

ROCHA PROJECT TIMELINE



2007

Dr. Williams and five Winthrop University students traveled to Nicaragua and Guatemala to participate in a one-time international service learning experience. After visiting the rural village of Rocha, the mayor of the community asked our group to help him build a school. Our group raised the money and construction began in November, 2007.



2008

Winthrop University History and Human Nutrition (graduate and undergraduate) students traveled to Nicaragua in May, 2008, as part of spring semester courses. During the visit, the Winthrop School was opened in Rocha by a representative of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education. Human Nutrition students put on health and nutrition clinics and collected anthropomorphic data. A dentist and a dental hygienist from Rock Hill, SC, with the help of Winthrop students, put on a three-day dental clinic in Tierra Blanca.

2009

Winthrop University History and Human Nutrition students went to Nicaragua in May, as part of spring semester courses. We raised the money to add a second room to the Winthrop School.



2010

Winthrop University students, Benjamin Hall (Modern Languages), and Amber Peoples (Sociology), went to Nicaragua as interns and conducted door-to-door surveys in both Rocha and Tierra Blanca. The surveys gave us good demographic and economic data that helped us better understand the living conditions of these two communities.

2011

History and Biology students traveled to Nicaragua in March as part of spring international service-learning courses. Biology students conducted water tests in streams and rivers. Students helped re-roof houses, taught English classes in the Winthrop School, and put on health clinics in Rocha and Tierra Blanca. In the summer of 2011, History M.A. student Arthur Takahashi carries out research in Rocha and Matiguás. He completed his thesis, "The Sandinista Revolution and the CONTRA War in Matiguás: How the Struggle for Neutrality Affected Peasants in the Mountains of Nicaragua's Liberal Bastion," in 2012. This thesis, along with the surveys, helped inform subsequent projects in the communities.



2013

Human Nutrition and History students traveled to Nicaragua. Human Nutrition students carried out nutrition clinics. All students helped put on a health clinic, with the help of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health. Winthrop students collected medicines that were distributed at the health clinic. Students planted a community garden in Rocha, and carried out several projects at the Winthrop School.

2014

History, Human Nutrition, and Social Work students accompanied Dr. Wendy Sellers and Dr. Ginger Williams to Nicaragua during spring break as part of three different academic courses. Students and medical providers conducted dental and health clinics in both Tierra Blanca and Rocha. Human Nutrition students collected anthropomorphic data. Students distributed seeds in the communities to individual families. Dr. Williams promised the Rocha community to build thirty latrines and a new water system within three years.



2015

History and Human Nutrition students travelled to Nicaragua during spring break as part of academic courses. For the first time, a Human Nutrition faculty member, Dr. Simone Camel, traveled to Nicaragua, which added value to the nutrition clinics. We held a health clinic in Tierra Blanca and collected anthropomorphic data as well as conducted nutrition surveys. Jeannie Haubert and Ginger Williams published "The Rocha Nicaragua Project: Using Research to Build Relationships in International Service Learning," *Humanity and Society* 39 (2) (April 2015),170-188.

2016

History and Human Nutrition students, along with Dr. Camel and Dr. Williams, traveled to Nicaragua and carried out health, nutrition, and education workshops. We continued with the seed projects and health and dental clinics.



2017

Dr. Williams accompanied four out of five of the first Winthrop students who traveled to Nicaragua for a 10-year reunion trip. The trip was summarized in the *Winthrop Magazine* article, "The Road to Rocha: Alumni Revisit Nicaraguan Community to Continue Service Project," and described how the Rocha Project still affected Winthrop University alumni ten years on. <https://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/ucm/publications/WinMagFall2017.pdf> Winthrop alumni finish building the promised latrines and viewed the new gravitational water system.

2018

History and Human Nutrition students, accompanied by Dr. Lauren Sastre and Dr. Ginger Williams, conducted health, education, and nutrition clinics. One month later, in April 2018, political protests broke out in Nicaragua. The US State Department immediately issued a warning on travel to Nicaragua.



2019

Dr. Ginger Williams traveled to Nicaragua and meets with villagers in Rocha, La Hermandad, and Pueblo Viejo about embarking on a rural goat-gifting project for women and girls, modeled on similar projects in Africa and Asia. The goat project is entitled "A Glass of Milk." The hope is that this project will allow the women in rural communities the opportunity to supplement their family incomes through the sale of milk, cheese, and soap.

2020

Dr. Ginger Williams teaches a History course, on Nicaragua during the spring semester. Students are not traveling, but are working with Dr. Williams on the goat-gifting project, and are writing research papers on possible new projects for the rural communities. Dr. Williams also writes a proposal to formalize the Rocha Project in an effort to gain more institutional support, as well as bring other Winthrop University professors to the table to explore planning future cross-disciplinary courses and academic work.

