



Celebrating Our 20th Anniversary at *¡Sí a la Vida!*

Dear Supporter of *Sí a la Vida*,

This year *Sí a la Vida* celebrates its 20th Anniversary since being founded in 1994 by Jonathan Roise and Mercedes Guido Huete. This is a true landmark for a program that began with a few boys sleeping on floors borrowed from other organizations and grew into the impressive program that we know today!



Celebration at the Managua Center



And on Ometepe Island

Celebrations were held at both centers, with a delicious meal, entertainment, and activities such as burlap bag races, hitting the piñata, and then giving quiet thanks and recognition to the achievements of the founder and leading spirit of *Sí a la Vida*, Jonathan Roise. Jonathan died in 2012, but *Sí a la Vida* is still going strong -- a testament to his vision and leadership.

***Sí a la Vida* is a comprehensive program.** It is operated at two centers, with a skilled and experienced staff, and with children from 8 to 18 years old. **It depends on steady funding.** This has primarily been provided by individual donors like you. We are working hard to develop other sources of support, but you are **critical** to our success.

What does “comprehensive program” really mean? From the first contact with a “street kid” to long-term follow-up after a kid leaves the program, *Sí a la Vida* strives to make changes in his life that are positive and lasting. Staff members fully assess each potential participant in the program. This evaluation may be the first that the child has ever had. Many boys are then referred to appropriate outside resources (e.g. drug rehabilitation centers) and

others into *Sí a la Vida*. These evaluations provide a vital community service, with an impact far beyond the boys who enter *Sí a la Vida*.

Once a boy enters the program, any of his available family are contacted and encouraged to be part of the process. One goal is to improve the family situation so if the child returns there, he lives in a better environment than he left.

Sí a la Vida treats the whole boy. Each boy receives psychological evaluation and care. Each boy enrolls in school, and *educadores* provide support with school work. The emphasis is on values – honesty, respect for oneself and others, responsibility – and on developing abilities to delay gratification, control impulses, and set long-term goals. The boys also learn to have fun, interact well with others, maintain personal hygiene, and grow into manhood with a positive idea of what manhood means.

When a boy leaves *Sí a la Vida*, the program strives to maintain contact and support, including scholarships for further education and monthly support meetings. We are now developing a structured program for following these *reintegrados*, but lack funding to fully implement it.

The Big Challenge: Funding the program has been very difficult since the economic crisis. Donors have given less, and costs in Nicaragua have risen year after year. As a result, *Sí a la Vida* goes without many basics: Clothing and school materials are in short supply. Maintenance on facilities has been deferred. Athletic equipment is scarce. Some effective incentive programs, such as a free bicycle for a completed year in school, have been discontinued. We were able to buy a new vehicle for social-work outreach to families and *reintegrados*, but we don't have operating funds to buy all the gasoline needed!

***Sí a la Vida* will survive and thrive**, with enthusiasm, new ideas, and loving care for the boys. The program is fully staffed and has the full complement of kids. But we need your help more than ever! The program still relies on your donations. We are developing a more sophisticated system to document the effectiveness of *Sí a la Vida* so we can compete successfully for foundation support. But that costs money too, and implementation is in the future.

Please consider giving an **Anniversary Donation** now to enable *Sí a la Vida* to adequately fund day-to-day program needs, support graduates, repair facilities and develop assessments required for grant applications. Your contribution makes such a difference!

Send checks to ASALV, PO Box 30191, Seattle, WA 98103 or contribute at www.asalv.org

Sincerely,

Rick Allstetter
President
Amigos de Sí a la Vida

