

# Trip to Nicaragua an amazing experience for Wis. travelers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Local residents traveled to Nicaragua last month. They participated in learning center presentations throughout the country that taught Nicaraguan women various skills, from basket making to sewing.

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The road from central Wisconsin to Nicaragua is many thousands of miles, but thanks to the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners, it seems a lot shorter than that.

The state chapter of the Partners of the Americas program led a tour of Nicaragua for Wisconsin residents in hopes of building connections between state residents and their international partner.

For 10 days in February, local residents got a first-hand view of Nicaragua from what many felt to be the nation's greatest resource: its people.

"Not only were we going there to help each other,

## If you're interested ...

**What:** Taking a cultural tour of Nicaragua

**Where:** Travel to the capital, Managua, and smaller cities and towns through Nicaragua

**When:** The Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners hosts annual tours for Wisconsin residents; some years there are more than one.

**Cost:** Average trip costs \$1,800, including airfare, hotel and some meals for 10 days

**More Info:** Visit [wnp.uwsp.edu](http://wnp.uwsp.edu) or call the main office in Stevens Point at 715-346-4702

but we learned so much about their culture," said Elizabeth Vollrath, who attended her sixth tour of Nicaragua. "That's really important in the world we live in today, to understand each other."

Unlike a resort vacation, however, participants assisted in skill-based pre-

sentations, the creation of a lending library on Ometepe Island and cultural tours that allowed them to see the Central American country from a variety of areas.

The opening of the Ometepe library, the fifth lending library opened in Nicaragua by the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners, was

an emotional joy for many Wisconsin participants, who were amazed by the response of the community toward such a gesture.

"This was something very new to them. To me, it reminded me of Christmas," said Lorraine Danczyk, who went to Nicaragua for the first time last month. "It was almost hard to believe, with all that we have here. And they appreciated it so much."

Along with a "taste of Nicaragua" component, as well as hiking trips and a stay at a lakeside resort for a short time, the tour allowed Wisconsin participants a chance to see Nicaragua not as a poorer country, but as an equal partner with many gifts.

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