

Building Bridges

A CHANGE FOR CHILDREN PUBLICATION • DECEMBER 2000

¡Solidaridad! Reflections on Painting Peace

By Mario Tellez

*Painting Peace Participant
from Nicaragua*

Eleven years have gone by since, for the first time, I took a brush in my hands and, through painting, I expressed my ideas, opinions and feelings on various themes discussed at the muralism workshops. Currently I am an educator and pass on my acquired knowledge to other children, adolescents and youth who attend the various community outreach workshops (drawing and painting classes) of the Talleres de Muralismo (Muralism Workshops) Project.

Talleres de Muralismo is a non-government non-profit organization which promotes the education and participation of children through public art with a social content. More information about Talleres de Muralismo and their current initiatives appears later on in this newsletter.

Talleres de Muralismo works mostly with children from barrios (communities) with scant resources in the city of Estelí. It is shocking, but true, that for many of these children, the muralism workshops are the only creative and educational activity they have access to each week, given that many do not go to school because they cannot afford it, and there are very limited alternatives for them in Nicaragua.

With the older youth, we paint murals in various public spaces around the city. The adolescents and youth use public art – the murals – to express their ideas, feelings, and opinions on cultural themes that impact their lives. We paint about our indigenous people and their lives, about the problems faced daily by Nicaraguan society; poverty, unemployment, privatization of health and education, poor



Mario accepts a mural panel from a Canadian youth

service and lack of medicine in public hospitals, a lack of access to the basic necessities of life: shelter, food, health, protection, water, education, recreation. Through the murals, the adolescents are able to demand respect for their rights, all call for the protection of the environment, transparent government, just treatment from the authorities, and peace.

Change for Children's "Painting Peace" project, enables groups of youth from different communities and realities to

begin speaking about ways of creating cultures of peace. It is based on Manifesto 2000, a document written by 20 Nobel Peace laureates that expresses peace as more than just the absence of war, but rather as something we will have only when there is social justice on earth. "Respect all life", "reject violence", "share with others", "listen to understand", "preserve the planet", and "rediscover solidarity" are the six basic principles which Manifesto

...continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 3....	Painting Peace Update	Page 10....	Peace in El Salvador
Page 4....	New Project Initiatives	Page 11....	Youth Summit Report
Page 7....	Intern Update	Page 11....	Peace Jam Report
Page 8....	Thank You Message	Page 12....	Membership Reminder
Page 9....	CFCA Open House	Page 12....	Contact Information

Reflections on Painting Peace

...continued from cover page

2000 expresses and urges all people to practice in their daily lives.

Painting Peace has reawakened, in the hearts of many, the hope that we can attain peace on earth. Many of us have proposed making a change in our lives and, convinced and committed with the necessity of putting the six principles of Manifesto 2000 into practice, we are expressing our wishes to create a culture of peace and non-violence through our paintings and murals. As part of Painting Peace, I have also painted, together with youth from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Canada, a large canvas of 3.2 meters by 6.2 metres and two murals – one in Somotillo which is a rural community in Nicaragua, and one on a church in Tierra Blanca, a community in El Salvador.

During this tour which has lasted about a month, we lived many experiences which I am sure will be with us throughout the rest of our lives. For example, during the first phase of Painting Peace, our tour through Nicaragua and El Salvador, we were participating with youth with some experience in painting murals, but there were also youth who were experiencing the muralism project for the first time. I was impressed by how we were able to overcome our language barrier, and after a short time we were able to begin cultivating friendships. It was a challenge for us from Talleres de Muralismo to share our experience in mural painting and our methodology with the youth from the three countries.

Beginning with the discussion of our initial ideas during the design process, the preparation of the walls, drawing and painting the mural, to the final step of applying the final layer of special paint to protect the murals from the sun and other factors, I enjoyed how all of us integrated ourselves into the entire process of painting these murals. I am very sure that we all feel that the murals are ours, because we participated throughout the entire process. I also know that no one can say "I painted this part of the mural by myself". I think that, for those of us who participated, it was very powerful to learn about the history of our neighbouring countries. For me, it was particularly powerful to learn about the history of El Salvador, hear about the war they lived through and the injustices that were carried



The Painting Peace Group at Hosanna Lutheran Church

out there and continue to be carried out by the authorities against the Salvadoran people.

We were able to confirm that the realities of Nicaragua and El Salvador are very similar. Both countries faced wars against the government of the United States, both are currently facing difficult economic conditions, and every day that goes by there are less alternatives for the people.

It was also impressive to see the reception we were given by people throughout Nicaragua and El Salvador where we stopped to talk about Painting Peace and paint our murals. Everyone – from small children to seniors – opened the doors to their communities, their houses, their minds and their hearts, so that together we might talk about what we can do to achieve peace. In Somotillo and Usulután, for example, everybody in the community who walked by was speaking about the images on the mural and, more importantly, about the reality that the murals express and the positive messages and proposals for attaining peace and social justice contained in them.

During our time in Canada, I have come to realize the difference in our cultures and lifestyles. Art in schools, for example, health care, education, and many other things that for Canadians are part of daily life, for us are but a dream and a right for which we constantly struggle, but to which we currently do not have access.

I have also come to realize that it is not countries or cultures which define people. A Central American, for example, thinks of a Canadian as someone who is well-off, has everything he or she needs to

survive, has access to technology, is cold and unfriendly, etc. But upon getting to know people, you realize that it is not like that. You meet people who are concerned about the well-being of others and who are also looking for peace. Although the realities of our lives are very different, the peace we seek is the same.

In the various schools and locations in Canada where we have shown the mural panels painted by different groups, we have spoken about our countries and about Painting Peace. I have been impressed by the attention paid to us, the time dedicated to listen to us, the desire expressed by children, youth and society to know more about our countries and to know what they can do to contribute in the struggle to attain peace. Most important is the desire to continue sharing our experiences, cultures, opinions and to practice solidarity with each other.

I am now certain that we are all agreed that we need a change, and that only by uniting youth and society in general from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Canada and all the countries of the world can we achieve the peace we are seeking.

I would like to end by thanking Change for Children and all the people that made Painting Peace a reality. Projects and initiatives such as this one are critical to spurring the type of dialogue, analysis and sharing necessary to achieve true peace, and the people that contribute to this type of program can rest assured that they are not only contributing to some anonymous program that they will never see. They are contributing to an ongoing process that will continue to bear fruit for years to come.

Thank you.

Youth of the Americas: Tour Update



By Chris Peters

When the **Painting Peace** project began, we thought *the Youth of the Americas Peace Mural* would consist of 30 to 40 panels. Instead, we have 83 completed panels, and nine more in progress. Requests to participate in the project are still coming in, from as far away as Saskatoon, Kelowna, and Whitehorse. The impact of the project has far exceeded our expectations – and it continues to grow.

Individually and collectively, the panels are beautiful works of art. The wide range of styles and themes reflect the diversity of the young artists. But all the panels convey a strong message: that a more just and peaceful world is possible. Since the end of October, that message has been carried to over 15 schools, churches, conferences and special events, from Standoff in the south to Slave Lake in the north. Through its travels, the mural has been viewed by over 8,000 Albertans, many of whom have called it “amazing” and “inspiring.” More inspiring, however, were the connections made between the youth participants.

The tour began in late October with the arrival of six of our young partners from Central America: Erick Acuña, Manuel Guñera, Coralia García, and Mario Téllez from Nicaragua; and Andrea Moreno and Julia Maria Aguilar Periera from El Salvador. Various members of the Alberta youth leadership team (and some new friends as well) joined them on the bus at different times. Through a blown-out tire, a new alternator, several roadside visits by the Alberta Motor Association, and an unexpected overnight stay in Slave Lake, the group traveled the province giving presentations amidst the mural. The presentations included slides, stories and our own music video for the song “Pintando La Paz,” written by our bus driver/tour leaders Frank Bessai and Fredy Martinez. The Painting Peace team shared the histories and current situations of Nicaragua and El Salvador; the social

justice work being done there; and the experience of the Canadian participants in Central America. After each presentation, audience members were invited to ask questions and give comments.

These were the most rewarding times. The discussions were often allowed to go on past the allotted time, and on occasion led to extra activities such as participating in a clay sculpture class. There were school tours, lunches, and snowball fights. At times there were tears, and spontaneous gifts of appreciation from students who were particularly moved. The most important thing learned, as Mario notes, is that while the realities of life in the North and South may be vastly different, the Peace we all seek is the same.

Students heard of the affects of war on youth in Central America, but realized as well that peace is more than just the absence of war – it includes social justice. They recognized that there are still many obstacles to achieving true peace, both in the South and here in Canada. These ideas are expressed not only in the travelling mural but also in the permanent public mural currently being painted in downtown Edmonton. It is divided into three interlocking sections: the obstacles to Peace; what we as individuals do to change things; and what we envision a truly peaceful world to be. It's an enormous undertaking – the final size of the mural is 79' wide by 24' deep. The first section, painted on plywood panels to be mounted at a later date, is near completion. Work on the next two sections will continue into the new year, and Edmonton area youth are invited to participate in the painting.

The new year will also see the completion of other areas of the project. By the time you read this, our Southern friends will have returned to Central America, but their art, their experiences, and their ideas will be recorded in the **Painting Peace** book. A collection of photos of the mural panels, along with stories, poems and other writings from participants in all three countries, will be produced in the spring of 2001. A series of

six beautiful, full-colour posters is available now. Each has a reproduction of one of the mural panels, expressing one of the Manifesto 2000 themes, as well as quotes from the artists. T-shirts are also available, with the **Painting Peace** logo on the front, and a quote from Gandhi on the back: “We must become the change we want to see.”

This quote is the essence of the Painting Peace project, expressed in greater detail through the pledges of the Manifesto 2000. Our goal is to encourage people of all ages to look at what peace really means, and how they can contribute to positive social change. The question “What can I do?” has come up again and again at our presentations. The answer is different for each person – it may be volunteering, letter-writing or participating in peaceful protests. But simply learning about what's going on in the world, and acknowledging that we all share the responsibility for change, is a good place to start.

Many of the Painting Peace youth from Central America work with organizations supported by Change for Children. Your donations make a great difference in helping these young people continue their work for change and social justice. Please contact us for more information on how you can contribute to specific projects, or other ways to get involved.



Painting a panel for the mural

New Project Initiatives

By Ricardo Acuña

As most of you know, one of our goals at Change for Children is to build solidarity between our supporters in Canada, and our partners in the South. We also receive numerous requests from supporters for information on specific projects that they can contribute to financially. For these reasons, we like to include information on current projects in our newsletter. The projects featured below are all new initiatives, which have recently been submitted to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and/or the Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta. If they are approved by these agencies, the Wild Rose Foundation will match all donor dollars for these projects on a one-to-one basis, and CIDA will match all donor dollars on a two-to-one basis. Projects that are approved for funding from both agencies will result in a total of six dollars going to the project for every dollar received from donors.

Improvement of Textile Production – Guatemala

The project takes place in a number of communities in the municipality of Comitancillo, a semi-remote municipality located in the western highlands of Guatemala, in the Department of San Marcos. Comitancillo has a population of approximately 53,000 Mam-speaking Mayans, most of whom live in the mountainsides in 43 small villages which make up the municipality. It will be implemented in conjunction with an organization called AMMID (the Maya-Mam Association for Research and Development). AMMID was born in April 1992 out of a program designed to train and develop community leaders in the area of community development.

The majority of residents of Comitancillo are poor subsistence farmers who use traditional agricultural techniques to grow their corn and beans, as well as some wheat, fruit and potatoes. Agriculture is the basis of the people's economic lives but it rarely provides more than just enough to feed their families. The people of Comitancillo face a variety of problems including a lack of adequate income, a high

level of illiteracy, high indices of malnutrition and low levels of education and training. The years 1992-1995 saw the birth and phenomenal growth of the AMMID Women's Groups which gained a membership of almost 500 aboriginal women in a number of villages. Demands from other villages to organize chapters and carry out activities quickly surpassed the Group's infrastructural capacity. For this reason, CFCA supported a project in 1996 to strengthen the institutional capacity of the organization.

To date, the Women's Groups have been producing textiles on a small scale. Their main products are blouses and guipiles (traditional Mayan garment), but some of the groups are also producing woven fabrics, haversacks, hats and change purses. Their production has been based exclusively on orders received from individuals in the community. Currently, 95% of the traditional women's clothing sold in Comitancillo is brought in from outside the municipality – from municipalities in Guatemala which specialise in the production of fabric and traditional clothing. Merchants from Comitancillo purchase their product in bulk from these municipalities, and sell them in the market. The textiles produced by the AMMID Women's Groups are of similar or better quality than those brought in, and

can be made according to the taste of the purchaser. Although the Women's Groups do not yet have the capacity to produce bulk quantities, their product is usually the same price or cheaper than the imported product because they do not have to pay transport or middle-people.

This project, therefore, supports five of the AMMID Women's Groups as they seek to expand their productive capacity in traditional Guatemalan textiles. It will also provide increased opportunity for them to market their products. This will be done through the purchase of new machinery, the training of the women on the use of the machinery, the construction of a production centre, the renting and staffing of a market stall for the women's products, and ongoing training in the areas of business administration, production and marketing plans, and strategic planning. The project will ultimately result in increased income levels for the Women's Groups and their members, a greater selection of quality textiles available at a lower price for the community at large, increased self-esteem, respect and community involvement for the women, and a greater understanding by the community at large of the cultural importance and meaning of traditional local textiles.



Members of one of the Mexican Women's Groups

Capacitation of Women's Groups – Mexico

This project will be carried out in conjunction with the Mexican NGO Comunidad, A.C. Comunidad is based in the city of Cuernavaca in the state of Morelos, Mexico. It was founded in 1996 by a group of community activists who saw the need for a foundation with a solid organisational infrastructure, human and financial resources, and the administrative capacity to support smaller community groups in their development initiatives throughout the state of Morelos. Project activities will take place in eight communities in the state of Morelos, in central Mexico. Morelos, situated 70 km south of Mexico City, has a population of just under 1.5 million.

Mexico has been embroiled in a deep economic crisis since the early 1980's. This economic crisis has had especially devastating effects on the people in areas where most of the production comes from agriculture rather than industry. The situation is now deteriorating even more rapidly with the onset of NAFTA and the recent devaluation of the Peso.

The state of Morelos, with its large peasant population, is one of the states that has been hardest hit by the economic crises. As a result of its proximity, over the last 15 years Morelos has, for all intents and purposes, become an extension of Mexico City. This process has accelerated significantly since the earthquake of 1985. The result of these two factors has been a huge urbanisation process in Morelos. The conurbated municipalities of Morelos, which possess some of the best agricultural land in the area, currently account for 70% of the population. This population triples on weekends and holidays due to the amount of traffic from Mexico City.

The socio-economic conditions in the target communities are typical of those in many other Latin American communities. They include a lack of basic services, inadequate shelter, precarious economic activities, lack of health care, poor hygiene, malnutrition, and various contagious diseases – especially among mothers and children. There is a high rate of migration to the United States by males in search of employment. Income generation is characterised by being rural in nature, shared by the entire family, based on subsistence, with little capital, and with the

majority of activities being agricultural with little connection to the 'modern' sector. The need for this project was identified by local women's groups, with support from Comunidad. All of the target groups are currently involved in some form of small scale production or offering of services for income. They identified a lack of concerted long term strategic and production plans as their greatest barrier to formalizing and expanding their operations. They also identified a need to make their products and services known to the community at large. The goods and services provided by the women's groups have already proven themselves within their own communities as ones that people will pay for. Research conducted by Comunidad demonstrated that there is sufficient demand in the state-wide market for these products and services to comfortably accommodate increased production by these groups.

*Mexico has been embroiled
in a deep economic crisis
since the early 1980's....
The situation is now
deteriorating even more
rapidly with the
onset of NAFTA....*

This project, therefore, will provide ten women's groups with training in the areas of strategic planning and the planning of productive projects. The groups will also be provided with follow-up support by Comunidad as they work to develop and implement their strategic and production plans. Additional support will be provided by the establishment of a non-repayable seed money fund, and revolving loan fund for the women's groups to access. The results of this project will include increased production and income for the women's groups, improved socio-economic conditions for the women and their families, more accessible goods and services for the community at large, and a working example that can be replicated by other small groups with micro-enterprise projects.

Muralism Workshops for Children and Youth – Nicaragua

This project will be implemented by the Nicaragua organization Talleres de Muralismo Infantil-Juvenil (Muralism

Workshops for Children and Youth). Talleres is an organization born in 1989 in the North-Central Nicaraguan city of Estelí. The organization arose out of the recognition by a group of young artists of the need and right of children to artistic expression as a part of their physiological and social development. A need which has been clearly established as an intrinsic part of the process of human development.

The artists, realizing that there were limited opportunities for this kind of development for children in Estelí, began offering these spaces for artistic development to poor children from the barrios of Estelí, and supported this activity with specific attention and activities designed to develop the children's self-identity, self-esteem, leadership, and full participation in society. Talleres de Muralismo currently reaches over 300 children, adolescents and youth through five workshops which are carried out weekly during the school year.

Nicaragua is largely a country of children and adolescents. Of its current population of 5 million people, 53% are under the age of 18. The average Nicaraguan household contains 5.7 people, and over 50% of them are headed by women. Currently, 70% of the population lives in poverty, and 60% has no fixed employment, surviving mostly through activities in the country's informal sector. As a result of the dire social and economic conditions in the country, many children and youth must spend their days trying to make money doing whatever they can – from shining shoes to selling cigarettes and chiclets on street corners. Many other children and youth turn to lives of violence, crime and drugs. Institutionalised violence, the economic crisis, cultural views on children, and aggression within the family are all situations which prohibit any short term change in the circumstances of Nicaraguan children and adolescents – especially those who live and/or work on the streets.

Given these circumstances, it is evident that there is a pressing need to create spaces for children to express themselves and interact with each other through discussion, the arts and recreational activities. Even in cases where it is intended to create these spaces, teachers, educators and parents tend to impose strict restrictions on what

...continued on page 6

Projects Corner

...continued from previous page

recreation and artistic expression should consist of. A drawing, for example, is usually only considered 'good' if it represents reality accurately with the exact colours and forms, without leaving any room for imagination, creativity, fantasy, and the psychological processes experienced by children. For the last 11 years, Talleres de Muralismo has been working to create authentic spaces for creativity and recreation.

In May, 1999 Talleres de Muralismo undertook an intensive study on the situation of children in Estelí in order to better understand their problems and needs, and to obtain information on the impacts that their programs have had over the years. The study revealed that those children, families and communities that had come into contact with Talleres had benefited greatly from the programming. Children who have participated in the programming at Talleres are, generally, more confident, self-aware and more involved in their communities. Families and communities that have come into contact with Talleres tend to demonstrate a greater appreciation of children, their abilities, and the role they can play in the transformation of society.

The study also revealed, however, that there are areas of significant need that are not currently being addressed by the programming at Talleres. The most pressing of these were determined to be youth in the Nicaraguan penal system, youth in rural areas, and education and awareness-raising on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Nicaraguan Code on Children and Adolescents. This project, therefore, was designed to support the ongoing work and activities of Talleres, while at the same time providing the resources necessary to expand their programming into these new areas.

Furthermore, the research conducted highlighted the importance of educators continuing to develop artistically while they teach the children. This ensures that they continue to develop as artists in their own right, that the passion they feel for the art-form remains vibrant and is passed on to the children, and that they can teach techniques and styles with authority. This is especially the case since most of the educators have come up through the Talleres workshops, and it is crucial that

their personal process of development not be halted while they facilitate the development of other children.

This project, therefore, will provide funding for Talleres to continue providing the workshops they now have, and will facilitate the expansion of activities to include workshops for youth in federal penitentiaries, rural youth, and will add a concerted focus on the rights of children and youth. It will also provide for the ongoing artistic and pedagogical development of the educators involved with Talleres de Muralismo.

Institutional Strengthening Project – Nicaragua

This project is in support of El Bloque Intercomunitario Pro-bienestar Cristiano (the Christian Inter-community Block for Well-being). El Bloque, which was founded in 1985, works in an area covering 2,400 km² in the northwest corner of Nicaragua. Its foundations are in the base Christian community movement of Central America, but it's ongoing programs include community schools, environmental education, productive cooperatives, community health promotion, technical support for agriculture (including grains, cattle and poultry projects), natural medicine centres, child and adult literacy, support for small business initiatives, and overall community organization. El Bloque also owns a centrally located property that serves for pilot farm projects for the communities, and for income-generating initiatives for El Bloque. Pilot demonstration projects to date have included a reforestation area, an organic vegetable garden, a chicken coop, a feed production project, and various others. The population base of the region where El Bloque works is approximately 60,000 people, spread out over 210 farm communities.

Up until 1998, El Bloque had been able to finance their administrative costs with the dues and contributions of participating communities, and through revenue-generating projects which it ran out of its centrally located plot of land. In 1998, the region where El Bloque works, was devastated by Hurricane Mitch. Small farmers lost their crops, many lost their homes, and El Bloque lost all of their income-generating ventures on their project land. El Bloque, with the assistance of numerous international agencies

(including Change for Children, CIDA and the Wild Rose Foundation) was able to play a significant role in the implementation of emergency relief measures, and of rehabilitation of family and communal farms. Given the circumstances, and the extent of the destruction, El Bloque did not use any of the hurricane relief funds to cover their administrative costs.

Since that time, the economic conditions in the target communities have not improved. Environmental conditions have meant the loss of more crops over the last two years, and El Bloque has not been in a position to get their income-generating projects back off the ground. The result of these circumstances has been the complete absence of revenue for administrative and technical expenses. At the same time, as a result of hurricane relief efforts, El Bloque is implementing more programs than ever before.

*In 1988, the region where
El Bloque works was
devastated by
Hurricane Mitch*

This project, therefore, supports El Bloque as it seeks to expand its administrative capacity and ability to fund and implement future projects. The project will provide funding for administrative and technical salaries, and other administrative expenses, in order for El Bloque to retain their full staff complement as they embark on the implementation of their new five-year strategic plan. This institutional support will enable El Bloque to begin addressing the issue of institutional sustainability, and begin seeking out alternative sources of income and funding for ongoing core administrative expenses. The project will result in a stronger more sustainable organization with increased financial stability, and continued quality programming in the target communities.

If you would like to contribute to any of these projects, please fill out the donation form on the back page of this newsletter, and write the name of the project you would like to support on the form. If you would like to learn more about these, or any of the projects that Change for Children supports, please contact Ricardo at the CFCA office.

Intern Update

By Kyle Fulton
CFCA Intern in Peru

Greetings from again from Lima-Land! Wow! Politics in Peru is definitely a hands-on lesson! I have undertaken this article three separate times in the last three days and upon reading the paper each morning I realize that new events have rendered my piece irrelevant - this time I am sending it at night!

So, where to begin and who to begin with? Perhaps with Montesinos, the former head of the Secret Service and Fujimori's right hand man, who during a breaking scandal fled to Panama, has since returned, disappeared, and is being charged with money laundering, ordering murder and torture, drug trafficking, arms dealing and that just starts the list. But, rumour has it he is dead.

Perhaps then I should begin with the recently ex-president himself? Who, the headlines told us this morning, is actually Japanese, not Peruvian, and therefore under the Peruvian constitution and law ought never to have been President.

Yesterday, the last few remaining "Fujimoristas" in Congress defended him saying that despite everything he has left the country better than he found it. They used the example of the National Coffers. Bad choice. This morning an article backed by the Minister of Economics revealed that only 5.9% of the 9.221 billion dollars generated from privatizing national companies is left. Oh, and that 500 million is unaccounted for. Not surprisingly, those Congressistas resigned today. It looks like Fujimori will be tried for being "morally unfit". But, if he will ever be extradited from Japan and come to trial is another matter.

Considering this, it might be best to begin by speaking of the coup the opposition recently had in Congress. Finally after ten oppressive years of being pushed around they have succeeded in becoming the majority and electing a new Congressional President. But, then it gets confusing since the new President of Congress is Senor Paniagua who, since noon today, is now the New President of the Republic! With everything changing so quickly it is no wonder that when I asked a taxi driver who the new President was he replied "You mean we have one?!" And to



Kyle holds up the cheque received from CIDA

think I used to find politics boring!

But on to simpler and more pleasant matters. First, a big thank-you to the Canadian International Development Agency's "Local Initiatives Fund and to Señor Nestor Guerra, whose patience and generosity of time (my Spanish tried both!) helped us to receive a grant. This grant, valued at over \$3,000, has enabled us to buy new materials for the kids to work with, create numerous up to date info-packs for the girls, buy new tables for the club house, go on educational excursions (i.e. health centre), paint a mural and much more.

But, let me bring you up to speed on my groups. Last Saturday Juan, the kids and myself took a trip to a neighbouring village, San Juan de Carabayllo, the purpose being to stimulate a talk about the environment and community. Starting off from the "Casa de la Mujer" we ambled along the sun-baked dusty streets strewn with garbage and edged uneasily by barking mad dogs that looked as if they had not seen scraps for a while. Small, lush flower gardens tended with obvious care shone like tiny islands of beauty in the sea of dust and refuse. We took a much used short-cut through a garbage dump where the kids delighted in filling their bags with discarded camera cases, soiled doilies and other "rare" and "valuable" items.

Although startling for me to see them scavenging in the waste it was nothing out of the ordinary for them. What we value depends greatly on our economic reality. I realize that after months of being here the image of a person rummaging in the trash should not be so shocking, since sadly it is a common sight. I walked the whole way hand in hand with Natalie, an affectionate and game ten year old twin girl, whose birthday it happened to be. I asked what the evening had in store for her and her twin - birthday cake, singing, candles, presents? My questions were left unanswered. It piqued my curiosity, never had I met a child who did not want to talk about her birthday! Finally, I realized it was not shyness or modesty that was restraining Natalie from talking but shame and sadness - nothing was happening to mark her eleventh birthday. When money is tight it is reserved for necessities such as food. For many here birthday celebrations are luxuries not taken for granted. It amazed me that such a young girl had the maturity and depth of character to accept this with a shrug of her shoulders and a timid smile. The experience gave me pause - yet another reality check.

And my girls. We recently visited the "Colegio Presentación de María" - a school

...continued on page 10

THANK YOU!

To Volunteers and Donors

As we reflect on the past year, we realize how much we have to be thankful for! Change for Children Association simply could not exist without the hundreds of individuals that believe in and financially support the work of our organization and Southern partners. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all of you, and offer our thanks for your generous acts of solidarity. You are the foundation of Change for Children. We wish you peace. Muchas gracias!

We would also like to acknowledge the many individuals that gave of their time and abilities as volunteers for Change for Children during the many educational events, fundraisers and other functions this year. These are the working hands of Change for Children. Thank you:

Abby Derkach	Dinorah Garcia	Joey Lee Son	Marina Garcia	Sandy Myers
Alex Bailey	Erin Kelly	Jordan Perrault	Mario Acuna	Sarah Ducholke
Alyssa Fraser	Erin Park	Jose Garcia	Mark Halpert	Sarah McClelland
Armand Gallinger	Eugene Ulmer	Juan Molina	Matt Berezan	Sarah Shaughnessy
Baydon Welsh	Gillian Schulz-	Katie Berezan	Meagan Appleby	Scott Harris
Belle Bertrand	McPherson	Kelsey Nelson	Melle Huizinga	Shannon Sears
Brenda Allan	Gingie Welsh	Kelsey Smart	Michael Hoyt	Sharon Strong
Brenda Roberts	Heather Morgan	Kristin Smith	Morna Fraser	Steve Lowe
Bunny Edwards	Heloisa Modesto	Laura Berezan	Nasser Tahbaz	Sylvia Galbraith
Caroline Davis	Ian Mulder	Laura Roberts	Natalie Moran	Tamie Perryment
Chris Peters	Jackie Montgomery	Lee Britton	Nicole Smith	Teresa Paslawski
Chris Schultz	Jania Teare	Lily Welsh	Pat Sears	Tom McDonnell
Clarence Visser	Jen King	Linda Chipeniuk	Patsy Ho	Tommy Marr
Colleen Duffy	Jennifer Blair	Lucy Acuna	Paul Pucylo	Travis Teare
Corrina Mak	Jenny Visser	Lyle Sweeny	Prakash David	Trevor King
Cynthia Jalbeit	Jessica Breton	Lynette Schulz	Randy Kohan	Vadim Sebeykin
Darren Woluschuk	Jessica Walker	Margo Nelson	Roger Garcia	Vanessa Bailey
Delmy Garcia	Joel Rhein	Marguerite Watson	Ronnie Stark	Zosha Dicastrì



Change for Children volunteers sell our crafts at this year's Just Christmas Sale

Our annual fundraiser, Instruments of Change, was again very successful in 2000. Many, many individuals, organizations and businesses supported us with donations of goods and services for our silent auction. It is with sincere thanks that we recognize the following donors that contributed to Instruments of Change's success.

Against the Grain	Expressions	Meadowsweet Honey	Take Stock Inc.	Vudu
Alberta Ballet	Eyot Creek Farm	Merle Norman	Ten Thousand Villages	Watkins
Alhambra Books	Farmer's Daughters	Metalsmiths	Terra Cota	WEM Attractions
Apples & Dandelions	Fort Door	Michelle Belanger	Terry Berezan	West Country Herbs
Art by Larisa	Fort Edmonton/Valley	Morgan Bamford	Theatre Network	Western Cycle
Arthur Murray	Zoo	Moxie's	Tiffany's Décor	Windscape Clothing
Artifacts Trading	French Meadow Bakery	Music World	Travel Shop	Workshop West Theatre
Company	Fringe Theatre	Mutual Propane Ltd.	Unique Stone & Trophy	Yardbird Suite
Artistic Sewing Centre Ltd.	Fringe Theatre	Notables	Vaughn H. Meyers & Associates	Yock Loke's children's Clothing
As Time Goes By	Adventures	O'Byrne's	Vivian's Kitchen	Yuk Yuk's
Ascendant Books	G Dennis & Company	Occhiali	Vriend's Organic Farm	Zoryana
Back Rub Company	Garneau/Princess	Olde and Retold		
Bedrock Seed Bank	Theatres	OptaDerm		
Blu's	Genesis Body Care	Orlando Books		
Bob's Piano Service	Gerry Bailey	Out of the Blue		
Body Shop	GHU Framing	Parkallen Healing Arts		
Bugs 'n' Berries	Godiva Chocolates	Pat Sears		
Burlington on Whyte	GrabbaJabba	Pink Lime		
Busy "B" workshop	Grateful Threads	Planet Golf		
Busy Bee Bargains	Gravity Pope	Provincial Museum		
CC on Whyte	Hair Razors	Purdy's Chocolates		
Centennial Flight Centre	Helen Underwood	Pure Radiant Energy		
Cecily Mills	High Level Diner	Quatre Foil Designs		
Color Blind	Hole's Greenhouse	Rapid Fire/Varscona		
Conrad's Sugarbowl	Hosanna Lutheran Church	Theatre		
Coupe Studio & Pottery	IKEA	Redbike		
Crafts Canada	Integrations Health Ctr.	Resorts of the Canadian Rockies		
Crankpots	Iron Bridge	Riverbend Gardens		
Creperie	Iron Horse	Ross Men's Wear		
Crystal Glass	Itonica	Rowena Gifts		
D. Garcia	Jeanna Baty	Ruth-Ellen Appleby		
Darren Woluschuk	Jennifer Berezan	Sarah Shaughnessy		
Delvin Designs	Junque Cellar	Save-on Foods		
Ditch & Company	Jupiter Glass Galleria	Second Cup		
Divine Decadence	Khazana	Self Heal Herbal Centre		
Doug Grover	King & I	Shaggies Raghause		
Earth's General Store	Kinsmen	Sharon Strong		
Edmonton 2001	Laine Sastok	Silver Star Metaphysics		
Edmonton Art Gallery	Laser Quest	Sol Andino		
Edmonton Drillers	Leave it to Jane Theatre	Soulminders Steel & Art Studio		
Edmonton Eskimos	Little Royal Framing	Space Race		
Edmonton Oilers	MacEwan Centre for Sports & Wellness	Spoonman		
Edmonton Opera	Mad Scrapper	St. John's Ambulance		
Edmonton Skydive Club	Manpower Services	St. Paul Studios		
Edmonton Space & Science Centre	Margie McCrea	Strange Frames		
Edmonton Symphony Orchestra	Margo Nelson	Studio Theatre		
Elephant & Castle	Marvel College	Styling Elegance		
Erin Kelly	Mayfield Grill	Sub Sea Experience		
Eugene Ulmer	Mayfield Inn & Suites	Synapse Photography & Design		

Please accept our sincerest apologies if we accidentally omitted any volunteer or donor. We do appreciate the gifts of time, talent and resources from all of our community.

In appreciation of your support and solidarity over the year, we invite you to

Change for Children's Annual Open House and Volunteer Appreciation

Friday December 15
4:00 pm to 10:00 pm
at Change for Children
10545 - 92 Street
(St. Michael School)

Please join with our staff and Board of Directors as we express our thanks to our supporters and celebrate the season with some holiday cheer.

Call the CFCA office at 448-1505 for more information.

All are welcome!!

The Path to Peace in El Salvador

By Father Pedro Declercq

In order to speak about peace, it is first necessary to properly translate the word "peace", so that we may be sure we are speaking of the same reality. Peace is not tranquility, silence, the peace of cemeteries, but rather the exact opposite. Peace is the translation of the word "shalom" – a Hebrew word which means justice, value, courage, harmony, love – perhaps the best translation is in the Nicaraguan song which says "not one step backward my friend". This was the word spoken by those condemned to the gas chambers during the second world war. They wished each other "shalom". The trusted that God would not abandon them despite the criminality of humans...

From there we can derive that peace can never be built from power, money or self-interest. Power leads to domination, money leads to exploitation, and self-interest leads to corruption. They cannot lead to peace, because no one and nothing can give what it does not have.

Peace is always built by the victims of established society, by the crucified. It

was the crucified and risen Jesus who wished peace to his disheartened disciples, as if to say "not one step backward my friends".

*Peace is not tranquility,
silence, the peace of
cemeteries, but rather the
exact opposite.*

This phenomenon can be seen once again in El Salvador, and is a source of hope. In a system where health care is being privatized, it is the sick who are organizing in mutual help and support. The current system tends to divide people into the good and the bad, and oppresses those who are excluded. It will not be the police that save El Salvador, but rather these excluded ones who begin to act in a constructive manner without excluding others.

Peace is based on justice, justice on truth, and truth will set us free (John 8, 32). This is seen in El Salvador when the Jesuit priests demand the truth about the martyring of their colleagues and their

assistants. Many are bothered by this because they say it is the opening of old wounds and contrary to peace. But the poor know that peace can only be built with truth, never with lies.

It is with the martyrs that we build peace, and we know that the poor celebrate their martyrs. The tomb of Monsignor Romero is visited often as a source of inspiration. The rose garden where the bodies of the Jesuits lay is a historical place for the poor. It is from historical memory that peace is built. Thus the tremendous importance of the painters for peace who are helping youth recapture historical memory through art. Their paintings are like an open bible which give truth and peace.

I think that for Canada it is necessary to enable the victims to speak and act as a historical force. The film made recently about the tour to Nicaragua should be made known. And direct contact should be promoted as a means of extending the wave of peace so that in the midst of a deadly neo-liberal system the globalization of peace and solidarity can grow – so that as brothers we can extend our hands and wish each other "not one step backward".

Intern Update

....continued from page 8

run by Canadian nuns in Carabayllo. We went to their annual fair where they show-off their achievements from the past year. Upon entering the grounds my jaw dropped and my eyes bulged (in this I was not alone) on the stage, enthusiastically gyrating to the beat of Techno-Cumbia, were four girls clad in skin tight, strategically placed plastic outfits- that is if a few ribbons can be called an outfit. Remember that this is a Catholic school! Wondering what I was getting my girls into we pulled ourselves away and went to peruse the stations. On display were items from the seven workshops they provide. Thanks to a private donation seven of my girls will be attending the school in January in order to gain practical skills that will help improve their lives. Most of the girls are interested in "juguetería", toy making, because they are able to sell the end

results in the street or market. This is a convenient system as many of them have children and need to bring them along. One of my girls, Bertha, remarked that juguetería is a good choice because they could also teach it to their friends, neighbours and the other girls in the group. It was gratifying to see that sense of community, since it is something we have been working on building.

After taking in the stands I could no longer resist the tempting smells wafting through the air. The idea that it might be fun to sample some of the goodies was met with swift nods of the head and big smiles. The girls all opted for a kebab of "anticuchos", grilled beef heart. Although one of Peru's most popular specialties I could not stomach the idea of eating heart; even despite the torrent of persuasive adjectives it provokes in Peruvians- "riquismo", "delicioso", "lo mejor". Hearts are for loving not eating I reasoned. Sitting on

the bench, I munched my stale, soggy chicken sandwich while one eye watched tangy juices drip from the girls' kebabs. Squished together as we were, I was soon overcome by the smacking of lips, sighs of "riquismo" and bewitching smell. I asked for a taste- love at first bite. This reinforced the lesson Peruvian politics has provided me - not everything is as it seems!

My time here has flown by and as things wind-down I have begun to note the things I will greatly miss. Although my experience in Lima has been punctuated by difficulties, I realize that these difficulties are what are implied in the term "cultural differences" and that without these I would not have experienced a "cultural exchange". Peru is different from Canada in more ways than I could ever hope to explain but feeling the force of these differences has made my time here rich with memories.

Youth Summit 2000

Creating a Culture of Peace



By Joseph Lee Son
Youth Summit Coordinator

As part of UNESCO's Manifesto 2000 official program, Change for Children co-sponsored *Youth Summit 2000 - Creating a Culture of Peace* which was held at the Arts Barns in Edmonton from Nov 14 to 17, 2000.

Expanded to four days, the Summit was a resounding success. With 134 registrants from 25 junior high schools and 86 from 13 senior high schools from as far as Calgary, Wainwright, Rochester and Jasper, the Summit will have left a profound and lasting impression across the province. Building on the six peace themes of Manifesto 2000, students explored and examined the many roles peace plays in our daily existence. Students then expressed their interpretation and vision of peace through participating in creative workshops such as creative writing/poetry, dance, drama, sculpture and mural painting

. The result was inspiring and hopeful as youth - one by one - took their stand on the role they can play in creating a culture of peace.

The visiting youth from El Salvador and Nicaragua were also active participants. They presented a brief insight into their reality and challenged the Canadian youth to examine their place and role in community building. The week ended with a celebratory Peace Jam which showcased poetic and musical talents of many of the youth.

With any event of this magnitude, there are many players. Thank you to:

- the numerous volunteers who assisted in logistics and facilitation;
- the sponsoring organizations including the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund, Change for Children Association, The Edmonton YMCA, Learning Network and the Canadian International Development Agency;*
- Ian Mulder, coordinator of the Peace Jam.
- the 32 local facilitators who gave their time, expertise and vision to explore, create and present a culture of peace for us all.

For more information on the manifesto 2000 Program or to sign the pledge, visit www.unesco.org/manifesto2000

The Peace Jam

By Ian Mulder
Peace Jam Coordinator

The Peace Jam was the wrap up party on the Friday evening after the weeklong Youth Summit. Youth bands, soloists, singer-songwriters, and poets were invited to attend and share their work with other youth from the summit, as well as with parents and members of the general public. To spice up the creative energies, a \$200 prize was offered for best original song or poem on the theme of peace. In total, six musical groups and five poets performed, all of which were by all accounts, terrific.

From bands like, Deux-Six, a French language rock band from Maurice Lavalee, to poets like Dylan, to the energetic punk sounds of Smiling Politely, the evening was incredibly eclectic and the crowd appreciative. Highlights of the evening included the terrific performances of two of the Youth Summit's workshop leaders, Liam Black and Gord Oaks. Oaks opened the evening with a handful of original songs flavoured like 70's era Cat Stevens, while Black recited his epic poem about his experiences in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

From my perspective, I was greatly impressed also with the quality of the performances of the younger bands: all of them, without exception were not only talented, but also professional, and their boundless energy really made the evening a success. In the end, with much difficulty, the panel of judges succeeded in selecting two performers for the Peace Jam prize. Congratulations to Kim Mulder for her spectacular poetry, and to And I Quote of Drayton Valley for their raucous Hardcore vibe.



One of many Youth Summit workshops

Membership Matters

Annual memberships expire as of December 31, 2000. Please consider renewing your membership or becoming a member if you have not been over the past year. Membership cost is \$15.00 per year, which helps us to cover the expense of producing and mailing out this newsletter. As a member, you receive voting rights at General Meetings, special rates for fundraisers and other events, borrowing privileges at our resource library and the knowledge that you are an integral part of an organization working hard for social change. If you are unsure about the status of your membership, please call the office at (780) 448-1505.



Two participants in a CFCA project in Managua, Nicaragua

Comments?

We appreciate receiving your comments, suggestions or criticisms about this publication or it's content. Please mail, fax, or e-mail your letters to us at:

**CFCA, 10545 - 92 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1V1.
Fax: (780) 448-1507
email: cfca@web.net.**

Building Bridges

is published three times annually by Change for Children as part of its education program. The views expressed by the publication are not necessarily those of Change for Children Association.

Editing and Design: Cherie Klassen & Ricardo Acuña



While **CHANGE FOR CHILDREN ASSOCIATION (CFCA)** highly values its partnerships with communities of various religious and political persuasions, we are a non-sectarian, non-partisan society. Our development projects are located primarily in Central and South America, Mexico and the Philippines. Types of projects, their cost and priority are determined by the indigenous co-operants living in these countries, according to their current needs.



Please support CFCA's Important Work with a CHARITABLE DONATION

Please find enclosed a tax-creditable donation to be used in the following areas:

- \$ 15.00 To purchase a 2001 Change for Children membership (non tax receiptable)
- \$ _____ Undesignated - to be used as needed by Change for Children Association
- \$ _____ Your general project account (supporting a variety of projects as required)
- \$ _____ You projects in the country of _____
(current projects are in Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil)
- \$ _____ Your Development Education Program here in Canada
- \$ _____ **Total amount enclosed.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Change for Children Association (CFCA), 10545 - 92 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1V1
Phone (780) 448-1505 Fax (780) 448-1507 Email: cfca@web.net www.changeforchildren.org
Registered Charitable Organization No. 11884 9496 RR0001

Support Change for Children with a PRE-AUTHORIZED PAYMENT PLAN

I/we authorize Change for Children Association to begin automatic monthly withdrawals from my/our bank account as specified on the enclosed cheque marked "VOID". This authority is to remain in effect until further notification from myself/ourselves or Change for Children.

Please make a withdrawal in the amount of \$ _____ on the _____th of each month.

_____ / _____

_____ / _____

Signature(s) of Account Holder / Date Signed