



April 18, 2011
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Meet Eric, with new school books for this year. He seems to be doing pretty darn well, as you'll see in "Eric The Perfect!" below.



Not to be outdone, Mauricio is beaming up a storm and wondering how in the heck he's gonna get all these heavy books to school.

RECENT NEWS

Boy, have we been busy! As you'll see, School Year 2011 is moving right along. One of the Bridge Kids scores big on his first exam! Wait – is little Maria a student, or a teacher? One of our volunteers had a FUN time! People are dumping (building supplies) on us, and we love it! We're tiptoeing into microloans, with Ricardo and Maria. How often do you get a chance to build a bridge over an ocean? It's a baby – boa! Volunteers were everywhere this month. We had some Amazing Greats here – then there's Jody, and Surf For Life – and I've only scratched the surface! Last but not least, we welcome three new members of The Bridge!

SCHOOL YEAR 2011 IS UNDER WAY!

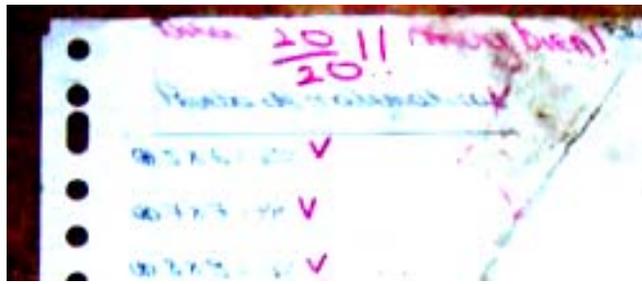
With your help, we've been able to place more than 70 "Bridge Kids" in 13 schools this year – our biggest year ever! Book orders are still coming in, but (we believe) we're just about finished "suiting 'em up" for the year. We'll have a final total for you... ummm... eventually.

Contributions from many of you have made this possible. Exceptional efforts include a fund raising project by the students at Country Day School, and continuing donations from La Luz de Amma Foundation. Once again, we were blessed with the on the ground involvement of Bobbi Banks, who returned from Nova Scotia to personally help Nanci in many suit-em-up trips to Bribri. "You rock girl!" Steve & Mary Jennings chimed in with yet more help for the Bridge Kids. Then, there is the wonderful support from many of you, with donations for one or two students! Many of you have chosen to remain nameless. Your rewards are even greater. Please forgive the names we've missed. Give yourselves all a bow for a wonderful job well done.

Thank you every one!

ERIC THE PERFECT!

One of the Bridge Kids took a math exam recently. Eric brought the sterling piece in to show us his grade.



Here's the first page of Eric's test... a perfect score!

Good going, Eric!

NEWS FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL CROWD

You'll remember that Alejandro and Maria were graduated into Colegio, which is what they call high school down here.

Alejandro is completely jazzed with courses he's taking, such as Animal Husbandry and Agriculture, subjects with real practical value around here.

Maria is literally "stepping out". She's one of four girls in her class who have been chosen to teach in a kindergarten class across the Panamanian border in a town called Chase. Their first trip, they went there with a teacher from the Colegio. Their next trips will be on their own. Looks like Maria's gonna get some experience teaching! She's jazzed. She took her first set of tests the other day and beaming reported that she had aced every one. She said to us, "I even got an A in *your* language!"

Whatever happened to Wood Shop and Homemaking classes?

FUND RAISING

How A Volunteer Angel In New York Raised Money For The Bridge

Ladies and Gentlemen, meet Nadia Adassi!



Say Hello to Nadia!

We asked Nadia a few questions about her really great fundraiser for El Puente. She got her friends together in a local bar in New York City, explained who we are and what we're doing down here, and collected donations for El Puente. Here's what she said.

“The more I read about El Puente, the more I realized what you guys are working with. It (the fundraiser) was also a really good chance to see my friends before leaving for Costa Rica. .

I said “There are many places you could have chosen to have the event. Why'd you pick that particular one?”

“I know the managers there – they're my friends,” she replied.

“How'd you get the word out?” I asked.

“I started by inviting people word of mouth. Then, I sent out an invitation on Facebook. Most of my friends are students. I put on a real push to get people to attend about a week and a half ahead of time.”

How'd the affair come out? “About 50 people actually showed up. We had a lot of fun!”

On February 28, Checks from 5 donors, including Nadia, were deposited in the El Puente bank account totaling \$321!

Not bad for a **FUN** evening of partying with friends!

Thanks to ALL of those who attended – and to Nadia for the great idea!!

BUILDING A LA MONTAÑA! ***Building on the mountain!***

The new Asociacion de Desarrollo (Development Association) has rolled up its sleeves and is busily providing houses for some of our folks living up on the mountain. Slowly but surely, they're upgrading from a sticks-and-thatch kind of house to something a little more substantial. The Asociacion has obtained funding for housing, and has been buying construction materials for families living in sticks-and-thatch jungle-style dwellings.

As it turns out, The Bridge is a convenient drop-off point for the building materials. The Ferreteria (sells hardware – not ferrets) delivers the wood, roofing, and other materials to our yard.



Abelio and Aparecio (left above) wait for construction materials to be offloaded so they can be stacked and readied for carrying up into the jungle.

Members of the family for whom the house is intended must then carry the materials up into the jungle to the site of their home. Hired carpenters are then assigned to build the houses.

MOHAMMAD YUNUS' VISION

Mohammad Yunus is the founder of the microcredit concept. He has been responsible for providing millions of loans through the Grameen Bank, aimed at helping people help themselves to self-sufficiency. Yunus won a Nobel Prize in 2006 for his efforts at Breaking The Cycle Of Poverty.

We thought you'd be interested in his vision in this video.

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/filmmakerforchange/share-muhammad-yunus-vision-bonsaimovie>

Tiptoeing into microloans again

A short time ago, we received a generous donation from Unity of Sussex County, in Lafayette, NJ, specifically for the purpose of making microloans. We thought we'd let you in on the first two microloans that were made using that donation.

The "Cycle" Is Complete!

Ricardo is a hardworking Bribri family man with three young children, one only three days old. He works as a security guard at night, and he would pedal his bicycle an hour or more each way to get to it at The Tree House in Punta Uva. He asked for a microloan to purchase a gasoline-powered bicycle, allowing him to spend less time traveling, and more time with his family and perhaps work a few more hours on his job, thus bringing home some more money – a critical item, since his wife Yamileth was very pregnant, and was about to deliver when this loan was done.



Meet Yamileth, Ricardo, and their two children – and the motorized bicycle bought with a microloan.

We explained that microloans are, according to global "best practices" given only to women, and only for purposes of creating an income, and that this would have to be an exception. We discussed this in advance with people from Unity in Sussex, and they agreed to make this loan before it was done. Both Ricardo and Yamileth signed the Microloan Agreement. The repayment terms include handling their income in these steps:

- 1) Make a 5% deposit from their income into a savings account in their name, thus having it available in case repairs are needed, or a payment would otherwise be late.
- 2) Make a 5% payment toward paying off the microloan.
- 3) Apply the rest of Ricardo's income as they normally would.

Yamileth has an open bank account, and I have the account number. I will be going online to verify the deposits into that account.

Ricardo is particularly excited about the ability to prepay the Microloan without penalty. The annual interest rate is 18% - a little low by microloan standards, but we do not need to cover many overhead expenses. And in some cases, non-bank lenders in this area sometimes charge 18% per month, not per year. This is a very good deal.

Beads Of Sweat

Maria, the Bribri woman we entrust with operation of The Bridge when we're away, was very interested in making jewelry. She would need a very tiny drill, capable of drilling through seeds that are often as hard as steel.



Here's Maria, with the Dremel Tool kit purchased at a local hardware store. We found the smallest drill bits imaginable, and tracked down a special chuck that would hold the bit.

We'll keep you posted as she gets to work making jewelry with this little beauty. This loan is more toward the ideas for microloans – the means of production provided to a woman. One step at a time here.

BRIDGING THE OCEANS

We recently met a young woman from Sweden, who gave us an opportunity to “bridge” a connection. Anna-Marja Persson visited The Bridge at the end of March. She is a member of the “Saami” tribe, an indigenous group in her country. As we talked, she showed interest in getting to know more about Don Candido and his project to preserve indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants. I brought her over to meet the healer.



Anna-Marja had a chronic condition she was interested in discussing with Candido, and he went about his diagnosis.

The surprise came when Don Candido said he hadn't been aware that there *were* indigenous tribes in Europe. This connection may be useful for Candido in his own long-term project – to unite all curanderos in the preservation of indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants. He's just “bridged” another ocean.

A BOUNCING BABY BOA!

Early one morning recently, we awoke to find a familiar head bobbing across the windowsill inside our bedroom about three feet away. In the dim morning light, we first thought it looked like a fer-de-lance snake, called a terciopelo down here, one of the more venomous snakes in this area. We thought it might be something worth paying attention to.



Say Hello to our morning visitor!

Not wanting to have this fellow slithering around inside the house, we got a plastic bag and a broom and heart pounding, Nanci knocked him off the windowsill into the bag. Then, we placed the bag into a cardboard box and taped it shut.

Next – we called the Rescate Center, a local place that can capture snakes and release them in the wild. When the rescue guys arrived, they identified the interloper as a baby boa constrictor! The owner wrapped the snake around his wrist and was promptly bitten for his trouble. We're lucky we were visited by the baby – according to one of our wildlife books, the adults can grow to over 18 feet long!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Have we mentioned before that volunteers are vital to The Bridge? We are so blown away by the number of great folks who volunteer the time to help keep things going around here! Meet some of this month's Wonder Workers.

Amazing Greats!

What a great visit we had with three volunteers who came to us through the Amazing Grace Center for Spiritual Living in Seattle.



Meet Janna McLarty, Eric O'Del, and, far right, Howard Langeveld, who came visiting from Seattle (and Vancouver). Also say Hi to Rich Bolich, our son-in-law, 2nd from right, who happened to be visiting from Nashville. "The Crew" is getting ready to finish hanging up a new tarp over the eating area – a vital repair after a wild horse got loose in our yard recently and tore a corner of the old tarp. Wild horses didn't keep them away!

Thanks for the repairs and the handsome donations from the folks in Seattle. We couldn't do it without you!

Meet Jody!

Vim and vivacious Jody Rutledge graced our presence here at The Bridge for more than four months, and spent some very appreciated volunteer time with us. Always chipper and helpful, Jody was ready to pitch in for every chore, big or small



Jody rounds the corner, on her way out of the kitchen with two bowls of soup as Nanci cheers her on!

She's now back in the US, picking up her pet Molucan Cocatoo from the bird-sitter, and settling back into her "other life".

Thank you for all the time you spent with us and The Bridge Family. Jody! You will be missed big time.

Surfin' In The Jungle

Good fortune had us revisited by two groups of volunteers from the [Surf For Life Foundation](#), a California-based organization that does good work around the world in communities near the ocean.



Victoria Roomet, Sun-Ae Patterson, Hanna Schmittat, Bill Stefanacci, David Brooks



Sun-Ae Patterson, Bianca Brown, Angela Hunter, Sasha Potter

The first group of angels arrived with much appreciated school supplies and spent the day helping to clean the tables and chairs in the outdoor eating area.



The second group dove in and did some badly needed repairs on the front gate.

Everything looks great, you guys! Thank you!

Volunteer Mailing Sent Out

We recently sent out a mailing to 112 of you who signed in with us as a volunteer since 2009. Did you get yours? If you did not, or you were a volunteer prior to 2009 and you would like to be added to our Volunteer Mailing List, please send me an email, and I'll add you in!

The first mailing was a questionnaire – we're interested in learning how we can make the volunteering experience at The Bridge even more exciting for the volunteers who come!

And Thank You! to all of you who have spent many hours helping us keep things flowing for The Bridge families!

WELCOME TO THREE NEW MEMBERS OF THE BRIDGE

Finally... we'd like to congratulate Jackie & Joseph, as the proud parents of brand new twins; and congratulations as well to Ricardo and Yamileth, who birthed their third child while this newsletter was being written.

COSTA RICAN TIME

As a final note, we thought you'd get a kick out of this one.

The concept of "time" is an interesting one in Costa Rica. People who are really into scheduling, or planning, have an exciting time here. In the dictionary, "mañana" means "tomorrow". Here, on the ground, it simply means "not today". So when I saw the following definition of "time" on the "Inside Costa Rica" website, I laughed. I wanted to share it with you. Their definition says it all.

“Editor's note: please remember that the above times are all on Costa Rican standard time, that is they may start or stop as scheduled, within a reasonable time, give or take an hour here or there.”

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.](#)
- **Use GoodSearch and Goodshop** – every time you search, the Bridge gets a penny. When you shop online at GoodShop, you save time and money, and The Bridge gets an average donation of 2.5% at no cost to you. To visit this website and see what’s up, [click here!](#)

DONOR NOTES

We are blessed with many people (in addition to Barry & Nanci) who are in the “Intrepid Bridger’s Club” – they have committed to a monthly pledge amount. You can see how the Pledge Program is going by [clicking on this link.](#)

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.

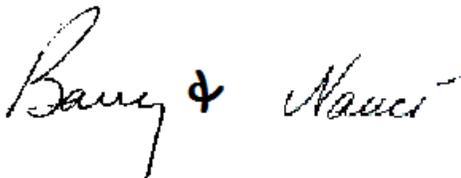
Make a **Monthly Pledge** by [clicking here.](#)

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!



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 Blog** -“Angels With Their Skins On” by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to The **Bridge Website** 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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