

FROM BOOKS TO BRILLIANCE

December 14, 2008

With the creation of a second village library in central Nicaragua, the addition of several hundred books to Mulukuku's *Biblioteca Samuel Vidaurre*, and the approval of our 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service, *From Books to Brilliance* has much to report. We are now a legally recognized public charity! This is indeed a significant step toward our mission to bring books to people who do not have access to a local library or a book to read. We wish to thank *St. Anthony's Alliance* for their unconditional support and encouragement in this endeavor, who over the past two years has served as our fiscal sponsor.

The citizens of Mulukuku are unmistakably energized and optimistic about the reopening and growth of their library. In June of 2007 *From Books to Brilliance* purchased over 900 books for beginning and intermediate readers at multiple locations in the capital city of Managua, and this summer purchased several hundred more. Once again a yellow school bus transported us and the books safely to Mulukuku, along with the University of Texas-Galveston medical delegation. Upon our arrival we found that the library, closed for nearly twenty years, had been relocated to a larger and more inviting space. A handwritten sign boasts its daily hours of operation, overseen by two very capable and energetic volunteers from the community.

We, the founders of *From Books to Brilliance*, were thrilled with the incredible progress witnessed at the *Samuel Vidaurre* library. The community's children are eagerly visiting to read "stories", and teachers are bringing in

ACCESS TO BOOKS IN CENTRAL NICARAGUA!

their students to introduce them to the proper care of books and the joy of expanding their knowledge. The shelves are organized and the books are accessible to all. Records of daily activity clearly demonstrate the town's enthusiasm for this revitalized facility, and the librarians excitedly informed us of their ambitious plans for its immediate future...plans that include expanding library services and making improvements to the building itself. The *Biblioteca Samuel Vidaurre* is quickly becoming a center of the community and a cornerstone for education in Mulukuku.

Awareness of this library has spread. While working with the



Maggie Covill and Don Fausto, with the beginnings of Santa Rita library in



Biblioteca Samuel Vidaurre, closed for 20 years



Children reading "stories" in relocated and reopened library, pictured below.



medical delegation in the more remote village of Santa Rita, a community leader handed us a letter. In this letter Don Fausto requests our help. He explains that in order “to develop better life conditions” his community also wants a library. Consequently, a couple hundred new books are now housed in a modest cement block building, a stone’s throw away from their one room schoolhouse. Showing their appreciation several parents offered gifts of home-made breads to us at the clinic! According to Fausto, the children are very excited and showing up daily to read from this small collection.

From Books to Brilliance believes that the people of Mulukuku and Santa Rita are now poised to benefit greatly from these nascent libraries. Central Nicaraguans have been creating a future for themselves since the ravages of war in the 1980’s took men from their households, and women were left to raise children alone. With tremendous courage and determination the people of these villages have pulled themselves from that dark and chaotic past into a vibrant present with exploding enthusiasm. Their persistence continues. They envision a time when their children are literate and well

educated. Libraries with books for all will help to promote that dream. A brilliant future is now becoming possible for these underserved people...a future previously impossible to achieve. However, these libraries need books...many books.

While *From Books to Brilliance* works with the citizens of Mulukuku and Santa Rita to grow their libraries, our organization also hopes to develop relationships with other underserved communities. With the approval of our non-profit status, we are currently focusing our efforts to obtain support through community fundraisers, grants and donations, as well as through gifts of books and services. During the last two years *From Books to Brilliance* has been fortunate to receive funding from many generous individuals as well as from the *Dr. Seuss Foundation*. *Hoopoe Books* donated beautifully illustrated children’s books. *Moss Optical* in Minneapolis and women at *All Saints Lutheran Church* in

Albuquerque donated hundreds of reading glasses. *St. Anthony’s Alliance* made it possible for our organization to accept these donations. The people of Santa Rita and Mulukuku are very grateful! *From Books to Brilliance* looks forward to expanding this much needed literacy program. We believe that our small and initial effort can turn into something great, serving

an ever growing population well into the future.



Children in Santa Rita reading while waiting to see a doctor

With tremendous courage and determination the people of these villages have pulled themselves from that dark and chaotic past into a vibrant present with exploding enthusiasm. Their persistence continues. They envision a time when their children are literate and well educated.



Volunteers preparing books for placement in the Samuel Vidaurre library



Child enjoying her first book, published and donated by Hoopoe Books