

UNITED METHODIST OHIO RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT

VIM PROJECTS - NEJAPA, NICARAGUA

BACKGROUND

Since 1997 Volunteers In Mission (VIM) teams have been supporting the ministry of the Fundación El Samaritano (FES) and its missionaries, Dr. Nour and Carolyn Sirker (unfortunately Carolyn Sirker passed away in June 2013) in the country of Nicaragua. This support has been financial and with mission team labor for many projects of FES. FES has had two primary goals, improvement of medical services and provision of quality education, both of these for those without financial resources to obtain them from other public and private sources. To insure the continuation of FES ministries, the FES missionaries sought and found a new Christian foundation, Foundation AMOS (AMOS), that has the capability and willingness to add FES medical ministries to its own activities. FES will continue to manage the educational ministries, especially at the Christian school, Escuela Carolina de Sirker, in the barrio of Nejapa, which will be the focus of our Ohio River Valley District (ORVD) VIM mission teams projects in 2015.

THIS YEAR'S PROJECTS

ORVD endorsed VIM teams for 2015 will support FES ministries in Nejapa and Managua areas. This will mainly be construction and/or maintenance of the FES school, Escuela Carolina de Sirker. Details will be made available before or by the time of the team orientation meeting.

Additionally, all VIM team members will engage in a variety of humanitarian ministries, among them visitations in maternity and oncology wards in Managua public hospitals for the poor with prayer and useful gifts; and meeting and greeting Nejapa community residents along the roads. Other activities, including cooperation with the Nicaragua Evangelical Methodist Church, will be a part of the team ministries.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Time will be included for worship, sightseeing and shopping.

The mission statement of the VIM teams is
"BUILDING CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS".

PURPOSES OF THIS VIM PROJECT

The purposes of this VIM mission project are to provide volunteers with a short term mission experience:

- 1) that results in needed and meaningful help and support of FES ministries in schools and of the Nicaragua Methodist Church, and shows Christian love to all those encountered in hospitals, schools and community,
- 2) that builds Christian relationships and understanding with the Nicaraguan people they will serve, and within the team,
- 3) that develops a sense of Christ-like service, and
- 4) that leads to significant forward progress in each participant's spiritual journey.

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

This VIM project is endorsed by the ORVD, West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. It is organized and led by Mike Day (June) and Rev. Brad Olson/ Rick Fair (November). All leaders have had leadership experience on several previous VIM team projects in Nicaragua.

PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR SKILLS

Most importantly, volunteers must be people who are HIGHLY COMMITTED CHRISTIANS, those who have a desire to praise God through the demonstration of their faith in service to other people.

VIM projects are intended for most adults, and mature youth. Every project requires a variety of skills such that each participant, regardless of skill level, will gain a feeling of making a positive contribution to the projects and activities. Final project definition, especially those involving construction, will be clarified as the time for the project approaches.

TEAM SIZE

The VIM team size depends on the number of applicants. Past teams have varied from 5 to 30 members.

COST*

The cost is expected to be \$1,300 per person for 2015 which includes all team related expenses from departure to return including air travel from Columbus Ohio, and all expenses for bus, housing, and meals. Each participant will be expected to bring a designated number of layettes and health kits for projects in Nicaragua. Not covered are meals in transit from and to the USA, and personal out-of-pocket expenses.

Financial assistance is available for participants from ORVD churches to reduce individual costs if needed to be able to participate.

A valid US passport is required.

(A **valid** passport is one that expires later than 6 months after **date of return**.)

* Cost may be changed depending on airline costs in effect at the project time.

ABOUT NICARAGUA

Nicaragua is in the center of Central America, south of Honduras and El Salvador, and north of Costa Rica. To the east is the Caribbean Sea with two small Nicaraguan islands, and to the west is the Pacific Ocean. The land is diverse being low and tropical to the east, mountainous to the north and down the west central side. Many of the mountains are of volcanic origin and several are active. There are beautiful beaches along the Pacific Ocean shore. In the interior there is lots of agriculture. Main crops are coffee, bananas, pineapples, sugar cane, tobacco and many fruits and vegetables. There are two large inland lakes near the western side. Lying between these two lakes is Managua, the capital city.

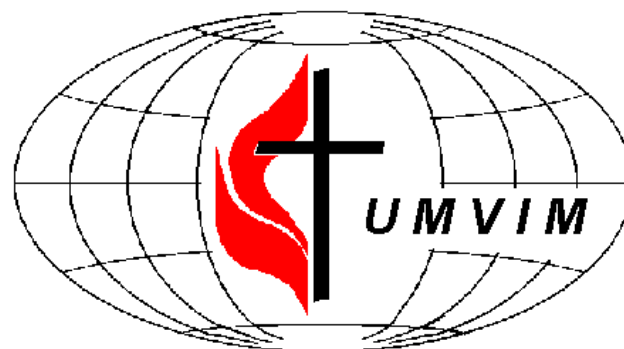
Managua is very different from a usual capital. In 1972 the center of the city was destroyed by a strong earthquake. Now much of the area has been rebuilt. There are still some skeletons of buildings standing, including the old Catholic cathedral, although most of the damaged structures have now been pulled down and new modern construction developed. There are few buildings typical of government. The National Palace has been restored from damage mainly incurred in the civil war of the 1980's and is now a fine museum.

In the 1980's Nicaragua was in great political turmoil as civil war spread throughout the country. Nicaragua was never a rich country, but the civil war ruined what economy there was. Now there is peace again and a democratically elected government. However, it has not been easy for the Nicaraguan people. There has been much improvement in infrastructure, but unemployment remains very high, and there are many poor people. Education and medical care, especially for the poor, is substandard. Political issues are tumultuous. But the people seem happier now to be at peace, and there is optimism as conditions can slowly be seen to improve.

Our VIM teams will have a wonderful opportunity to work with and meet the people of Nicaragua, especially the children, to shop in their markets, and to sightsee in and around Managua, at the lakes, mountains and the Pacific Ocean beach. We will share prayers and gifts of love with women with cancer, and with new mothers, babies at public hospitals, work with school children, and will help our Christian brothers and sisters build increased school capacity at the Nejapa school benefitting the Nejapa community near Managua. We will also spend time assisting the Methodist Evangelical Church of Nicaragua with some of its programs.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND HUMANITARIAN MINISTRIES NEJAPA, NICARAGUA



UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

Christian Love In Action

Building Christian Relationships

June 22-30, 2015

November 7-15, 2015