

2016



2026

A DECADE OF LEARNING
A LIFETIME OF IMPACT



May 2026
Newsletter



MAY GREETINGS FROM CREA

As spring unfolds, CREA's classrooms, library spaces, and outreach communities continue to be filled with learning, growth, and connection. In this month's newsletter, we are excited to share stories from students whose lives are being shaped by access to books, educational opportunities, and the support of dedicated teachers and mentors.

This month, we also celebrate a very special milestone: On May 9th, CREA founding member Lila Cunningham turned 100 years old! As CREA celebrates its tenth anniversary, we are honored to recognize the vision that planted the seed for what CREA has become today.

To all of our donors, supporters, and partners: THANK YOU for nurturing that vision. As CREA continues to grow, your generosity gives more opportunities for even more children and young people in rural Nicaragua.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Provides young learners and their families access to books and programming designed to teach discrete literacy skills, promote reading proficiency, and inspire critical thinking.



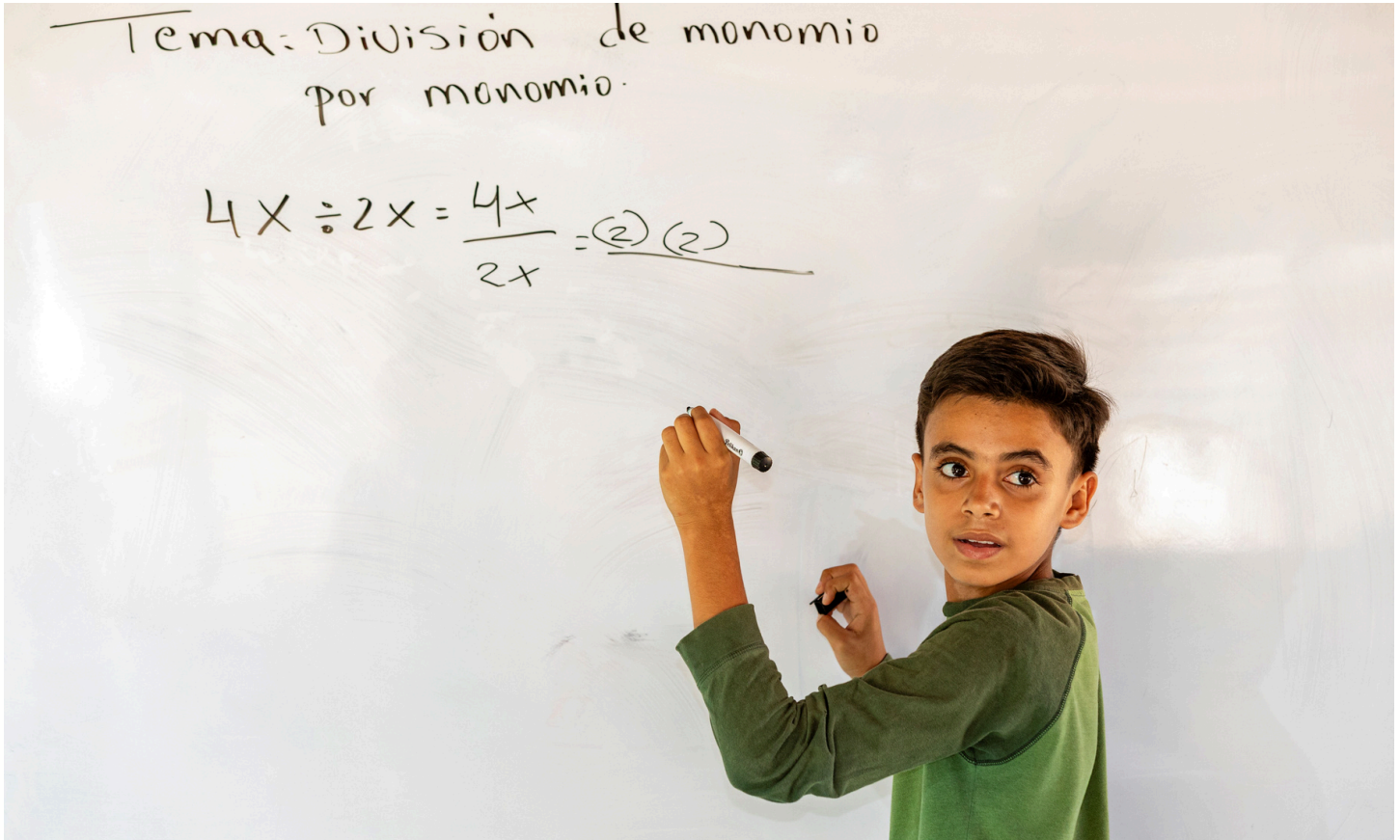
Melody listens closely during read-aloud time, where stories help spark curiosity, vocabulary, and a growing love of books.

Seven-year-old Melody first came to CREA through the Mommy + Me program in 2025, where many children begin their learning journey at CREA alongside their mothers. She now attends weekly classes at CREA and is one of our most enthusiastic young learners.

Now in second grade, Melody is already reading confidently and often helping her classmates during activities. She especially enjoys reading, math, creative projects, and hands-on activities. Melody is also one of CREA's most dedicated readers, regularly checking out books to take home and read with her family. For students like Melody, a love of learning begins early and continues to grow with every book.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Provides children and youth with critical, supplemental learning support to finish primary and secondary school.



Nahum works through a math problem at the board during class at CREA's Library + Learning Center.

For over five years, Nahum has been a familiar face at CREA. He initially sat quietly in class, unsure if he should raise his hand or share his ideas. Reading quickly, understanding certain lessons, and participating in class did not come easily to him. Since joining CREA in third grade, Nahum's academic aptitude has greatly improved.

Now 14 years old, Nahum says that CREA has helped him better understand his schoolwork and gain confidence in himself. He enjoys learning new things, spending time with other students, and diving deeply in CREA activities. He says, "CREA has helped me a lot with my studies and helped me stop being afraid to participate."

Youth Development

Supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of adolescents as they strive to reach their goals and create positive change in their communities.



Valentina is building skills she hopes will one day carry her to a CREA scholarship and beyond.

Valentina is 15 years old and has been coming to CREA since 2023. Initially, her mother enrolled her in CREA for extra academic support. Math was a real struggle, and keeping up in class felt out of reach.

Two years later, her grades have improved measurably, and math no longer feels like a foreign language. What she values most is the way that CREA's teachers work alongside students, helping them not just get through their lessons, but ensuring that they truly comprehend them.

Valentina has her sights set on becoming a CREA scholarship student. In her own words: "Every day that I come to CREA I get a little better. Someday I want to be one of their scholarship students and make my dreams come true."

CREA Highlight

In 2012, Lila Cunningham and her late husband, Vern, sat on their porch in Nicaragua and imagined something simple but powerful: A small library where children could access books in Spanish! At the time, books were scarce in the communities and libraries did not exist. That conversation was the seed that would eventually germinate and grow into CREA.

On May 9th, Lila turned 100 years old!



Lila and Vern Cunningham, whose porch conversation in 2012 sparked the idea that became CREA.



Lila at the groundbreaking for the CREA Library + Learning Center with CREA founder Scott Hagg.



Lila during her 2023 visit to witness CREA's continued impact.



CREA founders celebrating Lila's 100th birthday in Ohio.

Alongside her late husband Vern, a lifelong educator at The Ohio State University, Lila brought both deep insight and the compassion needed to shape CREA’s earliest days. Lila served on CREA’s board for many years, helping guide the organization from a small grassroots concept into the thriving learning community it is today.

When Lila visited CREA in 2023, she was able to see firsthand what had blossomed from those early conversations: new classrooms filled with students, guided by dedicated Nicaraguan educators, and programs reaching thousands of children and their families. Reflecting on the experience, she shared, “I never ever dreamed that CREA would turn out to be this wonderful and impactful.”

As CREA celebrates its tenth anniversary, we are deeply grateful for the vision, generosity, and collective belief that has helped make it a reality. In honor of Lila’s 100th birthday, we invite you to celebrate her remarkable milestone and legacy with a symbolic gift of \$10 for every decade of her life.

Your gift of \$100 will help ensure that the educational opportunities that Lila helped to create will continue for generations of students to come.



GIVE \$10 for 10 DECADES



Thank you for being part of CREA's story. Your support helps create opportunities for children and youth to learn, grow, and pursue their goals each day. From early readers discovering a love of books, to teenagers gaining confidence in the classroom and in life, your generosity contributes to these academic milestones.

We are deeply grateful for this community and look forward to sharing more with you in the months ahead.



¡Muchas Gracias!
Michelle Chackerian, Board Chair
and the entire staff and Board of Directors at CREA

