



7 February 2008

Dear Friends at Dining for Women,

It is with much gratitude that I am writing to show you how your generosity in 2007 was spent. Enclosed is your official donation record, should you need it as an organization, along with our year-end summary letter.

More specifically, your donation was used for the Fair Trade Zone, the women's sewing cooperative. I am attaching below the stories of two of the founding members of the cooperative, and know that you will enjoy getting to know them a little.

Your donation provided financial support when the cooperative was in cash-flow trouble. The cooperative is slowly learning to deal with huge cloth orders, client payment schedules, payroll deadlines, routine utility bills, etc., and all of that in a society where the electricity was cut for many hours daily, where transportation strikes make getting business orders delivered to appropriate officials difficult, and where the cooperative members and their families have grown up only living with daily deadlines instead of learning to do long-term planning. It is no wonder that they found themselves unable, throughout the year to take care of major bills. In each of these moments, because your funding was available, we were able to underwrite them. Since there were times in the year when there literally was no available cash in the bank, this cushion designated for their use was critical. Thank you!

The breakdown of your donation of \$7,153.87 use was as follows:

Advance to purchase clothing labels:	\$1,085.00
Advance for attendance at international meeting	\$ 35.00
Advance for electric bills	\$ 4,330.00
Advance for electric generator maintenance	\$ 650.00
Advance for biodiesel for generator	\$ 630.00
Advance for security services	\$ 3,280.00
Total advanced:	\$ 10,010.00
Amount repaid during 2007:	\$ 2,570.00
Total unreimbursed advances (mostly your funding):	\$ 7,440.00

Thank you!

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Rosa Dávila



Rosa and daughters

loses the opportunity to go to school, she loses the opportunity to be make something of her life.

I started in the Nueva Vida sewing co-op because I didn't have work, and I was taking in washing to feed my children. My oldest daughter was in school and I didn't know if she was going to be able to continue because of the cost. I felt that since the cooperative was starting at zero, I had an opportunity here. The co-op has been a huge achievement for me personally – it has been a real leap because before I was someone who knew nothing of computers, meetings, airplanes, nothing even of high school. I was afraid of everything.

In our community there is a lot of unemployment – if you go to my block on any given day, you will see that all the women are in the free trade zones and all their men are watching television. In the cooperative we have been improving in everything and I hope that we will be able to give more employment and permanent work to people.

After we built our building, I worked as a sewer in the co-op. After more years in school, and administrative training, I began to be a spokeswoman for the cooperative at international meetings, and I currently am the Warehouse Manager, in charge of our supplies and cloth inventory.

I was born in a small village in Mateare, Nicaragua, the oldest in my family of 11 children. My mother was a housewife and my father was a farmer; he planted beans, maize, tomatoes, papaya and watermelon. I didn't learn to read until I was 13 and I came to Ciudad Sandino two years later so that I could continue with my studies. I was able to finish primary school.

I live in Ciudad Sandino with my three children and their father. My children – Karen, Jorge, and Haydee – are all in school and I study on Saturdays. I'm in my last year of high school, in the same class as my daughter Karen. I want my children to have all the opportunities I never had, and I hope that they become capable of managing by themselves. When I go through the alleyways of the market and I see the glue sniffers on the ground, I feel bad for them and wonder if I will see my children there one day. Each day that a child



Rosa working in her cooperative

Zulema Mena



Zulema and son David

I was born in Dipilto, in the department of Ocotal, Nicaragua. In my family there were 15 children, but there are only 11 of us living now. My father was an evangelical pastor in the Assembly of God church, and my mother made bread and baked goods. I was only able to study through my sophomore year in high school because there were so many of us, and so I worked as a street vendor. Before Hurricane Mitch I lived in Aqualinca in Managua and I bought shoes and clothing on credit to sell. Mitch affected me most economically, because we had a mechanic shop where my husband repaired cars and we lost it in the hurricane.

I now live in Nueva Vida with my husband and four children. All of my children are studying: Ruth, daughter, studies on Saturdays so that she can take care of the smaller children during the week. I have to find a way to help them study because Ruth wants to be a doctor, Manuel wants to be an architect, Alvaro wants to be a lawyer and David, my youngest, wants to make \$500,000 a year!

In my community there is a lot of poverty: barefooted kids who survive by digging in the garbage dump behind

Nueva Vida. There is a lot of family violence, and a lot of child abuse – there are poor people who send their kids to beg on the buses and the children become addicted to glue. There is a woman who grabs a belt and beats her daughter with it every time she asks for food. If this cooperative project becomes bigger, my dream is to give work to these poor people in my neighborhood. So many ask me for work, but it would be a lie to promise them something until we can get things under control here. But with the way the project is progressing now, I feel like we will reach that end.

I know that sometimes it is difficult for us to plan well, and sometimes things happen that we can't control that upset our clients. But visitors who come see us and what we are trying to do and understand the problems we are facing. One of my responsibilities, besides my work in production, is to speak with visitors and show them around.



Zulema and visitor to the cooperative