

NORWALK LIBRARY EXHIBIT

Nicaraguan sister city spotlighted

By R.A. Schuetz

NORWALK — During the Contra War in the 1980s, which led to tens of thousands of deaths in Nicaragua, cities around the world began organizing to help. They became sister cities to communities in Nicaragua, sending resources and aid. Among them were Norwalk, New Haven and Hartford.

“There were hundreds of them at that time,” said Elizabeth Gibbs, who was an original board member of the Norwalk-Nagarote Sister City Project. “Many of them have petered out. Ours is growing.”

For the rest of the month, the Norwalk-Nagarote Sister City Project has a small exhibit in the Norwalk Public Library. When you walk in, you can see pictures in a glass case on the left of the work

the project has been doing. Gibbs said volunteers will be at the exhibit on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to share information.

The project sponsors a tutoring program for elementary-school students there, as well as an after-school program, an organic farm and a community center. Gibbs said the project is now working to raise money to build a preschool modeled after the Bank Street School for Children in New York City. The school is known for its interactive curriculum.

“So they’ll have play areas; the little kids won’t be taught sitting in rows in desks,” Gibbs explained. The project has already raised about 80 percent of the needed capital to build the school and is campaigning to raise \$10,000 more, which a donor has promised to match.



File photo

Catherine Bagg hands out wristbands to Daniel and Emanuel Juarez, ages 11 and 9, at an event highlighting the Norwalk-Nagarote Sister City Project in June.