



Friday, March 7, 2008

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Just another Thursday morning at The Bridge... Roy, Irene, and Sandara wait to walk to school with other kids in the yard, the big "veggie truck" waits for the driveway to clear, and Rosa & Antonio Velazquez change a tire on their pickup truck, from which they operate their own veggie stand in Puerto Viejo. The Velazquez' own a large finca (farm) nearby. Rosa has had previous experience working at a drug rehab shelter in Nicaragua, and she and her husband want to start one on their finca... to help them grow the farming business, and to help the locals get off drugs.

RECENT NEWS

We continue to assist at the beginning of the 2008 school year: books are the big thing now. The Bridge is for the birds (too). Here's a quick snapshot of the support we've received. GoodSearch and GoodShop revisited!

SCHOOL YEAR 2008 JUST KEEPS ON BEGINNING

At this moment, you have helped put 26 kids in school this year!! And, we are not sure that'll be all. We're down to crunch time now. Finally, as the teachers decide what books they'll use for this year, we're getting the book lists. An early check of the bookstore in Limón told us that the full quantity needed for the 12 kids in Puerto Viejo school will not likely be available. Many of the books are workbooks, used once and thrown away. For one child, the cost for those books exceeded \$80. We're looking all over Limón for the others.

Nanci went to ATEC, where the only public copier in town is located, and started the process of copying the number of books needed. Before we're through, the book phase of the year's startup could require between \$400 and \$900, depending on many things out of our control.

If you wanted to donate some additional funds for book expenses for this year, it is exactly the right time. Go to the donation page NOW by clicking here -----> www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page30.html <-----



Back to our backyard on Thursday morning...Alejandro, Willi, Mauricio, and Maria figure things out around the table, while Carmelita, ever the shy teenager, hides behind a towel. We're literally surrounded by Indians!

THE BRIDGE IS FOR THE BIRDS

You'll remember some time ago we reported on a Gavilan – a Hawk – that was brought here in bad condition. Nanci put on the leather gloves, eventually deciding to bring it to the vet in Bribri. He nursed the bird back to health, and was happy to see it fly away free. Then there was the aricari, a “mini-toucan”, who first flew right into Tashia, then smacked into the side of our house. After a night of food, water, and rest, it flew away the next morning – “free as a bird.”

We also were given custody to an Amazon parrot. This bird's wings had been clipped, so the parrot couldn't fly. When we got it, it was in bad shape. Maria, the Bribri mom who works with us, asked if she could take it home. She'd “repaired and released” several birds before, and she took a liking to this one. We said OK.



When she got the bird home Maria plucked out all the stumps of feathers, so new ones could grow in. Over the ensuing weeks and months, the parrot became a pet. Wherever Maria goes around their place, the parrot runs after her. When they leave the parrot alone, the parrot hides itself. As they arrive home, the family calls for it, and it comes out of hiding – shrieking a welcome greeting. If you've heard parrots in the wild, you'll understand the word “shrieking”. Our bird gets to visit The Bridge, where it sits in the almond tree and just trims the leaves while holding court.

WHO SUPPORTS THE BRIDGE?

You do – *all* of you – with support in cash, supplies, tangible prayer support, and even just your good will. Thank You! We are in awe of the continuing support we receive. Thank you all again!

GOODSEARCH AND GOODSHOP PAY OFF!

Last issue, I mentioned that Goodsearch paid us a year-end donation for GoodSearches during 2007. I also mentioned GoodShop, and suggested that there are many brand-name online retail outlets that will donate money to your designated charity – which, I hope, is El Puente. I noticed that right at the end of February, someone out there made a small purchase to try it out, and there's a \$0.49 donation sitting in the statistics report. Yay! And "Thank You!" to whomever made the purchase through GoodShop!

I haven't said much about GoodShop. Here's a list of the names you'll see when you go to the internet page that has easy-to-use links to each store:

1-800-flowers	Half.com	Oriental Trading
Amazon.com	Home Depot	Overstock.com
Apple Store	Hotels.com	PetSmart
Barnes & Noble	Hewlett-Packard	Sears
Best Buy	Home Shopping Network	Sephora
Bloomingdale's	iTunes	Staples
Buy.com	J.Crew	Target
Circuit City	Kodak	Teleflora
Dell	Kohls	The Container Store
Drugstore.com	Lands' End	Toys R Us
Ebay	Macy's	Travelocity
Expedia.com	Nike	WalMart
Buy Movie Tickets	Nordstrom	Zappos
The Gap	Office Depot	
Guess	Old Navy	

Why are these stores doing this?

- On one hand, they're doing a good thing for charity organizations.
- On the other hand, they're cutting down on retail store expenses by directing at least some of their sales volume to an internet site that doesn't need the overhead of a retail store.
- On the other hand, some of the money they save on overhead, they donate to the charity of your choice. Everybody wins....

To explore the GoodShop page, click on the following link and get started!

<http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx>

If you haven't signed up with Goodsearch before, you'll have to do that before actually shopping.

Be sure to choose "El Puente-The Bridge" as your charity.

Can GoodSearch produce serious amounts of money? Consider this example – of gathering enough cash to purchase a good, strong, larger used car. Here's how it could work.

HOW TO BUY A CAR USING GOODSEARCH	
Cost of a used, stronger, larger vehicle	\$12,000
Number of newsletter subscribers (3/6/08)	557
Average # of searches each day by each subscriber	7
Total searches per day	3,899
"Computer days" per year – estimated	300
Total searches per year	1,169,700
Goodsearch donation per search	\$0.01
Total Donation to El Puente	\$11,697

Good Searching!

BRIDGE DAYS ARE REALLY TOUGH

After serving 40 people or so soup on a weekday, everybody is pretty tired. Here's some of the "beings" involved taking a rest at the end of the day.



Tica and the Ku from Norway demonstrate the "Cat" & "Cow" yoga positions



"Little", is sleeping it off. Even the dolly is tired after being carried around by several little girls for the whole morning

VOLUNTEER CORNER

We've been blessed by the presence of yet another great Volunteer...



Meet Fran DuCross, better known here as "Frankie". She's been here many of the Community Kitchen days, serving soup, washing dishes, increasing the Laughter Index... here, she's chopping some veggies as we prepare for another week of Vegetable Soup.

Thankee, Frankie!

RANDOM NOTES

On the proposed marina development – this project would wipe out the waterfront of Puerto Viejo as it is now known, and have up to 100 boats dumping their sewage into the water off Playa Negra. A public meeting was held which almost came to fisticuffs. It was nasty. Timoteo Jackson, a Bribri tribal leader, walked to the microphone and said “the Bribri are against this project. There are 11,500 of us, and 2,500 of you. We’ll vote against it.” The meeting broke up shortly after that. It was good to see the community respond with such interest.

The situation with the road continues – spot repairs continue to be made, but no pavement has appeared. Clouds of dust are rolling in as the larger vehicles fly by.

We eagerly anticipate arrival of the rainy season – which is forecasted to be much earlier this year – within the next few weeks, we’re told. We know and accept that we have PLENTY of water!

House financing opportunity back in play – it’s time to act on this again. More about that in a forthcoming email.

Yes, we’re going to have to buy a stronger car – more about that in yet *another* forthcoming issue.

YOU CAN HELP US!

There are several ways you can help.

- **Send this email to people you know** who might also enjoy it. Make El Puente the subject of an informal viral marketing program.
- **Post a message about us on social networking sites or discussion boards** dealing with adventure, travel, voluntourism, education, microlending, human services, eliminating poverty, or other humanitarian activities.
- **Send us the names of your local newspapers**, together with an editor’s name and email address. We’ll add the information to our growing Press Release File.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

There couldn’t be a better time than **NOW** to donate to all the programs and the operations of The Bridge!

NOW’s a GREAT time to contribute.

Donate online by [clicking here](#), where you can use a **credit card** or an **E-Check**.
Or, mail a check made out to “**El Puente**” with “**Member 29409704**” in the Memo Field to
USE Credit Union, 8697 La Mesa Blvd, La Mesa, CA 91941

Deductions are tax-deductible

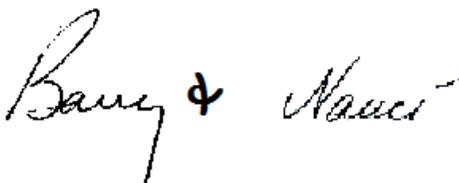
Do it NOW! You’ll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES

...go to www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly and download the file with the date of this issue.

Go to The **Bridge Website** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to The **Bridge Online Store** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Download a **Powerpoint presentation** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Download **brochures in Spanish or English** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to the **newsletter archive** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

See some **Video clips** showing activities at The Bridge by [CLICKING HERE](#)

We Value Your Opinion - Give us your feedback by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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