

## Nicaragua 2008 trip: Mission Accomplished.

It was with mixed emotions that we returned to Chinandega, especially to the site we left about one year ago with just a skeleton of a building, surrounded by concrete blocks and remainder of cement and other building materials. The first thing I noticed when arriving at the construction site of the clinic was a line of many women, most of them with infants and toddlers, waiting there even before the clinic opened. No question that we made a big difference in their lives and that of their families. They were seeing about 100 patients a day, so you can imagine that the addition to the clinic we have built was a welcome extension.



This trip was very successful; we had a large team of 15 people, with additional help of local Peace Corps volunteers. We accomplished our primary goal, i.e. the construction of a clinic addition of about 10,000 sq feet. When we left, the walls and roof was up, the local construction team will finish the stucco, patio, plumbing, landscaping, fence and even a small playground to entertain the kids while waiting (remember, no waiting room, they wait outside).

We also accomplished our other tasks: we distributed more than five hundred hygiene packages containing toothbrushes, tooth paste, soap, etc. to the local school children. Some of them also had floss in their package, which most of them had never seen before in their lives. We distributed 150 dictionaries to the children; this particular school teaches English starting in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. We also sponsored a feeding center and prepared meals and handed it out to 400 kids in a poor neighborhood.



We had several suitcases of medical supplies, which we hand-delivered to the childrens hospital as well as the main hospital, with enough supplies to distribute at several other clinics, which the local rotary club will take care of. We also distributed school supplies and clothes to the small community which we built a school for 2 years ago. It is amazing how many friends we have made, which you find out after coming back year after year.