

Fabretto enables impoverished Nicaraguan children and their families in underserved communities to break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential through programs promoting nutrition, health, education, community, and character development.



La Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto

Group Volunteer Prospectus



Greetings from Nicaragua

Thank you for your interest in the Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto's Group Volunteer program. The purpose of the information presented in this Group Volunteer Prospectus is to provide you with basic knowledge of many aspects of Nicaraguan life, the History of the Fabretto program, and what you can expect upon arriving in country, should you choose to participate as a Fabretto Volunteer.

Nicaragua is considered one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, and this is reflected in its health and educational statistics. In 2005, 29 infants died before the age of one for every 1,000 live births. Forty children per thousand died before the age of five. One in five children is malnourished. One in four children gets pregnant before the age of 19—a significant statistic considering that more than half the population of Nicaragua is under the age of 18. Maternal mortality continues to be a problem in areas where access to health care facilities is minimal. Although HIV/AIDS infection hasn't yet reached the staggering proportions of nearby countries, migration patterns and a culture that stigmatizes condom use is contributing to the spread of AIDS in Nicaragua.

Education is also a formidable obstacle in Nicaragua. According to World Bank statistics for 2005, 1 out of every 2 Nicaraguan children never completes the 5th grade. In rural areas, the statistic plummets to 1 out of every 9. Of the children that make it to high school, only 20% of them will ever go on to higher education or professional careers, while the remaining 80% take on the agricultural work of their families or mire in unemployment.

Fabretto's goal as an institution is to break the cycle of Nicaraguan poverty through a combined program of education, health, nutrition, and economic opportunity. Our centers provide students with daily reinforcement courses that not only engage them through learning supplementation, but allow them to reapply their education in a variety of ways – through such avenues as computation, business development, and civics courses. Our health education program teaches students to understand the value of good health, the need for basic hygiene, and simple yet affordable preventative measures to ensure their well-being. Nutrition comes in the form of a balanced lunch provided to all students enrolled in Fabretto, every day of the school week, which allows them to worry less about

empty stomachs and to better concentrate on their studies and occupations. Through Fabretto efforts, men who were once out of work and destitute are now successful carpenters, mechanics, and small-business owners while women who never brought in personal income provide for their families through Fabretto art cooperatives and employment opportunities.

As a Fabretto Volunteer, the focus of your service would be geared towards reinforcing the important work already underway. Throughout your orientation and as you began working, Fabretto would provide you with the tools and information you need to perform effectively as a volunteer. Without doubt, living and working in Nicaragua presents many challenges. However, these challenges provide the best opportunity for a rewarding volunteer service. We hope that this information helps to clarify the mission and work of the Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto and how you can become an integral part of working to break the cycle of poverty. We look forward to hearing from you.

La Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto

History of Nicaragua



Discovery and Conquest

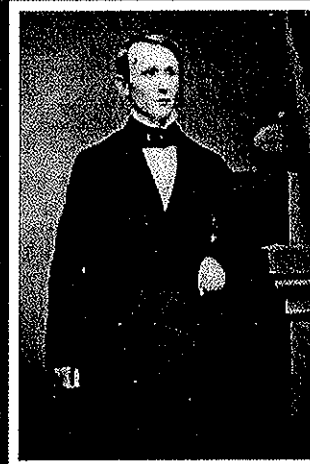
Sometime in the 13th century, tribesmen under pressure from the aggressive Aztecs of Mexico fled their villages and moved south down the Central American isthmus. Legends tell us that they were led by a vision of a land dominated by a great lake. They settled on the shores of Lake Nicaragua (Colcibolca) and in remote hamlets further to the south.

When the Spanish landed in Nicaragua in the 16th century, they encountered three distinct indigenous tribes – the Chontal, the Niquirano, and the Chorotegano – that were perpetually skirmishing with one another. Although Spaniards often used violence to diminish the power of indigenous chieftains around Lake Nicaragua and the areas of Leon and Granada, European diseases were even more devastating. Many regions, including the western highlands, were left effectively devoid of indigenous tribespeople.

In 1524, the first permanent Spanish settlement was established and the country was named after a powerful indigenous chief, Nicarao, who had fought bitterly against early conquistadors Pedro Arias Davila and Francisco Hernández de Córdoba to protect his territory between present-day Managua and Masaya. It was Córdoba who would eventually explore the fertile Tipitapa River valley, map the San Juan River, investigate the shores of Lake Xolotlan, and found the colonial ports of Leon and Granada.



Francisco Hernández de Córdoba



William Walker

Independence

After gaining independence from Spain in 1821, Nicaragua briefly entered into confederation with other provinces along the Isthmus to form the Central American Federation. When Nicaragua withdrew from the federation in 1838, the remaining states decided to become independent republics as well and the federation dissolved.

In the ensuing anarchy of independence, the primary cities of Leon and Granada vied for superiority and acted as independent city-states until a national government was finally agreed upon in 1845. Nevertheless, it was this inter-city rivalry that would lead to the arrival of the infamous American filibusterer William Walker in 1853. At the invitation of the Liberals of Leon, this "Grey-Eyed Man of Destiny" and a mercenary army of 300 thugs and vagabonds from the tough neighborhoods of San Francisco conquered the conservative city of Granada and set up a dictatorship under Walker's leadership. After usurping power in 1855, Walker declared English to be the official language of Nicaragua and reinstated the slave trade. Drawing the ire of American industrialist Cornelius Vanderbilt by seizing a transit company to take Americans to California via Nicaragua, Walker was expelled by the US Navy and five other Central American Republics in 1857 after a series of battles around Rivas and Managua, only to make two subsequent unsuccessful attempts to recapture the country.

Autocrats and Assassinations

Following Walker's overthrow, conservatives gained power in Nicaragua and held it until 1893, when left-leaning political boss José Santos Zelaya overthrew the government and proclaimed himself dictator. An autocrat with leftist ideas, Zelaya became Nicaragua's first nationalist leader. In 1909, resorting to a brand of imperialism that foreshadowed the political struggle in coming decades, the United States encouraged Zelaya's conservative opponents to overthrow him and sent in the Marine Corps, eventually forcing his resignation. The Americans maintained a military presence in Nicaragua from that point forward; in 1916, the puppet Managua government signed a treaty with Washington that granted the U.S. exclusive canal building rights in Nicaragua. During this period of de facto opposition, a series of Liberal leaders maintained a steady resistance to U.S. domination, culminating in a guerrilla war led by Nicaraguan folk-hero

Augusto Cesar Sandino in the northern mountains. The U.S. military was unable to dislodge Sandino from the mountains, and with the Great Depression exhausting military resources, Washington withdrew its forces from Nicaragua in 1933. Although Sandino achieved his goal of removing American forces from Nicaragua, the U.S. left a new military unit called the National Guard in its wake, headed by the young Anastasio Somoza Garcia. Somoza would eventually assassinate Sandino, seize control of Nicaragua in 1937, and begin a family dynasty of enormous wealth and corruption that would run the country's political economy for more than 42 years.

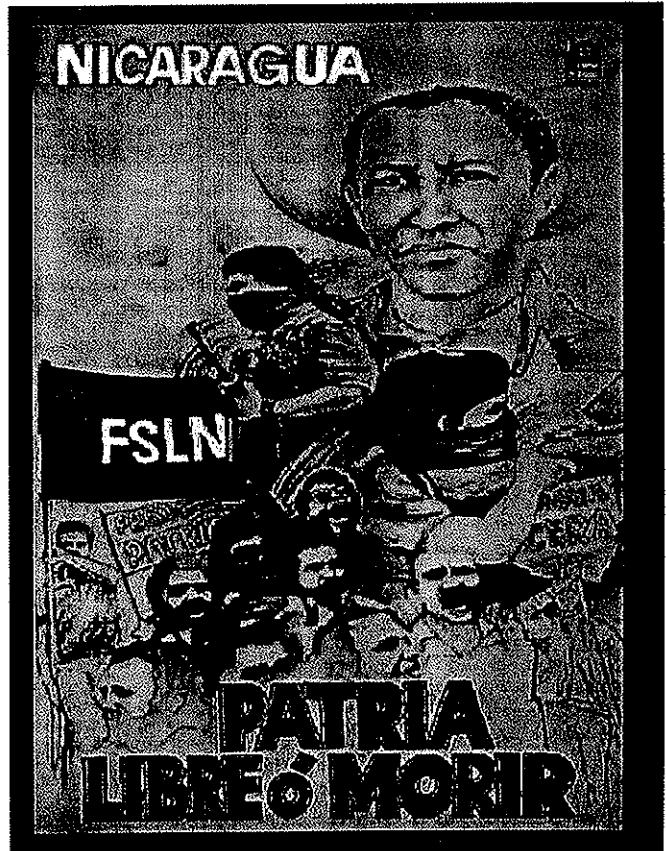


José Santos Zelaya

Revolution

During the 1960's, a socialist-communist resistance movement calling itself the Sandinista Front (FSLN) began training in clandestine camps in the northern mountains. Although early insurrections by the FSLN in the departments of Matagalpa and Jinotega were quickly crushed, the assassination of the editor of the national newspaper and potential president candidate Pedro Joaquín Chamorro by the Somoza National Guard in 1978 coalesced support behind the FSLN. A 1979 uprising and insurrection broke out in the country, beginning in the famous Limbo neighborhood of Managua and spreading to the hills of Jinotega and Estelí. Although hampered by the Somoza regime, the FSLN was a well-organized enough force to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979. Somoza fled the country, and the Sandinistas became the new leaders of Nicaragua. The Sandinistas nationalized banks and natural resources, brought food trade under government control, and improved agriculture, health care, and literacy rates. Nevertheless, by 1981 the U.S. government, embroiled in Cold War hysteria, was angered to discover that the leftist-leaning Sandinistas had formed ties with Cuba and other communist countries. Under the authorship of newly elected president Ronald Reagan, the U.S. decided to destroy the Sandinista government. To accomplish this, U.S. tax breaks and supplies were funneled into a counter-revolutionary group that became known as the Contras. The Contras were ex-National Guard members, mercenaries, and farmers who were ideologically opposed to the Sandinista tendencies of the FSLN. Throughout the 1980s, the Contra-Sandinista war ravaged Nicaragua, making it virtually impossible for the Sandinista government and its battered country to attract foreign investment and international credit. The U.S. provided the war machine of a million rifles, machine guns, and a million dollars of explosives, and the Contras were able to contain the insurrection and by 1990 Costa Rican president Oscar Arias Sanchez negotiated an end to the civil war.

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Nicaragua Today

In 1990, with the Contra forces in disarray and the Reagan administration out of power, the FSLN held elections in Nicaragua to show the world that their government was committed to democratic principles and to reaffirm public sentiment in favor of the revolution. To their surprise, the Nicaraguan people overwhelmingly voted them out of office and Violeta Chamorro, widow of the slain journalist Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, was elected president of Nicaragua. Although a political novice, Violeta Chamorro was instrumental in rebuilding a nation shattered by war, forgiving debts, reducing the army to manageable levels, disbanding the Contras, and negotiating a relationship with the international aid community. Since Chamorro relinquished her office in 1996, Nicaragua has been a country of two principle parties, the FSLN, which deftly reinvented itself as a political machine after 1990, and the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party won consecutive presidential victories in 1996 (Arnoldo Aleman) and 2001 (Enrique Bolanos), and has remained powerful despite the fact that Aleman absconded vast sums of money from government coffers during his presidency, and that Bolanos was nearly ejected from the presidency and heavily criticized by his own constituents for belying the American Embassy to support his policies. Meanwhile, Daniel Ortega has maintained strong control over the FSLN and despite consecutive losses in 1990, 1996, and 2001, he was elected president once again in the most recent 2006 election, running on a platform of progressive reforms.

Daniel Ortega



History of the Fabretto Mission in Nicaragua

The Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto began with the inspired work of Father Rafael Fabretto in Nicaragua; in his absence, the organization continues to influence the daily lives of thousands of Nicaraguan children. Father Fabretto, a Silesian missionary from Venice, Italy, began his work in Nicaragua in 1953 when he founded a group of orphanages in the rugged northern mountains. The Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto was founded in 1990, after Father Fabretto unexpectedly passed away, by former students, volunteers, benefactors, and community members in order to continue his vision of creating educational and social opportunities for children.

Suggested Reading

Blood of Brothers: Life and War in Nicaragua
Stephen Kinzer

Memoirs of a Counterrevolutionary: Life with the Contras, Sandinistas, and the CIA
Arturo Cruz, Jr.

The Lost Revolution
Ernesto Cardenal

Country Under My Skin
Gioconda Belli

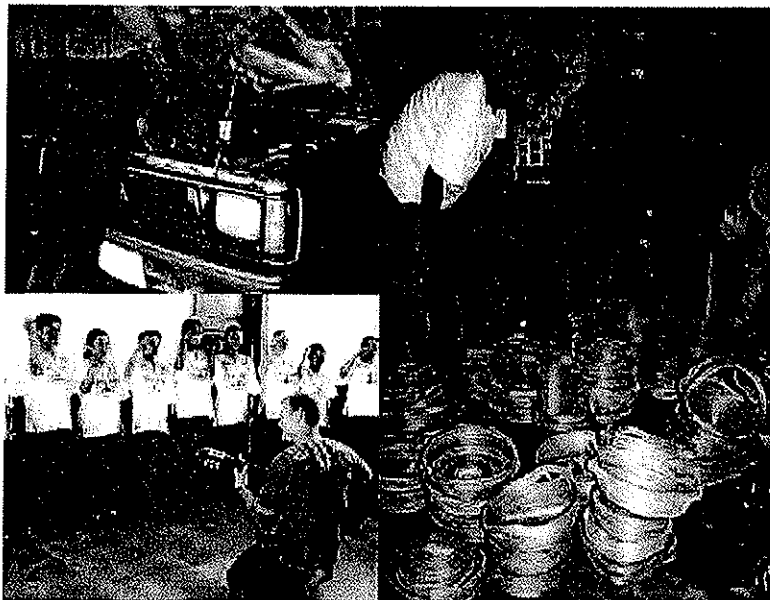
The Jaguar Smiles
Salman Rushdie

Adios Muchachos
Sergio Rodriguez

Sandino: the Testimony of a Nicaraguan Patriot (1921-1934)
edited by Sergio Rodriguez



The Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto's mission is to "enable impoverished Nicaraguan children and their families in underserved communities to break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential through programs promoting nutrition, health, education, community and character development." In keeping with this spirit, Fabretto educates and attends to the basic needs of over approximately 5,500 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 22 enrolled in its five centers located in Managua, Estell, Somoto, San Isidro, Las Sabanas, and San Jose de Cusmapa. Each year, Fabretto works with local school districts in the communities to determine which children are most disadvantaged and are at highest risk of dropping out of school due to a lack of family resources. With its after-school program, Fabretto provides these children with opportunities to spend a large portion of their day in a safe, structured, and nurturing environment where creativity, arts, and educational mentoring are coupled with a nutritious lunch to foster a productive atmosphere for learning and social development.



Today, Fabretto continues to grow, strengthening the education of its students and developing local communities. In 2001, Fabretto founded a musical education program that infuses traditional Nicaraguan folk music with modern instruments. The program has catapulted to national and even international attention through the success of its first studio album and an two North American tours. Fabretto also runs a successful forestry program, auto repair business, carpentry shop, and women's artistic cooperative, in addition to ESL programs, innovative vehicles as the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial tutor-based educational program, the Model Schools initiative, Peace Corps Empresa Creativa business development courses, and IT development computer training. From a small support base of donors and friends in 1990, Fabretto has developed a support structure that includes such organizations as Microsoft, the Alphanumeric Corporation, Comparte Foundation of Spain, USAID, Tin Roof Foundation Inc., Digital Labs, and the American Nicaraguan Foundation.



NICARAGUA

-
- Somoto** - Centro
- La Sabana** - Centro
- San José de Cusmapa** - Centro
 - Proyecto Forestal (FSC SmartWood)
 - Pinos Fabretinos (carpentería y artesanía)
 - Coro Fabretino (sede)
 - Finca agrícola
- Estelí** - Centro
 - Finca agrícola
- Managua / San Isidro** - Centro
 - Oficina central y almacén
 - Taller de automóbiles
 - Finca agrícola

The Asociación Familia Padre Fabretto operates in five centers, or oratorios, throughout Nicaragua:

Managua/San Isidro
900 students

Estelí
600 students

San José de Cusmapa
2,700 students

Las Sabanas (Quebrada Honda)
750 students

Somoto
600 students



Group Volunteer Program



Mission Groups

General Description

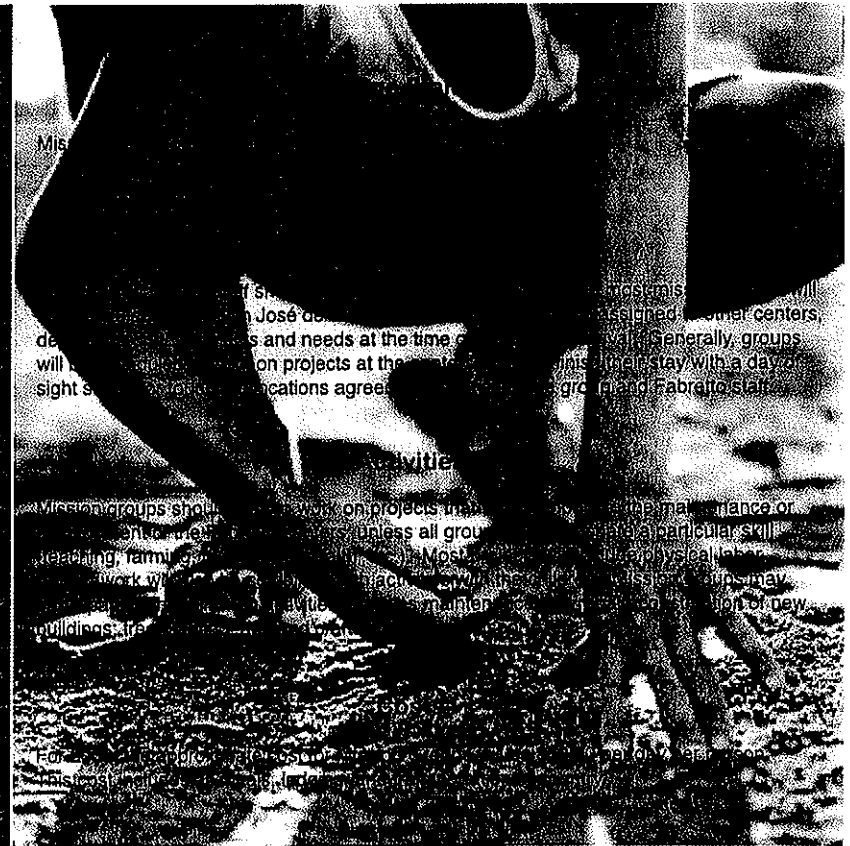
Mission groups are groups of five to twenty people who will join together for a short-term work opportunity at one of the centers in Nicaragua. Mission groups can originate in churches, educational institutions, civic organizations, or through individual efforts. These groups should contact Fabretto's U.S. office to coordinate trip dates and orientation meetings. Preferably, people with some previous knowledge or experience of the Fabretto ministry should organize mission groups, so that the organization's history and mission can be shared with the mission group. If people with little knowledge of Fabretto are organizing the group, orientation meetings should be planned with board members, former volunteers or people with intimate knowledge of the organization. This will help the group to have a broad understanding of the organization, and what they can expect during their visit to Nicaragua.

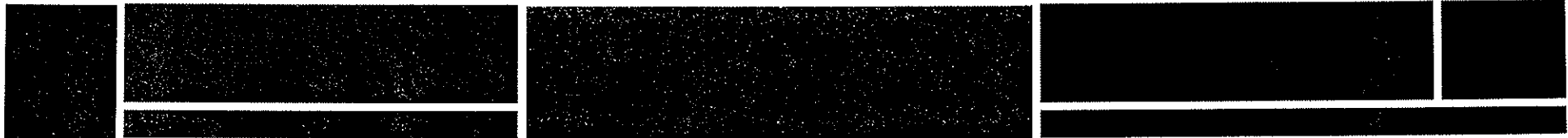
Composition

Mission group members should be at least fifteen years old, and should be in reasonably good health. Any potential group members with serious medical needs should be screened by Fabretto staff prior to traveling, to be sure that their needs could be properly attended to. Because of the limited health care services available in many parts of Nicaragua, it is not recommended that people with severe health problems participate in mission trips.

**Love cannot remain by itself
-- it has no meaning.
Love has to be put into
action, and that action
is service.**

Mother Teresa





Fabretto Orientation Guidelines

Serving as a Fabretto Volunteer should be considered a great opportunity to live in Nicaragua and learn from its people. With this opportunity comes a concurrent responsibility to uphold a philosophy and lifestyle that allows you to work effectively, safely, and represent our Fabretto mission in the best manner possible. Three guiding principles in fulfilling that responsibility are:

- Live and work as a professional.
- Strive to be as effective as possible on the job.
- Integrate yourself into the local community.

Your personal behavior as a Volunteer will influence the degree of success you have in living up to these principles. Remember that you are guests of the Nicaraguans and that you should be respectful of and sensitive to their values and ideas without compromising your own. In keeping with this idea, Fabretto has constructed a small list of guidelines that might make your stay in Nicaragua more fruitful both personally and professionally.

Inappropriate Behavior

A point to keep in mind is that your social and working life cannot be separated in Nicaragua to the extent they can be in the United States. Being a novelty in your community as a foreigner, you will be the subject of considerable gossip. In the opening days, weeks, or months of your stay in one of Fabretto's five educational centers, entire cross-sections of the community will be speaking about you and forming opinions of you that reflect both yourself and the Fabretto program as well. It is therefore our hope that all Volunteers will act with the reputation of Fabretto in mind. Behavior unbecoming of a Fabretto Volunteer will therefore not be tolerated. This may include, but is not exclusive to: unrestrained drinking, inappropriate sexual license, excessive borrowing and drug abuse. Inappropriate behavior carries with it the possibility of verbal reprimand from Fabretto personnel and expulsion from the program.

Dress Code

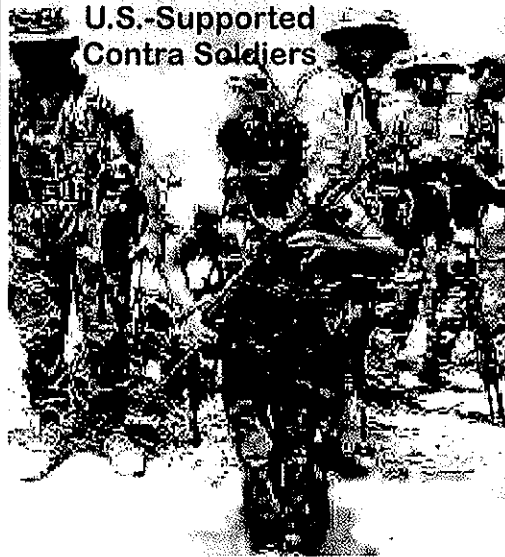
As in the United States, the way you dress in Nicaragua can establish your credibility. Your appearance reflects your respect for the local customs and expectations of the people with whom you live and work. Nicaraguans dress very neatly and take great pride in looking well in public and at social functions. Inappropriate dress, like inappropriate behavior, is something that can set a Volunteer unnecessarily apart from his or her community. In general, the best guideline is to dress as other Nicaraguans do in the same situation. For example, in Fabretto centers and counterpart offices, Nicaraguans dress professionally casual: neat, clean, and ironed. It is suggested that you bring casual professional attire for all venues, such as polo shirts or button-downs and slacks or long dresses. Dresses or shirts that have tight or spaghetti-strap tank tops are not appropriate work attire, and low-cut jeans or shorts may cause unanticipated attention from locals. Flashy jewelry or expensive watches might also have a negative affect. Also keep in mind that Nicaragua is a politically divided nation. The wearing of ideologically motivated attire (e.g. Che Guevara or Sandino Vive! t-shirts) carries the possibility of alienating Nicaraguan friends and co-workers.





Prevention Safety Measures

In general, volunteers feel very safe in their living environments and comfortable in their work with Fabretto staff members. However, volunteers should always be aware of their surroundings, take appropriate precautions, and help Fabretto reduce safety and security risks. For example, expensive items such as laptop computers, MP3 Players, and jewelry should not be left lying haphazardly around the Fabretto offices or in volunteer houses that are not securely locked. Women on the whole should not frequent certain bars or poolrooms, and it is recommended that Fabretto volunteers take precautions about traveling alone on buses or walking the streets at night, as they are occasionally unsafe.



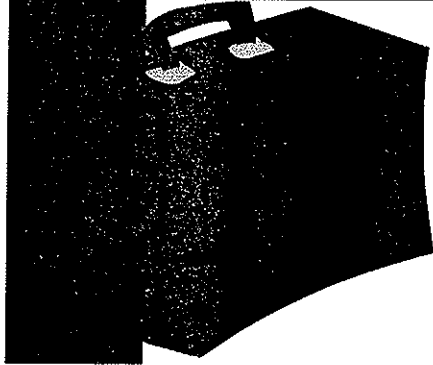
U.S.-Supported
Contra Soldiers



Fighters from the
FSLN

Politics and Religion

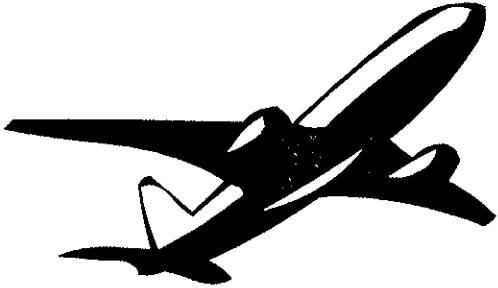
Fabretto's credibility and hence, its ability to perform its mission, is contingent on not becoming identified with local political issues. Therefore, volunteers are to avoid becoming involved in Nicaraguan political affairs or publicly expressing a particular ideology. Similarly, volunteers are free to exercise their personal religious beliefs but they may not engage in religious proselytizing. Volunteers who are not clear as to what constitutes religious proselytizing should consult with the Fabretto Executive Office in Managua.



Baggage Advisory

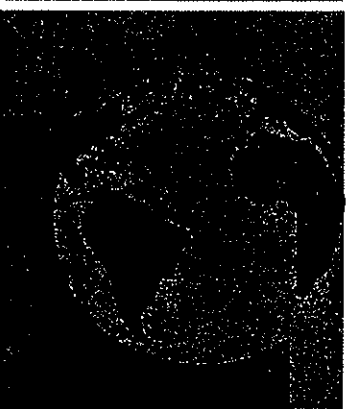
Please Note!!

In preparing you for your journey to Nicaragua, the Fabretto Volunteer Program has created a packing list of suggested items. Please note that these items are not mandatory materials but highly recommended to improve your stay.



Recommended Items

- Any and all Prescription Medication (Including Birth Control)
- Weatherproof Hard-Soled Boots
- Comfortable Footwear (Sandals and/or Tennis Shoes)
- Casual, Professional Attire (Polo or Button-Down Shirts and Khaki Pants for Men, Long Skirts and Button-Down Blouses for Women)
- Sunglasses and Brimmed Hat
- Head-Lamp or Battery-Operated Flashlight
- Nalgene Water Bottles
- A Raincoat w/ Hood or Poncho
- Fleece Jacket or Sweater (particularly for Volunteers working in Cusmapa)
- Bathing Paraphernalia (Towels, Shaving Kit, Bathing Trunks)
- Sufficient Undergarments, Socks, T-Shirts, Shorts, and Long Pants for the duration of your Stay (Washing is available upon request)
- Mosquito Net / Mosquito Repellant
- Leisure Reading, Short-Wave Radio Transmitters, or CD Players
- The Nicaragua Moon Handbook by Joshua Berman and Randy Wood
- Spanish-English Dictionary



Unnecessary Items (items available anywhere in Nicaragua)

- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste
- Kitchen Utensils (Pots, Pans, Glasses, Cutlery)
- Deodorant
- Generic Shampoo

Airline Baggage Regulations

According to the most recent information from the SatoTravel Agency, your total check-in luggage should weigh no more than 80 (eighty) pounds with no one piece weighing more than 70 pounds.

Total combined linear dimensions of you first and second piece of checked baggage may not exceed 107 inches. The largest piece may not exceed 62 inches (length + width + height of the two bags = 107 inches).

Your total carry-on luggage may not exceed a total linear measurement of 45 inches.

Your two checked pieces of baggage may total no more than 80 pounds. You will be responsible for any additional charges. This advisory was developed to minimize baggage-related problems during international travel

Due to fluctuating fuel prices, Fabretto strongly recommends making inquiries with your airline carrier as to specific baggage regulations at the time of your departure.

