



January 24, 2013
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Nanci surrounded by moms and kids shopping for school stuff in Bribri



First – split the Bridge Kids into two groups...

RECENT NEWS

As the 2013 School Year gets off to a great start, we are busy suiting up those eager Bridge Kids – the ones You are helping go to school! As of this moment, we've served a total of 58 Bridge Kids, with a whole lot more on the waiting list. The phone is ringing, and some of moms are even lining up with their children. One very shy 17-year-old mom from Cahuita asked if we could put her 5-year old son in kindergarten – I took his name, age, and school name. Then the mom looked down at the table, and asked in an almost inaudible whisper, if we could help her to attend high school. I said, "we'll do our best", and took her information as well.

Christmas at El Puente – we had a grand party, a Caribbean-style chicken dinner, and a great all around time.

Here's a very special sendoff to our most enthusiastic volunteer ever!

Nutrition lessons – aimed at illiterate adults.

Look who came to dinner! "Oh my God, would you look up there in the rafters!"

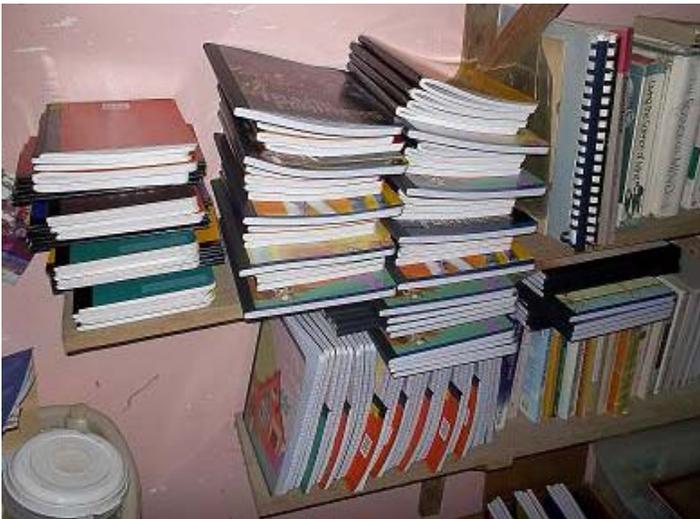
Enjoy this month's issue!

GIVING 2013 A “CLASSY” START!

The 2013 school year is indeed getting off to a “classy” start. As of this writing, Nanci and some wonderful Donors and Volunteers have “suited up” 47 Bridge Kids completely, and another 11 partially. What does one of those shopping trips look like? C’mon along, as yet another school year is set up, and bunches of kids go through the process – see what your donations are doing down here!

Getting Started

There’s quite a bit of work to be done before heading out to Bribri with the first bunch of Bridge Kids.



Notebooks are a big deal, with specific sizes and number of pages to meet the requirements. We buy them in bulk, and stack them wherever they’ll fit – in this case, displacing me of the books in our library, and I might add, any hopeful guests.



Then there’s the supplies – backpacks, paper, pencils, ball point pens, rulers, protractors, calculators, pencil sharpeners, erasers, calligraphy notebooks, construction paper. We also throw in any donated shirts and underwear we get.

Some of you have been more than willing to buy supplies and ship them here. We appreciate your efforts very much. Any donated items we get frees up some cash which in turn lets us put still more children in school. If you plan on mailing anything down, please contact us, and we’ll instruct you in the best methods. We’ll also show you the required notices on the packages to avoid problems with Customs. And, we want to make sure you know what to expect with the cost of postage.

We have also been blessed with donors who have come to visit with an extra suitcase filled with school supplies. That’s the easiest way to get things here – if you’re already traveling! If you are, and you want to extend that list you were making – listing all the reasons you have for traveling down here – don’t forget to add, “bring school supplies”!

Going To Bribri!

Once this starts moving along, the fun *really* begins! Some of the students come here, and ride up with Nanci on the bus. Others get on the bus along the way. Still others meet her in Bribri.

As in the above foto taken this month, Nanci and the moms and kids get busy at the bus stop in Bribri. The group is split into two parts. One half goes to the shoe store, while the other goes to another store and gets uniforms and anything else needed. Then, the groups switch, and complete the process. Fortunately, we have had Volunteers willing to help, and they make this process work beautifully. Thank you hands on people!



Little girl has a fit!



Nanci and Volunteer Louise Proulx, from Montreal, get ready to take two Bridge Kids through the store.



Volunteer Marcia Williston, from the US, digs into clothing bags to help the kids try things on..



"I'm ready – what's next?"

Then, There's... Lunch!

Proceeding to a local soda, or restaurant, Nanci brings in juice bought at a store (to save money), sits the kids down at tables, orders a big something that can be shared among many of the Bridge Kids, and a great lunch is had by all.



Nanci pours some orange juice and provides other food for a quick lunch before the Bridge Kids get on the bus.



Volunteer Sian Hughes, from the UK, shares a table with A Bridge Kid. Thank you, Sian!

Then – Back Home!



Nanci buys the bus tickets home. I can imagine the guy behind the window saying, "You want HOW MANY tickets?"

As of today, Jan 24, You have suited up 47 Bridge Kids completely, and another 11 partially. Many on the ever increasing hopeful list, Do the kids want your help? Four of the most recent Bridge Kids walked to Bribri from Margarita – over an hour and a half – to meet Nanci there for suit-em-up. ***They sure do want your help!***

GOOD GROWING!

Current Status

Yesterday, as this was being written – Nanci originally had eight students scheduled to meet her in Bribri. The competing demands for cash came so quickly that we didn't have enough in the bank account to cover that schedule. Nanci called four of the eight people, and postponed their appointments for a week. The other four are without a telephone and were walking for about an hour from a town called Margarita to meet her in Bribri, so she went there. As far as she was concerned, those kids were not going to walk to Bribri in vain. She brought the cash we had on hand, made a deal with the shoe store manager, and suited up those four Bridge Kids.

Now would be a great time to jump in and support the School Program! It's \$150 for each child. If you can give that amount, or more, or even less, you can still share in the joy of seeing these kids go through school and build a brighter future!

To donate, go here: <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page30.html>

Do it now – you'll be glad you did!

CHRISTMAS 2012 AT EL PUENTE

So what IS a Christmas Party at El Puente like? We were blessed with the opportunity to once again celebrate that joy-full holiday with the families we serve at El Puente. And we are also very happy to be able to share it with you!



First, there's all that shopping to be done. Nanci and that great Volunteer from Korea, Han, went to Limón and picked up enough stuffed toys to allow a "grab bag drawing by all of the children who came.



A cool neighbor, Christian, even moved his barbecue grill into the yard for the day, and prepared 14 chickens "Jerk Style", a yummy Caribbean flavor treat!



Here's Timoteo Jackson, tribal elder, talking to the Volunteers and all the folks who came to celebrate the day. You can see a brief video of him, speaking both in Bribri and Spanish, by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3iJ8b6iiU4>

You can come for a video visit to the Christmas Party yourself, by going to these links:

A visit to the party: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGeGXS FuQco>

Children grabbing for toys in the "Grab Bag" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Sq5-kvofB4>



Of course, we had our now-traditional water balloon fight! Rex, one of our Volunteers, declared himself the winner because he got the wettest!



To top things off, this little girl reached into a great big grab bag, and emerged with this beautiful little teddy bear!

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year, to All!

GOODBYE TO A GREAT VOLUNTEER!

We would like to give a very special sendoff to our most enthusiastic volunteer ever - Sylvia Murdoch. Sylvia earned her wings on the 18th of December as she gave up a long struggle and joined the ranks of the angels. We are all so sorry to see her go. Her happiness and acceptance for everything that came into her life will always be a great example for all of us.



Thank you Sylvia!

Sylvia is survived by her husband Jeff Murdoch and a family in San Jose, Costa Rica. We open our arms wide to receive Jeff and the spirit of Sylvia into our home and the Bridge Family.

NUTRITION COMES TO THE FOUR

Nanci explains nutrition to a family from a Panamanian indigenous tribe. The mom was always asking for money to take the baby back to Panama to go to the hospital. By asking a few questions, we surmised that the children had very poor nutrition.

The book that Nanci is using is one written by Iris Briand, a Volunteer from the US who was a nutrition major in college. Most of the adults we serve are illiterate. The book is very heavy on pictures, and contains text that is as simple as possible, which school children can read to their parents – and thus teach their parents about nutrition. Thank you, Iris! And a Thank You to Robert Pearson, who helped with editing.



After this trial run, we're looking to simplify the text still further. Another Volunteer has surfaced – Graciela Vargas, an MD from Nicaragua. She has gotten out of that profession and is living in this area. You've seen her before, volunteering as a translator at one of Timoteo Jackson's functions. And, she has said she'd be willing to see about simplifying the text, with a goal of explaining nutrition to completely illiterate people.

Onward!

LOOK WHO CAME TO DINNER!

It's a Case Of "Just Desserts"

On one fine Community Kitchen day, after we had lost one of our chickens – a white one we named "Ivory" – the folks gathered here noticed we had a guest. A boa constrictor had come to join in! As those seated in nearby tables saw the "special guest", they looked very nervous, and moved away. I guess he wasn't very popular.



We did the only thing we could do – we called the Jaguar Rescue Center. They sent out a crew, carrying a very long black bag, and with great skill, they got the boa down, and dropped it into the bag. As the lead guy – a relatively tall man – picked the snake up to get it into the bag carried by an assistant, he had to stand nearly on tiptoe – the snake was over 6 feet long! We later learned that they have a secure release site in a remote area, and they brought the snake there and turned it loose.

We guessed that the lump in the middle of the snake's body in the picture above is where the big guy's chicken dinner was located. "Ivory" went missing shortly before this guy showed up at the Community Kitchen. Some of you will remember that we bought chickens to patrol the yard and control tarantulas, scorpions, and snakes. We are pretty sure that this big snake turned the tables – making it a case of "just desserts".

By the way – we also had a black chicken we named "Ebony". And yes, they did live together in a sort of "perfect harmony".

MARIA'S NEW GROOVE

You know Maria as a long-time worker at El Puente, and the mother of five Bridge Kids – Alejandro, Willi, Carmelita, Catie, and Maria – all in the School Program.

One of the supply things that has to be bought for the School Program is a holder for pencils, pens, and erasers. Here, that can be a “pencil bag”. Using fabrics donated by Dela Wilkins, Maria got to work with the sewing machine Nanci lent her, and made those pencil bags! We'd have to buy them from a store, so we bought them from her.

Thank you, Dela! And Maria.



Here's Maria with those fabrics donated by Dela.

YOU CAN HELP!

There are several ways you can help.

- **Send this email to people you know** who might also enjoy it - forward the newsletter to friends.
- **Visit our Facebook Page – “Like” it – post something on it - Show it to your Facebook Friends**
Here's the link - <http://on.fb.me/W0ZccV>
- **Post a message about us on relevant web sites or discussion boards.**
- **Go to GoodSearch and look into searching the Internet, shopping online in 1,500 brand name stores, and even dining out at participating restaurants** – all of which will provide a donation to El Puente, and it won't cost you one penny extra. <http://www.goodsearch.com>
- **Look at our list of critically needed supplies** – <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page26.html>

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** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/pledge>

Make an **Immediate Donation** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/page30.html>

You can donate online using PayPal, or mail a check.

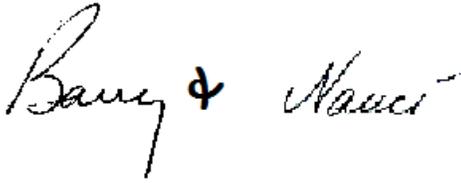
Do it NOW! You'll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry & Nanci". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES

...go to <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly> and download the DOC or PDF file with the date of this issue.

INFORMATION ON THE BRIDGE

Go to The **Bridge Website** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org>

Download **brochures in Spanish, English, or French** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/brochures>

Go to the **newsletter archive** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly>

THE BRIDGE VIDEO VAULT

See us in action in the **CNN News Report** at <http://bit.ly/yQSV0Z> (Push the "CC" button for English subtitles)

Download a **Powerpoint presentation(PPT)** or a **narrated slideshow/video(AVI)** <http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/present>

More video including El Puente in a **Surf For Life video** at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ywkO7OziY>

There is a video with Barry & Nanci by Actuality Media available at <http://vimeo.com/46201540>

See more action in a recent graduation ceremony, and more:

Two Indigenous Students Graduate 6th grade in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLSohyM2WI4>

Bribri Tribal Elder Talks At The El Puente Christmas Party

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3iJ8b6iiU4>

A Visit To The El Puente Christmas Party

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGeGXSFuQco>

Children Choosing Toys At The El Puente Christmas Party

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Sq5-kvofB4>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: barrystevens@earthlink.net

nanci.stevens@gmail.com

Our toll-free number from the US is 1-866-462-7585

Phone in Costa Rica +506-2750-0524

SKYPE: barry.stevens2