



El Maestro en Casa, Inc.
ADULT OUTREACH EDUCATION
Ciudad Cívica, Intibucá, Honduras
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<http://lencaeducation.org>
30 July, 2012

Dear friends and generous supporters,

I'm back home again in glorious Vermont, so grateful for the peace of my garden and the clamor of my grandkids.



Sherry Crawford with some of her English students at our Center

It's been an interesting year so far. Well, all years are interesting, but we seem to have launched into a new phase. As promised in my last newsletter, Sherry Crawford became our first non-Peace Corps volunteer, and what a treat she was! She started up our after-school English classes, planted our organic vegetable garden, harvested strawberries from our rooftop greenhouse, painted doors, graded math papers and a zillion other odds and ends which gave our very over-worked teachers a little breathing room. And in her spare time she managed to get me off by back-side to hike in the patchwork hills that



Sherry's organic garden at our Center

surround La Esperanza, with the breath-taking views that remind me of why I fell in love with the place so many years ago.

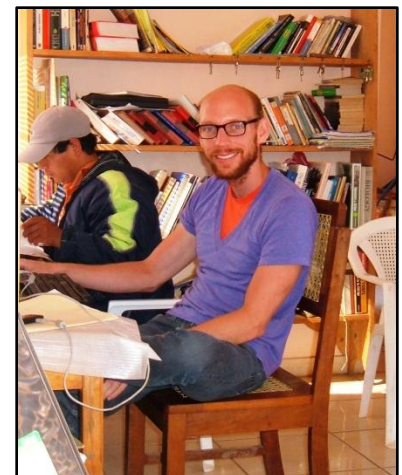


Karen Gordon (l) with me and our teacher Natividad in a community group in Duraznito

While Sherry was with us we also had a visit from Karen Gordon, director of Cup for Education (<http://www.cupforeducation.org/>) which sponsors one of our teachers. For the first time, we were able to take a donor around to our community groups so she could actually see for herself what we do. How exciting is that?

As soon as Sherry finished her two months, Jarod Apperson arrived from Atlanta Georgia to spend 2 ½ months with us. He was also amazing! He took over the English classes and then began giving weekly remedial math classes for 9th and 10th grades in our school. Soon he was traveling to Jesus de Otoro to help the 9th graders there, as well as correcting math homework in all grades. Our 7th grade teacher, Armando, was especially grateful, since he has over 170 students. Jarod also made an immense contribution to the development of our social enterprise.

Soon after Jarod's arrival, the volunteer we had requested from Swisscontact's Senior Expert Corp, Max Leuzinger arrived. Max is a retired Swiss businessman and expert in project and market evaluations. He spent a month with us researching and evaluating various possibilities for a social enterprise that would generate funds for our operating budget, making us more self-sufficient and less dependent on donations. The result was a proposal for the construction of 2 huge greenhouses, on land either donated by the



Our volunteer, Jarod Apperson

Honduran Secretary of Agriculture or a local farmer's association, for the production and commercialization of strawberries and tomatoes. Here's where Jarod's superb accounting skills kicked in. He made a 6-page spread sheet to accompany the proposal, detailing the budget and expected profits over a 10-year period, and making this the most complete and professional proposal we've ever had. Now I just need to find the funding to get it started!! The photo is inside the type of greenhouse we are building, with the expert help of a local farmer, David Euceda. The tomato plants will gradually crawl up the lines which are on pulleys.

This project, though, is more than a source of income for our program. It's a technologically advanced alternative agricultural model for our students and local farmers' groups. Our collaborator, David Euceda, is a local farmer who has spent years testing and improving his techniques, and is successfully producing on a large scale in his climate-controlled greenhouses. There are other greenhouse projects in Intibucá, but none have come close to achieving the success that David has. Why? We believe it's a question of education, the kind of education that opens minds, that promotes problem solving and creative thinking. Unfortunately that is not the kind of education offered in the Honduran public education system. But it is the kind of education we offer. So we feel that this project will be successful, and that it will serve as a teaching model for our students and local farmers' groups as well.



David explains his greenhouse to Max (I) and me (with umbrella)



Our student group in San Antonio

Our student population grew a bit this year: 460 students, up from 430 last year. But many of these students didn't register until classes were scheduled to begin—and some not until after! This was because 3 of our largest community groups, who receive some support from various religious organizations, were all having organizational problems that required our diplomatic intervention. We were finally able to sort things out, but it gets trickier every year. We now have 7 community groups, 6 of which have 3 grade levels, plus the groups who come to our Center in La Esperanza. And we only have 4 teachers and 2 motorcycles! Losing the Peace Corps volunteers really exacerbated the problem. We're hopeful, though, that we'll find some good long-term volunteers. If you know anyone who speaks Spanish and is looking for an internship or just an interesting volunteer experience, be sure to direct them to our website: <http://lencaeducation.org/support-us/volunteer/>

Or if you know someone who speaks Spanish and is looking for a new direction in their lives, I am finally actively looking for my own replacement! Although I'm sure I will always remain connected to El Maestro en Casa, it's time for someone else to take over running the show. All the pertinent information is on the website <http://lencaeducation.org/support-us/interim-executive-director/> and I'll be here in Vermont until 26 September, eager to meet with anyone as crazy as I am.

As always, I am indebted to you all for your moral and/or financial support. We wouldn't exist without you.

Susan