

Update: Nicaragua 2010 - the Journey begins....

Hello to all our friends back home in Canada. Well the team was a little bleary eyed- some of us had an hour sleep and others just decided to stick it out and stay up all night- to meet at the airport at 3 am. Everyone arrived on time which is amazing when you think of how spread out the team is and 22 members. My son Curt and his GF Erin brought a U-Haul with our 44 hockey bags loaded- each weighing 50 lb. We had a bit of confusion when we thought a couple of bags were missing but then discovered we had two bag 35's, no 16 and no 23...all the result of a panic repacking episode when we realized many of our bags were "oversized" and a lady at American Airlines (who was definitely having a bad day) said we would be charged \$150 for every oversize bag and \$50 for every bag over 50 lb. Needless to say, we rectified that situation but it played havoc with the bags (and Sue Wideman's detailed list of what was in each bag) so we are a bit worried about how this will work when we hit customs in Nicaragua.

The flight to Miami was fine - and everyone caught up a bit on their sleep.

Once in Miami we had our next glitch- The flight to Managua was delayed for 4 hours - so Moises made some calls to his connections/the bus driver and finally at 2:30 we were on our way again.

The flight was good- about 2.5 hours long and finally we could see the sunshine and green fields of Nicaragua. We met Moises brother, sister-in-law and his father and step mother- and all our hockey bags were piled onto the top of two 12 passenger vans and a Toyota pick up truck. With our carry-ons and backpacks we were like sardines but finally made it to the Hotel Colonial about 10 pm. The accommodations are pretty primitive - but We were pretty beat after about 20 hours of traveling...and everyone fell into bed.

The next morning we were expecting to sleep late but everyone was up in good time and put our hockey bags in order, packaged pills. Some executive from the Somoto Rotary came to meet with us, Moises father and brother will be going to the local hospital tomorrow to provide surgical expertise. In the afternoon we had planned on a trip to a canyon but there has been so much rain that it was not safe - so we had a tour of the region with a visit to a cathedral, coffee plantation, pottery shop.

Both the electricity and the water is unpredictable here- and internet is sketchy- I am typing this in a downpour with no lights as the electricity is off again and you better hurry up when showering as the water can end at any moment. That happened to me and Sue had to pour water from a wading pool over my head to get the conditioner out.

When it rains here, it rains...it is like the heavens open. We are sitting out on the deck with a few cervezas watching the lightning and downpour. Rivers of water run down the street. It is actually something to see....

After a stressful day getting here, we are geared for clinics to start tomorrow. The people here are very kind and welcoming. We are brushing up on our Spanish and the food has been pretty good...we have some flavor to our rice...

Will report back tomorrow with our first day of clinics.

Buenos Nouches

Linda