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# PLANTING HOPE

## SEMBRANDO ESPERANZAS

*Creating opportunities for education, development and cultural exchange in Nicaragua and the United States.*



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Newsletter

Spring 2009

### The First Nicaragua-to-Vermont Brigade - A Dream Come True

The Planting Hope Nicaragua delegation arrived in Boston on one of the coldest days in January, minus 25 degrees. We greeted the 10 students and two adults with bundles of coats, hats, scarves, mittens and boots that had been donated by our many PH supporters. As they all looked through the bags Eric instinctively knew that cool teens don't really wear coats; he avoided all bulky items. Berman loved the colorful ski caps and tried many before choosing the red, then the purple and finally, the striped.

Philip Dalsimer hosted a sleep over for all the students for their first night in Montpelier. Sunday morning the group attended the service at the Unitarian Church and received an enthusiastic welcome. In the afternoon guests, host families, and PH friends gathered at Philip's house for brunch and introductions. After trying on more warm clothes, some first-time sledding and receiving Monday's schedule from Beth, our guests went home with their first host families.

In Nicaragua, the Scholarship students and the two PH employees who were chaperones had prepared many demonstrations of their culture to bring to Vermont. They practiced folkloric dances and songs and how to cook some typical festive meals. Eric Hart helped each person create a power-point presentation, using their own photographs to tell stories about themselves, their families and different aspects of Nicaraguan culture. The first dance performance, power point presentation and cultural workshop began at 7:45 Monday morning at Union Elementary School in Montpelier.

The Nicaragua warmth, love for their culture and genuine friendliness charmed their audiences. Several young UES students insisted that their families attend a



*Members of the Nicaragua to Vermont cultural exchange at the VT State House January 2009*

dinner and performance at Bethany Church the following Friday, because they wanted to spend more time with these vibrant young adults.

The Union Elementary School visit was the first of 15 school workshops and performances in Central Vermont, Henniker, N.H. and Boston. The Friday night dinner was the first of five community dinners and dance performances for hundreds of Vermonters. The students had several hours of IT workshops at

South Burlington High School and spent time with their People's Academy peers who traveled to Matagalpa in April. They toured Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, had some time to shop, (Santana purchased 15 pairs of black shoes for school children in his community), and participated in open mic at Langdon St. Cafe. In Boston they saw The Blue Man Group, visited English High School and danced with Latino students in Jamaica Plain, and captured hearts wherever they went.



*Planting Hope volunteer Julia Sendor, working with Elvis and Eric at the South Burlington High School Imaging Lab.*