



January 28, 2013  
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## El Puente School Program 2013–The Magic Number is... 140!



*School Year 2013 – Off and Running!*

### **RECENT NEWS**

The school year has started, and you've touched the lives of 140 students! Nothing to do now except wait for the textbook orders. Yay! A warm heart, and heartbreak, in the same week. An electrifying decision and some work ahead. We have moved communication up a notch – with a Facebook page – you can post, talk with us, ask questions... c'mon in! Here's a reminder about the video library – you can visit virtually! A neighbor comes calling with an idea for a project. A hole in the roof - action at The Bridge. The rocket stove takes off! And, some nice words from a subscriber.

***Enjoy this month's issue!***

## **LOOK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE – AGAIN!**

### ***A personal note from us to you!***

Dear Subscribers, well-wishers, donors, prayer team, and volunteers. We're nearing the end of school enrollment for 2013.

## ***Whew!***

How'd We all do? Well, thanks to you guys, We touched the lives of 140 students this year! We were able to completely suit up 70 children with all the supplies, shoes and uniforms, and another 70 with all the stuff they will need to begin school! Pat yourselves on the back for a job well done!

The School Program started off with a Big Bang with a couple of substantial cash donations. Some smaller ones kept us rolling until returning angel Bobbie Banks helped suit up a bunch of the later kids. Thank you so much for being such a big part of our program. Thank you for the donated stuff that allowed us to put uniforms on more lucky children.

As usual, our children come from all over Talamanca. Most are indigenous kids, with 30 of them going to school south of the border in four different schools in Panama. Our School Program serves the Guaymi and Ngobe Bugle in Panama, and the Bribri and Cabecar in Costa Rica, not to mention a few immigrant children from Nicaragua.

Without your support of The Bridge School Program, life could be pretty bleak for the precious children we serve. Year after year, I am privileged to see the differences that an education can make for a struggling people. The powerful force behind the moving of mountains is what The Bridge has with all of You at the pedals. Thank you for being the fuel!

*But wait – there's more!*

It's not over yet. Orders for textbooks are rolling in now, so keep these prayers and donations rolling in, too, so We continue to be all We can be to this batch of deserving kids.

The school kids here at The Bridge, as well as Barry and I at the helm, give you all a great big hug for a job well done, and we vow that your continuing time, talent, treasures, and good intentions will find worthy outlets.

With our heads bowed in gratitude,

Barry & Nanci Stevens

**THIS LITTLE KID IS ALL LOVE!**  
**Say Hello to Little Richard in Uniform!**



Little Richard and his mom Yamileth were forced to go to the hospital in Limón recently when the health care people discovered that the child had an enlarged heart.

Good news after that trip - he won't need to be seriously considered for surgery until he's twelve. We were able to enlist a large prayer support group for that little boy, and we're so grateful for their positive energy!

I got a really good feeling early one morning recently when this precious kid, dressed in a new school uniform, came running across the yard with a huge grin on his face and threw his arms around my legs in a big hug.

I wonder if being all love can cause an enlarged heart? My sure felt swollen.

## **A HEARTBREAKER**

***“Can we sleep here tonight?”***

One night at about 7:30, our doorbell rang, and a woman’s voice was calling out from the front gate. I recognized her as coming from the Guaymi families from Panama. These are the folks who got flushed out of their valley home in Panama as someone built a dam for a hydroelectric plant and flooded that valley, without bothering to check if anyone was living there. It gets dark around here at about 5:30 pm. The woman was not clearly saying the words in her question, almost as though she didn’t really want to ask it. She went back to her husband, and he came to the gate. “They had gotten back from town too late, and they could no longer get safely to their home in the jungle. Could they sleep here?”

Immediately, I felt like my heart was being torn in different directions. On the one hand, we wanted to help – we always do. Muscles across my chest tensed up. This would not be a good idea.

We’ve had people sleep overnight in the past – such as Ronualdo’s first days of taking prescription medication, when the doctor said he needed to be watched. People have shown up with snakebites, or with other injuries needing to be tended. We do what we can. But to simply sleep here? I don’t think so. So... I had to join the ranks of the hard hearts, and suggest that they needed to find their way home that night, and in the future they might choose to return home before dark. Other families seem to be able to do that, and now it was their turn. As soon as that decision was spoken, the tugging feeling across my chest vanished.

Next day, I had a chance to run the situation by people I consider advisors... and they said “good call. That sort of thing is a slippery slope.”

## **AN ELECTRIFYING DECISION**

On some days, we can find six or eight cel phones plugged in and charging on our porch or out in the back on the washing machine. Most folks here now have cel phones, and in general they don't have electricity at home. They need to have a place to get them charged up, and it looks like we're it.

Thinking along the lines of self-sufficiency – I ran across some articles about a man named Lester J. Hendershot. In the 1950's, he was exploring the idea of using the Earth's magnetic field to generate electricity. By rotating a coil through a magnetic field, an electric voltage is the result. Since no outside power is needed in Hendershot's approach, as is needed by conventional generators, this can be seen as an efficient way to generate electricity.

Various articles are available which explain how to build one of these things, and it seems they can be built with about \$100 - \$150 worth of parts – some used, some new. We're told it can take \$50,000 or more to run a power line up into nearby areas of the reserve. This approach, if it does indeed work, could be an inexpensive way to provide small amounts of electric power for a reasonable cost – to do things like charge a cel phone, or have a 25 or 50 Watt bulb burning at night.

If any of you have had experience with this, please get in touch with me – let's see if we can figure it out.

If, after a little more exploration, this appears feasible, I'll look around for a Bribri guy with a little experience and see if it's a project they would even want to take on.

News at 5! Stay Tuned!

## THE EL PUENTE FACEBOOK PAGE

I've finally had a chance to learn more about that magic new place – the “Facebook Page”. We had some volunteers a while ago who worked on setting one up for us, and I didn't have the time to learn about it.

I went through it recently. It is alive and well! And, it's a great way to leave comments, ask questions, even to talk amongst yourselves!



The link to the page is

<https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/El-Puente-The-Bridge/167210443307400?fref=ts>

If that doesn't work you should be able to find it by going to Facebook and searching for “El Puente – The Bridge”.

C'mon in - join us – say “hi!” While you're there, “Like” the page! Leave a comment, ask a question, even start a discussion.

Welcome to El Puente – The Bridge! See you there!

## **A VIDEO LIBRARY**

### ***With a Wide Open Door!***

Look at the very bottom of this newsletter – you'll see a list of videos that can give you a virtual bird's-eye view of the goings on down here. Drop in - have a look.

It's the next best thing to being here!

## **NEIGHBORLY NOTES**

Once in a while, a neighbor with a project that is kicking off in the local area contacts us. I spoke with Kelly Brown recently. He is a restaurant owner in Puerto Viejo, and has an idea of something that can be done with the large amount of organic wastes that a restaurant produces. I know from conversations that some of you may have an interest in this sort of project. Here in his own words, is his summary of the project.

*"This project consists of transforming organic waste into energy, fertilizer for crops, and protein for human consumption. For this project we need a minimum of a thousand square meters of land, a truck, basic infrastructure, and ten pigs, twenty chickens and a few goats to start. I drive through town to all hotels and restaurants and collect organic solid waste and feed it to animals. The waste from these animals has two uses. Some is broken down into gas which has two uses – one as a source of energy, and the other as fertilizer. When the animals have fully grown some are used to procreate and others sacrificed for human consumption. We expect this project to offset a bigger plan devised by the local government for the whole Talamanca Region where meat is expensive. This project aims to reduce toxic waste in our environment by teaching business owners to classify their waste, reduce production of noxious gasses, reduce rodent population and other vermin, and encourage conscious, ethical disposal of waste in the community and surrounding area. Thanks. Kelly E Brown"*

If you are interested, or simply would like more information, please contact Kelly directly.

Kelly's contact Email - [brownkelly78@gmail.com](mailto:brownkelly78@gmail.com)

## **A HOLE IN THE ROOF**

Falling branches are a problem in the jungle. What looks to have been (hopefully) the last one hanging over this new roof came down in a recent windstorm.



We have a local guy that has a work crew of himself and three other muchachos. They are sponsored by the nearby ferreteria, or hardware store, and wear the same uniform shirt the salespeople in the store wear. We called the crew immediately; they showed up within the hour, then retraced their steps to the hardware store and returned with two new plastic sheets. The entire job was complete in one hour. The cost – 10,000 colons (\$20) in materials, and 5,000

colons (\$10) for labor. Wow! Not bad. There is still a small triangular hole in one panel off to the side, but how many people can say a toucan poked a hole in their roof? I think we'll just leave it that way.

## **THE ROCKET TAKES OFF**

We invited Art Donnelly to give a demonstration of a product he's been working on to our indigenous families here. It's a very special stove that burns wood without any smoke, making it ideal for use inside peoples' houses. It also produces a high-quality charcoal, which he will buy back from them. The charcoal can then be used in agriculture, helping things grow in an area with characteristically poor soil. Lots of pluses to this one.



*Here's a close-up of a Rocket Stove*



*Art set up the demo*



*Art explains how the stove works to a group of indigenous women at El Puente, and about the opportunity for them to make some money by selling Art the charcoal the stove produces,*

Can't wait to see how this one comes out!

## TESTIMONIAL FROM A SUBSCRIBER

This just showed up in the email one day. The sender is a man who moved his family here many years ago, and then decided to move back to the US. We knew him here by his nickname – “Hatch”. He and his wife Kim lived in Puerto Viejo for several years. Say “Hello” to Dennis and Kim Sinacola!



Dennis wrote: "Want to do something really meaningful this year? Make a small (or large) donation to El Puente "The Bridge". Kim and I got to know this charitable organization while living in Costa Rica. It's run by Nanci and Barry Stevens who have dedicated their lives to helping the indigenous BriBri indians who live in abject poverty on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. Barry and Nanci live modestly in a house that most Americans would consider primitive, have soup kitchens there, teach classes there, and provide microloans that enable the BriBri to stand on their own feet and start small businesses to help their families. They are the real deal - wonderful people - angels on a mission. You can learn more at

<http://www.elpuente-thebridge.org/> and at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/El-Puente-The-Bridge/167210443307400>

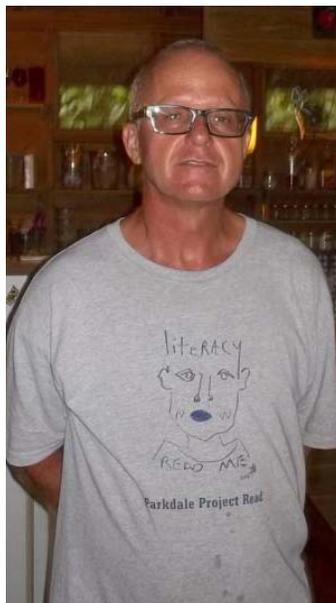
## VOLUNTEER CORNER

We are still blessed with volunteers who filter through here, and help us do what we do at El Puente. Here's three more wonderful folks who showed up and brightened up this place with their energy! Say “Hello” (and goodbye) to...



Shazia Shamim, from UK

THANK YOU!



Bill Knox, USA

THANK YOU!



Ana Paredes, Costa Rica

THANK YOU!

## **Current Status**

We believe we're through suiting-em-up for this year.

We are still waiting to hear about the requirements for books.

**Now would be a great time to jump in and support the School Program!** Whatever you can donate, you can still help these kids get some books, and you can 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!***

## 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.

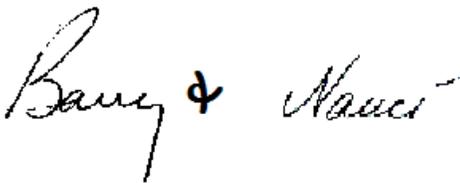
**Do it NOW!** You'll be glad you did!

**Thank you for your support!**

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



## 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.  
(For this issue, the archive will not be updated automatically. We're fixing a technical problem.)

## 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 LIBRARY

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=4ywk070ZiY>

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 Puento Christmas Party

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

A Visit To The El Puento Christmas Party

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

Children Choosing Toys At The El Puento Christmas Party

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

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Go to our Facebook Page to read and leave comments about El Puento – The Bridge

<https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/El-Puento-The-Bridge/167210443307400?fref=ts>

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