



# NEXUS

**SPRING/SUMMER 2013  
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**An Alberta incorporated society**

**Founded 1975 by Hank (1935-2012)  
and Tillie Zyp**

**Nurtured by Al Gerwing (1923-2007)**

**Fully volunteer, no paid employees**

**Head Office, Wainwright, Alberta**

**Financial Office, Salmon Arm, BC.**

**Members are our supporters who  
choose to become members.**

**Value and partner with various  
secular and religious affiliations in  
helping people in need internationally**

**Programs in Brazil, Peru, El Salvador,  
Nicaragua, Guatemala, Jamaica, India,  
Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, and Philippines**

**Committed to grassroots people creating  
a more just world for their families.**

**We believe in the value of caring  
for the earth and its people.**

**We believe the earth's resources are  
meant for all to share and respect.**

**We believe dignity and human  
rights have no boundaries.**

**We have abundant hope that working  
together we can influence change toward  
a compassionate, caring, peaceful world.**

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## CANADA MEETS GHANA CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Just before Christmas 2012, a dynamic teacher from Ghana treated us with a visit. Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels was born in the small village of Bongbini in northeast Ghana. She is now the founder and executive director of PAMBE Ghana, a unique bilingual primary school supported by Rainbow of Hope. She visited St. Joe's High in Edmonton, St. Thomas Aquinas in Provost, Theresetta in Castor, and the Wainwright Elementary and Blessed Sacrament schools in Wainwright. She mesmerized everyone with her warmth and delightful presentations.

We thank Alice for coming and we thank the schools, especially our students, for their respect and meaningful questions. We thank Jeff Newland and Key 83 for airing her story on its news coverage and the Rotary clubs of Wainwright, Alberta and Watford, Ontario for supporting PAMBE Ghana. We invite you to read more about Alice and PAMBE Ghana on our website:

**[rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca](http://rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca)**





## SCHOLARSHIP AND YOUTH FORMATION PROGRAM:

### Planting the seeds for a new El Salvador

by Leslie Schuld, Executive Director  
Center for Exchange and Solidarity (CIS), El Salvador

**"Give a person a fish and you have fed them for today. Teach a person HOW to fish and they can feed themselves for the rest of their life."**

The CIS Scholarship and Youth Formation Program benefits youth in 12 communities in El Salvador in strengthening organization, leadership development and access to high school and university. This year 200 students are receiving high school scholarships and 100 university scholarships. To support a high school student costs \$300 U.S. per year for 3 years and for university \$1,000 U.S. per year for 6 years. Some vocational programs such as chef, teacher or nurse are \$1,000 U.S. per year for 3 years. CIS also supports 6 grassroots promoters to coordinate programs, organize formation workshops, develop scholarship committees, and assist committee in managing the program.

The CIS program is unique in that it not only opens doors to higher education, it offers formation in gender equality, environment, human rights, social networks, and issues youth face. Students and parents attend monthly workshops on important issues and reflections about the national and international reality. The objective is to build awareness of the reality, how to make changes and build consciousness of giving back to the community and values of solidarity, not just to think of migrating after graduation.

### GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

The students give back to their communities throughout the program. Each year they develop a volunteer project. For example, some have taught youth computer workshops, given sessions on Salvadoran history in local schools, worked in literacy campaigns, developed community gardens, and organized CIS clean water campaign which has to do with changing people's thinking and habits as it does with providing access to water filtration systems.

Additionally, students at the university level sign a commitment letter, pledging to give back 50% of what they receive to help pay for another student to study, based on when they get a job and monthly income.

The program is also not just focused on individual development, but also on strengthening community organization. Each program is required to form a committee in charge of overseeing the application process, facilitating monthly workshops and overseeing volunteer programs.

Students are accepted to the program based on criteria of economic need, willingness to participate in community organization, responsible conduct and passing grades. For high school studies, high grades are not a requirement, as many students come from families with scarce economic resources and families with high illiteracy rates and often go to school without adequate nutrition and attention span. Thus the program puts these youth on a more level playing field. In addition, CIS requires

that at least 50% of the recipients to be female, since the level of females studying is lower than males.

For university studies, academic achievement is an important factor, since if students have very low grades, they are not likely to pass university courses.

Perhaps the best way to see the necessity and

*The objective is to build awareness of the reality, how to make changes and to build consciousness to give back to their community and values of solidarity, not just*

impact of the scholarship and youth formation program is to learn about some of the students in the program and their story

of struggle, perseverance and aspirations for their family, community and country.



**A student proudly showing**

## ADILENE YAMILETH SAAVEDRA HERRERA

Adilene is from San Luis Los Ranchos, a canton 6 kilometers from the center of Comasagua. She is studying Public Accounting at the “Open Module University” in Santa Tecla. Adilene is the oldest of 6 brothers and sisters and lives in a small two room shack with her siblings and parents.

The CIS started the scholarship program in Comasagua in 2008 and prioritized the village of San Luis los Ranchos because of the women’s organization the CIS has supported and developed since 2005. The women have their own center where they dye indigo clothing and accessories and have won their third government contract to make school uniforms starting in 2011. Because of their work and the development of their women’s business, Rainbow of Hope for Children, with a grant from Alberta Community Initiatives International Development Program, expanded and built a more secure building for the women at the end of 2012. Adilene forms part of this women’s cooperative and is able to complement payment for her studies since the scholarship does not cover 100% of expenses.

Adilene’s father has 3<sup>rd</sup> grade education and her mother never was able to study. For Adilene it was only a dream to be able to go to even high school. Her goal was to get good grades, thinking at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade her studies would end. When she finished 9<sup>th</sup> grade, a general high school [only covers 2 instead of 3 years of education] was built in her village a few blocks from her house which enabled her to graduate from high school. Through the CIS scholarship program Adilene has been able to continue studying and is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of a 6 year program in Public Accounting.

To study Adilene leaves her home at 3:15 a.m. three days a week, and returns at 8:30 p.m. She has to walk 6 kilometers to get to the first bus stop and then takes a one hour bus ride to Santa Tecla, to be on time for her first class at 7 a.m.

Adilene’s motivation to study was her desire to overcome her harsh economic conditions, to be useful in the society and to help her family economically. Since her father earns only \$90 a month working in the field, when he has employment, they barely have enough to put beans and tortillas on the table, and it is more difficult now to sustain 3 other brothers and sisters who are of school age as well as the 2 pre-schoolers.

She wishes to use her knowledge and her skills to strengthen and to build the women’s business to generate more employment for women in her village, and support her family

economically.

Her main concerns about life in El Salvador include the lack of employment for youth and deficient education programs. She worries about delinquency especially for youth and sees access to education and employment as the only way to curb the countries insecurity. She also is concerned about environmental deterioration.

Her hope comes from the people willing to struggle, who desire to overcome poverty and make an effort to improve their living conditions through honest work. She is happy that there are institutions willing to help people transform their conditions. She is excited that possibilities are opening for more youth to study and have access to superior education that will permit them to be productive and contribute to the development of their country, even if only with small steps.

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On left, Adilene proudly poses with her family; sibling #6 was born after this photo was taken.

On right, Adilene is skillfully cutting material for the school uniform contract.



## VICTOR MANUEL ANDALUZ RECINOS

Victor was born in San Juan Opico in La Libertad and has 12 brothers and sisters. His parents studied through third and fourth grade. His family moved to the community of El Caoba in December of 2000 after the family was displaced due to economic debts. Victor's family as well as other homeless and landless farming families organized and settled on government property in El Caoba. They built makeshift homes from plastic and tin. Since they have not been able to get the titles to the land they are on, they cannot build more formal structures. The community has been in negotiations with the local and national government since 2001 trying to get the land transferred to them.

Rainbow of Hope, CIDA, and Wild Rose Foundation provided funds to dig a well and install solar power in 2003, so El Caoba had access to drinking water. CIS provided school supplies so that students could attend school. Victor, only 14 years old at the time, surpassed the levels of education of all of the adults in the community. He was elected community secretary and developed the letters of requests, compiled the list of students and their education levels, assessed what school supplies were needed for each grade, and went to the office supply store to develop a budget of what would be needed so each child could go to school. Despite living with no water or electricity, Victor was top in his class at the local high school at the La Libertad Port, competing with students who had much more access to education and better living conditions.

Victor was motivated to continue his studies in English after being visited by CIS and Rainbow of Hope delegations. His dream was to become a teacher and through his education to help others and his family. He sees it as a personal struggle because Salvadorans who live in the countryside are unprotected. Economic factors and distance make it almost impossible to go on to high school. Sleeping under a roof made of cardboard, clothes and notebooks getting wet, and not having adequate food, made him all the more motivated to study. Victor had to walk 1 hour then take a bus to get to school.

Victor entered the University of El Salvador in 2008 and will graduate in 2014 with a license in English and minor in Education. He has completed his course work. Students must write and defend a thesis as well as complete 500 hours in social project to graduate. Victor volunteered teaching English at the CIS to "give back" as well as acquire experience throughout 2012.

Victor counts as his personal victories a scholarship he won in high school to study English and computers for 4 years. He had the second highest grades in his high school graduating class and won an award for creating the best web page in his computer course in 2007.

Because of his excellent teaching methods, responsibility and knowledge, the CIS hired Victor in January of 2013 to coordinate the English Language Program. He now is an integral part of the CIS program.

Victor says the CIS scholarship has helped him in many ways. He had the opportunity to visit CIS projects and converse with people about their reality and their needs. He feels he is part of social change through his teaching and work with volunteers. He not only coordinates the CIS English program, he is a substitute teacher for Spanish classes and has formed part of a team to help coordinate and translate for visiting delegations.

A concern of Victor is who will govern the country in 2014 after presidential elections. Many social programs begun with the new government in 2009 can be lost. The principal focus of the current government has been to help those with scarce economic resources. He is worried about the lack of access to good edu-

cation. "The people need tools and abilities to contribute to the economic, social, cultural and political growth of the country," he insightfully states.

Victor rejoices in the opportunity CIS gave him to study, to develop his personal and professional abilities, and to get experience. He is grateful to have a job before graduation. His volunteer work at CIS and access to the scholarship and formation program enabled him to get hired. He is happy he can help his family economically. He has a dream to continue and expand the CIS vision and mission by one day founding his own organization to help children who live on the streets to access education.



**In 2008, this young student was chosen to greet Rainbow of Hope to El Caoba. The community was very proud of Victor, their first high school graduate.**



In 2011, CIS Scholarship recipient, Victor Analuz, graciously helped our volunteer, Cecily Mills, down a steep incline at Chinameca, El Salvador to visit families and the retainer walls, funded by Rainbow of Hope protecting homes during devastating floods. Victor was a CIS volunteer at the time.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUPPORT A SCHOLARSHIP?

Higher education is key to improving the standard of living of individuals and families and enables them to participate in the social, economic, and political decisions affecting their lives. So often the focus of scholarship programs is on the elite and advantaged of society. The CIS program is unique; it gives the impoverished and the marginalized a chance for further education, and promotes intrinsic value of giving back to the community and country. Rainbow of Hope is pleased to announce its approval to accept donations in support of the CIS scholarship and youth formation program. If you wish to help a student, here's how:

A gift of \$300 will enable a needy student in El Salvador to attend high school and a gift of \$1,000 to attend university.

## HOW RAINBOW OF HOPE RESPONDS TO DISASTER RELIEF

When disasters strike in the world - floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, disease, explosions, war - civil society agencies and people worldwide desire to help. They are faced with the quandary of which disasters to assist and how best to assist, which sometimes leads to inconsistent response approaches. Rainbow of Hope is not immune to these questions and the perplexity is compounded by requests to respond in a tangible and direct manner to specific disasters. The board recognizes it does not have the expertise to select which disasters to assist and how best to assist, nor does it have the human and monetary resources to respond like organizations whose mandate is to put boots on the ground wherever natural disasters occur. Rainbow of Hope, by CRA regulation, works through international partners by agreements. So, it is through our international project partners where we have projects that thousands of people have benefited by Rainbow of Hope supporters over the years. If a disaster occurs where Rainbow of Hope has no projects, and one or more volunteers commit to raising funds for relief, the board considers this within the scope of its policy.

### DISASTER RELIEF POLICY

1. Given the scarcity of financial resources and its lack of expertise by the Board in this regard, only those disasters which occur in the specific geographic area where Rainbow of Hope has active projects and which affect the people involved in the projects, will be considered for approval. Within these parameters, the Board will decide on which disasters to support and the amount of financial assistance to be provided.
2. Where a volunteer is desirous of supporting and spearheading fund raising for a specific disaster, these situations will be considered by the Board on a case by case basis and, for those approved, will be considered as a separate project.



On left, families rejoice in receiving titles to land funded by Rainbow of Hope after the 2001 earthquake in El Salvador, naming their community *Arcoiris* (Rainbow). On right, is the 2010 flood in northeast Brazil. The women of MMTRP made National TV news for getting supplies to isolated communities by walking, motor bike and helicopter.



## PROJECT J5 TRIP TO JAMAICA

### October 26 – November 03, 2012

The Project J5 group gathered at the Columbus Club Hall at St. Theresa's Parish in Edmonton at 8:00 pm for final preparations and a bit of an emotional send off by previous Project J members and family members. Father Jim and Deacon Matthew came by and gave us their wonderful blessings and then it was time to get on the chartered ETS bus for the trip to the airport. The bus was very handy considering the 20 large pieces of luggage, weighing about 1,000 pounds, and the 10 carry-on bags. We were booked on the red-eye to Toronto, and after a short layover there, we left at 9:50 am and arrived on schedule at Montego Bay, Jamaica around 1:00 pm. After a bit of red tape at customs in Jamaica checking our luggage to see if we were bringing in new clothing with us, we met up with Ronnie, our leader for the week. In no time, we were on our way to Our Lady of Dunsinane National Shine Mission house in Manchester. This would be our home for the week.



**Project J5 Team - Karen Madu, Al Kucy, Stephen Dufresne, Cathy Pidhirney, Maria Lupul, Kelvin and Sharon Keichinger, Ingrid and Dave Frigon**

“Welcome to Jamaica,” Sister Maureen and our work coordinator, Ronnie, warmly greeted us and took us to choose our rooms. No sooner unpacked, we were off to enjoy a wonderful evening meal cooked by Meeckus and Miss Jeanne. Sister Maureen gave us an orientation of what was expected of us. Later in the evening Ronnie gave us a schedule and a rundown of what we would be doing through the week. He asked each of us why we were there and reminded us that we cannot change things in the short period of one week.

On the morning of our first full day in Jamaica, Deacon Dennis Hendriks of the Diocese of Manderville spoke to us about life in Jamaica. He talked about the poverty, a factor augmented by the large number of children born out of wedlock in Jamaica. He indicated that it is difficult to change a lifestyle such as this. Deacon Hendriks advised us that Jamaicans are very warm and inviting people. We felt this warmth and had so many wonderful experiences during our week in Jamaica that would fill the pages of the NEXUS. We are happy to share a few with you.

#### St. Philomena Basic School

After breakfast one morning, we set out for a long drive, over some very bumpy and potholed roads, to Portland Cottage about 1.5 hour away from our home base. We were going to help complete the construction work on a classroom addition to the school.

St. Philomena Basic School is a pre-school from two to five years of age. It created quite a scene when we arrived. We all enjoyed interacting with the teachers and children, and they certainly enjoyed our visit as well as the candies, assorted school supplies and a small financial donation to the school.

There was one little boy, in particular, whom Al nicknamed ‘Double Trouble’. A short time after our arrival, the boy soon lost interest in his school work as he was too busy entertaining us by dancing and teasing us with his antics.

As the day progressed the classroom was taking shape as we were busy doing various building and painting tasks. The original school was painted yellow and blue, which most of us ended up wearing, in one way or another, as we tried to match the paint pattern on the original school. It was a very warm day, and at the end, though we were very hot and tired, it was a very rewarding day. The journey home, with the principal of the school

*We felt this warmth and had so many wonderful experiences during our week in Jamaica that would fill the pages of NEXUS.*

dropped her off at another school where she was taking evening classes. She was a good sport.



## Mary Help of Christians Seniors Home

Another very heart filling experience was visiting Mary Help of Christians Seniors Home in Balaclava, operated by the Missionaries of Charities Sisters founded by Mother Teresa. There was only one sister there at the time. She was a Mother Teresa in the compassionate way that she interacted with the residents. A total of 35 women and 17 men lived in this Seniors Home. Many have no family or relatives to look after them in their old age.

Our guys did some intricate painting, with a 4" brush painting 1" strips of mortar on the walls downstairs, while the ladies visited the female residents upstairs. What a wonderful group of people. They certainly love to tease each other. One of the residents, Sylvina, wanted her picture taken with everyone, including Ronnie. She told Ronnie that he looked like a fat mongoose. They all love to sing. One lady had an amazing voice. We helped to serve lunch. What a wonderful experience it was. Words that describe these women are: happy, friendly, humorous, and grateful. They enjoy life to the fullest though their health has deteriorated.



## St. John Bosco Home For Boys

That same afternoon we visited St. John Bosco Home for boys. This residential school is home to 130 boys. It is operated by the Sisters of Mercy with Sisters Susan and Mimi in charge. These two sisters are beautiful people with a great sense of humor, but you know they are in charge.



The boys attend a school on site and also learn various skills such as the operation of a huge pig and chicken production facilities on the school grounds, meat cutting and processing, catering and farming. They also make many crafts and cookbooks and the Sisters are very good at selling these items which brings in some revenue. We did our part in purchasing items and left with packages in hand after they treated us to a feast of pizza.

The sisters shared many proud stories of some of their boys obtaining employment on cruise ships in the food industry or locally as meat cutters and processors. They never forget their roots and always stay in touch with Bosco Homes. Some send money to help other youth to give them a chance.

## Visiting families who have received homes

Due to various circumstances, there were no house building materials onsite for us to build a home. So, we visited families that now live in homes built by other groups. One home was built six months ago and now is owned by Angel. She and her five children and fiancé live here. The land was originally located in a totally bushed area and given to Angel and her family by her adopted mother.

Angel, her family and friends worked around the clock for the better part of a week to clear the tiny piece of land so volunteers could begin to build her the house. She was very, very proud to show off her home and new kitchen that they had added on to the house on their own. They also planted many fruit bearing trees, a garden, and plants that produced spices and mint that they use for cooking. There were lots of ornamental plants that had been planted on the property to show the pride of ownership of this new home. It was quite a remarkable accomplishment for the 6 months they had been in their new home. It was a wonderful experience to share in the joy that the benefactors expressed - how their home had made such a difference in the lives of their families.



This Project J5 trip to Jamaica was a wonderful experience for all who participated and for many different reasons. Jamaica like any other country has lots of wealth. Sadly amongst this wealth, it has a lot of poverty. Such is life and they deal with it in their own ways. We all experienced the Jamaican people to be very warm, open, friendly and upbeat, as well as very spiritual people.

This short article does not do justice to all of the wonderful experiences that each of us had on this Project J5 trip. But we hope it does in some way give a sense of need of financial resources, as one way of helping the people of Jamaica continue to move forward in building a better life for themselves, their families and their country.

## RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF:



All our donors, the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation, Rotary clubs, the K of C. and Edmonton Community Foundation.



Canadian International Development Agency

Government of Alberta  
Community Initiatives (CIP)  
International Development

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

### RAINBOW OF HOPE PROGRAMS

1. Sight to the blind, Trivandrum, India (Alberta CIP - International Development will match 2:1 to maximum of \$15,000)
2. MMTRP-AL (Rural women workers and fisherwomen in Alagoas), Brazil
3. School of family agriculture, Bahia, Brazil Project is completed (account open for future)
4. Citizenship and values, Grota da Alegria, Brazil
5. PREDA protecting children, Philippines
6. CIS scholarship program, El Salvador
7. El Sauce School Organic agriculture training, El Salvador
8. COMUS sustainable coffee cooperative El Salvador (CIDA will match 3:1 for this project)
9. San Luis Indigo/Sewing Centre and La Loma School/community projects, El Salvador (Alberta CIP - International Development will match donations 2:1 to maximum of \$11,500)
10. Building citizenship with music, Nicaragua
11. Rainbow of Hope College Cunen, Guatemala
12. Reconstruction & education, Chinchá Baja, Peru
13. PAMBE Ghana Pre-school, Ghana, Africa
14. Kinyambu School & library, Kenya, Africa
15. Ussango School in Tanzania, Africa
16. Community capacitation in Jamaica
17. Disaster relief fund
18. Unrestricted (where most needed)

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## ANNUAL MEETING

**JUNE 22, 2013, 1:00 PM**

**Blessed Sacrament  
Parish Hall  
906 - 6 Avenue**

**WAINWRIGHT, ALBERTA**

**Come join us!**

### NEXUS BY EMAIL

Dear supporters,

We are starting to deliver the Nexus by email. If you received your NEXUS by email but prefer it by mail, please email us. If you received a copy of NEXUS by mail, and you wish us to email it, please email us at [rohfc@telus.net](mailto:rohfc@telus.net) and we would be happy to put you on our email list. If you change your mailing or email address, or prefer not to receive NEXUS, kindly let us know.

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