



Durham - San Ramón Sister Communities

Hermanamiento News

Durham, North Carolina - San Ramón, Nicaragua

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Cultural Immersion Ecotourism in San Ramón

Ecotourist trips to San Ramón are an opportunity not only to enjoy the stunning beauty of the Matagalpa region of Nicaragua but also to meet local people. After spending a week in San Ramón, four days at Finca Esperanza Verde and three with a host family in the town, you will come away understanding what life is like for the wonderful people you have met.

When you arrive in Managua, Nicaragua's capital, instead of boarding an air conditioned tour bus, your guide greets you and escorts you to the public bus stop in front of the airport where you are immediately part of the local scene.

When you arrive at Finca Esperanza Verde the staff are ready to show you what they have accomplished in developing the farm's shade grown organic coffee, butterfly pupa exports, and camp ground. Before you can put your bag in your cabin, you will be planning outings to search for leaf cutter ants, howler monkeys, toucan, migratory birds from North America and waterfalls. After dinner you may star gaze, take a hike in search of nocturnal creatures or listen to a talk about organic coffee farming. For those who would like to help out there is always work to do on the farm



Ecotourism: "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and the well-being of local people." — The Ecotourism Society, 1991.

will introduce you to small town life and take you on walks to the honey factory, the local schools and to view oropendulas feeding their young in large hanging nests. You will

picking coffee, gathering food for the butterfly caterpillars or repairing hiking trails. Local groups come to sing and to perform traditional dances. Area farmers take you on horse back rides into the countryside.

While in the town, your host family will be anxious to learn about you and your food preferences. You will be trying out the few words of Spanish you might know as you learn to wash clothes Nica style or to accompany a family member to the mill to have corn ground for tortillas. Members of the Tourist Guide Club

have the chance to learn about social justice issues such as sweatshops, the US Army School of the Americas and the effects of Nicaragua's crippling debt.

Host families, the Tourist Guide Club, farm staff, and cultural performance groups greatly appreciate the income ecotourism brings them and their economically depressed community. In addition, 25 percent of the trip fee is designated for projects which improve health care, education and cultural arts for the people of San Ramón.

Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities is sponsoring a variety of ecotourist trips to San Ramón in 2001. The



"Tourism itself is the world's number one employer, accounting for 10 percent of jobs globally." — Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise? By Martha Honey, Island Press, 1999.

base price for most is \$660 (\$575 + tax) including meals, lodging, transportation, a full schedule of organized activities and cultural performances. Trips designed to meet special needs will be priced accordingly. The trip price is low because the organizers in the states are all volunteers. Space and reasonably priced air plane tickets are limited. Please join one of the following trips!

- January 3-10: especially for college students
- January 14-21: Immersion in the life of coffee from harvest to your cup
- February 3-10: especially for Durham folks
- February 10-17: especially for friends and family of Richard and Lonna
- February 17-24: especially for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
- March 3-10: especially for orchid collectors

Contact us immediately! Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities, <harkrader@mindspring.com>; 919-489-1656

Web page coming soon: <www.durham-sanramon.org>



Theresa El-Amin and Lonna Harkrader of Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities celebrate with other no-sweat activists and members of the Durham City Council upon passage of the anti-sweatshop resolution.

Durham Now Sweatshop-Free

Durham passed an Anti-Sweatshop Resolution by unanimous vote of the City Council August 7. Durham is the first city in the south to do so joining other cities and counties across the nation. Durham's action is part of a national movement to bring just working conditions and fair wages to textile workers both in the U.S. and abroad. Duke University and UNC students started the movement in the Triangle three years ago by pressuring their universities to require that university apparel be "sweat-free." From now on the Durham city manager must ask vendors seeking to sell or lease textiles or apparel to the City to supply the following information which will be used in Durham's procurement decisions:

- a) the names and addresses of the factories where the textiles are produced,
- b) the names and addresses of the owners of the factories, and

- c) the base hourly wage and age of factory workers.

El-Amin, a local labor organizer with Jobs with Justice, is responsible for promoting adoption of the resolution with help from Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities. State law had to change to allow Durham to adopt the ordinance. State Rep. Paul Luebke worked to draft enabling legislation which was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Gov. Jim Hunt earlier in the summer.

Backup support to "sweat-free" municipalities is provided by the National Labor Committee/People of Faith Network, (212) 242-3002.

To help us shop more responsibly, the Council on Economic Priorities' pocket-sized publication "Shopping for a Better World" offers information about the social and environmental records of corporations. To order a copy call (212) 420-1133.

A little of the Cafe San Ramón story

Cafe San Ramón is grown at Finca Esperanza Verde in San Ramón and also on surrounding coffee cooperatives at high elevation. We imported 3 tons of green coffee beans this year, paying \$1.85 per pound when the world price was \$1.25. We purchase our coffee at a high price both because it is a fair exchange for the amount of work which goes into growing and preparing organic coffee for export and to encourage more farmers to grow coffee that is environmentally friendly.

Proceeds from the sale of coffee support the development of Finca Esperanza Verde, our ecotourist lodge and organic coffee farm in the mountains of San Ramón.

One fourth of ecotourism income supports community development projects in San Ramón.

People who drink Cafe San Ramón say:

"Coffee is extremely important to both of us. We have tried everything on the local market and Cafe San Ramón is far and away the best coffee I have ever tasted."

— Anne Sanford, Real Estate Broker

"I only drink San Ramón coffee — nothing else is as good. It's also certified organic and shade grown. I know I am contributing to maintaining a healthy environment for song birds who migrate south."

— Elizabeth Gibbs, Manager, Durham Farmers' Market

Cafe San Ramón makes great holiday gifts! Check out our December special on the enclosed order form!

Thanks to Everyone!

The Success of Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities is due to the generosity and hard work of many people.

We especially thank EMJI, Inc. web page designers located in Apex, NC, <<http://www.emji.net/>>, for creating our web page, hosting it, and maintaining it free of charge as a community service.

International Health Forum of UNC Medical School which sent a representative to San Ramón and also raised \$1,200 to repair the Health Center's Ambulance.

Ken Howard, PA, CPA, for filing our tax return.

The SW Durham Rotary Club which continues to make large contributions in support of economic and community development projects in San Ramón.

We thank the following for their support:

Congregations:

Church of the Reconciliation

Duke University Chapel

Durham Friends Meeting
Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
Watts Street Baptist Church

Businesses:

Azalea Graphics
Durham Food Coop
Kroger Stores
Wellspring Grocery

Organizations:

Duke University student groups in support of San Ramón
East Chapel Hill High School Spanish Honor Society

If you or an organization you are part of wish to be involved with a third world project, please speak with us. We offer you ways to be part of our people-to-people project which suit your special needs and goals. Whether you have lots of time or only a little, lots of money or none at all, we can help you participate in a way that brings you joy and the satisfaction of caring for others.

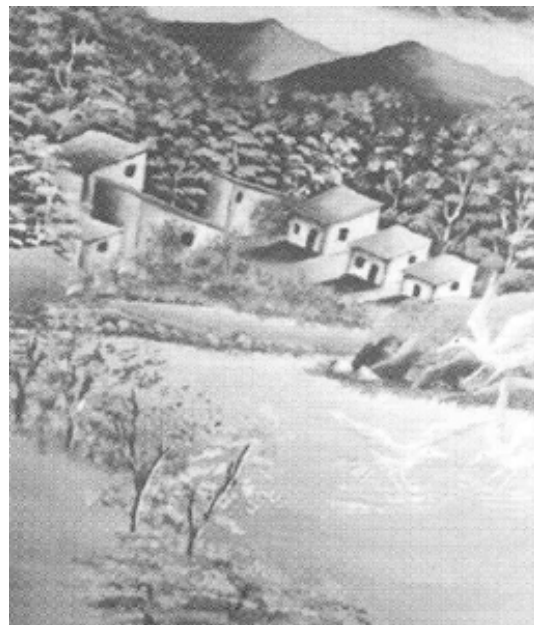
We Support Useful Projects

We're proud that we were able to support the following projects in 2000:

1. Latrine project — El Horno #3 and Mils Bosque. \$11,877.
2. Purchase of daily newspaper for the library. \$104
3. Herbal medicine classes/workshop. \$600.
4. Tecum Umani Theater Festival. \$170.
5. Sewing machine and sewing lessons for El Horno #3. \$270
6. Trash can construction project of the Tourist Guide Club. \$100
7. School supplies. \$2,200
8. 5th year teacher's salary. \$1,500
9. Ambulance repair — Health Center. \$1,200
10. Art supplies for children's art classes. \$250

Another way we support development: This year we purchased \$13,000 worth of goods at fair prices directly from artisans and small farmers to sell in Durham at craft sales. These gift items include handmade leather bags, tropical butterflies mounted in glass cases, art work,

freshly roasted Café San Ramón and tropical wildflower honey. We would be delighted to bring these beautiful items to sell at your congregation's holiday sale.



We purchase paintings by young artists to sell in Durham. The income helps students afford college and living expenses.



Annual School Supply Drive

A letter of appreciation

To the Sister Community Committee in North Carolina, USA:

We hope that when you receive this note you are well and carrying out your work. The reason for writing is to thank you profoundly for your great donation and moreover for your dedication to help our children in the Mills Bosque school, because now they will learn better with use of the school materials.

Thank you for your donation and we hope that this is not the last, but that you will remember our children need your help.

Martha Davila, teacher

Christian Amaro, student representative

Elena Sadea, parent association

Please contact Bill O'Connor, 919 419-4419 to involve your school or class in raising money for school supplies.

San Ramón Municipal Library

By Julia Leibson

On my four-and-a-half week trip to San Ramón this past summer, one of my primary jobs was to create an inventory of the books in the town library. The librarian, Janette Hernandez, helped me in this task, which made it a very enjoyable job. Janette has worked at the library for the past year now. The library contains mostly books in Spanish, with a small collection of books in English. The books cover many genres, including those of literature, science, history, and mathematics, to name a few. Perhaps the most popular books in the library are the "cuentos," or children's stories. Children flooded in and out of the library after their day at school to relax and entertain themselves with stories for children at all levels of reading. Primario and Secundario students also came in frequently to use the

many textbooks available in the library. They would spend many hours in the library, studying together in groups to complete their homework for the day.

The library is a small, one-room building, with a wide entrance opening out onto a patio, which looks out onto a well-kept little garden. It is located on the main road in the central part of town, across from a park and playground. The atmosphere of the library was very comfortable and welcoming, and I would say a very popular location for San Ramóners under the age of 17. The librarian also held weekly showings of movies or cartoons on Friday afternoons. This was highly attractive to the kids, bringing even more numbers to the library. The movies, TV, and VCR were all donated by the Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities. I personally very much enjoyed working in the library, having the opportunity to see and get to know many precious kids, and also to see a little more of San Ramón every-day life.

Julia, who completed a variety of jobs for us during her stay in San Ramón, is a senior at the University of Virginia.

Great News — And Action Alert

The Jubilee 2000 Cancel World Debt movement carried out at the grassroots throughout the world, including fasting and demonstrations in North Carolina, has reached a historic moment.

US Congressional leaders agreed October 24 to cancel \$435 million in debt for 33 countries including Nicaragua.

Please call President Clinton and your congress-person and thank them. Ask that a condition be that school children should no longer have to pay user fees for public education and other social services. Only 20 % of school aged children in Nicaragua are enrolled in school due to unaffordable user fees.

Also ask for radical restructuring and reform of the World Bank and IMF that don't hurt the poor.

Congressional switchboard:
202 224-3121.

White House Comment Line:
202 456-1111.

Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities

Board of Directors:

Chair: Lonna Harkrader
Vice-Chair: Bill O'Connor
Secretary: Michael Sanderson
Treasurer: Richard Harkrader
Members: Marni Gwyther, Jonathan Sheline, and John Chase

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Web developers: Christie Garland and Joy Stutts
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Health: Jonathan Sheline, chair; Marni Gwyther, Michael Sanderson, Barbara Sheline
Café San Ramón marketing: Lonna Harkrader
Coffee baggers: Gail Curry, Bill O'Connor, Bob Healy, Lyn Gould, Lonna Harkrader
Craft and coffee sales: Ken Knight, Bill O'Connor
Finca Esperanza Verde: Richard and Lonna Harkrader, co-chairs
Tourism: Kevin Lanning, John Chase, Christie Garland, Lonna Harkrader
Tourist Guide Club of San Ramón: Jonathan Sheline
Butterfly pupa marketing: Barbara Sheline
Mailing List: Bill O'Connor
Translation: Adriana Oller
Newsletter editor: Jim Jensen

Herbal Medicines Help in Community Development

" We thank our Sister Community for your financial support to help us continue to specialize more in herbal medicine through the training classes that we received. We thank you because we gained new knowledge which will permit us to better serve the people of San Ramón with a supply of herbal medicines which are good quality, safe, effective, and affordable in the treatment of illnesses."

— Martha Figueroa y Margarita Sanchez

Two San Ramón women were able to take an advanced course of study in herbal medicine in August through a \$600 grant from Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities. The Christian Promotional Center for Peace and Life, a.k.a. Casa del Niño, recipient of the grant, has for many years promoted the use of herbal medicine in San Ramón where standard medications are unaffordable for most people. Margarita Sanchez, director of the program, and Martha Figueroa, pharmacy sales person, took workshops on interpreting the quality of herbs by color, moisture and smell, consistency of measurement of herbs, fungal infections, manufacture of shampoo for hair loss, and cough medicine with honey. They also took a class on herbal drug interactions and studied which herbal medicines are contraindicated for certain health conditions.

When you are next in San Ramón, be sure to visit the Farmacia de Medicinas Naturales next to the Casa del Niño, a grassroots community development organization whose dedication to serving the community has impressed us from our first visit to San Ramón in 1993.



Margarita Sanchez describes the process of drying herbal medicines.

You Can Help

Include me as a Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities partner. Enclosed is \$_____ to support community and economic development projects in San Ramón. A minimum contribution of \$25 ensures that you receive the newsletter.

Please use my donation for:

- repair of the Health Center's ambulance (\$800 needed)
- school supplies (\$1,000 needed)
- textbooks for the library (\$350 needed)

- I would like to see a slide show
- can supply an American Airlines frequent flier certificate
- I would like to join and maybe organize an ecotourist trip to San Ramón
- I can sell Cafe San Ramón once a month

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The Durham-San Ramón, Nicaragua, Sister Communities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Please make tax-deductible donations payable to:
Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities, 1320 Shepherd Street, Durham, NC 27707

Call to get involved: (919) 489-1656

We welcome you to join us at our monthly meeting the 4th Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m., January through October, at the Eno River Unitarian Fellowship, 4907 Garrett Road, Durham (on the left 1/2 mile from Darryls and 15-501). Our mission is to strengthen awareness, friendship, and cooperation between San Ramón, Nicaragua, and Durham, NC, through people-to-people exchanges and social and economic development projects that support justice and our belief in an interdependent, one-world family.



Durham-San Ramón Sister Communities
1320 Shepherd Street, Durham, NC 27707

Our new web page is coming soon:
<http://www.durham-sanramon.org>



If this square is checked, we haven't heard from you recently. Please let us know if you would like to remain on the mailing list.