



Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. – Mark Twain

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mannaproject.org



Do you know a college student or recent graduate looking for a meaningful job, adventures abroad, and life-changing professional development? Please encourage them to explore long-term volunteer opportunities with Manna Project in Nicaragua or Ecuador!

APPLY TODAY!

APPLY

### ECUADOR UPDATES

#### Spring Break Groups in Ecuador



During the first week of March, two Spring Break groups visited the Ecuador site, one from Vanderbilt University and one from University of Findley. Their main project was assisting with the local daycare, Gotitas del Saber. At Gotitas, the group painted murals, built a tire jungle gym and helped work on the drainage system for planters! The groups also helped with various activities at the community center, joined in on a community dinner and were able to visit Mitad del Mundo. Short-term group trips are the perfect opportunity for Program Directors to practice their leadership skills. If you would like to explore the volunteer option of a short-term trip with us, [check out this page on our website](#).

### NICARAGUA UPDATES

#### The 5th Annual Cedro Galán 5k Run for Health



On March 18th in Nicaragua, over 100 community members of Cedro Galán came out to run in our 5k race to support the Cedro Galán Health Clinic. The clinic provides necessary healthcare for over 2,000 individuals. With the help of our generous donors, we were able to raise \$7,300 to keep the clinic running! The clinic means so much to this community and it was amazing to see so many locals who are passionate about health, exercise and their community! Help us reach our 2018 Cedro Galán fundraising goal [by making a contribution today!](#)

#### New Guitar Class



A community member, Reynaldo, has started teaching Guitar classes every Wednesday at the Community Center. Children, young adults, and teens have started coming to learn the basics of playing guitar. With 10 participants each week, this program has been a quick success! Guitar class exposes students to the joy of learning music, and is an excellent "free-time" alternative to video games and cell phones. This is a program the team has been wanting to start for a while, and we are grateful Reynaldo chose to take the initiative! To help with incredible community programs like Guitar class, you can [donate here](#) keep the programs running!

#### Worcester State University (WSU) Spring Break Group Showcases Camp



J.A.M. A group of college students from WSU spent a week helping with programs and organizing an event for the kids in the community. They spent an entire day tie-dyeing shirts, and then on Thursday the students got to show off their colorful designs at the event! The event also included a beautiful display of art made by the students and a piñata. It was a fun, high-energy get-together, and we are thankful that WSU make it such a success! To learn more about our Spring Break trips, [visit this page](#).

#### Community Member Spotlight: Valentina



Valentina is an 8 year old girl who recently started coming to the community center every afternoon. Her energy is refreshing and all of the Program Directors have come to know her like a little sister. Valentina's parents own a local hair-salon. She loves to participate in art activities or play games with other kids. Valentina even helps Program Directors clean, sign-in other kids and has become a regular in the Library. Valentina is an integral part of our community and her spunk, personality and laughter are some of the many reasons we love seeing her smile every day!

#### Vanderbilt Spring Break Group Supports Spay/Neuter Event



For the first time in MPI history, students from Vanderbilt University spent a week helping improve the lives of animals in Nicaragua. They spent a day volunteering and bringing in donations for the animals at a local animal shelter. They then spent all day Saturday assisting local veterinarians as they performed spay and neuter operations on ten animals at no cost to the families. Thank you for all your help, Vanderbilt University!

#### Papallacta Retreat



Program Directors and Country Director, Carolyn, took a relaxing trip to Papallacta Resort. Papallacta is a city in the Paramo of Ecuador that has natural hot springs. Having won various resort prizes, Papallacta is a must-see attraction! The group went on a hike through the Paramo and then returned to the hot springs to relax and reflect on their time with MPI. The team discussed teamwork, ways to encourage each other and had a compliment circle! Retreats not only help Program Directors better understand their teammates, but also build confidence within the group. [Apply to be a Program Director](#) to work on your professional development, team building skills and to see an incredible country!

#### Program Directors Travel to Ometepe and San Juan Del Sur for Semana Santa



With some time off from community programs for the last week in March, the Nicaraguan Program Directors got to travel around the beautiful country that they've grown to know and love. They hiked Concepción and Maderas, the two volcanoes that form the island of Ometepe, and saw so much incredible wildlife! To live your adventure, [apply today to become a Program Director](#).

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Carissa Chen, 13-month Program Director in Nicaragua, 2015-16



Then



Now

**What was your favorite part about being a Program Director with MPI?**  
I found my love for education as a PD with Manna. Teaching English levels 4 and 5 and also being one of the pioneers behind the English Vocational Training program was the most rewarding experience. I just went back to Nicaragua in February, and more than 5 of our English students currently work in call centers utilizing their English every day. It's incredible to see how far they've come in such a short amount of time and being part of their journey is very special to me. The day-to-day work at Manna can be difficult but the outcomes and success stories that we see long term make it all worthwhile.

**Please tell me a little bit about what you are currently pursuing.**  
I currently work on the Marketing Team for Teachers Pay Teachers (TpT) -- an online site where teachers can buy, share, and sell educator-created content for their classrooms. I get to work directly with teachers and find new ways to support them every day. Teachers have the most important job but they often go unrecognized, so I love the work I get to do as part of the Marketing team and sharing teachers' stories.

**To read more about Carissa Chen and how Manna Project has impacted her journey, please visit our new page, [ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT](#).**

Is your birthday around the corner? Do you want to raise money for a special occasion, personal challenge or simply to support an organization? Start a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign to meet your personal goals while raising money on behalf of Manna Project!

MAKE YOUR MOMENTS MATTER BY STARTING YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN

