By Jenna Saldaña, Director of U.S. Operations

I started working at El Porvenir in January of 2003, leading our work trips in Nicaragua. In February 2003, Bob and Nancy Baglan came down to work on rehabbing two hand-dug wells, and I got to know them both well during those 10 days as well as through multiple visits at their home and mine in the years after.

El Porvenir received nonprofit status in September 1990. Bob and Nancy made their first gift in March 1991. By the time I met them in 2003, they were already long-time donors. When Nancy wrote that Bob had passed away after a long illness, I thought back to a quote they had shared when they named El Porvenir in their estate plans:

“When we decided to name several organizations as beneficiaries of our wills, El Porvenir was one of the first to be put on our list. El Porvenir makes it possible for us to help the poor in Nicaragua better their lives, in a way we could never do on our own. We have great confidence in the work El Porvenir does and are happy we can contribute to its financial future in this way. It feels like a way for us to ‘keep on living!’”

I asked Nancy right away if we could plant trees in a watershed in memory of Bob, and in that way, he would keep on living and doing what he’d spent his life doing: helping others.

In the Las Cruces watershed in El Sauce, 250 trees are growing and part of the restoration of this watershed that provides water to the people who live there and all who live downstream of the water that begins there. Bob began his support of El Porvenir in El Sauce in 2003, and continues it there today and into the future.
I spoke at their house many years ago; the event was well attended and warm. I remember feeling welcome.

Sometime last year, we noticed that the monthly check arriving only had Kathleen’s name on it, so I reached out to her. She shared that Ed had passed away. We knew we wanted to honor Ed and his commitment to others. Kathleen shared this: “We originally connected with El Porvenir through Ed’s work connection to Carole [Harper, El Porvenir founder] although we had been involved in several other organizations doing development and human rights work in Central America. We have always believed that El Porvenir is doing the kind of grass roots development that makes the most difference. I continue to feel grateful that we have been able to support it over the years.”

The tree plantation in memory of Ed is now established: 750 trees planted in Tierra Amarilla, Camoapa. Tierra Amarilla is another watershed in the process of being restored. The trees are small now, but as they continue to grow, the area will return to being forest with all of the benefits that that brings. Nicaragua has been severely deforested over the last 70 years and climate change is having an impact. Tree by tree, we’re working with rural Nicaraguans to change this.

After sharing the photos of the plantation, Kathleen shared, “It makes me deeply happy to know a part of us is planted in Tierra Amarilla and will live on and benefit those people long after the memory of our lives fades. Thank you for thinking of doing this in Ed’s memory.”

**Make a Lasting Gift to Nicaragua**

Do you want to create a lasting legacy by providing clean drinking water and adequate sanitation into the future? Or do you want to honor a friend or family member by making a memorial gift?

Ways to give include a gift in your will or living trust, beneficiary designations, or qualified charitable distributions. El Porvenir’s Director of U.S. Operations, Jenna Saldaña will gladly speak with you regarding your legacy planning; please call or email her at 720-236-9158 or jenna@elporvenir.org.
For Rosa Elena Lanuza Blandón, mother of two, the lack of water in La Sabana, El Sauce was an extremely challenging situation. “For us, it was very difficult. Here, we only had a well, and it was in such poor condition that we couldn't drink the water from it.”

To wash and bathe, they had to walk over three miles to the river, carrying a bucket of clothes on their heads. Walking there, the dry clothes are heavy. Coming back, the wet clothes are grueling.

“For those who had horses, they could travel on horseback; but for us, we went on foot, and it was hard,” she explained.

Thanks in part to a generous bequest from long-time supporter Susan Ryder Skaggs, the 219 residents of La Sabana now have water in their homes, which brings great joy—and good health—to all who live there.

“The timing couldn’t have been better; with the pandemic, we must wash our hands even more often, and now we are able to do that,” emphasized Rosa Elena. “Now we have water in our homes, so it isn’t necessary for us to crowd together with people we don’t know; this is another way that we are safer,” she said.

“We are so happy to have water in our homes for our children. We are careful not to waste water, and now we can wash our hands as many times as necessary,” said Rosa Elena.

Susan Skaggs began supporting El Porvenir in 1994 after visiting a rural community where El Porvenir was working with a community to develop a water project. We are honored that she chose to leave a legacy of clean water, safe sanitation, and healthy watersheds. Thousands of people in rural Nicaragua are impacted by the gifts she made over almost three decades and particularly by her generous bequest.

Ensuring generations of clean water for Nicaraguans does not have to mean making a donation today. Designating a portion of your estate to El Porvenir means your wish to support water, sanitation, and reforestation projects will be fulfilled in the future.

Learn more about legacy giving on our website: www.ElPorvenir.org/donate
Aug. 1-Sept. 30: First $125K in Gifts Doubled!

As summer winds down, we’re gearing up for several events that are sure to make a big impact on the lives of rural Nicaraguans: the $125K Challenge, Virtual Fiesta, and Walk for Water.

Join us August 1 through September 30 when generous donors will match the first $125,000 in contributions made during this time.

Get involved by participating in the Walk for Water September 19 through 25. You choose a Nicaraguan team to support and then help your team fundraise to reach the goal. Every gift counts!

Finally, the third annual Virtual Fiesta on August 17 will celebrate the completion of our work in Ciudad Darío, bringing together friends and supporters for a 30 minute gathering via Zoom. All gifts received during the Fiesta will be matched up to the first $125,000!

All information can be found on our website: www.ElPorvenir.org – see you soon!