



LA VIDA  
EDUCATION

# Highlights of 2009



## Making your donation count

Thanks for your support of LA VIDA Education! It has now been six years since we started serving the community of San Juan de Oriente, and things are going better than ever. I'll include more details on the back, but I just wanted to let you know how important your contributions have been to our success as an organization and thank you for the way in which you continue to help transform an entire community. Our educational community center, La Esquina del Aprendizaje, had its highest attendance ever this year with 27,415 visits. The center continues to be so full that kids and teachers spill out to the sidewalk on many days. It has truly become the educational hub for the area and is being run entirely by local staff from the community in Nicaragua. Thank you for playing a role in this process and for the exciting work you've supported in San Juan de Oriente.

Thanks,  
Aaron





	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of books in the public library	526	1,885	2,663	3,028	3,341	4,000+
Average daily attendance at the library	4	15	60	116	135	137

### How the Educational Community Center works

- LA VIDA Education operates a free educational community center in the town of San Juan de Oriente, Nicaragua, which includes music and art programs, a library, and a children's learning area.
- Students between the ages of 5 and 16 are the most frequent visitors; additionally, many teachers use the center to prepare lesson plans and adults come to read and check out books for their children.
- Elementary school teachers bring their classes to the center in the mornings to participate in reading programs, while high school students do their homework and use the reference materials for reports and assignments.
- Resources provided by the center do not exist at public schools (most schools don't have enough money for textbooks and some don't even have desks). The center really is the educational lifeline for many people in the area, as some students have taken buses from an hour away to use the center. This model allows us to reach far more students than simply providing resources to individual schools.

### Recent developments and goals for the future

Earlier this year we received nonprofit status in Nicaragua (in addition to our existing nonprofit status in the United States). This allows us to purchase land for a new center and gives the local staff in Nicaragua more authority to expand programs and build a facility that will serve as a model for the rest of the country.

Our five-year goals include:

- Purchasing property and building a new educational community center with a library, art center, tech center, income generating museum and butterfly farm
- Hiring a full-time director in the United States to continue to grow the organization and ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Tracking student progression in school (and providing support services) to ensure that 75% of youth in San Juan de Oriente graduate from high school by the age of 20

### Your donations over the past six years have allowed us to:

1. Operate what we believe is now the **second most attended library** in the country
2. Start a **girls' soccer league** for the entire town and purchase all the equipment
3. Complete **two construction projects** at local schools
4. Add more than **4,000 books** to the public library
5. Partner with more than **100 volunteers** on ten-day work trips (projects include construction, English lessons, summer camp, and sports camp)
6. **Employ six local Nicaraguans**, who are widely regarded as experts in their field, to run the center

### What can a dollar buy?

Whatever way you want to cut it, a dollar buys a lot. For only \$18,000, we were able to buy more than \$5,000 in books, provide salaries for six of the most qualified staff in the area, and support more than 27,000 visits to the center in 2009. For less than a dollar, you give someone the chance to spend hours in a fun, collaborative environment, reading, playing music, and getting help with homework.

**Thanks again for your support. It's making a difference!**