



THE NORFOLK AND NORWICH - EL VIEJO FRIENDSHIP LINK

The twinning organisation for the civic twinning of Norwich with El Viejo, Nicaragua



NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

TWINNING COMMITTEE – 5th June, 2008

REPORT OF NORWICH & NORFOLK – EL VIEJO FRIENDSHIP LINK

The Nicaraguan new school year started on 14th February, 2008. The start of the new term included 33 new pupils as replacements for those who had graduated from Grade 6 in November last year.

The main activity has involved the annual purchase and distribution of the schoolbags, exercise books, pens and pencils to the 200 scholarship children. As usual this is a major event for the communities involved with parents, teachers and pupils from the various schools coming together for the occasion. The distribution takes place on two days, one for the more rural schools and the other for the two urban schools in the city. This year our representative managed to have the schoolbags emblazoned with Link logo and title.



Parents and pupils at the distribution of schoolbags

The next big handover will be the uniforms. This involves a big logistical exercise in making sure that each child gets a uniform of the right size. Once this has been achieved, our representative sets about organising the purchase of the various items and negotiating the best price she can achieve. Shirts and blouses present few problems but trousers and skirts are made up locally from cloth bought in bulk. This is important because it provides work for local people and helps the local economy



One of the children from the school at the Norwich Community receiving his schoolbag. On the right is teacher Lisbeth Betancur, then Enrique Pineda, Director of the local group of schools, Link representative Carmela Hernandez, and the child's grandmother.



Publicity for the Link!

The Link logo that appears on all 200 schoolbags this year.

Unfortunately our representative fell ill during the preparation for the distribution which has delayed the whole exercise. She was a victim of the outbreak of kidney problems that has become a serious health issue. It seems to affect the sugar growing areas of the country, of which El Viejo is one. Many of our schools are located in the very large areas of sugar cane plantations and this is a cause of concern. The Government now seems to be treating the matter seriously and the local Council is also doing what it can to help.

This time of the year tends to be a little quiet so far as the local activity is concerned in contrast to what is happening in El Viejo itself, but we are now hoping to make some progress with the proposed school garden project. We are waiting for the local environmental NGO to send us information about their proposals for developing teaching material for use in the schools and also to give us advice about appropriate plants that could be incorporated into the project. In the first instance it is intended to carry out a pilot scheme with one of the schools in order to evaluate the project. We hope to be able to report progress with this project later in the year.

Finally, the Link's annual sponsored summer bike ride will take place this year on Sunday 20th July. This is our major local fundraising even and once again we will be riding to Burston and hoping to boost our funds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Link Secretary', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Link Secretary