

**TWINNING COMMITTEE – 2 October, 2008.**

**REPORT OF NORFOLK AND NORWICH – EL VIEJO FRIENDSHIP LINK**

1. It has been a rather quiet summer so far as activity in El Viejo has been concerned. In the early part of the summer our representative completed the distribution of material and equipment under the scholarship project. Special events were held at all eight of the schools involved and there was good participation, particularly by parents which was good to see.

2. The Link's annual sponsored summer bicycle ride took place once again with seven riders following the route from Norwich to Burston via the byways of south Norfolk. If anyone claims that Norfolk is flat, our advice is to tell them to get a bike! We managed to raise just over £1,000 which is a record.

3. Also on the financial side the Link has benefited from a legacy from a member who sadly died in May. We have received almost £49,000 which will give us both financial security and make possible a wider range of activity.

4. Government initiatives in Nicaragua are helping to reduce the degree of poverty in the country which continues to be widespread, particularly in the rural areas. Campesinos (peasants) are being helped by a 'zero hunger' scheme which provides a pregnant cow, a pregnant pig, chickens and seed. However, this will not help the very poorest who have no land. Medical help has been forthcoming from Cuba and Venezuela with significant numbers of people travelling to those countries to receive free treatment for vision problems such as cataracts.

5. The Link is developing a project to create school gardens to teach children to grow various crops, such as pineapple, tomatoes, pumpkin, radishes, yucca, radishes, and beans. It is intended that this practical activity will be accompanied by providing teaching material to teach the children about good nutrition and the need for a balanced diet as well as instruction about the importance of protecting the environment. The crops will be used to supplement food supplies provided to the schools by a government scheme to ensure that children get daily meal at school. The Link is investigating commissioning this teaching material from various sources. It is planned to set up a pilot scheme to test the project at one of the schools as soon as possible.

6. Our local representative in Nicaragua is organising the eight scholarship schools to set up a twinning 'corner' which will display information, photographs etc, about the twinning with Norwich. We are organising photos and maps about Norwich which we will send. It is also intended that the children will prepare items to send us about their lives and communities.

Ralph Gayton  
Link Secretary