



October 31, 2010  
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*One of the first Jack O'Lanterns seen in Puerto Viejo,  
and what a cut up for the Bridge Kids!*

## **RECENT NEWS**

Nanci and the kids cut up at The Bridge! Joseph's going fishing – and the rumors are flying! Irene goes to meet the women of Yorkin. Barry does teeth! Volunteers are requested – to visit the Post Office. Did you know the Dalai Llama is on Facebook?

We sometimes provide a new slant on old stories, and we may seem to be telling them again. We're adding many new subscribers each month, and we wish to bring them up to speed on those old stories. Please be patient with us – growth can be very exciting!

## **THE BRIDGE CUT-UPS**

One of the things we do here is share our own culture. You already know about the Christmas and Easter gatherings, which are big deals serving as many as 80 partiers. Halloween's a bit more low-key. A group of Bridge Kids hung around on the porch after Community Kitchen on Thursday, and Nanci, always the cut-up, took a kitchen knife in hand and showed them the basics of carving a Jack O'Lantern.



*Nanci cuts into the pumpkin, while Maria, Ronualdo, Catie, Cris, and Griselda look on.*

Much of the pumpkin was salvaged and added to the weekly store of fresh veggies chopped that day.

The final result? You see it above! He lost a tooth in the process and had to have a dental implant. But even with that, he's a fine ol' Jack-O'Lantern.

Happy Halloween!

## **SUCCESS STORY**

### ***Joseph's going fishing – and the rumors fly***

You will remember the story of Jackie & Joseph – a couple very much in love, and very addicted to crack. They had that miracle on our porch, where Jackie filled in a randomly selected coloring book and puzzle within it, while they were having another one of those drug discussions with Barry. Jackie filled in the puzzle, and she and Joseph gasped as they read the finished answer... "Say No To Drugs!" Two weeks later, after believing they had heard the voice of God, they were in rehab.

Through 14 months of rehab, they got straight, got married, had a crack-free baby, and got out... and against all advice, moved back to Puerto Viejo. Joseph wanted to "do something about the drug problem". He now runs a twelve-step program for addicts, and he wades into the "crack zone" and the addicts in it to talk with them.

The rumors are flying... "Is Joseph doing crack again... what's he doing over there with the addicts."

If you're looking for fish, you'll have more luck if you're near the water. He's got some really powerful bait. Looks like he's pulling them in. Way to go Joseph!



*Meet Jackie, baby "Coochie", Joseph, and Sergio*

We're thrilled to see the family back at The Bridge! And we're pleased to receive their new invites, who are just as welcome as they are.

J&J are still making and selling coconut oil, and are increasing that business while adding another line – shredded coconut is turning out to be very popular as well. They're on their way!

### **"CAN I GO AND MEET HER?"**

Those of you who have been with us for a while will remember Doña Bernarda, from Yorkin, a town deep in the interior of the Bribri Indigenous Reserve. As the story goes, Bernarda and the rest of the women in Yorkin got tired of the drunkenness and abuse, and threw all the men out of the village. She then went to Mexico and Spain, raised some money, and returned to build, along with the other women of the village, an elementary school, a high school, and a medical clinic. Then they built a meeting house, where visitors were received, together with overnight lodging facilities. One by one, the men asked if they could come back to the village, and the answer was "yes, but there will be a few rules..."

About a year ago, nearly everything they had built was destroyed by severe flooding. Many of those buildings we showed you in photos from a previous issue no longer exist. The women and the newly reformed men rebuilt. Yorkin is back in business.

Nanci told this story to Irene, a teenage girl living in a very abusive situation. After hearing the story, she asked Nanci "Can I go and meet her?" Of course, you already know what Nanci's answer was.

The trip is great. A bus ride gets you into the reserve to a town called Bambu. There, picking up a motorized canoe, you travel an hour or more upstream. Arriving at Yorkin, there's a 30 or 40-minute walk into the jungle to get to the village. And... there you are! If you're interested, there's a YouTube video about that trip at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N XK0FtZgc18>

So, a couple of weeks ago, Nanci and Irene went to meet Doña Bernada and the rest of the women of the Casa de Mujeres – the House Of Women.

Smiles are too few and far between from Irene so this photo of her during the canoe trip is thrilling to see.



*Irene and one of the boatman during the ride to Yorkin... that smile says it all!*



*Overnight lodgings are... rustic. This darling lodge is where they bedded down for the night.*



*Meet Doña Bernarda and a niece at the Yorkin water falls and pool*

Bernarda dedicated a lot of her time with Irene, talking about what happened at Yorkin, the importance of education, the opportunity to be free from violence and abuse. It was a good trip!

### **BARRY DOES TEETH**

I've been making day trips to San José recently, visiting a dentist. I had been reluctant to get into dental work because of the cost. Whatever we do with money these days, we ask questions such as “How many bags of food would that buy?”, or “how many bowls of soup could we serve for that amount?” or “How many Bridge Kids will THAT put in school?”

Then we were introduced to another Angel – Dra. Andrea Stedem, whose office is in Tibas, near San José. She is affiliated with the Amma Foundation here in Costa Rica, and she found out about The Bridge through them. They're one of our monthly donors, and have made substantial contributions for the School Program.



*Meet Dra. Andrea, on the left and her associate Dra. Kimberly, right*

She offered to do the rather extensive work needed on my teeth for free! I couldn't say no. Now I'm spending a day a week getting some writing time on the bus and waiting at a bus station, and having permanent bridges installed in my mouth. Every time I go to San José I come back with more teeth. You might say it's "a new kind of bridge at The Bridge."

Any difficulties? Sure – learning how to chew again. And on a recent trip we spent an additional 6 hours on the bus, waiting for a rather horrible traffic accident to be cleared up. On the bright side, I got to know a lot of new people while waiting!

If you'd like to know more about Dra Andrea, you can contact her by email at [astedem@clincastedem.com](mailto:astedem@clincastedem.com)

## **ANGELS IN THE POST OFFICE**

***Volunteers Wanted – Once Again, Test What It Costs To Ship Things To Costa Rica***



Nanci and I are completely humbled by and grateful to those Angels in the Bridge Family who go shopping to get the things we've listed on the website as our current needs, and then pack them up and mail them down here. We don't know how to do any more than say "Thank You!" for your time, your effort, and for your willingness to bear the substantial costs you incur in doing that work to support the Bridge Kids and their families

We got a really sharp reminder of the costs involved in making shipments by mail as another wonderful set of donations got here recently. The goods were sent by US Postal Service Air Mail, and the postage was – expensive. We're very grateful for the support we're getting, and it feels appropriate to do what we can to reduce your costs as you graciously send things down to us.

When we first settled in 6 years ago, we had a contest... a race, to see how quickly the various classes of mail could be delivered from the US to our little corner of Costa Rica. We asked people to send letters, and we kept track of when and how they were sent, and when they arrived.. What we learned then was interesting – there was nearly no difference in the delivery times for the arriving mail. Regardless of how it was sent, the letters all took between 7 and 10 days to get here. So First Class would be just as effective as Air Mail, for example, and a whole lot less costly.

I'd like to ask for Volunteers in the USA to find out a few things for us. For example, is it possible to send packages to Costa Rica by Second Class, or Parcel Post as well as first class and air mail? If so, what is the cost per pound? And, if it is possible, we'd ask the Volunteer to mail something – even something as simple as a paperback book or new age cd– using one or both methods. This would let us find out what the cost is, and how long it takes. If there are any other types of shipment methods that are less costly, I'd sure like to know what they are as well, so feel free to be creative.

Please write the date of mailing/sending somewhere on the outside of the package, and send us an email to let us know what you sent, which carrier/postal class you used, where it was sent from, and when.

For anyone who wants to volunteer, our mailing address is:

Barry Stevens  
APDO 69-7304  
Puerto Viejo de Talamanca  
Costa Rica

We'll keep you posted as to the results!

Let the race begin!

### **VOLUNTEER CORNER**

We are delighted to have the services of volunteers here at The Bridge. We've recently been blessed with three volunteers who dove in and did some of the things that needed doing.

Neil Livingston, also known in Canada as "Deejay Scootz" because he is a DJ back home, dove into the internet and dug up email addresses to help us extend our ability to reach people who could be interested in the activities at The Bridge.



*Meet "DeeJay Scootz, AKA Niel Livingston*

Thank you Neil!

Then there's this wonderful lady from Holland... Reenske Aalfs.



*Ladies and gentlemen, meet Reenske Aalfs!*

Reenske grabbed a knife and dove into a watermelon to help prepare fruit served at the Community Kitchen. She was a wiz at many other things as well, but this foto had the best smile! Reenske has already gone back to her old life in Holland. We will miss you Reenske.

Next, meet another great lady – this time from Sweden!



*Bridge Fans, meet Anna Ödkvist*

Anna Ödkvist has been helping at the Community Kitchen – serving meals, and of course washing dishes! She also likes to sit down with the people who come to The Bridge and get to know them. That’s really cool! Thank you, Anna! Nanci’s jazzed because Anna will be with us throughout the holidays. Yay, help with Christmas party!!

## **DONOR NOTES**

The Dalai Lama posted this note on, of all things, his Facebook account. It addresses a fundamental question – “What happens when you donate to a cause?”

***“Once you shift your focus from yourself to others and extend your concern to others, this will have the immediate effect of opening up your life and helping you to reach out. The practice of cultivating altruism has a beneficial effect not only from a religious point of view but also from a mundane point of view; not only for long-term spiritual development but even in terms of immediate rewards.”***

When you donate to The Bridge, you are also opening up yourself and your life to the flow of good things that come from Life.

You can [go to our Donation page and make an immediate donation](#), or [Click Here to make a Monthly Pledge](#):

## **RANDOM NOTES**

Thanks for the advice on **photo file sizes and resolution**. I’ve downloaded some tools to use, and they work well. I have also simply switched the resolution on the camera so that the file sizes are manageable to start with.

We’re still looking for **star wrenches** to fix the juicer. It’s sitting in the shop, waiting for a tool that doesn’t seem to be available here in CR. We need the two or three smallest sizes of Star Wrenches, and these are the ones that have a plastic handle that looks for all the world like a screwdriver.

## **YOU CAN HELP US!**

There are several ways you can help.

- **Send this email to people you know** who might also enjoy it.
- **Post a message about us on relevant web sites or discussion boards.**
- **Look at our list of critically needed supplies** – [click on this link to get to the “What Can I Bring?” page on our website.](#)

## **VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**

**Thank You for the continuing support we have been getting.  
You all are allowing us to continue to serve!**

**NOW’s a GREAT time to contribute.**

Make a **Monthly Pledge** by [clicking here](#).

Make an **Immediate Donation** by [clicking here](#),  
and donate online using PayPal, or mail a check.

**Do it NOW!** You’ll be glad you did!

\* \* \* \* \*

***Thank you for your support!***

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!

*Barry & Nanci*

**IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES**

...go to [www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly](http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly) and download the file with the date of this issue.

Go to The **Bridge Blog** -"Angels With Their Skins On" by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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