

Marco Polo Disc Golf Nicaragua Progress Report

After receiving the grant from the PDGA in March of 2016, the Disc Golf Nicaragua team has been hard at work.

One of the first steps was to submit the request for 4 associations and a national federation with our legal advisor, Emerson David Silva Urbina. He has drafted the constitution for the associations. After the associations are complete with all member information (ID, signature, personal information), then he will submit for the federation. Currently we have 3 of the 4 associations complete with 15+ members each - departments of Managua, Rivas, and Esteli. The fourth department of Matagalpa is near completion. Emerson will be making trips to the different departments to get signatures and final information from the members. After, the process for associations will be finalized and the organizations will be established as non-profits, opening doors for further grant funding.

By having these official organizations, we can then participate in International Olympics, such as the Central American Olympics held in Managua December 2017. As well, it allows us to educate the sport in schools and universities, and provides us access to additional government funding. The first batch is around US \$7,500 and earns more each year based on past success.

The second part of the grant was to work with Pastor Rigoberto Reyes and the students of Finca Belen. Finca Belen is a rehabilitation farm/school that works with local impoverished communities and street kids. They teach higher yield agricultural practices, beautician school, sports, and welding/woodworking just to name a few of their offerings. Approximately 6-12 different students have been learning how to build disc golf targets as part of their welding school. On this same property, we have designed and constructed a 9 hole course with 2-3 tee pads for varying skills and growth. The targets look and function amazingly. Course construction was performed by our team along with the students. It was a fantastic experience, especially when they really didn't understand what the concept of disc golf fully was. After, they have enjoyed seeing the results and being able to play the new sport. Pastor Martin, has really taken to the sport and has been a spokesperson for disc golf already with his fun and energetic attitude.

Multiple work trips over a couple month period finished with a grand opening on June 24th for Finca Belen Disc Golf. A mission team from California, the students, local community members, pastors from around the country, and sports programmers were all in attendance adding to over 50 participants. An introduction regarding the PDGA grant and vision, a clinic, and a doubles event lasted for 4 hours and the results were all positive with great feedback from the players. There was mention of Nicaragua's most popular iconic professional athlete to be invited to play disc golf at our next event, as he also supports community outreach. The local communities have been bringing people to play at the course and another mission group is planning a trip for either September or December. The group will bring more discs, and possible funding for another 9 holes on the property.

Through Rigoberto, he had introduce us to a church camp in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in February. Other pastors from different parts of Honduras and the facility directors and managers became very interested in disc golf, especially a course on the property of Campamento Bautista Converse. We arranged the next trip to design and construct the course in coordination with Oglesby Union Church mission group for June 30 - July 4th. The 8 team members from Oglesby Union Church had a very successful disc donation, bringing 210 discs, 40+ solar lights and other equipment for night disc golf. The 6 hole course was completed in a beautiful pine forest with painted rock tee signs, 2-3 mulch tees per hole, benches, 2

targets for Disc Shoes, and 1 target for Around 9 all within 3 days. The targets were also created by the students at Finca Belen in Nicaragua and delivered with final assembly in Tegucigalpa. The trip ended with a very successful grand opening of more than 60 Hondurans of all age ranges. Spirits were high, and the on-site manager is now a big advocate for disc golf (he even got a difficult hole in 1 for a beginner)!

Over the past several months, we have also donated our services as part of the associations/federation to the Nicaraguan Christian Academy - Matagalpa. Several years ago, a mission group installed a homemade disc golf course on the property, but through the successful development of the school and classroom expansion, it had been disassembled. Touring pro, Tim McDill, and I offered to teach the director and phy ed teachers how to play disc golf. They were intrigued and invited myself back to redesign the course. Once an 18 hole mix of object and homemade targets, we reduced it to a quality 9 hole homemade target course in a safer area of the property away from buildings and easily visible by teachers when students are playing the entire course. On July 31st, we have been invited to attend a school fair called Feria Familiar that is themed for the International Olympics. We will have a booth and be teaching 300-400 students and family members how to play disc golf.

We have just touched base this week with another mission group that is looking to develop two 9 hole courses in a community near the capitol. They may also be bringing some top professionals for clinic demonstration. We are looking to see how we can work together in promoting disc golf.

With the creation of the disc golf associations, we are planning to have at least one course central to each department that will help build the involvement and strengthen the bonds of the association. After the official status of the federation is approved, we will be approaching a couple universities that are interested in disc golf courses as well. We have also been able to find better quality material at a lower cost, so we look forward to the next series of targets we will construct for the courses.

The people we have worked with and built relationships with have become close personal friends we value deeply. The communities we've interacted with, families that have welcomed us into their homes, and the social/economic issues we are able to address are uplifting for us all.

On behalf of Disc Golf Nicaragua and FENIDIVO (Federacion Nicaraguense de Disco Volador), we graciously thank the Professional Disc Golf Association for this opportunity to spread the love of disc golf through Nicaragua and Central America.

Salud,

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