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Home for At-risk Children in Managua, Nicaragua Celebrates First Anniversary

Vancouver, Washington (July 10, 2009) - Forward Edge International (FEI) is celebrating the first anniversary of the opening of *Villa Esperanza* (Village of Hope) in Managua, Nicaragua. On July 1, 2008 sixteen children were rescued from the horrors of life in a city dump community, called La Chureca, and brought to live in the safety and shelter of *Villa Esperanza*.

Prior to coming to the live at *Villa Esperanza*, the lives of these children were at high risk for prostitution, abuse, neglect, malnutrition and suicide. Since coming to live at the *Villa*, there has been significant improvement in the children's general health, grades, emotional well-being, and spirits. Kaitlin Denham, a youth team volunteer from Edmonds, Washington, recently remarked, "What was amazing to see was how their hearts were beginning to change, the more time they spent living at the *Villa*. After visiting La Chureca and seeing where [the girls] came from, their progress is even more amazing."

The occasion was commemorated at *Villa Esperanza* with a party and a time of sharing. Perla, a sixteen-year-old child who lives at *Villa Esperanza*, bravely spoke to the crowd of over 60, which included FEI President Joseph Anfusio, local staff, and two visiting FEI mission teams. With heartfelt gratitude she stated, "I want to thank the donors who have given us this new life. I love you...and thank you from my heart."

Many of the girls who live at *Villa Esperanza* echoed Perla's sentiments, thanking their house moms and "Papa" Wilbert and "Mama" Gloria, referring to FEI Nicaragua Program Directors, Wilbert Alvarado and Gloria Sequeira. FEI Field Staff, Susie Miller and Wil and Karen Greene were also thanked.

More children's homes are currently under construction on the *Villa* grounds, with plans of rescuing more children as funding permits.

Forward Edge International is a Christian relief and development organization based in Vancouver, Washington. By mobilizing hundreds of volunteers each year, Forward Edge International alleviates suffering through disaster-relief work, health care projects and programs for vulnerable children in the U.S. and around the world.

To learn more about *Villa Esperanza* and the child sponsorship program, contact Carma Roetcisoender, Child Sponsorship and Communications Director, at carma@forwardedge.org or 360.574.3343. Additional information can be found at the FEI Web site, www.forwardedge.org.

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