

December 1, 2006  
Volume 2, Issue 2



### Do You Have What It Takes?

TeamWorks is currently looking for volunteers and student interns who are ready to make an impact in the lives of others. Positions are available in administration, grant writing/fundraising, graphic design and promotions, project development, as well as for in-country staff members. Visit [www.teamworksinternational.org](http://www.teamworksinternational.org) for more information.

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## TeamWorks, AmeriCorps, and Many Other Local Organizations Completing the Circle

Immerse yourself in the vision of a global network of individuals, whom you depend on and who depend on you. AmeriCorps member Ryan Johnson and TeamWorks International founder and CEO Matt Gerber teamed up with many other local non-profit and community organizations to offer a special convention for the public: *Completing the Circle: Coffee*, held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Beaverton on September 28, 2006.

Completing the Circle is about social justice, sustainability, and community awareness. It is about the relationships between individuals, communities, countries, and the environment. The first Completing the Circle convention focused on the coffee industry, which is the second highest traded commodity in the world, behind oil.

Over the past five years, the price of coffee has fallen almost 70 percent, forcing coffee farming families out of business. Small coffee farmers in developing countries sell their beans for less than it costs to produce. Meanwhile, the largest coffee corporations continue to reap enormous profits.

Every major player in the coffee industry needs to be brought together to make plans that will construct a more equitable coffee market for these farming families. This was about more than coffee; this conference was about coffee as a key element in the global challenge to make trade fair.

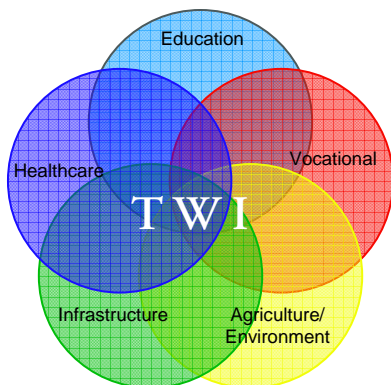
In the Completing the Circle conference, we discussed what factors brought on this crisis, which organizations are involved in working towards remedies, and about how others can become involved in the process. As a bonus, we sampled some of the best coffee in the world, donated by Stumptown Coffee, Café Mam, and Starbucks Coffee, which helped embody a commitment to changing the way we do business on a global scale. For more information about Completing the Circle, please visit our website at [www.completingthecircle.org](http://www.completingthecircle.org).



A parrot that Matt Gerber encountered while exploring the Nicaraguan countryside.

### Our Philosophy:

TeamWorks strives for a holistic approach to community development. This is a fancy way of saying that we try to look at how each aspect of a community is connected. Our goal is to build relationships through service and this is how we do it. Not only do we look at a community as a whole and integrated system, but we emphasize the role of the community partners (the local residents) having ownership of the projects.



## Anne's Update: Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua

By Anne Mansfield

I am not actually a part of TeamWorks now, although I certainly was the first two times I came to Nicaragua, but this year I have been under my home church in Newberg, Oregon. There has been a large increase this past year in groups of folks coming from the states, working on various projects and spending time and involving their lives in the lives of the children. There are groups coming back at Christmas with their entire families to spend Christmas with the kids.

I have taught the girls to embroider, knit, and crochet and they have been making products to sell. The boys (including the younger guys from 8 years on up) have grown to love embroidery. "Bordar" is the word used here and I can't keep them in enough projects. When a picture is finished, I and three of the older girls work at sewing them onto "tunu" a fabric made from the bark of a tree grown only here in Nicaragua. When the North American groups come down, we have sales of their products. We have had four sales to this date and the kids have made over \$1,000. I take a small percentage for supplies out of each sale, but the kid gets what he has earned. Then comes the huge project of taking all 65 or so of them shopping!! Last week we finished the latest "ir de comprar" (shopping trips).

Another wonderful thing happening is a contest to enable the teenagers here to get to YWAM (Youth With A Mission) camp in Diriamba, south of Managua, for 10 days in early December. We set up a contest with the entire youth group (Jovenes) of the church whereby, if anyone memorizes five verses a month over a ten month period (for a total of 50 verses) they would receive the trip to Diriamba and the 8 days of camp free! (My home church pledged to cover the expenses for any who met the requirements!) The project started out and nothing happened for three months. So I added a prize at the end of each month, starting with a Game Boy! That month they got going, and they haven't stopped. *(Continued on Page 4)*

# Sponsorship Allows Children A Better Education

By Ben McReynolds, Student Sponsorship Coordinator

Almost three and a half years ago, TeamNicaragua first ventured into Central America's indigenous landscape in search of Casa Bernabe and Verbo Ministries. Our desire was to honestly appreciate the lives of the poorest Nicaraguans, to endeavor to integrate into their culture and ways of life as much as a willing and open gringo could, and to secure heart-felt and lasting relationships with the poor, the orphans, and those serving them. It is apparent today how much the trip left a lasting impression in all our lives. It was on this trip that Earl Bowie, pastor of Verbo Ministries, asked us to develop a sponsorship program to assist low-income and no-income students at the two Verbo schools.

Public education is very poor. An 85% unemployment rate has left few families with the ability to consider better options. In many smaller Indian communities, schooling is non-existent. Earl and his wife are in a constant struggle against great social and economic odds to offer the children of Puerto Cabezas and its outlying communities the best education those children can receive.

One conversation with Damaris, Earl's wife, stands out to me. She spoke of the great

difficulties facing their teachers, as students come to them from either the public school system or with no education at all, and have a complete lack of discipline and understanding of the importance of study. They also face difficulties integrating the students from the orphanage into the system because the kids all come from such destructive pasts that they require very special attention; many lag far behind and excel at a much different pace. Tia Leo, the orphanage mother, sews each student their own uniform so at least they will feel dressed equally with the other students.

I spent two weeks last March in Nicaragua, again with our friends at Casa Bernabe. During this trip we had the amazing privilege of traveling by land from Managua to Puerto Cabezas, a lucky 15-hour journey. We also went swimming with the kids at the river, as well as in the ocean, where our team was robbed at machete-point. It was only two weeks before we left for Nicaragua that I received word that the Puerto Cabezas airport was being held siege in protest by rebels who were disquieted by recent elections. Such is the desperate population of Eastern Nicaragua. Earl, Damaris, and their amazing



Sponsorship benefits the children who need it most.



www.verbo.org



A mere \$20 per month can help the children of Verbo Academy in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua have success in school and life.

coworkers are not exempt from the economic forces that oppress this population. Their labor and their love for their people have never been more evident to me than on this trip.

My team and I have developed a student sponsorship program designed to allow individual donors to fund the education of individual students at the Verbo schools through either monthly donation or one yearly donation. \$20 a month or \$240 a year will accommodate one of the 208 children within the school system who are currently indebted to the school with the security of tuition, supplies, and a positive economic future. The bigger picture is that each sponsorship donation will allow Verbo Academy both to operate within its means and to expand to better address the needs of Puerto Cabezas desperate population.

Each donor receives a sponsorship card with a large photograph of their sponsored child on the front and informa-

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**theloop@teamworksinternational.com**

tion about them and their school on the back. A postcard in the mail initiates payments and reminds donors of overdue payments, depending on their commitment. Development is going into a sponsorship webpage on our website, and someday we would like to create a student updating service on our website so donors can keep track of and possibly communicate with their sponsored student via the internet. As directed by TWI's board of directors, 95% of the donation goes to help Verbo and %5 is directed to TWI's operating fund.

Volunteers within the sponsorship program include Miriam McReynolds, Rebecca Seiwert, Lisa Carr, Carol Skuzie, and myself, Ben McReynolds. If you desire to sponsor a child, volunteer within the sponsorship program, or represent student sponsorship within your church, work, or any other gathering, please contact me at 503-880-6806 or mcben80@hotmail.com. Thank you for your time, your love, and your service.

## Reflections on India Trip Lead To An Interesting Question: Is Ignorance Really Bliss?

By Diamond Dang

Ignorance is bliss—or is it?

America is a country blessed by the gift of ignorance. By our ignorance, we can ignore the poverty in the world, by our ignorance we can justify our lavish lifestyles, and by our ignorance we can choose to be consumed by the reality that is America—America the great, America the just, and America the wealthy.

I have walked away from my experiences in India with many questions. What is our responsibility, how should we respond to that responsibility, and is the way in which we respond appropriate and effective? If we are not careful, our often ignorant mentality of being an American will bleed through, as we attempt to respond to the world's poverty.

Like it or not, being an American pervades every area of our lives. We are a wealthy nation, that is undeniable, but in failing to understand what that means we continue to perpetuate a mentality of colonization without knowing it.

Jean-Paul Sartre, in the preface of *The Wretched Earth* by Frantz Fanon, writes:

"It [the golden age of colonialism] came to an end; the mouths opened by themselves; the yellow and black voices still spoke of our humanism but only to reproach us with our inhumanity. We listened without displeasure to these polite statements of resentment, at first with proud amazement. What? They are able to talk to themselves? Just look at what we have made of them! We did not doubt but that they would accept our ideals, since they accuse us of not being faithful to them."

This is the very dilemma I saw while in Northern and Southern India. If our desire to help the poverty in India is not balanced with an understanding of those people and ourselves, we will perpetuate the very nature of a mentality of oppression.

You can learn more about TeamIndia, and how TeamWorks is working to help poverty in India on our website!

"When they played, I remembered what it meant to be worry-free."



## Count Your Blessings

By Elisabeth J. Bertram

As I look back over my journal entries and numerous pictures, there are two things that stick out pointedly in my mind.

One, count your blessings. Count your blessings as you open the fridge that you have electricity that doesn't shut on and off on whim. Count your blessings that there is food in the fridge. Count your blessings that you can buy all your food in one place and it doesn't take all day to cook your evening meal. Remember that your children can have a good education that will prepare them to support themselves for the rest of life. Remember that you are not a second class citizen; you can speak to whomever you wish while walking down the street. Remember there are not bombings and threats in the country you live in.

This is just a small section of what it is like to be aware in India. But for most of the children we spent time with, the above was of no concern to them. They were worried about whether or not there would be food to eat and a roof over their heads, how their families were and whether or not they could send them anything they received from us, that they had hurts and were afraid of getting sick and dying. These are the concerns that we got to help meet and love them through, even occasionally distract them from. We are blessed to be very comfortable.

The children were wonderful. Their hearts were not only welcoming, but so full of joy for the time you spent playing with them. When they played, I remembered what it meant to be worry-free. We had fun and ran and laughed. Life was simple, we taught school in the mornings, painted their cots or did grounds work in the afternoon, had two hours to play with them, served dinner, prayed over them and counted stars as they fell asleep.

Life was much slower, that was hard to get used to. We went in looking for a good productive day, and planned five activities. If we had finished one activity by the end of the day, the children thought that we were doing well. Productivity and output are VERY American concepts, but they loved us all the same.

Thanks to everyone's generous support, we were able to leave the organization with some money to pay for 1/2 of the children's school books for the entire year, as well as a lawn mower to teach the kids how to keep the grass down so they don't have to worry about snakes so much. It was, and will be, a great tool to teach them how to be responsible for a project.

Overall, I learned so much, and I am so thankful for the spirituality that India and its people blessed me with. I can only hope that I touched some of them as much as they profoundly affected me.

### Team Africa: A Look At The AIDS Pandemic

By Ashley Wornell

Imagine waking up everyday in a hospital. You are host to a very serious illness you have lived with since birth. Doctors tell you there is no cure. Your mother died from it, and you are told your father probably died of it as well. There is hope for a cure or at the very least the production of a medicine to prolong your life. You are poor however, and these things cost money. So hope, for you, is kin to chance. And chances are not looking very good.

Does this situation make you cringe? Now replace the "you" with "millions of children living in poverty" and replace "serious illness" with HIV/ AIDS. Still cringing?

This is a very real situation taking place all over the world. It has been around for years, and at the rate by which people are sending aid, it will be an issue for a long time.

Before looking further into the situation, it is important to know a little more about HIV/AIDS, including its definition, how it

spreads, where there are high numbers of reported cases in the world, and who are infected the most. Although the following doesn't cover every detail and aspect of the issue, hopefully it will show you what you need to do to become socially responsible in dealing with it.

First, HIV is a virus. The letters composing the name actually stand for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Basically, HIV attacks the human immune system, preventing the body from fighting off other viruses or bacterial infections. This eventually leads to AIDS, also known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Once a person reaches this stage of the illness, death is likely.

So how does HIV spread? The answer is simply this—the transportation of infected body fluids (blood and semen, for example) to the uninfected. The two most common modes by which this happens are sexual activities in which bodily fluids are exchanged and the use of drugs that require needles.

To learn more about the AIDS Pandemic in Africa, please visit [teamworkinternational.org](http://teamworkinternational.org) OR [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org) today. Get involved and make a difference in the lives of AIDS stricken communities in Africa and around the world.

Prevention tactics sound easy enough—don't share needles, don't have sex with an infected person—but millions are infected every year, and in every realm of the world. The region with the most reported cases of HIV/AIDS is Sub-Saharan Africa, which in 2005 had 25.8 million people known to be infected. More than half of those infected are women—many who have had sexual intercourse with only one person, usually their husband. Why does Sub-Saharan Africa have so many cases?

Demographics and economics, to begin with, are a huge influence.

Pair a large population with a poor economy and the result is millions of people living in poverty. Of those millions a large percentage are women. This introduces a new factor, societal roles of women and men. Men are often the ones who work to earn money, whereas women have children. If a woman loses her husband, options for work are scarce and money is hard to come by.

Often, working in the sex industry is a way for them to overcome poverty, but it creates new problems of its own, HIV/AIDS being one of them. Men give the sex industry their business to begin with. Many of those men are married. If they become infected with HIV/AIDS, then they pass the disease to their wives. Another problem with selling sex for money is that many women become pregnant. If they are infected with HIV/AIDS, then their children may become infected as well. Eventually children born to HIV positive parents will become orphans—poor and looking for a way to get by, only perpetuating the cycle of illness.

"You don't have to build a house or be a doctor to make a difference. All you have to do is play with an orphan, wash dishes with someone, or visit them at their home. To make someone feel loved or special, even for a day, you have made a difference." ~Matt H.



Having fun with the camera and kids in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

### Kids Have Fun Competing for trip to Camp

(Continued from page 1) The first month cost me 15 Game Boys! This month those same kids have all kept on and now there are 21 Basketballs, Futbols and Baseballs I am giving out this Saturday night. Other prizes are trips down the river and a picnic, or a movie night in town, Banana splits and games at my house, etc. I am excited that these kids here will see more of Nicaragua than they ever have, and that they will have the experience and fun

and life-changing teaching of this wonderful camp.

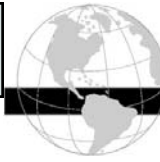
Editor's Note: Anne Mansfield works with the children at Casa Bernabe in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua under her home church in Newberg, Oregon. Casa Bernabe is associated with Verbo Ministries, which has a church and a school nearby. There are two homes for children, Casa Bernabe has approximately 60 children, including

boys and girls from three to 10 years old, and girls up to age 20. The Discipulado Casa has about 35 boys from 11 to 20 years old. TeamWorks is working now to help continue the sponsorship program for the children of this school. See page two of The Loop newsletter for more information about the sponsorship program.

[www.verbo.org](http://www.verbo.org)



# DONATE!



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TeamWorks International is an IRS 501(c)3 recognized organization. All Donations are tax-deductible in accordance with Oregon State and U.S. Federal Laws.



This widow woman is collecting seashells along the beach in Nicaragua.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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City: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Cut Here and Return By Mail

Below is some information for you to keep!

The mission of TeamWorks International is to build and maintain lasting relationships through service. We provide an outlet for leadership and innovation to community members worldwide in order to strengthen education, health care, vocational training, infrastructure development and environmental preservation; allowing others' needs to direct our actions. For more information see our website:

[www.teamworksinternational.org](http://www.teamworksinternational.org)

## TeamWorks and the Adventure of Serving

TeamWorks is an organization dedicated to the betterment of the world. Tackling roots issues behind poverty is not an easy job and it requires both a long-term commitment to persevere and high amounts of cultural sensitivity. There are many organizations in the world that pour incredible amounts of resources and vast sums of money into community development, but with little results. Our strategy for positively impacting the lives of people comes from careful monitoring of similarly focused organizations to see what works and what doesn't. For this reason, we operate under the following two premises:

### Relationships are the most important

What is going to leave the biggest impact after each trip is not what building was built or service was provided, but the personal connection that is made. By knowing that someone in a foreign country cares deeply and genuinely about them, individuals in the communities served experience a greater sense of self-determination and responsibility for their lives.

### Work is done with people and not for people

TeamWorks International does not seek to start any new projects, but rather to come alongside those people in the communities who are already doing work. This concept of "helping others help themselves" is vital to the longevity and success of projects. By empowering individuals to change their communities and then connecting them with the necessary resources to make it happen, people are left with a sense of ownership for the work that is being done and will continue it even when the teams are not there.



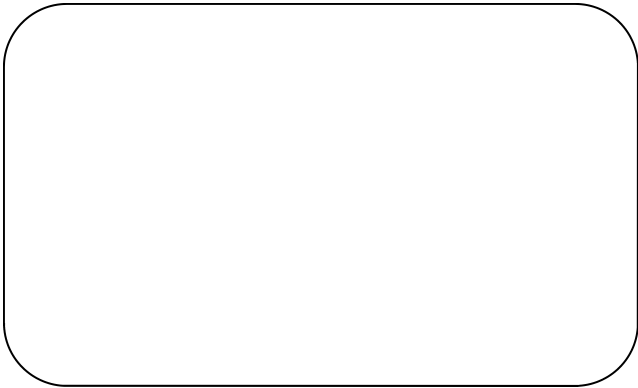
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The Adventure of Serving

## Connect With Our TeamWorks Partners

### We Thank You!

TeamWorks is proud to join with many other organizations and companies as we seek to impact the world. By working together, we are able to reach farther than we could ever do on our own. The following organizations have provided immeasurable support for TeamWorks in a variety of ways and we are grateful for all that they have done. To link to our Partners, just visit our website and click on Our Partners at:  
[www.teamworksinternational.org/partners.php](http://www.teamworksinternational.org/partners.php)

### Organizational Partners

- ◆ PSU Engineers Without Borders
- ◆ Four Rivers Health Care
- ◆ Completing the Circle
- ◆ Jubitz Family Foundation
- ◆ La Grande Rotary Club
- ◆ George Fox University Rotaract Club
- ◆ San Ignacio/IBRA (Nicaragua)
- ◆ Newberg Noon Rotary Club
- ◆ Newberg Earlybirds Rotary Club
- ◆ Cascade AIDS Project (CAP)
- ◆ Kiva
- ◆ Kids Get Computers
- ◆ Hillsboro Rotary Club
- ◆ Columbia County

- ◆ Rotary Club
- ◆ Portland Downtown Rotary Club
- ◆ Forest Grove Daybreak Rotary Club

### Educational Partners

- ◆ Mark Hatfield School of Government (PSU)
- ◆ Institute for Nonprofit Management (PSU)
- ◆ George Fox University
- ◆ Boston College
- ◆ Columbia University
- ◆ Eastern Oregon University

### Corporate Partners

- ◆ Starbucks Coffee
- ◆ Intel
- ◆ HP
- ◆ Embassy Suites
- ◆ Salimena Studies

- ◆ Northwest Classic Properties, Inc.
- ◆ Woodcraft

### Faith-Based Partners

- ◆ Verbo Christian Ministries (Nicaragua)
- ◆ Good News Fellowship (India)
- ◆ Community of ChristChurch (Oregon)
- ◆ La Grande Church of the Nazarene (Oregon)
- ◆ Mid-Valley Community Church (Oregon)

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