

 **WISCONSIN / NICARAGUA**  
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*Stevens Point McDonald's  
waste bin put to good use*



Providing garments/dressings for patients with severe burns following initial treatment and during rehab process

## Burn Therapy Dressing project - WHY?

In looking how to provide better assistance to the burn patients after they get the initial treatment and during their rehabilitation process, Dr. Leandro Perez let W/NP know how important it is to provide therapy dressings/garments over the patient's burns for the proper healing process. The healing of a burn or wound is a dynamic process, the management and outcome can vary significantly depending on available materials.



Dra. Geraldine Cross, Velez Paiz Hospital, has expressed how sad it is to let patients go after they have received the initial treatment, and during their rehabilitation it is hard to accomplish the appropriate process without the therapy dressing or garments.



# Burn Therapy Dressing project

## Current Status of Burn Patients in Nicaragua

Burn patients from different parts of the country must travel to Managua for treatment. Currently, the public hospitals are not able to provide appropriate burn therapy dressings or garments for the patients.

W/NP has a network of skilled sewers from the Learning Center Project who can make the needed burn dressings. An industrial type serger or sewing machine was needed to make the therapy dressings for burn patients. The first step was acquiring a machine and getting it to Nicaragua.

Special thanks to Linda Schober, Waupaca, for finding a machine after learning about the need during her travels on the annual W/NP Learning Center Trek and to the U.S. Funded Transportation for getting it from Wisconsin to Nicaragua.



**Who could fix the Industrial Serger and get it working to make the burn dressings?**

7 years ago, this young man took the first sewing machine repair Learning Center class at the W/NP Managua Office

*"I found this course very good, I wish they repeat it and they give me the opportunity to invite me again for that is very important for me. I learned a lot, like how to regulate the seam, to clean the machine, to tighten the thread, since I had never done this training before I learned a lot. I would like to learn and to work as technician in repair of Sewing machines. If I could be able to repair machines, I want to be an expert which will help me in life. I'd like to be a good technician in repairing machines, and I would like to repair Industrial. I would like if they gave me the opportunity to continue studying here."* - **Course evaluation from Diddman (orange shirt, to the left in photo, December 2006)**



2006

**April 2013** *Diddman's evaluation comments from 2006 come to fruition in the photo below as he is able to repair the only industrial sewing machine W/NP has to begin the therapy dressing burn project*



2013



## Plan of action:

The Therapy Dressing project began with W/NP Learning Center volunteers making dressings for patients from Lenin Fonseca Hospital and Velez Paiz Hospital, under the direction of Dr. Leandro Perez, who cares for the patients and checks the dressings. *(The Velez Paiz Hospital has since been shut down for demolition due to structural damage.)*





- Dr. Leandro follows the patients during the time they need to wear the Therapy Dressing
- Boanerges assists with the elaboration and fitting process to be sure of the right pressure every Therapy Dressing is to have according to the patient's needs.
- At every appointment, Dr. Leandro checks the pressure and condition of the dressing and he will determine if the dressing needs to be adjusted or changed.
- Currently, the social security labor institution agreements do not cover the elaboration of Therapy Dressings for burns, so most cases the patients need to look for this service.
- Doctors will give references to the W/NP Therapy Dressing project and will coordinate with Dr. Leandro to send the patients to W/NP to receive the appropriate dressing or garment.
- There will be an opportunity for the patient to make a contribution, but those patients that cannot afford to pay anything still will receive the Therapy Dressing for their burn. The suggested contribution will be from \$2.10 to \$4.20, just to keep materials in stock and help support the office basic expenses.

The following slides further define what Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners Learning Center Project has available for patients following their initial treatment.



*New product to try for making forms for affected wound areas, Thank you Pete!*

*Ministry Health Care basins put to good use, Thank you Mary & Larry!*

*UWSP shirts, Thank you Fred!*

### How to help?

*You have already taken the first step.*

- ✓ Learn about the project
- ✓ Share the story
- ✓ Decide how you can help further by
  - *Finding needed supplies*
  - *Identifying support sources*
  - *Making a donation or have a fund raiser to purchase supplies*



*Working together, we make a difference.*

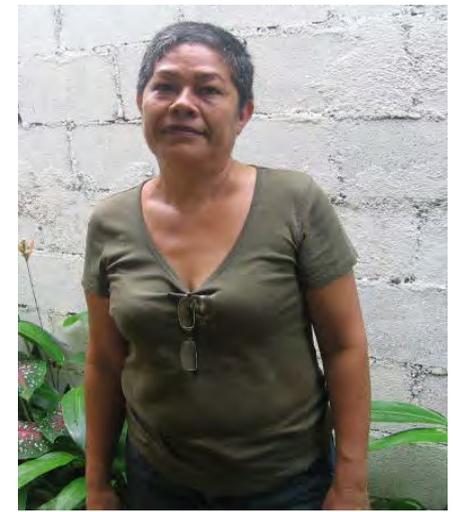


Brenda Liseth Calero Flores  
7 years old.

While riding a bicycle, her inside right ankle touched the tire and was burned by the friction. She was treated at Velez Paiz Hospital and then referred to W/NP to get her burn therapy dressing.



Guadalupe (Lupe) and Sandra Boniche are volunteers from the Learning Center Project. They know how to take body measurements as regular sewers and the process for making burn dressing garments is the same procedure and produces a quality and custom fit.





Skilled sewers from the W/NP Learning Center Project making the garments to fit just right





Carlos Gaitan and Rafael Gaitan are brothers who work in a sugarcane field in their hometown. Last December 23, there was a big fire in the field while they were working. Both brothers were trapped in the flames, unable to escape. Ninety percent of their skin was burned off due to this fire, and they had nowhere to turn for help.

Five months after this devastating accident, Dr. Leandro Perez sent them to the W/NP office to get fitted for therapy dressings. Carlos and Rafael received gloves, sleeves, vests and pants dressings.

These brothers' continuous persistence inspired everyone around them. W/NP volunteers enjoyed their jokes and encouraging dispositions in the midst of such tough hardship and misfortune.



German, (right) who happened to be receiving his hand dressing the same time as Carlos and Rafael, heard first hand from these two gentlemen how much quicker his burn would heal from the therapy dressings.



*Carlos, 17, was hit by an electrical cable of 13,000 watts while he was walking on the roof of his house, his left arm, chest and legs were burned.*

Patients feel the program has provided personal and instant attention as they receive their garments the same day of their appointment.



*Gerardo, 22, has a broken arm and 46 % of his body has third degree burns. The condition of the areas affected on Gerardo were difficult, the creative skills of the Chica Nica sewers played a fundamental roll in making and fitting his garments properly, which took about 6 hours to complete.*



The skills volunteers in Nicaragua are bringing to the project, are a key factor in how and why this project can take place. Boanerges fills a variety of roles above and beyond his work at the hospital. The Learning Center teachers and students invest many hours graciously offering their skills and assistance.



## Why do we (Nicaraguans) volunteer for this project?



**Boanerges Berroteran** I began my experiences in my job of therapy dressing at the hospital Antonio Lenin Fonseca, the work with burn patients it is delicate, but at the same time is a good and helpful experience. You leave behind the fear of a burn when you show the love to the patients, because I think this could be a love for someone or a family.

**Suyen Cerda**, I support my colleagues in as many ways as I can, I feel great and happy when I see patients who receive their garments and eventually am able to see how they are getting improvements in their healing process. That makes me feel good to see I could help these people who need it so much.



We asked the sewers what they could do with US \$20 dollars?

**Sandra \$20** would buy materials for the preparation of acupressure pants which would benefit 6 patients

**Marcia \$20** would buy materials for the preparation of 12 acupressure masks which would help 12 patients with low-income

## Looking ahead .....

April 2014 marked 1 year for the W/NP Burn Therapy Dressing project, assistance has been provided to 163 patients and 414 custom made garments have been carefully constructed. Patients receiving garments are giving reference to other patients about this project and the need is growing.



**Thank you for your interest.**

We have the Nicaraguan volunteers to make the garments (*back row, above*), the patients (*front row above & left*) who have critical needs, and now we need your help to find the funds or other ways to obtain the materials needed.





Katherine and Ernesto have offered to share their personal stories in hopes of helping others understand the value and importance of this project.



*Please contact [wnp@uwsp.edu](mailto:wnp@uwsp.edu) for a copy of their story, sharing it with others can be the first step in helping this project continue!*



**Thank you!**

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