

NEXUS

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INCLUDES 2015 - 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference



The community of Arcoiris (Rainbow), El Salvador, is special to Rainbow of Hope and Rainbow of Hope is very special to the Arcoiris. Our first visit was after the earthquake of 2001 that turned their homes into rubble at the foot of the steep slopes of Los Violetes on the edge of Comosagua. Rainbow of Hope and the Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta had just purchased several hectares of stable land some 15 km away and the new community was born. Four visits later and the relationship grows stronger than ever. In this edition, we are pleased to feature highlights of our visit to Arcoiris and other Salvadoran communities from November 9 to 18, 2016.

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VISIT TO EL SALVADOR 2016

by George Bunz

A LAND OF MANY CONTRASTS AND STRUGGLES

Two volcanic ranges east to west, segment this beautiful land, the smallest country in Central America. Between these ranges lie fertile valleys, semi-fertile hills and inhabitable slopes. The country extends 270 km long by 142 km wide, 21,040 square kilometres, an area less than half of Nova Scotia. About 6 million people live here, of whom a huge number live below the poverty line of \$1.90 US per day. Why?

For two centuries coffee has been a major cash crop for El Salvador, bringing in approximately 95% of the country's income. However, this income was enjoyed by only 2% of the population, sharply dividing the people between a small powerful elite and an impoverished majority.

We reciprocated that each time we visit, we leave a piece of our hearts in Arcoiris, and we come to find them among the people.

These wealthy few families have now diversified into finance and commerce. They were, and still are, the power brokers of the country. The vast majority, the indigenous people and mixed Europeans, worked the land for meagre wages and lived on the treacherous slopes renting shanties from the wealthy landlords, their homes vulnerable to earthquakes and floods.

They were, and still are, the neglected, the oppressed, and the powerless. The civil strife of the 1970s and the long civil war of the 80s were about the struggle for justice, for a fair share of the resources, and access to equal participation in the civic life of the country.

Land reforms and property redistribution, an outflow of the peace accord in 1992, improved the situation for many small farmers and peasants, but there is still a huge gap between the rich and poor.

THE POOREST OF THE POOR SUFFER THE MOST

It is in this land of many contrasts—the powerful and the powerless—that Rainbow of Hope arrived in 2001 and trekked through the rubble of homes destroyed by the earthquake. How no one lost their lives at Los Violetes is a miracle; 23 families were left homeless and landless because they did not own property and therefore were not entitled to government aid nor international bilateral aid given to the government to administer. With a matching grant from the Wildrose Foundation of Alberta, Rainbow of Hope funded the purchase of several hectares of land, divided into 23 plots with land titles given to the mothers. We also provided land for a community garden to feed their families.



Mothers delighted in receiving title to property



Left, Lito showing the barren land in 2001. Right, Mati and Lito in their cosy home in 2016, much like all homes in Arcoiris today.

Community organizer, Lito, said 2001 was the start of a 15-year relationship and how happy they are that we come back to visit them. We reciprocated that each time we visit, we leave a piece of our hearts in Arcoiris, and we come back to find them among the people. It was good to see the improvements—electricity, good homes, water, and a community centre.

COMUS SUATAINABLE COFFEE PROJECT

The COMUS Sustainable Organic Coffee Project in the Usulután Region is highlighted in the annual report of this NEXUS. We visited a little community of Los Conchas high into the mountains, who has suffered earthquakes and floods. They switched to less profitable corn a few years ago because of the rust plaguing coffee production throughout Central America. With support of this project, they have planted 11,000 rust resistant seedlings, which will start producing coffee and income in about five years. Los Conchas is just one of dozens of communities in the Usulután benefiting from the program.



Rust destroys the leaves then the plant. COMUS has nurtured 2 varieties of rust resistant plants, a real boon to the coffee growers there.

EL SAUCE SCHOOL ORGANIC MINIFARM

We congratulate Professor Castor and his students for converting the school yard into a lush mini-farm, growing vegetables and medicinal plants for the school and sale, and integrating the mini-farm into the curriculum of the



school. Currently 60 students work double digging the soil and caring for the plants, and two farmers are employed to train other farmers in the techniques of organic farming. Rainbow of Hope also funded the water tank and irrigation system for the mini-farm. The organic mini-farm attracts visitors from local schools and universities, and the media, as well as international groups and individuals.



INDIGO DYING AND SEWING CENTRE

Rainbow of Hope funded a building and facilities for an indigo and sewing business entrepreneurship operation for the women of San Luis Los Ranchos to facilitate the production and marketing of products to earn income for their families. The business is in its fledgling stages, but they plan to bid on the upcoming school contract for school uniforms. The women were hopeful they can tap into the growing market for artisan indigo tie-dyeing and generate income for their families.

THE RAINBOW-CIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

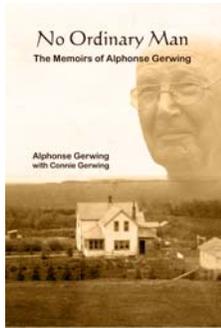
If ever there is a program that provides life-changing experience, it is the scholarship program. We are funding the travel for students of Isla Espiritu Sonto to the mainland, to attend high school and university, plus a living stipend. Its a half-hour ride by boat. The program involves leadership and doing a major project in the home community.



It was heartbreaking to hear about their struggles and joys at being able to get an education. In spite of gang violence and threats, they refuse to give up. Saul is aspiring to be a medical doctor, others have dreams of electronic engineering, computer technology, nursing, and church ministry. We salute Luis Alonso of La Loma who started grade 1 at age 17, completed grade 9 in 4 years, then high school and is in his 3rd year university majoring in electronic engineering. Rainbow of Hope is in dire need of funds to keep this program going. A gift of \$300 will cover one high school scholarship for one year and \$1000 will cover a year of university. What a Christmas present!

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★ *No Ordinary Man* The Memoirs of Alphonse Gerwing ★

Looking for a special Christmas gift for a special person? Consider the memoirs of Al Gerwing (Tomas in Brazil). Al was a director of Rainbow of Hope for many years, and dedicated to Brazil and social justice wherever oppression existed. The memoir is an interesting mixture of family history, anecdotes and social commentary--a story well-told, informative, and frequently hilarious.

You can purchase a copy for \$20 online at www.mcnallyrobinson.com or by emailing Ted Gerwing in Saskatoon at tedgerwing@sasktel.net. It is also available at the Lake Lenore Grocery and the Humboldt Museum. Funds go to the Alphonse Gerwing Foundation which supports ROHFC projects.

CHANGES, CHANGES

Rainbow of Hope for Children has had a year of change. As many of you know, our long-standing treasurer, Richard Forer, died suddenly in January. In addition to the sadness at losing him, George Bunz had to cancel a monitoring trip to Kenya and Tanzania to stay home and try to deal with the aftermath. Luckily, Cliff Hagerty volunteered as treasurer until such time as we found someone to fill that position. Several other long-standing directors also resigned before the annual meeting so there has been more changeover than usual. Renewal is good for organizations and we hope that the new directors will bring new ideas and energy to our work.

Welcome to the new directors:

Guy Werbicki

Guy Werbicki is the Human Resources Hiring Manager for the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division. As Principal of École Cardinal Leger School, Guy established a partnership with ROHFC and formalized the Kinyambu School Library Project in 2010. As a school community, École Cardinal Leger School raised \$15,000 from 2010-2011 to support the construction of a library and purchasing of resources. The partnership with Kinyambu Primary School was more than just a fundraising campaign. Students from both schools exchanged letters several times, having the opportunity to share their daily life, culture, family backgrounds, and learning at school. During school assemblies, pictures of the Kinyambu students, staff, and parents, as well as the construction of the new library, were shared with the Cardinal Leger community in order to celebrate the relationship between the schools and to instill an attitude of gratitude for the educational opportunities that students experience in Canada.

Guy presently resides in Saskatoon with his wife, Nelda, and two children, Ty and Adlen. As a new director with Rainbow of Hope for Children, Guy looks forward to supporting new projects in Africa and South America by facilitating partnerships with schools in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division.

Charlie Matt

Charles Matt is vice president of Rainbow of Hope for Children (ROHFC) and a director on the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation (AGF) board. He has visited many of the projects funded by AGF and the ROHFC and recently stepped forward to join the ROHFC board. He is looking forward to assisting in developing project proposals and following through with their delivery and implementation. It gives him great pleasure to see how people who are living in very poor conditions have had their lives, and/or their children's lives, improved by the efforts of individuals who truly care about others.

Charlie has a Certificate in Business Administration and in Human Resource Management. He also has a small renovation business and thoroughly enjoys fixing things. He has taken French, German, and Spanish language classes during the last 15 years. In particular, he is attempting to become more fluent in Spanish which he practiced daily with the local people during a recent monitoring trip to El Salvador.

He recently retired after spending almost 48 years with the Ministry of Highways and Transportation. Charlie has two sons and one daughter. They have all made him a proud grandpa with 3 grandsons and one more on the way very soon.

Patrick Hessel

“Deacon Pat” serves as a deacon at Holy Trinity Parish in Spruce Grove/Stony Plain, Alberta. He became involved with ROHFC when his parish established a twinning relationship with a Catholic parish and school in Hayes, Jamaica. The project provided tuition and food for students and poor families in the region. He is also involved in supporting educational activities in South Africa and Lesotho. He and his wife are supporting the construction of two schools in Nepal that were destroyed in the 2015 earthquakes. He hopes to expand his work in Nepal through involvement with ROHFC.

Pat and his wife of 39 years have four children and seven grandchildren. Trained as an epidemiologist, he is a former professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Alberta.

Peter Van Winssen

Peter Van Winssen is quite honoured to be a part of the Rainbow of Hope Board. He became interested in Rainbow of Hope through learning about its activities at church in Wainwright. He has been learning and speaking Spanish for several years so he hopes to be able to go and assist with projects in South and Central America. When George Bunz, the current president, discussed this with him and he heard from friends about the project in Chile, he felt that a more active role would be appropriate.

Peter is a lawyer in Wainwright with 3 adult children and a wife who is also interested in giving back to the world at large. He is willing to provide any assistance needed with contracts or legal matters and is looking forward to a more active role in Rainbow of Hope.

Nzavoni: A New School Project in Kenya

ROHFC has been operating in the Kinyambu area of Kenya, 200 kilometers east of Nairobi, for several years. An NGO called Kinyambu Rural Education and Community Development (KRECD) works with us on the projects we have done there. Simon Ngumbi, chairperson, and his group have provided local contacts and input and enabled us to contribute to the community. So far, we have built a library and fence at Kinyambu Primary School and provided desks and other resources to that school.



We are going to expand our focus to another school in the area, Nzavoni. This is a bit farther from the center of the village and is in very poor condition. Kenya made primary school education free in 2003 but local communities are responsible for school buildings and maintenance. The government supplies teachers and some very basic school supplies.

Many of the classrooms, teacher offices, and work spaces at Nzavoni Primary School are falling apart. They were built very cheaply from locally made soft bricks which don't last very well. Termites, locally called white ants, have invaded and are building their mounds inside the walls and eating through the rafters. The floors and walls are cracking. Parents are concerned for their children in these rooms. Consequently, the school has been losing students to nearby schools, causing overcrowding at those other schools.

Our plan is to build two buildings, one with two classrooms and another with one classroom and offices. Because of the site, one long building is not feasible and classrooms in Kenya are built so air and light can come in from both sides. We will also furnish them with desks and blackboards. The offices will have lockable storage for exams and materials and desks and chairs for teachers. Parents will provide unskilled labour and are excited to have a new building for their children.



Poverty in Brazil 1999

It's not a question of merely giving. And certainly not of tossing something at the poor in contempt. No, it's a question of sharing.

~ Cinira of Sao Paulo (Henriqui)
Translated by Al Gerwing, 2001

THE OCEAN IS MADE UP OF LITTLE DROPS OF WATER

I well remember these words of Alphonse Gerwing on my first visit to Northeast Brazil in January 1999 at our team debriefing after our first week—the massive expanse of poverty, plastic tent cities strung along roadsides, countryside and favelas in cities, the cries of neglect. “Really now Al”, I said, “What difference can we make?”

Al assured me that I was not alone in my first impression, that it was indeed his on his first visit, after which a local woman passed on to him this message of hope and reality. In Al’s mentoring style, he taught our team that each life we touch with kindness makes a difference to that person, and just like the tiny drops in the ocean, together we can make a difference to families, communities, and even countries.

As I reflect on the work of Rainbow of Hope for Children Society and its steadfast supporters 18 years later and 41 years after the NGO was formed, together we certainly have been a rainbow of hope in many parts of the world—Brazil, Peru, Central America, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, and even Afghanistan. If you have not read the 40-year history of the NGO, consider reading the Fall-Winter 2015 edition of the NEXUS on our website at www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca.

TRANSITION TO A NEW TREASURER

This past year has been no less one of challenge and progress. In January we received news our treasurer, Richard Forer, had passed away unexpectedly. It shocked the NGO. How do you replace such a self-giving volunteer force as Richard?

Low and behold, Cliff Hagerty, a retired chartered accountant of Humboldt, now living in West Kelowna, stepped up to serve temporarily and get the NGO back on its feet. Thank you Cliff for being there for Rainbow of Hope in our time of need.

Board members have interviewed several potential volunteer treasurers and we hope that one of them will consider the position. All are accountants with experience and the desire to help out with our mandate to work in the developing world.

RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF:



Global Affairs
Canada

Affaires mondiales
Canada

Government of Alberta
CIP - International Development

Thank you all for your support

Thank you to all our donors, several Rotary Clubs and Knights of Columbus, Edmonton Community Foundation, and the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation. Special thanks to Miss Sharon Romanow and her leadership students at Blessed Sacrament School in Wainwright for helping prepare the NEXUS mail out.

THREE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

COMUS SUSTAINABLE COFFEE PROJECT, USULUTÁN REGION, EI SALVADOR

This Project, in which ROHFC is partnered with Global Affairs Canada, is in its fifth and final year. The Sustainable Coffee Project has 4 major activity areas: Food Security Enhancement, On-Farm Production Improvements, Gender Program Capacity Building, and Coffee Processing Plant Improvements (production capacity and environmental performance). Through the activities in these areas, the Project is enhancing the food security of 200 subsistence coffee farmers and improving the capacity of the community run “Association of United Communities of Usulután (COMUS)” to sustainably implement its rural development programs, and improve rural women’s inclusion and participation in the programs. Thanks to the exceptional work of the project team in El Salvador, we have overcome numerous challenges, especially rust and the devaluation of the Canadian dollar, and are on track to fulfill the primary objective of creating an ecologically and economically sustainable coffee production and processing business in one of the poorest regions of El Salvador. We thank our amazing project team in El Salvador and Global Affairs Canada for their support.



Nov. 11, 2016 ROHFC's volunteer, Ed Rajfur, and Vice president, Charlie Matt, admire the rust resistant coffee seedlings in the nursery at Los Conchas. 11,000 plants, and not one plant lost. They will start producing coffee in 4 to 5 years.

RECREATION-HEALTH-EDUCATION, CHINCHA BAJA PERU

Since the earthquake of August 15, 2007, the people of Chincha Baja are striving to reconstruct their lives. Most of the area has the water and electricity restored, but many families remain living in unfinished dwellings or temporary shelters provided by various international organizations. Since the earthquake, recreational activities for women have been discontinued due to lack of a safe, hygienic and secure location to practice and organize sports tournaments for women. This project is working with women groups, the Health Centre, Ports associations, the Municipality and the Centre for Occupational Education (COMPLEX) reaching beyond the traditional scope of organized sports to incorporate broader health and development activities for women and girls. It is enhancing the health of women through physical fitness activities, education on dieting and health issues, interpersonal relations and wellbeing. We thank our director, Joe Gubbels, for his tireless work in Peru, the Alberta government for its CIP-ID matching grant and the Rotary Club of Stony Plain, Alberta for its generous support for this project.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DISADVANTAGED ADOLESCENT GIRLS AT USSONGO, TANZANIA



In January 2016, Connie Gerwing lead a ROHFC team of three to visit projects in East Africa. She reported the preschool at Ussongo is already in operation and the 20 children has skyrocketed to 60, buzzing with excitement. The classroom for the adolescent girls is almost completed as well, and equipment and furnishings are being purchased. Work still needs to



be done to complete the electrical infrastructure for operation of sewing machines and computers. The Daughters of Mary are doing a good job implementing the project, scheduled to be completed in February, 2017. We thank Norm Duerr of Humboldt, Blessed Sacrament School Advent project, Wainwright Men’s Chorus, Wainwright Rotary Club, and the Alberta government CIP-ID program for its matching grant. What a difference ROHFC projects are making to the people of East Africa!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Connie Gerwing,
Prince Albert, SK

Joe Gubbels
Edmonton, AB

Patrick Hessel,
Spruce Grove, AB

Mary Anne MacDonald
Edmonton, AB

Peter Van Winssen
Wainwright, AB

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Treasurer: Cliff Hagerty
West Kelowna, BC

V-President: Charles Matt
Saskatoon, SK

President: George Bunz
Wainwright, AB

Rainbow of Hope for Children Society Statement of Operations and Net Assets For the Year Ended March 31, 2016

	2016		2015	
	Unrestricted	Projects	Total	Total
Revenue				
Donations (Note 3)	\$ -	\$ 245,868	\$ 245,868	\$ 323,370
Interest and other income	-	6,381	6,381	4,845
Federal government grants	-	110,768	110,768	186,622
Provincial government grants	-	11,270	11,270	18,000
	-	374,287	374,287	532,837
Program expenditures and allocations				
Bali	-	2,000	2,000	11,154
Brazil	-	50,323	50,323	19,238
El Salvador	-	149,856	149,856	294,057
Ghana	-	3,840	3,840	6,255
Guatemala	-	417	417	138
India	-	-	-	(583)
Jamaica	-	-	-	1,509
Kenya	-	11,915	11,915	18,258
Nicaragua	-	26,135	26,135	(2,643)
Peru	-	68,322	68,322	42,639
Philippines	-	550	550	19
Tanzania	-	12,234	12,234	42,836
Unrestricted	-	23,314	23,314	52,270
Project administration	-	13,045	13,045	23,003
Project monitoring	-	-	-	7,483
Public participation	-	12,336	12,336	17,204
	-	374,287	374,287	532,837
Expenditures over revenues for the year	-	-	-	-
Net assets, beginning of year	4,583	-	4,583	4,583
Net assets, end of year	4,583	-	4,583	4,583

PROGRAM OF RAINBOW OF HOPE

1. Reducing avoidable blindness, Indonesia
2. MMTRP-AL (Rural women workers and fisherwomen in Alagoas), Brazil
3. School of family agriculture, Bahia, Brazil
4. PREDa protecting children, Philippines
5. El Sauce School organic agriculture, El Salvador
6. COMUS sustainable coffee cooperative, El Salvador
7. High school & university scholarships, El Salvador
8. Disaster reconstruction & education, Chinchá Baja, Peru
9. PAMBE Ghana education, nutrition and health
10. Kinyambu Primary School, Kenya
11. Nzavoni Primary School, Kenya
12. Bilingual Bicultural College, Cunen, Guatemala
13. Ussongo Primary School water project, Tanzania
14. Ussongo Preschool
15. Disaster relief fund
16. Undesignated: where most needed

*This Christmas the presents you give
help to change the world*

We thank you for offering a gift to one of these projects and are pleased to acknowledge your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Kindly send your donation to:

RAINBOW OF HOPE
WAINWRIGHT, AB T9W 1S7
PO BOX 2883

Registered Charity No: 889160172-RR0001
www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca

NEXUS: Produced and edited by Connie Gerwing and Jan Schmitz in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Rainbow of Hope's Head Office in Wainwright, Alberta, Canada. The expressed views of the authors are not necessarily the views of the NGO.