

The house that Kathryn and Rick built

A third of Nicaragua's children don't complete their primary education. With a lack of clothing, long distances, muddy houses and the hardships of living many find it difficult to get to school so it's a big deal when a child has an excellent school attendance.



Maria won her family home repairs

This is Maria Ángel Córdoba's story:

This eight-year-old girl lived in a one-roomed space with plastic bin bag-type walls with her mum and four siblings.

The roof wasn't watertight because it was propped up with sticks. There was no privacy and no study space for the youngster.

Despite the obstacles Maria proved to be a very hard-working student with an excellent school attendance.

That good record gave her the chance to take part in a La Esperanza Granada lottery.

Maria's name was picked out of the hat and that won her family home improvements.

Her proud mother is Ana Jesus Martinez.

"My daughter is such a good student. She's always at

school," she said.



Volunteers Kathryn Sachs & Rick Weismiller

Meet Kathryn

The family home before the repairs were made
Sachs and Rick Weismiller from the USA.

Lots of people say they don't have time to help.

Many also believe a holiday to somewhere like Nicaragua in Central America is the chance to relax and enjoying the weather – but not Kathryn and Rick.

The quite literally had a 12-day work in progress.

"We got involved with the project because we had planned a trip to Nicaragua ...but we wanted to see more of the country, get off the 'gringo trail', and become a bit more involved with the local people.

"We also really wanted to find opportunities to speak Spanish and do something that would benefit the communities," said Kathryn, from Wisconsin, USA

They were part of a team of five people which included



Ana and daughter Kimberley, aged 1

three local people. They all worked under the heat of the Nicaraguan sun from about 830 in the morning until about 5pm mixing concrete, shovelling cement and constructing walls of wood and sheet metal and building Maria, her mum and her four siblings a new roof over her heads.

“It was great for us, because it allowed us to meet a Nicaraguan family and practise speaking Spanish. Ana cooked us lunch every day, which was really good, and also very touching, considering her limited

“The new “house” improvement over me feel pretty

“And it was nice to humid, tropical days. That sort of said Rick.



A secure watertight *The new roof being erected on the family home*

resources.

was a definitive the old house, which made good.

sweat out there in the sunshine for a few work is good for everyone,”

house was the end result.

Ana and her family were over the moon with the results.

“Before Kathryn, Rick and La Esperanza Granada came along there were six of us in one room. The walls were plastic and it was really stressful because we were all squashed together. It was depressing, to be honest,” said Ana.

Kathryn admitted she felt ashamed to be shocked by how the family especially as it became clear this was how many others in San Ignacio lived:

“It's hard to say that I was horrified or shocked by the house, and that is a bit sad.”

But there were benefits for everyone involved as Kathryn explained:

“It is a world away from anything in the US that I have encountered, and so, I was left without a real way to gauge the living conditions I witnessed.

“By any US standard the condition of the home would be horrifying, indeed.

“But, based on Ana compared with would expect the unsafe, yet there among neighbours much love and care very inspiring.

“It really made me notions of what

The newly-repaired that many children



Home sweet home in San Ignacio: the end results

and the family’s living conditions those common in the US, one family to be unhappy and to feel was a real sense of community and the family demonstrated so for each other in a way that was

question my pre-conceived each of us needs to be content.”

house gives Maria something in the neighbourhood don’t have

– a dry, secure base from which to start the school day and a greater opportunity to get to school and complete her primary education.

“They came along and changed the walls and gave us a new roof. I am so happy.

“I can’t begin to describe how content I am about the way things are for us in our lovely home. Thanks to Rick, Kathryn, La Esperanza Granada and my daughter Maria,” said Ana.