



*Sharing in the love of Jesus Christ by partnering with Nicaragua's poorest people in healthcare, education, economic development and housing.*

## **Press Release**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Rev. Mel West Retires From Rainbow Network Board of Directors after 14 Years of Service**

**Springfield, MO – April 2016:** Rev. Mel West of Columbia, MO stepped down from The Rainbow Network's Board of Directors on April 15, 2016 after 14 years of service. Rainbow Network, founded in Springfield, MO in 1995 empowers about 42,000 people in 112 rural Nicaraguan communities through programs in healthcare, education, economic development, and housing. West served on the Board in two terms, from 2000-2011 and again from 2013-2016.

When reflecting on what drew him to Rainbow Network, West states "I think Rainbow Network is the very best humanitarian mission of its kind that I have seen, and I wanted to give to it and promote it." West continued by saying, "The rural folks of Nicaragua were 'my kind of folks'. My first trip there reminded me of my childhood in southwest Missouri in the 1920s and 30s, before electricity, during the Dustbowl Days, the Great Depression, and the bank closures."

West says the greatest change he has seen in Nicaragua over the last 20 years has been an emergence of hope. When he began going to Nicaragua, West saw children who were extremely malnourished and filled with parasites, badly clothed and little to no education in their future. Now, West says the picture is completely different in communities Rainbow Network is working in. The children and adults alike are healthy, well-dressed, educated, and living in decent homes. West says, "The people have learned how to work to solve their own problems, and with that comes hope."

Some of West's most memorable moments have been the times he has met the students he and his wife, Barbara, were sponsoring in their education. West communicates regularly with his students through letters, but it has been especially moving for him to meet them in person and continue to encourage them to graduate.

Rainbow Network Founder and President, Keith Jaspers, shared that "Mel has helped save and change thousands of lives through our programs. His knowledge and experience in working with the poor have helped guide our organization to be one of the most efficient mission organization in the world."

West concluded by saying, "I have always sought to relate to the very best. Rainbow Network, to me, is the very best."

To join West in empowering rural Nicaraguans through Rainbow Network, please call (417) 889.8088, email [info@rainbownetwork.org](mailto:info@rainbownetwork.org), or visit [www.rainbownetwork.org](http://www.rainbownetwork.org).

Contact: Keith Jaspers, Founder & President  
Email: [keithjprs@aol.com](mailto:keithjprs@aol.com)

Megan Munzlinger, Development Director  
Email: [Mmunzlinger@rainbownetwork.org](mailto:Mmunzlinger@rainbownetwork.org)

Office Phone: 417.889.8088  
Address: 2840 E Chestnut Expressway, Suite A  
Springfield, MO 65802

Website: [www.RainbowNetwork.org](http://www.RainbowNetwork.org)