

2010 Annual Report

As winter approaches and snow starts blanketing parts of the North American countryside, on the Peruvian altiplano the first summer rains are freshening the high pastures. With them baked soils from the dry season are starting to soak up moisture, soften, and allow farmers with their foot plows to prepare the land for a diversity of Andean crops.

This year, thanks to your generosity, the hard work of our Board of Directors, and support from the people of Nuñoa we are moving ahead on all three of our integrated goals: the building the children's home, local medical assistance, and providing veterinary services to alpaca herders of the area. Progress to date and future plans were discussed at our annual board meeting September 18th.

To date we have raised over \$40,000 from donors and fund raising efforts. Two large gifts from Richard Mazess and Bill Casner helped substantially in this effort. Dick was an anthropology researcher in Nuñoa in the 1960s and Bill's daughter will join our medical/veterinary team this January. We anticipate the children's home will cost at least \$50,000. Some funds are being spent on medicines, medical and veterinary equipment, and transportation to and within Nuñoa. Beyond this there is very little overhead since our board members donate their time and expenses.

While the town of Nuñoa is becoming more modern and connected to the outside world, substantial poverty and hardship exists throughout the population. This summer three students from Princeton, Smith and the University of Washington studied aspects of the health care system and confirmed the need for improved services and quality of life. They took their work into rural communities. When unable to find a pick-up truck or motorcycle for transport they on occasion borrowed bikes and pedaled up the valley (this is on 40% less oxygen). Another student from UMass is studying the affects of climate change on Nuñoa herders and how mountain deglaciation and more erratic weather patterns can compromise pasture conditions and hence the livelihood of herding families. The world's largest tropical glacier lies just north of the district.

The past rainy season (Nov-March) on the altiplano was particularly severe on the herds with its unprecedented cold and precipitation. Unfortunately Nuñoa made the national news through reports of exceptionally high herd mortality, especially among newborns, due to hypothermia and pneumonia. This confounded the results of our vaccination program against enterotoxemia bacteria (the principal killer) that we expected would save a considerable number of alpaca infants (crias). For small-scale herders losing a high number of newborns seriously affects their ability to regenerate the herd and to make a living, ultimately reflecting on their well-being. Faced with these conditions some herders give up and come to town looking for work, others migrate out to the nearby cities. Anticipating that such conditions will return we received a small grant of \$500 from the Andean INCA (Infant Nutrition and Community Agriculture) Foundation to buy portable shelters to protect mothers and newborns from harsh weather.

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In 2010 we sent two medical/veterinarian teams to Nunoa: one in January the other in July. Steve Purdy, Nuñoa Project President and Director of the UMass Camelid Program lead these trips. One of the veterinarians on January team came from New Zealand where she works with a slaughterhouse. In Nuñoa she spoke to personnel at the town slaughterhouse on how to carry out their work more humanely and hygienically. She also donated sets of knives to the workers that enabled better butchering. This is an example of how new ideas and simple technology can build upon the extensive local information base.

We have started the building of the children's home or hogar de niños. When completed it will house 15 disadvantaged children from town and the countryside. A lunch program for an additional 15 children is also planned. The lot on which the hogar will stand lies along the river bank at the north end of town. When completed it will look out across the Nunoa River to a broad pampa (flat grassland) and up into a series of flanking hills. We have designed the home to take advantage of the warming morning sun. Two adjacent lots will serve as a garden area and a corral for animals being brought to town.



Our architect/builder has designed similar structures in nearby towns and is presently constructing a building at the university in the city of Juliaca, so we appear to be in good hands. Two rooms in the hogar will be reserved for researchers and guests of the project. This will provide an opportunity for the visitors and the children to get to know one another. From past experience such interaction is most rewarding for everyone involved and ends up forming strong, lasting bonds.

This, however, is getting ahead of the story. To date we have 11,000 locally made adobe (mud) bricks laid out in rows across the building lot. The adobe soil was brought to the site by town dump trucks, a service provided by the mayor. As of this month the land will be prepared for the foundation and holes dug for the upright (concrete/rebar) support columns. While our architect has said the project can be completed in four months I have little confidence this will be the case: things rarely process at such speed on the altiplano.

Trying to coordinate a building project from another continent is not without challenges. We have a manager in Nunoa who is supervising the construction while running the Mamaniri Ranch with over 1000 alpacas and other livestock. In addition we have an administrator who handles the accounts and banking. Unfortunately communication is poor because of power outages affecting email and cultural differences regarding the notion of promptness. We are trying to overcome these problems and Father Paul

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Habing (the former American priest of Nunoa, now assigned to Germany) has been of great assistance. Since the ranch and lots in town were purchased by him, and through his generosity are being transferred to the Nunoa Project, we are in the process of rewriting the property titles. This means dealing with a cumbersome Peruvian bureaucracy and hiring a lawyer to help us through a system not known for its user friendliness. We hope to have this completed by January 2011.

Finally, last summer we met with the Club de Nunoa in the city of Arequipa to explain the project and elicit their advice and assistance. This is a group of wealthy absentee landowners who live in the city but regularly visit their property in Nunoa. They are well connected and influential throughout the region and on occasions have given donations to the town. The Club expressed concern that the old "orphanage" built by Father Paul was disbanded and converted to a nunnery after he left town, and were enthusiastic to hear a new hogar de niños would fill its need. To this end they promised their support in helping us to find appropriate personnel and contacts.

In conclusion, on the altiplano things generally move more slowly than expected, require a lot of personal interaction, and a considerable degree of wrestling with the bureaucracy. Nunoa now has a new mayor who seems to be supportive of our work. The enthusiasm of the Board of Directors and personnel in Nunoa remains high and we very much hope that you, our donors, will continue to support us up to and beyond the completion of this worthwhile endeavor. Please contact us if you, your children, or grandchildren would like to travel to the altiplano or need advice in visiting Peru. The advantage of supporting a single community is that one can see the different projects building on one another and diversifying into related efforts as time goes on and new needs arise. Most rewarding, however, are the strong personal bonds that develop over time and the opportunity to be involved with the betterment of an Andean people, especially the next generation. If you have skills or want to help out we can probably find a place for you.