



February 2024  
Newsletter



## **February Greetings from CREA**

**Two months into 2024 and the kids are back at CREA full force. As we move into the new year, there is so much excitement and growth!**

**Whether we are teaching kids math, reading, or technology, young people are developing critical skills to help them be successful in school and in life.**

**The following success stories are made possible by our generous supporters.**

**THANK YOU.**

## Academic Success

CREA's growth in its outreach programming has been hugely successful. Parents and schoolteachers are thrilled by the increase in reading comprehension and fundamental math skills the kids are exhibiting. Through word of mouth, additional communities are requesting more visits from CREA, and the number of students coming to our Library + Learning Center remains at all all-time high. Students continue to receive critical, individualized learning support to be successful and to complete school.



*Ian Manual gets ready for math class at the CREA Library + Learning Center*

Nine-year-old Ian Manual is from one of the rural communities near CREA and began attending the Academic Success programming in 2021 when he was in first grade. Despite many challenges in his personal life, Ian Manual stayed positive and committed to his learning. He loves reading and math and has a personal mission to become a doctor and to help people in his community. One of CREA's biggest advocates, he has convinced many others from his community to join him on his learning adventures at CREA.

## Library Services

The Library Services team has been busy integrating reading programming with Academic Success at CREA's outreach sites. CREA's Mobile Library continues to travel up mountainous roads and across rivers to reach the kids. Some participants walk for miles to check out books, listen to stories and engage with each other. CREA's Book Clubs, StoryTime, and Mommy + Me each foster a joy of reading, fundamental to all learning.



*Xiomara with her daughter, Bebe Taili, at Mommy + Me*

Xiomara Espinoza was one of the first women to join CREA's Mommy + Me in 2019 and has inspired many other moms to join her since. At each gathering, she participates in read-alouds and book discussions, and checks out books from CREA's Mobile Library to read with her daughter, Bebe Taili, and her son, Stanley. She proudly says, "Books have helped my baby learn new vocabulary and my son is a fluent reader already. He has a deep understanding of books because he reads all the time. And he really loves to read books to Bebe Taili!"

## Youth Development

The Youth Development Initiative continues to support adolescents as they look beyond secondary school and imagine their future. English and technology classes are now regularly offered at CREA, and these skills are helping youth excel in school and prepare for jobs or university. Participation at CREA of these high schoolers quadrupled over the last year!



*Isayashline Isabella receives tutoring in English at CREA after school*

Isayashline Isabella is 16 years old and from a small indigenous community served by CREA. She enrolled in CREA this year at the urging of her aunts, to improve her grades and receive help writing her high school thesis. Isayashline Isabella has a big dream: To be the first in her family to complete school and go to university to study agricultural engineering. "This will make my family proud and allow me to help them."

## CREA Spotlight



*Lila Cunningham during her recent visit to CREA.*

CREA is thrilled to honor Lila Cunningham, one of its founding members. It was on Lila and her late husband Vern's porch that in 2012 the seed of a little library was first planted and fostered. That seedling has since sprouted into CREA, growing into the educational organization that today works in 15 local communities, reaching over 3,000 kids and their families.

Lila comes from a long career in the field of education, primarily at The Ohio State University in Columbus. Both she and Vern brought their comprehensive knowledge of education to bear in the founding years of CREA.

On her recent visit to Nicaragua, this spritely 97 years young founder shared the history of CREA's origins and growth. Honored by the staff of 31 Nicaraguans, some who have been with CREA since day one, Lila remarked, "I never ever dreamed that CREA would turn out to be this wonderful and impactful."

# CREA's 2023 Annual Report



**CREA's 2023 Annual Report is now available. Read all about the growth and opportunities CREA experienced in 2023. We had an incredible year.**

**Visit [www.creanicaragua.org](http://www.creanicaragua.org) to read the Annual Report.**

*Enjoy the emergence of spring and sunshine.*

*We are very grateful for your generous support in helping CREA reach the young people of Nicaragua.*

*We would love to hear from you!*



***¡Muchas Gracias!***

***Michelle Chackerian, Executive Director,  
Lilly Berrios, Deputy Executive Director,  
and the entire staff and Board of Directors at CREA***

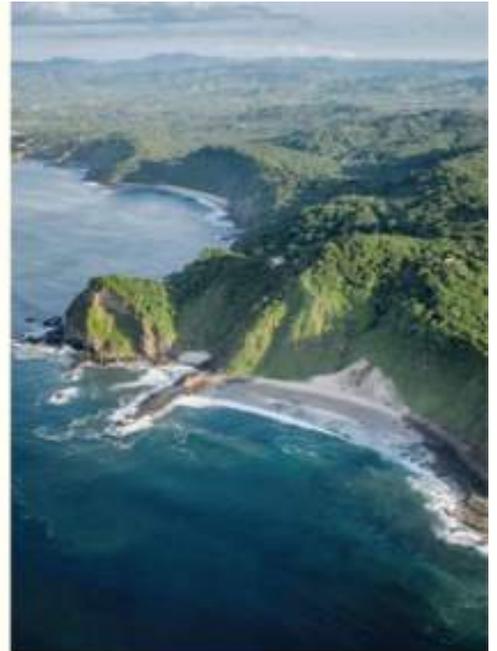


**Elevating Nicaraguans and their communities through literacy and learning.**

[www.creanicaragua.org](http://www.creanicaragua.org)

## ***Coming in March: Win-A-CASA!!!***

***WIN a luxurious week's stay in Casa Paloma, a beautifully appointed home in Rancho Santana, a world-class resort on Nicaragua's Emerald Coast!***



***Don't miss out! Win-A-CASA kicks off on March 5th.***