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**2010 is the  
20-year  
Anniversary  
of El Porvenir**

Celebrate  
With Us!

**World Water Day: March 22, Clean Water for a Healthy World**

World Water Day is a UN international day of awareness about the 1,000,000,000 people who do not have access to clean water. Yes, that's **one billion**. One sixth of our global population does not have a tap, a well, or any place to get safe drinking water. One billion people walk long distances to dig beside dried up rivers hoping to find water. They walk to a neighboring private well to ask for a chance to fill their bucket or dip their bucket into a dirty river where cattle roam and women upstream wash clothes. EP is working to change that.



"Sharing water, sharing opportunities" banner outside the EP Ciudad Darío office for World Water Day.

**Here are some ways you can celebrate World Water Day and educate others any day of the year:**

Take a bottle of dirty water to work, place it in a prominent place, and use it to start conversations about the need for clean water.

Ask your friends to substitute water for their favorite drink for a week and donate what they would have spent to El Porvenir.

Organize a trip with El Porvenir to work on a clean water project.

Start a "Change for Water" collection at work or church. Place El Porvenir literature next to a jar for collecting change.

Tell your friends and family about the global need for clean water.

*Think of your own idea, do it, and tell us about it.*

Spring 2010  
Newsletter  
Year of Celebration



**20 Years of Clean Water for Nicaragua**

**The View from Here: Wiwilí Progress**

by Rob Bell, Executive Director

**I have started a blog hoping it will keep you current and provide a more interesting look at daily life and the details of EP projects. The following are excerpts from our trip to Ulwasking, the site of our next project in Wiwilí.**

I got back recently from visiting a community on the Coco River. We are planning to start our first project in a Miskito community called Ulwasking.

On Friday, we met our guide, Pico and drove to Las Piedras, where we caught the boat. The road disappeared into more of a cattle trail the last 20 minutes or so.

The boat ride took about 4 hours, but it was well worth the time and sunburns. We saw enormous numbers of birds, including herons, cranes, eagles, and lots of turtles; but we saw more cattle than anything else. Not that I mind seeing cattle, but seeing them in the river helps drive home why the river water is not safe to drink.



The Coco River is the border between Honduras and Nicaragua, but the cattle and people don't seem to notice. We did stop at the "border control" point where two guys with large guns asked who we were. Eddy, our boatman, gave them the story. No passport checks thankfully, since most of us didn't have them on us. They probably assumed we couldn't speak

Spanish.

Ulwasking's water system had been built some years ago by another organization, but it looks like the community was not involved in the construction, as is our policy. When Hurricane Felix destroyed several parts of the system, they were unable to repair it. They had 2 plastic tanks, still in good shape. They got the tanks to Ulwasking by throwing them in the river and guided them from a small canoe. No



expensive transport in that case.

During the civil war, the Contras were based on the Honduran side and often came across through this region. The Nicaraguan government evacuated the community. Residents were allowed to take only 2 bags with them. The homes were burned down, so their opponents could not use them. The homes have been rebuilt for years now, but they are fairly simple, mostly wood with zinc roofing. In total, there are 45 homes in the village with only two latrines, one of which is full.

See Rob's entire story on his blog: <http://elporvenirnica.blogspot.com/>

We are helping the village repair the water system, build latrines and improve hygiene.

**Wiwilí —**

El Porvenir has been working in Wiwilí since 2008 in partnership with Water for People, and currently has active water, sanitation and hygiene education programs. In 2011, we plan to add a watershed protection/reforestation component.

Wiwilí has a population of approximately 75,000.

Eighty-four percent of this population is rural and about 50% of the population is aged 16 and under.

Wiwilí is a Miskito word meaning "water ant."

**El Porvenir**

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# Year of Celebration

## Supporter Profile – Mark Sullivan

Believing strongly that “all human beings should support other human beings,” Mark Sullivan wrote a check a few years ago to support El Porvenir. The ripple effect of that first investment has been priceless, both in the lives of Nicaraguans struggling to survive--and his own.

“When you see the smiling faces of children who don’t have shoes on their feet, drink clean water, or have a proper latrine, it’s a luxury and an honor to be able to write a check and know you have helped their lives. It’s a huge privilege.”

Sullivan, an Illinois businessman, wanted his donation to focus solely on business and job creation in EP communities. “The United States has done a horrible job promoting economic development in Central America, and Nicaragua provides an extraordinary opportunity because it’s the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, outside of Haiti.

“It is essential for the future of the U.S. to understand that we have a great opportunity to help the people south of our own borders, while creating a wonderfully peaceful, mutually economically productive, and more stable continent.

“So I wanted my dollars focused 100 percent on economic development. While that is not EP’s focus, they were gracious enough to explore the possibility. As a result, we were able to fund the conversion of a highly polluting brick manufacturing operation to more efficient concrete block manufacturing.



Mark with block plant owner

“These concrete blocks now are used to line the latrines that EP puts up in the region. EP found a way to make this work, and the man in whom I invested has already paid back about half the loan.”

After his initial investment, Sullivan visited more Nicaraguan communities. The more he traveled, the more he realized the wisdom of EP’s focus on basic needs: water, sanitation, forestation, and fuel-efficient stoves. “Until someone has a latrine to go to the washroom or can drink clean water,

they can’t even think about the business they can create.

“Until someone no longer has to spend hours a day getting water and wood, they have no time for other work. I have shifted because I see the extraordinary needs and the sickness when people don’t have clean water or are breathing in smoke from cooking fires.”

Now supporting the installation of fuel-efficient, low-cost wood stoves is his favorite EP project, Sullivan says: “It’s like the home run of the century in terms of bang for the buck in giving money away! For about 100 bucks, you can build and install a concrete stove with proper venting that reduces wood consumption by 50 to 60 percent, thereby reducing pollution 50 to 60 percent and reducing inhalation of wood smoke and the amount of time spent going out for wood as well as preventing deforestation.

“In terms of women’s health, the impact of the stoves is gigantic. Now, when I go into a community and see how happy and proud the women are to be cooking on new stoves, I take pictures of the big smiles on their faces. That is a big Thank You.’ It’s the greatest feeling in the world.”

Why does Sullivan feel EP has been so successful? “EP is a rare blend of efficiency and compassion. They employ local people, so they provide extraordinary benefit to Nicaraguan communities. They keep their payroll low, so they can put more money into projects. And they have a true, local understanding of what the needs are there.”

**“EP is a rare blend of efficiency and compassion.”**

In giving to the people of EP, Sullivan says he ends up receiving so much more in return. “I like to visit EP in Nicaragua because it invariably puts my life and my issues in perspective. It is such a grounding experience. It’s good to get out of your own life for a bit.

“And water and sanitation can’t be underestimated. In the United States, we take them for granted. But they are the difference between life and death and are essential to life expectancy and the quality of life. I want to at least throw a grain of sand on the proverbial beach of those making a difference.”

## The EP Story: 20 Years

**1989: El Porvenir (EP) is born** in Las Calabazas, Ciudad Dario, as a project of the Wellspring Center. Three Habitat for Humanity project villages request and carry out water projects: an extension of an existing water system, a spring capture, and a wash station.

**1990: EP becomes an official nonprofit** in California with North American volunteers in Nicaragua. Three Habitat communities receive hand dug wells and a water system extension is built.

**1991: First non-Habitat projects:** Two water extension systems, two wash stations, and a large gravity flow project in Habitat project villages, as well as one new well and 4 well rehabilitation projects in other villages. Staffed by volunteer North Americans and a part-time Nicaraguan accountant.

**1992: First resident staff:** Permanent presence in Ciudad Dario with a staff member in residence. Seven village projects, including spring captures, hand dug wells, and well rehabs.

**1993: First latrine projects** to help protect water purity by containing human waste. The first two latrine projects are built as well as 5 well projects, in or near Dario. Original design is with enclosures of locally available materials provided by residents. Now have 2 part-time Nicaraguan staff members.

**1994: EP expands to Camoapa!** Two full-time US staff members. EP supports 31 water and sanitation projects, 6,238 beneficiaries: tripling the number of projects and beneficiaries in two years!

**1997: Major gift and major growth.** El Porvenir receives a major gift to increase projects, improve staff compensation, purchase a work vehicle, and provide financial reserves. EP’s Nicaraguan accountant/administrator becomes full-time coordinator. Over half the projects are latrine projects.

**1998: EP’s first reforestation.** Two reforesters are hired, who travel on horseback to help villagers protect aquifers on which their water depends. EP staff is 2 US and 4 Nicaraguan.

**1999: El Porvenir opens El Sauce** as third regional office in response to the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in late 1998. Now 9 staff members.

**2003: First stoves.** EP expands to include fuel-efficient stoves to use 60% less wood. EP adds community health educator in every region, to change hygiene behaviors.

**2004: First EP full-time US-based staff member** hired to work with volunteers.

**2006: EP expands in two additional regions:** Terrabona and San Lorenzo. 63 projects are built in the five regions. EP has 19 staff.

**2008: EP, in alliance with Water for People,** adds the remote region of Wiwilí in northern Nicaragua.

**2009: Local government support.** 734 water and sanitation projects have been completed benefiting 105,000 villagers. In 5 of the 6 regions where EP works, the local government contributes 10-15% of project costs. This year EP helps villagers build 584 latrines, 9 wash stations, 26 wells, 2 gravity flow systems, and 151 fuel-efficient stoves. 89,000 trees planted with 89.5% survival rate. EP works with 23,332 villagers in the four program areas of water, sanitation, reforestation, and education. EP has 25 staff: 22 in Nicaragua and 3 in the U.S.

**2010: Help us write the history of EP in this year of celebration.**



## See What Your Contributions Can Do

How Much is Enough?

Your donation of \$20 is enough to plant 20 trees in a rural Nicaraguan village!



Photo by Patrick Bresnan

Your donation of \$100 is enough to host 20 community health/hygiene education chats.

Your donation of \$300 is enough to hold 20 handwash-a-thons in rural villages!



Photo by Patrick Bresnan

Your donation of \$700 is enough to air 20 EP radio programs with health and hygiene tips and reminders!

Your donation of \$1,200 is enough to rehabilitate a well to provide clean water for an entire village!



Your donation of \$3,000 is enough to buy a much needed new motorcycle (we need 4 new ones!) for one of our hardworking staff to get out to remote communities and help them have clean water to drink!

Your donation of any amount goes to support valuable project work in Nicaragua!

Thank you so much for helping Nicaraguans live healthier lives!

## Help Us Celebrate 20 Years of Clean Water

### EL PORVENIR TURNS TWENTY THIS YEAR!

**HELP US CELEBRATE ALL YEAR BY DOING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

#### HOW TO DO A BEANS AND RICE DINNER

(Adapted from Colorado Friends of El Porvenir [CFEP]. CFEP has hosted 8 successful dinners.)

**Purpose of the dinner:** energize people about EP, have fun, and raise money. Invite people who are motivated to support EP throughout the year. Ask them to bring their friends to the dinner, and help spread the word to other groups. One month before, do personal invitations and mail invitations to all known EP supporters in the area (EP will provide you with the list and labels!). E-vites work well, too.

Begin planning the dinner a few months in advance by getting at least 5-10 people involved. We have always used a church social hall for the dinner because it is free or inexpensive. Get everything donated so that that every dollar taken in goes to EP.

**Food:** chicken, gallo pinto (beans and rice, Nica style), salad, soft drinks, coffee, and dessert.



Gallo pinto

#### Presentation at the dinner:

- You can do this yourself.
- EP can provide a Power Point presentation.
- Depending on your location,

EP can try to have a staff or Board member attend.

**Silent and/or live auction:** This can include typical Nicaraguan items as well as things donated by businesses in your area. A good auctioneer can drive up prices and make people laugh. After the live auction, ask for pledges to pay for the cost of a well (\$2,500) and a latrine (\$380)—25 people willing to pledge \$100 for a well, for example.



Have a copy of a good movie on water/sanitation? We can share ours. It's called *Flow*. Have a discussion to follow. You could also get a copy of *Tapped* to show.



Photo by Patrick Bresnan

Submit your favorite EP photo to the 20th Anniversary Photo Contest! Winners will be featured on the website and the Fall Newsletter.

**Displays:** Display boards with photos of communities and projects, EP brochures, photos in albums or shown on a laptop computer.

\*For a more complete guide or to talk to someone with expertise in this, call or e-mail EP Board member and Chair of the CFEP Dave Arnolds at 303-322-7750 or dmarnolds@yahoo.com.

#### MORE IDEAS

Have a friend in the restaurant business? Ask a restaurant to donate 5-10% of their earnings for a particular day and help send business there that day. Put out table tents with information about EP, Nicaragua, and the need for water, sanitation, reforestation, and health education.

Keep a record and let us know 20 things you did to observe EP's 20th anniversary. More and more ideas:

- \* Learn a new Spanish word
- \* Learn a fact about Nicaragua
- \* Tell a friend about EP
- \* Test a Nicaraguan recipe
- \* Listen to a Nicaraguan song
- \* Read a Nicaraguan writer



Photo by Patrick Bresnan