

Nunoa Project 2013 Annual Report

As we enter the holiday season we send our best wishes and thank you for your continued support. We are coming to the end of our sixth season and much has been accomplished. Our Board of Directors and advisors give generously of their time and ideas, and you, our supporters, have made this a reality. In turn, the people of Nuñoa have been most appreciative of our concern and efforts in addressing hardships they face.

This has been another difficult year on Peru's aliplano. Unusually cold weather and snow, which covered the pasture for days on end, has led to high mortality rates of young animals. Hypothermia and compromised nutrition contributes to pneumonia and this has affected young children as well. Unfortunately, prices for alpaca fiber remain low which challenge Nunoa's alpaca based economy, especially those with small herds and the native herding communities with whom we work. ~We have built three small



adobe brick houses (see slide show) for the shepherd families on one ranch and hopefully these have provided better shelter than their traditional huts which leak when snow remains too long on the roof.

This year we held our annual meeting in July to address the creation of the Amherst, MA based North American Camelid Studies Program (see below) to complement the Nuñoa Project. This extends our scope in genetic and reproductive research and the training students in alpaca management

providing them an opportunity to test their skills in Nunoa. We thank our long serving Treasurer, Vickie Flahie, for managing our books and welcome Anne Adriance as her replacement. Anne comes to us with a background in fund raising and has provided new approaches in reaching potential donors. Tom Leatherman has also been added to the Board. He is an anthropologist who has worked for decades in Nuñoa and this summer is leading a group of students to address nutrition and health problems in the area.

At the meeting we reviewed the ongoing status of our programs. It is recalled that when the Project began our intent was to build a children's home replacing one that had been closed down. This intent faced numerous challenges including substantial last minute cost increases by the architect. More serious, however, was the ethical burden of trying to run such a facility – being in charge of other people's children - from abroad. In addition the state required a staff of specialists – a nutritionist and psychologist - that we could not afford. We then shifted our attention to a day care center for disadvantaged children and the elderly. The town was to sponsor and manage this with funds from the national government, and we would provide the land and some building expenses. In the end the government support never came through and the project died.

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Finally, at the beginning of this year we discussed with the local priest the possibility of using part of the old orphanage as a soup kitchen for children. This was occupied by nuns from Columbia who were teaching in the high school and it was proposed that they might help out with the children. The idea was enthusiastically received and during the spring we discussed details. In the final negotiations the Bishop got involved and the terms of agreement were such that financially we could not sustain the projected costs of running the facility. Furthermore, we would have little say in monitoring expenses or the quality of care provided. Disappointed, we had to inform the church that we could not go ahead with the project because we could not raise the needed funds on an ongoing basis.

What's next? We are presently exploring new venues of humanitarian assistance. The town has asked if we could provide wheelchairs and walkers, especially for the elderly who after a life of hard work and expose to cold have serious cases of arthritis and rheumatism – so much so that they have difficulty getting to stores to buy food. We have contacted a group in California who provides free wheelchairs and ships them to Peru. We, in turn, would be responsible for shipment from Lima to Nuñoa. Hopefully our proposal will be accepted.

Given lessons learned from previous attempts we redefined our mission as such:

“To facilitate projects in the District of Nunua that: (1) directly benefit disadvantaged people, especially children, women and the elderly; and (2) enhance alpaca management through improved health, quality of fiber and meat production for the betterment of conditions for herding families. Projects will be selected where there is a recognized need, a local group we can partner with, and a feasible solution whereby beneficial results can be obtained.”

On a more positive note we thank the efforts of Luis Matos, a lawyer and friend of the Nuñoa Project in Lima, who has guided us through the two year tangled bureaucratic trail of becoming an official Peruvian Civic Association (Asociacion Civil or A.C.). This status is essential for the purchase of land, serving the public and other governmental interactions.

Once again we thank you for your continued encouragement and support. Look here for an assessment of our veterinary assistance program that has been most successful thanks to the extraordinary efforts of our President, Steve Purdy.

Brooke Thomas
Vice President, Nunua Project