer. Might you have any to donate?

Scholar Profile:

### Mixi Ivania Rosales

*Translation by Sean Izzarone*



My name is Mixi Ivania Rosales and I am studying medicine in Cuba. I was born and mostly raised in Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua and am now 26 years old. This scholarship makes possible my visit home each year, without which I simply could not be away from my family.

Because of hard life circumstances, I didn't begin school until I was 8. My mother, Sandra Rosales Mi-



randa became ill and took me to the *comedor infantil*. Doña Rosita Guerrero (2002 visitor to Olympia) was very compassionate with my mother and with me and all of the children who came for food and found community. My mother volunteered to cook and I helped her by peeling vegetables or washing dishes; sometimes I ran errands for Doña Rosita. I played a lot and really enjoyed those years with the other kids who also didn't have even the basic resources at home. I can tell that the kids who are there now also have a lot of love for the project, which is a humanitarian one and should always exist.

I remember Anita (Anna Shelton, 2001 student from Evergreen) showing me how to play hopscotch. I remember making bread with her, Juana Garcia and Kelvin Ramos. Seano was always there too, to play with the kids and serve the food made by the volunteers.

When my brother had an accident and couldn't support me, I had to go work as a domestic servant to continue high school. Before going to class at 7AM I had to have done everything in the house. After class ended at 12:45PM, I had to continue with my work obligations. In my second year of high school I began to investigate the requirements for studying medicine. I worked hard to fulfill prerequisites and consider myself fortunate to have accepted into the program in Cuba. I thank God that I am doing well and now in my third year of medical school. My studies in Cuba are very tiring. Like in any course of study there are difficulties, even more so for a Nicaraguan student studying in Cuba but nothing that can't be overcome.

In the future I expect to work as a doctor. I long to get my specialty and help my neighbors, but more than anything I will look out for the well being of my mother.

Truly in life one can achieve everything even though it seems difficult. It only takes wishes intention and lots of strength and optimism. To the children of the *Comedor Infantil* I say "never say you can't until you've tried it and don't stop being guided by lived experiences. I invite you to experiment." To the friends in Olympia I

say thank you in my own name as well as for all of the *tomasino* children who have shared experiences at the *Comedor Infantil*. May God bless you and protect you.

## Scholar Profile: Moises Alexander Aragon Baez

*Translation by James Hibbs*



I send you greetings and my fond hope that you find yourselves well in all aspects of your lives.

I am currently in my final year of university studies and will soon earn my degree in Pedagogy (teacher certification). I have had great academic success due to the effort and will I put in day after day to get good grades and be one of the best students at Universidad Martin Lútero in Santo Tomás. I am mindful that I can study, thanks to your support. I am conscious this is a great opportunity being given to every one of the scholarship students. I know and am convinced that studying and being well-prepared will be what can help me succeed in this life that gets more difficult day by day.

Unfortunately, due to the bad job market, I have not been able to find work while I attend college. I have taken my Curriculum Vitae to the Ministry of Education and I am waiting for a positive response. I look forward to teaching soon! I also wanted to tell you all that I recently finished a short course in basic English.

I admire your sense of cooperation that you have for each of us scholarship recipients. Even though there are few people from the sister county association who know us personally, you afford us the opportunity to fulfill our dreams. I feel privileged to have received this scholarship from the people of Olympia who fight for us, despite the problems they might have in their own country where I know everything isn't well right now. That is a gesture worthy of admiration and therefore I say *thank you!* I hope one day to personally thank each of the people who have helped me with the scholarship.

*Addendum: Moises and his family will host one of The Evergreen State College students in their home this spring.*



*Fila de atrás: Greyling Murillo (estudiante de Lic. en Derecho), Yuri Alfaro (CDC Liaison) Juanita Yakeling Ruiz (estudiante de Contabilidad), Kenia María López Leiva (estudiante de Contabilidad). En la Parte de Abajo: Erika Yesenia Argüello (estudiante de Lic. en Enfermería), Moisés Aragón Báez (estudiante de la Carrera de Pedagogía), Marily Aguilar Oporta (estudiante de la carrera de Pedagogía), Aminta Rocha (estudiante de la carrera de Enfermería) y Mixi Rosales (estudiante de Medicina en Cuba.)*

**Thurston–Santo Tomás  
Sister County Association**

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**Sunday, March 15, 2015 Send-Off and Potluck Gathering**

Reconnect with TSTSCA at the Send Off for the Spring 2015 Evergreen Student Delegation to Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua! This will be our 11th group of college students to spend ten weeks in Nicaragua since 1996.



*Stephanie, Mollie, Caroline, V/Auricia, Faculty Alice Nelson, Marissa, Allie*

We invite you to gather with the students, past and prospective community and student delegation members, Lincoln Elementary folks, TSTSCA founders and supporters, and others to share our connection to Santo Tomás and TSTSCA and to eat scrumptious food.

Come to the Olympia Friends Meetinghouse at

3201 Boston Harbor Road, just north of Priest Point Park, anytime after 4:30, but by 5 PM. We'll connect in small groups and as a whole before enjoying an early dinner. This event follows the students' afternoon packing party for the projects, so we'll wrap up the dinner and conversations by 7:30.

Please plan to bring a potluck dish and to share your experiences/memories/vision (music, pictures and photo albums welcome).



*Heather (Liaison ), Caroline, Dayla (Anti-oppression/Privilege Trainer), V/Auricia, Mollie, Stephanie, Marissa, Allie.*

Contact Alan for more information, 943-2503.