

# Partners travel to Nicaragua for annual learning trek

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Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners of the Americas Inc., or W/NP, is one of many private, nonprofit organizations from the United States that provides and facilitates volunteer opportunities that strengthens the bond between the people of both countries.

People to people projects in education, women and development, agriculture and humanitarian assistance fully utilize available resources, build human capacity as well as increase the economic outlook for participants. W/NP travel offers Wisconsin citizens international opportunities and experiences to broaden their knowledge about culture and society, while developing new friendships and an increase in global awareness along the way. One of the founding principles that led to the development of Partners of the Americas, was to discover avenues that would lead to mutual understanding among peoples of the Americas.

In February, the group of 20 Wisconsin citizens received a warm



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Chris Klessig, Lorraine Danczyk, Pam Becker and Betty Pionek of Stevens Point learn to make pine needle baskets from Nicaraguan Altagracia, Cusmapa.**

Nicaraguan welcome to kick off the 2011 annual Learning Center Trek, organized through W/NP. Through the Partners' model of citizen to citizen relations, participants shared their time and talents while serving as citizen diplomats, learning about a new culture while sharing their own culture, meeting new friends and representing their country in various meetings, workshops and events. They participated in many activities that provided exposure to Nicaraguan culture and history, provided opportunities for community service and helped build each other's capacities.

Some of the Learning

Center Trek highlights included sharing a broad variety of workshops in Managua, Leon and Ticuantepe, delivering books to the Sherin Bowen lending library that were collected by Ben Franklin Junior High Spanish students as well as hand-made

books from high-school students in Oak Creek, hiking up and peering into the active Masaya Volcano, learning to make pine needle baskets, sand boarding down the Cerro Negro Volcano, shopping at local markets, delivering the new treadle sewing machines to the Learning Centers that were donated by the Stevens Point Star Quilters Guild, sharing paramedic supplies and experiences with the Nindiri volunteer fire department, birding hikes through Montibelli Reserve, picking pineapples, star fruit, mangos and other delicious fruits while talking with the local farmers and much more.