

THE GRAN PACIFICA WAVE

NEWS FROM THE EDGE OF THE SEA

DECEMBER 2015



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LETTER FROM THE CEO



MIKE COBB

Dear Friends,

First of all, Happy Holidays! I hope you have enjoyed the time to unwind with family, and savor the good things in life. It is an important time for everyone, regardless of faith, economic status, or whatever condition we may find ourselves in this time of year. These times of coming together are what remind us what is important, and what we will be working for in the new year to come. We have included an article about the holiday celebrations in Nicaragua, which are truly unique to the country, so that you can get a feel for what has been happening here over the last few weeks.

As far as the last few weeks, holiday celebrations are not the only exciting thing happening at Gran Pacifica. In addition to a wonderful Christmas Dinner and the planned New Years Eve festivities, we received word that the government has committed to paving the road! Another 2 kilometers will be completed in the coming months, and it is officially planned to complete the road. There is not a timetable for total completion, but it's coming, and that's a big deal. As property owners and shareholders, you stand to benefit significantly from the progress. You know that Nicaragua is an appreciation market, and the road's completion will jumpstart that appreciation, as prices are anticipated to skyrocket.

You will also enjoy Patrick Hiebert's article about the medical clinic coming to Gran Pacifica. It's truly been a collaborative effort, and will be a big step forward for Gran Pacifica and the surrounding community. The clinic will be named for one of baseball's all time greats, Roberto Clemente. For any of you in Pittsburgh, stay tuned for news on an event to be hosted in the clinic's honor. I'd like to congratulate everyone who has worked so hard to make this a reality.

In this issue, you can also read about residents' success stories in Nicaragua, the baby turtles set to hatch at Gran Pacifica's turtle sanctuary, and much more. It's only fitting that a new year will begin with new life for these endangered species. All of this goes to show that when a community comes together, great things not only become possible, they get done. You are truly made up of something special as property owners and shareholders, because you have vision and drive. And you've used that drive to invest in our company and follow your dreams of a new home at Gran Pacifica.

We recently hosted a "Webinar Wednesday," which is a program we plan to continue in the future. It was a full day of webinars about a wide range of topics, from Nicaragua as the new home of the American Dream, to exciting opportunities throughout the region, to future programs at Gran Pacifica and throughout ECI's properties. The webinars were all recorded, so feel free to contact me at the link below if you'd like a recording.

Enjoy this last issue of The Wave of 2015, and we look forward to sending you more great stories in the new year. This has been a wonderful project to work on, and I hope you have enjoyed The Wave as much as I have. You are important to us, and we are always looking for new ways to stay in touch. From my family to yours, and on behalf of all of ECI, I wish you the happiest of holidays, and the brightest of futures in the new year.

Sincerely,

Mike Cobb

PROPERTY UPDATE

Welcome Home

This time of year is time to witness snow birds flying south to their warmer homes. December and November brought us Lorraine Ackerman, Bob Lynch, Juan Espinoza, Kelly McInturff, Ellen and Don Roose, Ed Sackley, and Charles & Diana Taylor, the new owners of the house being built in Phase I.

Casa De los Delfines Hostal Elegante, a registered business at Gran Pacifica, had its Grand Opening on December 12th. Owner Mike Altchul hosted this lively evening with Hawaiian dancers to match the theme, and plenty of media coverage to get the word out about this quaint location.

Local Sports

Each December, local sports leagues wrap up their season.

The San Cayetano Astros and The team from California faced off December 13th. Gran Pacifica was well represented with players on both teams and many in the audience. The Astros were victorious with a score of 2-1.

In the finals, the Astros played against the Aduanas of Villa el Carmen, walking away with bragging rights until the league starts again in July.

The men are not the only ones to be passionate about their sports. Ladies kickball has quite a following, with many teams in the league and Burrito Bandito with a team of their own.



Medical Mission

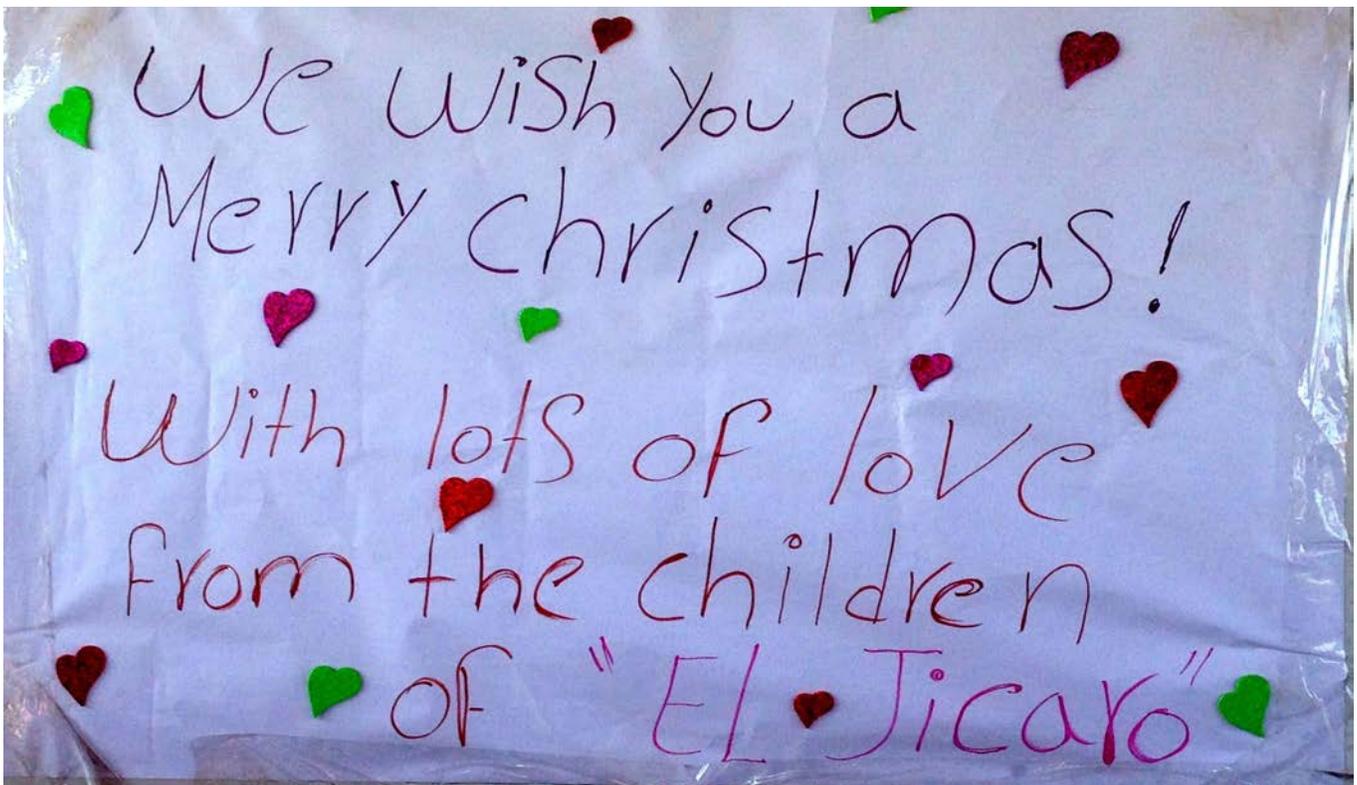
Travel to do Good will have a Medical Mission Saturday Feb 27 – Sunday March 6, 2016.

This mission will be Led by Dr. Suzanne Cutter, the Mobile Medical Mission Team will partner with local doctors and healthcare providers to deliver free and/or low cost medical care, including diagnosis, treatment, minor procedures, dental care, patient education, as well as referrals to higher levels of care.

Please contact Dr. Suzanne Cutter for more information at info@traveltodogood.com

Christmas at El Jícaro

With the financial support of Operation Walk Winnipeg, the residents of Gran Pacifica and Finca del Mar hosted a Christmas celebration for the children of El Jícaro. The children welcomed the foreigners into their school by performing two dance numbers. Children visiting from North America as well as local girl Taylor Giles took turns serving a traditional Nicaraguan meal to 80 children and adults from the village. Fun was had by all with two piñatas being demolished, which rained down a bounty of sweets, bracelets and coins for all. Leah and Dean, a hair dresser and cameraman from Canada who are also residents of Finca del Mar, brought down dolls that were used as props on a recent movie set that were no longer of use. These sweet little dolls found a home in the arms of each little girl that was in attendance. All of the boys received sporting gifts, crayons or toys.





Turtle Sanctuary

So far this year, our turtle sanctuary was the birthplace of 161 Olive Ridley turtles and 22+ Hawksbill turtles. The goal this year is to double the number of turtles released.

Construction News

Casitas – two more casitas were completed on the 31st, making four in total. One has been sold, which leaves three available for sale or for long-term rentals as even more near completion.

The house on lot A-40 went up in record speed, being completed in less than six months. The house has already hosted friends of the owner for a couple of weeks, and the owner arrived on December 28th to check out her new home. This house will be available for rent when Fiona is not in residence. Please stop by and say hi to Fiona, as she will be in town for the first week of January.

Road News

The 13th of December brought the presence of surveyors, machinery, and workers to the road that connects Gran Pacifica to Carretera Masachapa. When asked, the workers will tell you that at minimum two kilometers of road will be completed within three months. Another two kilometers would extend the paved road to the community of Finca San Diego; three kilometers would take it as far as the La Florida turn-off. Once the road is fully completed, it will be a great boon for property owners and investors.

If you would like to know more about living at Gran Pacifica, please contact Jo-Anne at joanne.stoltz@gmail.com.

OUR TALENTED NEIGHBOR

JO-ANNE STOLTZ

In 1998 an Israeli company based out of Honduras won a bid to rehabilitate all Dole banana plantations across Nicaragua. This company needed someone with expertise in a technique called tissue culture which guarantees the exact duplication of superior plants, resulting in more abundant harvests.

Dror Herzig spent his youth near the Sea of Galilee on Kibbutz Ginosar where he gained many years experience in Tissue culture and because of this was hired by Tissue Culture Laboratories (TCL) to head their project in Nicaragua. Arriving in 1998 with not much more than a backpack and speaking no Spanish, Dror began this four-year project for TCL who had provided a translator to help him communicate with his local team. The first month was busy setting up operations, however the first day that required them to go to the field at 6am and work in the harsh sun for the entire day resulted in the resignation of his translator. At this time in the Chinandega area, there were not many people who spoke English so it left Dror with a hundred workers and limited communication. He recalls after three months he was comfortable speaking Spanish and was able to read and write the language not long after that.

I'm a nurse too, and kidded her about her 'in charge' way of speaking. Someone said once it takes one to know one. Colleen said she was visiting her son and his family and was renting a house on the Gran Pacifica property. I saw her once or twice after that, then she left.

Dror met Chinandegana beauty Patricia Gomez, who had a young daughter named Valeria who was so smart that by the age of ten had taught herself to read and had demonstrated this skill by reading an entire collection of encyclopedias. In awe of the combination of beauty and brains, Dror married Patricia in 1999 and later added two boys and one girl to their family.

With the help of his siblings, they have purchased 180 manzanas of land near Momotombo, making the transition from employee to employer. It is one of the only plantain farms to be fully equipped with a fertigation system allowing it to become one of the top producers of superior quality plantains in Nicaragua without the use of pesticides. Corn, sorghum, watermelon and melon are also grown on their finca.

In another entrepreneurial endeavor, Dror created a successful construction company with partner Jorge that is responsible for managing the construction of shopping centers, houses and condominiums in Managua. These two have also built seven homes here at Gran Pacifica.



In mid 2014 he and his brother Ziv opened a restaurant in Granada that is operated under two names, Pizzaiol and Pita Pita. Wanting to authentically encapsulate Mediterranean style food with a Mid East twist, they have brought in a chef directly from Israel. This venture has been so successful they are presently looking to expand.

Below you will see Dror & Patricia with their family in Managua. The younger children attend school in Managua and the oldest Valeria is now a surgeon who is becoming a specialist in face and neck reconstruction.



<http://www.elpizzaiol.com>

If you would like to know more about living in Nicaragua, please contact Jo-Anne at joanne.stoltz@gmail.com.

DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

JO-ANNE STOLTZ

La Purisima – The Purity

At the beginning of December, Catholics and people of other religions show their devotion and gratitude to the Virgin Mary by constructing altars in her honor. It is quite a sight to behold in Managua as the festive lights of the altars mixed with the brilliance of the trees of life completely illuminate the street.

People walk up and down the street taking in the beauty of the altars and soaking in the festive spirit. Police presence is evident, making your stroll very safe.

La Gritería – The Shouting

On December 7th, La Gritería is celebrated in all areas of Nicaragua but Leon is known for its extensive Gritería celebration.

At 6pm, locals and tourists gather in front of the main cathedral where a short mass is broadcast followed by a very loud and lengthy display of fireworks. The mass of people walk out of and away from the Cathedral in a parade lead by the “Gigatona,” a giant puppet that dances to the beat of the drums and horns that accompany it.



Religious families set up altars in their houses honoring the Virgin Mary. Groups walk from house to house yelling, “Quien causa tanta alegría?” (Who causes such joy?) the homeowner then replies with “La Concepción de Maria” (The Conception of Mary). The homeowner then hands out treats to the people who have visited their altar.

THE HEALTH CLINIC IS COMING!

PATRICK HIEBERT

This story has a lot of ups and downs, but like any good story it will have a great ending! I must admit, when I conceived of the idea of a clinic while I was standing on the side of a dirt road in rural Nicaragua, I thought it would be reality quite quickly. Of course, like a lot of things, especially in Central America, it hasn't happened quickly!

Almost three years ago a group of hockey player buddies of mine, some Gran Pacifica residents and I, through the support of our charitable foundation Help Them Help Themselves, rebuilt the school in El Zapote, a small village near the resort. The project was a lot of work but very rewarding as we saw what was a broken down bat infested pile of garbage transform into a nice three room school with running water, an organic sustainable garden that provides food to the kids, new desks and chairs and a place for true learning.

While building that school our transport bus broke down and we had to send everyone in other vehicles. I waited with the bus for the mechanic on the side of the road and saw a little boy in the bushes throwing a baseball in the air. I motioned for him to come over and play catch and he nervously came out of the trees. As soon as he threw the ball to me I noticed his arm was badly misshapen. His forearm bent at a 45 degree angle between his elbow and his wrist. I asked him what happened in my poor Spanish and he explained that he had fallen out of a tree. I asked him "And the doctor let it heal like that?" As soon as I had said that I realized it was a stupid question. He looked at me like I had two heads and said "Doctor?"

I realized that not only could his parents not afford proper medical care to have his arm reset and cast but they probably couldn't even afford the trip to Managua to have the work done. I can only imagine the horrible nights he must have had to endure with two fractured bones in his arm and no treatment or painkillers. Later that evening when we arrived back at the resort I was told about a little boy that had died from Pneumonia earlier that week. He had been missing from school and everyone assumed it was just a simple cold. It was shocking to me that the level of care and health education available to the local villagers is so poor that a little boy can die from a very treatable disease. Any one of us would have brought that boy to the hospital in Managua if we had known. At that point I decided we needed to be part of changing the healthcare in the local communities. We had to bring healthcare to them and let them know it is for them.

That day seems like a very long time ago. There has been much planning and fund raising since then. The fund raising was going very slowly since a lot of money was needed. In addition, it was proving nearly impossible to find a location to build a clinic. Well fortunately that all changed in the last few months. Gran Pacifica stepped up and donated a parcel of land just outside the gates to the resort and ECI went a step further and auctioned off some teak farm land in silent auctions. That huge donation together with donations from several residents of Gran Pacifica got us over the hump. We raised over \$80,000 (our goal) in only a few weeks!

At the same time Help Them Help Themselves has been working with Travel To Do Good's Roslyn Parker (an agency specializing in volunteer travel) and Dr. Suzanne Cutter to plan a Medical Mission. This project is all about going into the various villages around Villa el Carmen (the municipality around Gran Pacifica) and treating those that need care most and educating as many people as we can on health care issues. This mobile medical project will happen from February 27th to March 6th, 2016 and on the last day we will have a ground breaking ceremony for the "Roberto Clemente Clinic – Villa el Carmen" the new name for the clinic that will begin construction shortly after that.

Thanks to all who have been patient and supported the concept of building a clinic over the past years. Now that we have the location and funds I hope to have the clinic under construction late this spring. We still have a lot of hurdles with permits, staffing and many other issues to overcome, but we have overcome all the hurdles so far and will continue to do so with everyone's support.