



First Quarter 2018

# Connection

The Quarterly Newsletter of  
The Women's Club of Costa Rica

## A Message from President Lisa Foulger

As we embark upon 2018, our 78th year of the Women's Club of Costa Rica, I am proud to serve this great organization, maintain many of the wonderful traditions and welcome some changes. Michale Gabriel has been a strong leader for the Women's Club the past two years, and I'm honored to follow in her footsteps. Her major contributions include enhancing our communications by leading the team to design a new logo, redesigning the format and cadence for **Connection**, and utilizing more active blast communications to keep the club updated on the many events going on. With an eye to the future, Michale forged a strategic partnership with the Amigos of Costa Rica ([amigosofcostarica.org](http://amigosofcostarica.org)), the U.S.-based affiliate of CRUSA (Costa Rica USA Foundation), to enable and expand our fundraising efforts outside our Costa Rica borders. These seeds, now planted, will sprout many new benefits

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## Our University Grants Program

When Elena Austermühle reflects on the WCCR university grants program that has been an important part of her life the past several years, the hard working, determined university students with whom she has interacted come immediately to mind.

*Priscilla Ortíz, for example.*

Priscilla's father abandoned her and her three siblings when she was three; their single mother sold trinkets on street corners to make a living for them. Priscilla listened well to her mother's persistent message about the importance of education and dedicated herself to getting good grades. The WCCR supported her throughout high school; by the time she reached college age, the organization had transitioned into scholarship stipends for university students and helped Priscilla again, including two years for her li-



cenciatura (master's degree) in counseling. She graduated last year and is a school counselor in Guanacaste, hoping to get her PhD in social work.

Daniela, another example, slogged her way through veterinary medicine studies despite setback after setback. Not only did she come from difficult personal and financial circumstances, but she failed the university entrance exam the first time and went to a rural state school to become a veterinary technician, living by herself far from her family's rural home. Once finally admitted to the universi-

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## Mark Your Calendar

- February 11** WCCR Social in Cariari, 2 p.m.  
(RSVP [michalegabriel@me.com](mailto:michalegabriel@me.com))
- February 14** WCCR Social in San Ramón de Tres Ríos, 10 a.m.  
(RSVP [sandhliang@gmail.com](mailto:sandhliang@gmail.com))
- March 4** Hiking and More, first hike 8:30 a.m. CODECE Center
- March 14** Monthly Program. 10 a.m. to 12 noon,  
Mariliana Morales, Fundación Rehab, San José

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## President's Message

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### Board Members

President ..... Lisa Foulger  
 First Vice President ..... Anu Naidu de Bolas  
 Second Vice President ..... Roxana McNair  
 Treasurer ..... Grace Woodman  
 Recording Secretary ..... Patricia (Pati) Arauz  
 Communications Coordinator ... Jessica Stewart  
 Vocal ..... Jenny Kitson  
 Vocal ..... Michèle Gómez-Tuinstra  
 Vocal ..... Carolina Salas  
 Fiscal Propietaria..... Noris Steenstrup  
 Fiscal Suplente (Substitute) ..... Estela Fangman

### Advisory Committee

Michale Gabriel, Advisor to the President,  
 Chair, Communications  
 Janet Burke, Assistant Editor, Writer  
 Dot Chaote, Fundraising  
 Nelleke Bruyn, Chair, University Grants  
 Nidia Viquez, University Grants  
 Kathy Rothschild

**WCCR Connection** is published quarterly  
 by The Women's Club of Costa Rica.

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### Mission

The Women's Club of Costa Rica is a social and philanthropic organization supporting personal growth and advancement of women and young people through scholarships and other educational opportunities.

in the future to keep our club members informed and raise incremental funds for our education programs. Michale has also encouraged implementation of new accounting systems, and she has grown our membership, inviting new voices and incorporating new ideas within the club. I look forward to building on the strong foundation Michale has established as I lead forward.

I have enjoyed connecting with many club members at the social, our traditional way to kick off the new year, coming together to enjoy each other's company. After our busy holiday season with family and friends and on the heels of our successful December holiday luncheon and auction, it has been nice to connect in such a warm and casual setting. With Sue Pardo relocating with her husband to Escazú, our long-time tradition of the eastside social in Moravia came to a close. Thank you to Grace Woodman and Michale for opening their homes to us all, and thanks to Susan Liang who stepped up to host a social in San Ramón de Tres Ríos on the east side.

The 2018 Board and Advisory members have been working to create the key events and monthly programs for 2018. It's wonderful to have new members with fresh perspectives and energy help us plan these activities. One realization we came to during our first Board session in early January is that we lack the engaged volunteers and access to venues that are priced right for us to plan our traditional March luncheon successfully. So we decided to push out the date until April. We are fortunate to have a new Board member, Estela Fangman, step up and volunteer to lead a group of volunteers in planning this event. Estela is building her team meeting with possible venues to identify dates and costs and line up the other pieces required to start planning this important event. If you would like to join the event planning team, please reach out to Estela or me. We rely strongly on our volunteer workforce, an essential element, and we encourage you to get involved....it's fun, and the more volunteers we attract, the easier the load for all.

We are also thinking in fresh directions about how to raise funds this year for our two key education programs, University Grants and Schoolbooks for Kids. With Nelleke Bruyn and Roxana McNair,

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## President's Message

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respectively, newly leading these programs, we have an excellent opportunity to explore new fundraising ideas. We're excited to develop our partnership with the Amigos of Costa Rica/CRUSA, set up recently to attract more donors internationally. We'll also rely on some of our past successes, expanding upon our base of corporate donors and trying out some new fundraising events. We welcome any and all ideas of how to structure new efforts that align with our club mission and effectively raise our needed funds.

My aspiration in this new year is to connect with many club members at club events, our interest groups, monthly programs and special events as a

way to hear from you what you desire to see in the club this year and beyond. Please engage and share your ideas. We are 182 members and five amigos strong, we have great diversity, and I would like to tap into our diverse member base to grow and enrich our club further.

## Treasurer's Report

### 2017 End of the Year (Dec. 31, 2017)

Income: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31:	¢28,541,187 (\$50,785)
Expenses: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31:	¢28,190,210 (\$50,161)
Total Cash and Bank:	¢131,446,517 (\$233,891)

**March 14th Monthly Meeting 10:00-noon  
at Fundación Rehab in San José**

## RESPONDING TO THE CALL

**Guest Speaker: Mariliana Morales  
Founder, Fundación REHAB**

**Mariliana Morales** experienced a profound spiritual call to spend her life fighting against sexual slavery. She is founder of Fundación Rehab, which deals with sexual slavery and provides hope and a pathway for victims in Costa Rica to heal and live productive lives. Morales has worked successfully with the Costa Rican government not only to recognize sexual exploitation as an issue but also to integrate it into their political agenda.

In 2009 Mariliana received the Heroine Against Slavery Award from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Fundación REHAB provides victims with counseling services, vocational training, education, food, and whatever other services are necessary. The organization's prevention program works in schools and colleges and offers a youth



program and childcare for young children who are part of the families of the people they are helping.

Do join us at the Fundación REHAB center in San José to hear Mariliana's inspiring story. It demonstrates what one person can do to make a difference. How fitting a tribute this program and speaker are to International Women's Day March 8.

Request for non-perishable items: We are asking all of you who plan to attend to please donate non-perishable items especially milk to the foundation. So grab your tote bags and fill them full. The moms would so appreciate it and we would too.

### Directions:

Ave 12, between Calles (streets) 13 & 11, in the middle of the block on the right, a big brown gate with a small sign that says RAHAB. WAZE: Fundación Rehab

# Holiday Luncheon's New Look

by Janet Burke

When Michale Gabriel, outgoing president of the Women's Club of Costa Rica surveyed the ballroom at the Costa Rica Marriott at the start of the December 11 holiday luncheon and auction, she had good reason to feel particularly pleased. "The space was beautiful; the layout of auction items was wonderful; the tables looked gorgeous with their display ads. When people walked in and saw how attractively things were laid out, they could see right away that everything was done with great care."

For Michale, it was a terrific way to bring an end to her two-year presidency, which was always all about trying new things out to see how they worked and to move the organization forward.

"This holiday luncheon was very different," she said, "because it's the first time we put a fundraiser together with the luncheon. We weren't sure how it would work, but our hardworking volunteers sold 175 tickets to this event. Our procurement team generated more than 70 items for the auction including beautiful stays in such places as Villa Buena Onda Boutique Hotel, the Latitude 10 Resort and the Rio Tico Safari Lodge, as well as practical items like tote bags, and the always popular lunches and dinners." Most exciting, the event and auction brought in a remarkable \$13,486 for the organization's education programs, far more than the \$8,000 that had been budgeted. As a result, WCCR will be able to provide books for the same number (1,497) of students as last year. Moreover, many first-time donors were in the crowd, which bodes well for future fundraising efforts.

Another difference was the program itself. Un-



*Laurel Anderson's hand-painted canvas rug was sold during the Luncheon's live auction.*

like the traditional Christmas melodies that are normally part of holiday festivities, this year's music leaned more toward the operatic, provided by a 15-year-old singer, Karina Lascarez, a student at the Conservatorio de Costella School. Karina sang an aria from Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte* and the song "Wishing you Were Somehow Here Again" from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. She

moved the crowd with her extraordinary voice.

The very energetic and effective Ross Tatum was MC and auctioneer and became quite a significant part of the entertainment. The bidding was especially lively this year, with the most popular pieces the hand-painted rug from Laurel's Originals (Laurel Anderson) and a striking painting of a tree frog by Costa Rican artist, Carlos García.

So Michale had every reason to feel excited about the holiday luncheon. "It takes a village to produce a quality event and our holiday auction team truly embraced the goal of creating a financial win for our programs as well as creating a festive, memorable experience for our luncheon guests. It was an honor and privilege to work with such a great group of volunteers and a wonderful ending to serving this organization as president for the past two years."

## Costa Rica National Symphony 2018 SEASON TICKETS

Fridays at 8 pm & Sundays at 10:30 am in the National Theater, March 16 & 18 to Nov. 30 & Dec. 2.  
Get 6 to 12 concerts, last day to obtain Feb. 29.

Information: Grace Woodman, 2249-1208,  
8369-7992, jaygracefernandes@gmail.com

# Our University Grants Program

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ty's veterinary program, Daniela was almost defeated by biochemistry, a must-pass filter course with masses of details requiring memorization. ("Medical doctors only have one species to study: us," Elena noted, "but these poor veterinary students have to learn everything about species that range from snakes to birds to sloths to big, big farm animals."). Daniela worked with a tutor, fought her way through the course, and now is in the clinical part of her studies and well on her way to fulfilling her career dream.

Daniel Barrantes studied robotics at the Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (TEC) and supported himself by working in construction. Irán Lopez Herrera had various jobs to get him through his chemical engineering studies, the most fascinating of which was his cake decorating business (with skills his mother taught him).

Maria Fernanda Alvarado Madrigal was thrilled to find out she could enter into more than one career path at the same time ("Is that not wonderful?") and studied both pharmacy and chemical technology; through it all, she maintained a GPA of better than 90 percent.

Elena entered the university grants program as a "madrina" (godmother), then assisted program chair Mary Jo Miller, and finally became head of the scholarship committee herself. Most of the students the grants program helps are the first in their family to go to university, Elena said. More of them are from rural than urban areas, and the population is fairly evenly split between men and women. All are in great financial need. The students have all been accepted into Costa Rican public universities and so have their tuition wholly or in part, depending on financial need, provided by the state. However, they often come from such financially desperate situations that they need much more to make it through their programs of study. The WCCR scholarship provides them with extras (travel money from their homes to the university, food, books, supplies for their classes).

But the program also provides them with mentors and madrinas, who are like guardian angels watching over them to make sure they have the emotional and other support they need. When Daniela was overwhelmed by her biochemistry course, ready to give up, her WCCR mentors helped her find her tutor and also went into cheerleader personae, saying "absolutely not, you will know what you need for your animal practice, but in this course there is a lot that you won't need day to day," a constant reminder that all she had to do was get past the course. Madrinas have always helped over and above, Elena noted. Sometimes they go to the store with their student to get food that will keep body and soul together until the end of the month. One current student, a single mom studying English to become an administrative assistant, was almost at the end of her resources for study because she needed someone to care for her little boy while she was at the university and also working part-time as a housekeeper. She always had good grades but could hardly go on without help. Her madrinas found her a sponsorship outside WCCR to make it possible for her to continue with her studies.

Once the students are selected for a WCCR scholarship, the organization helps them stay on track until they finally graduate. The program statistics are impressive. Since 2010, WCCR grants have helped 75 university students make it through their first (four-year) degree and often their licenciatura. Anyone doing the math can understand the substantial impact this program has made on Costa Rican society.

Elena is now passing on the grants program baton to long-time madrinas Nelleke Bruyn and Nidia Viquez. "I want to thank Elena for her loving support of this program," said Lisa Foulger, WCCR president. "As I've spent time with Elena on the Board as well as over the last couple of months, I very much appreciate her care for the students, her inspiring dedication and attention to detail as she has worked tirelessly to support them."

# Take a Hike!

## Our New Interest Group

Hiking and More is a new interest group that offers guided hikes of different durations and levels of difficulty. The first meeting will be on Sunday, March 4, and will include a fairly short hike, mostly easy but with a few steep parts, into the hills above San Antonio de Escazú. We will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the CODECE center (WAZE has directions), where there is parking for seven cars. The guide on this occasion will be Indira de Beausset, the bilingual president of CODECE (Conservation and Development Association of the Mountains of Escazú). A delicious típico lunch



cooked by members of CODECE will follow the walk. Cost (including lunch) is 8,000 colones.

We have chosen a Sunday as hikes have to start early in the morning, especially in the green season, and traffic is much lighter on Sundays than mid-week. If you would like

to join this group, please contact Jenny Kitson, group leader, at [jenny.kitson@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.kitson@gmail.com). There is a maximum of 25 participants on this hike, so please reply soon. At this first meeting, you can let her know what hiking level you prefer (easy, intermediate or advanced) and whether you would prefer weekday or Sunday hikes.

Other possible excursions with CODECE are the eólicas (windmills) of Santa Ana (an advanced 14-kilometer hike) on April 29 and a visit to Parque Nacional le Cangreja, which includes an easy hike to a waterfall on May 29.

### Sale: Desk and Household Items

Cindy and Bill Vorih are moving to the US; they are selling a desk and also having a garage sale. The desk, made in Italy from top quality wood with walnut veneer, is in very good condition. It is about 3 feet (0.90m) deep and 6 feet (1.80m) wide with a handy bridge on top, which has been holding a television. It has served well as a computer desk.

The desk separates into the top, a full-width shelf under the top, 2 back pieces and the bridge top piece. There are 2 side pieces and the 2 boxes holding the bridge. The various

pieces interlock on assembly and require no screws or tools. The desk is easy to transport and assemble. Any car that can carry a 3x6-foot board can carry the desk.



The asking price is \$180 or best offer. Contact Cyndy at [wvorih@gmail.com](mailto:wvorih@gmail.com).

### Garage Sale Featuring Household Goods:

Cariari 150m south of Amanco traffic light, 25m east. On February 24 and March 3, 10 am - 2 pm.