

Two Nicaraguans in “Continuing Promise 2010”

One is originally from Carazo and the other has parents who hail from León. Both are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

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Two Nicaraguans are among the Americans forming Operation “Continuing Promise 2010,” which will provide nine days of medical assistance and social work in Bluefields, Corn Island, and communities adjacent to these cities.

Marine Kenneth Gutiérrez, who was born in the U.S. but whose parents are originally from León, said that he is proud to be Nicaraguan and to represent his homeland in this mission.

“Being in the Marine Corps has helped me. On this mission, I’m working to serve others, especially the people of my country,” said Gutiérrez, after thinking aloud to himself in Spanish.

He said that he had been to Nicaragua in 17 years, and that the visit to Bluefields made him happy, seeing how the mission is helping the country. He added that he has been in the U.S. Armed Forces for 6 years, and that he had wanted to be a Marine like his father.

Still, Gutiérrez has not forgotten the Nicaraguan culture because his mother spoke to him in Spanish, and cooked popular Nicaraguan dishes, including vigorón (which consists of boiled yucca with fried pork rinds) and nacatamales (steamed corncakes).

When asked if he had been treated differently than his shipmates, Gutiérrez answered. “Here, we are all treated equally regardless of who you are or where you came from.”

Ramón Páramo, a 37 year-old officer born in Carazo, recalled that he left Nicaragua in 1986 when he was 13, and had not been back to Nicaragua in 24 years. Páramo has been in the U.S. Armed Forces for the past 13 years, and works as a supervisor in charge of coordinating flight operations for the 15 pilots who take off from the USS “Two Jima.”

Páramo is happy to be in Nicaragua because of the opportunity to serve. “And in addition to that, I am re-enlisting for the next six year,” said Páramo as he signed his contract on the grounds of Colegio Moravo, the same place where Operation “Continuing Promise” had set up a mobile hospital. Páramo promised that after finishing his career in the Navy, he plans to retire to Nicaragua.



The Nicaraguan-born Marine Kenneth Gutiérrez, said that he is feeling proud

to be of Nicaraguan origin, while officer Ramón Páramo insists that the humanitarian assistance is invaluable because it will serve the people of his homeland.

Repairing the grounds and fixing stadiums

LT Kelly Stevens, the officer in charge of the mission's construction projects, said that his crew is currently working Colegio Moravo where they will fix up the school's grounds and several of its laundry room, as well as the little league stadium in the "Fátima" neighborhood, the municipal drainage system of Bluefields, and the grounds of the neighborhoods of "Beholden" and "Old Bank".

Fifty thousand dollars have been invested in these projects. The crew for the projects is made up 60 personnel, including sailors, engineers from the mission, naval forces, city employees and local contractors.

Called to take care of the improvements

Delayla Marquinez, nicknamed "Po-po," a popular resident of the "Old Bank" neighborhood, announced over local radio that her fellow "Old Bank" residents need to take better care of the improvements that are being made to the local area.

"These people have left behind their country and their families to come here to help us. It is not possible to give thanks for the help that they have given us unless we take care of what is ours," said Marquinez.

Rubray Murry, the local city council representative, said that the help provided by the visitors has been invaluable. "We are thankful because the help they have given to our city will result in recreational facilities, which will give our young people a way to avoid drugs by providing them a place where they can play sports and enjoy themselves in a safe manner."