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**CHRISTIANS' HAVEN**  
A Ministry to Street Children and Orphans of the Philippine Islands  
P.O. Box 369 • Webb City, MO 64870

Thank you  
for your  
Support



## Rescue, RESTORE, Return

It is easily stated that Christians' Haven seeks to rescue street kids and orphans and then restore them in emotional, physical, and spiritual ways in order to see them eventually return as equipped adults to change the landscape of the culture where God will lead them.

The restoration process is crucial and challenging but also very rewarding. It is an awesome privilege to report that five of our young people have made the decision to become an eternal disciple of Jesus Christ and proclaimed that recently in their baptisms. They are Federico Dela Cruz, Roberto Gonzales, Ernisto Solana, Edwin Capa, and John Mark Dapanas. Please pray for these young followers.



## The All Important Question: What Is A DISCIPLE?

By Lynn R. Ragsdale, President



Christians' Haven is a disciple making ministry. It will always be our goal to do exactly what Jesus told us to do as Christians — "Go and make disciples."

With this biblical mandate to ministry it is vital that we continually research, pray about, and grow in our understanding of what exactly a disciple is. After all, if I am supposed to be making something, I had better know what that something is.

In his great book simply titled *Disciple*, Juan Carlos Ortiz describes his personal dilemma in ministry and in so doing describes ours. He assessed success in making disciples in the same way that you would assess success in a business. He pastored a church in Argentina that grew from 184 members to more than 600 members in two years. Wow! What success!! He was motivated to search God's heart and the leading of the Holy Spirit to really determine what he was doing and what he should be doing. Ortiz stated, "The Holy Spirit began to break me down. The first thing He said was, 'You are promoting the Gospel the same way Coca-Cola sells Coke, the same way Reader's Digest sells books and magazines. You are using all the human tricks you learned in school. But where is My finger in all of this?' The Lord told me a second thing, 'You are not growing. You think you are growing ... but you are just getting fat.'"

So, the question remains for us in our search for true spiritual success in this ministry to "make disciples." What is a disciple?

A disciple is one who follows Jesus Christ. But because we are Christians does not necessarily mean we are His disciples even though we are members of His Kingdom. Following Christ means acknowledging Him as Lord; it means serving Him as a slave. It also means loving and praising Him.

In simple words, most of our modern disciple making activity is man-centered and not God-centered. We sing songs like "Count your blessings" and "I am satisfied with Jesus" or "Jesus belongs to me." We then pray for the Lord to bless our homes, bless our jobs, bless our pets ... You get the point. These prayers are not for Jesus' sake, they are for our sake.

Our first step in making true disciples is to direct ourselves to a Lord focused discipleship personally. As Rick Warren stated so clearly in his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, we are created for the purpose of glorifying God and bringing Him pleasure. I must then honestly ask myself the question: When is the last time I intentionally and with purpose set out to spend even one entire day bringing God pleasure instead of myself?

Thus, from the director of a disciple making ministry to you as faithful supporters of CH – just something to ponder.

Your fellow servant,



Lynn R. Ragsdale, President

## Redefining Success



Rico Cabato is one of our fine college age students. He is an Agta, a tribe of people who are among the poorest in the nation. His mother died after giving birth to Rico and his father was not able to provide for him. He was admitted to the children's home when he was eight months old weighing only 3.5 lbs. He was suffering from malnutrition. His father died a few years later. He has been one of our kids ever since and we are very proud of him.

When Rico was deciding what he wanted to study in college his heart was pulled toward art and painting where he displayed great ability. Many pictures and paintings around our campus are the result of his brush. Once Rico entered college he excelled in all classes pertaining to art but struggled in other areas of study. Reading had always been difficult for him. Our Campus Director, Ruel Billones, and Social Worker, Jane Salipngat, began to investigate other options for Rico.

As a result of the love and care for our kids on an individual basis, Rico is now at our College House and involved in a mentoring program with a very accomplished artist in Cagayan De Oro. His work is amazing and the progress is tremendous. He is also very busy teaching painting to young people. The student is becoming the teacher. Now that is success!

Just like all families, each child is different and has unique challenges. Please pray for our staff as well as our children as we continue to treat them as very unique and special images of God. By doing so we can define success for each of them in a manner that will best suit them and honor God.

The Bible is very clear that God knows our names and even counts the hair on our heads. In other words, He knows us personally not corporately. At Christians' Haven we also attempt to look at all of our precious children in the same way. There are millions of forgotten children on the streets of the Philippines but they all have a name and all deserve the love and care from God's people. Thanks as always for helping.



## Conversations at the T-House (College House)

By Ruel Billones, CH Campus Director



"I don't understand myself." "I am bored in church." "I burn with lust." "I don't find life worth living." These are some words I heard from one of our college men in one of our sharing times at the T-House. When I listened further to what he had to say, he added: "Why did God allow me to have this kind of life? Why am I an orphan? Would I have been feeling differently towards God if my parents did not reject me?" These are questions that are left unanswered in his mind. He carries these struggles with him.

For children who grow up in live-in institutions, it is not difficult for them to conform to the institutionalized rigors of spiritual disciplines. It is easy to continue doing what they have been used to doing since they were young. Yet, for many of them, conforming to what they have always known about is not enough. Filipino culture puts a high premium on conformity. It is also obvious in how we do church on Sundays. Everybody seems to conform. It feels like order for them in an otherwise chaotic world.

At the T-House those who go through the discipleship training begin to ask questions about the meaning of what they have always been doing; the meaning behind the structure. Real critical thinking is encouraged. It is in the safety of a home like CH that they can be open with their questions and tensions. At the T-House we want them to feel safe to process the incarnation of Christ in their experience. We hope that they will not feel shame or rejection

as they wrestle with their questions. Many times their questions seem to be a disguised search for security and attachment with a God who says, "I am the Father to the fatherless."

The young man asking the above questions during recent devotions continued by saying, "But Kuya (big brother), you will never know the depth of our cry for love as orphaned kids. It stays with us and even feels disturbingly real now that we are adults." I invited him to not dismiss what he feels, but to allow Jesus to speak to him where he feels the struggle. Then, we opened the Word together in John 1 to see the call of the early disciples. When Jesus commented on His meeting with Nathaniel, He said, "I saw you there." Now, this modern disciple began to rest when he realized again that Jesus saw him "there" too, when he was in the ugliness of poverty and homelessness.

## Mission Trips With Purpose



Why not plan a trip to visit us in the Philippines? You can be assured that it will be a trip you will never forget. When you visit Christians' Haven you will have three clear goals. First, to ENCOURAGE our staff and kids. They love having partners visit. Next, ENRICH Christians' Haven by doing tangible work on the

campus or hands on ministry with the kids. And finally, leave with an ENLARGED worldview. Promise – you will never see your world the same again!

A recent trip included members from three churches. They came from Medford, Oregon; Johnson City, Tennessee; and Crown Point, Indiana. While on the visit they observed our children at their best. They

served alongside our young disciples in feeding programs and outreaches to the children's prison and Badjao tribe. They helped paint our buildings to keep them in top notch shape. And they blessed the campus with special gifts from their churches. A Sunday School class from Johnson City, TN provided a gift to buy sports equipment for our campus. WHAT A BLESSING! Basketballs, soccer balls, volley balls, bad mitten sets, ping pong equipment and more were purchased. There was even money left over to maintain our equipment and inventory!



Please consider being a blessing on our campus by taking one of our mission trips in the future. Information is available on our web site, [www.christianshaven.com](http://www.christianshaven.com).

## Mission Trip Response

Following her return from a recent trip to Christians' Haven Dr. Patricia Bonner wrote the following comments. This was her second trip to visit the work.



*"It was well worth the trip. I was so glad to see changes that have enhanced the work there. I love the attitude of the staff as it seems each one truly loves the kids and has their best interest at heart. It is hard to find a staff so committed as they are. I was most impressed with the older children and all they are doing to help others."*

*(Dr. Bonner is a retired professor from Milligan College and is the Missions Chairperson at the First Christian Church in Johnson City, TN.)*

Sue Benton wrote the following after returning home from a visit to our campus in the Philippines.



*"Thank you, thank you, thank you--God is good, isn't He! What an awesome experience and I do know that the experience has certainly changed my outlook to missions. Christians' Haven works! God has drawn me to a place to desire to be bolder for Him--to be less timid and more outspoken for His will and for Missions. And He spoke to me every day there about giving Him the glory in all I do...that is my fervent prayer--that I would always give Him the glory, and that He would guide me through the rest!!! Thanks for the opportunity and expanding my worldview through this mission."*

*(Sue is the Missions Chairperson at the Rogue Valley Christian Church in Medford, OR.)*

## When Helping Hurts

By Nick Parsons, Mustard Seed Global Fellowship



There is an undeniable movement in our U.S. culture, and thankfully, in our churches as well, to engage with the poor and the hurting around the world. Enhanced technology like satellite broadcasting, streaming internet video, and global social networking has brought the stories and faces of people in poverty into our homes and makes us all aware of the dire poverty of people in places we once felt were far off. One need only remember the swift and incredibly generous response by governments, organizations, churches and individuals to the recent earthquake and subsequent humanitarian crisis in Haiti.

But do these efforts actually facilitate long-term holistic health for the people on the receiving end of our charity? How can we ensure that those in dire need are actually being helped and not hurt by our financial giving and good intentions? How can we strive to improve the outcome of social ministries to the poor, both in the U.S. and abroad? These are some of the questions that Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert of the Chalmers Center for Economic Development seek to address in their new book, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor*.

This eye-opening and challenging book is divided into three sections. The first section provides a biblical foundation for engaging those in poverty and helps to build a Christian framework for thinking through the complexity of the issues related to poverty alleviation. The second section provides general principles for helping the poor in a way that does greater good than damage and shows that many of our intentions in giving actually end up hurting those we are trying to help. Additionally, the authors advocate an holistic, asset-based, approach to community development that can empower the poor to not only be immediately relieved, but also pursue long-term reconciliation to God, themselves, others, and creation. The third section of the book deals with practical solutions and strategies to help those in material poverty.

As I read this book, I was challenged to examine not only the methods in which I have given, but also my motives. *When Helping Hurts* forced me to ask if I really desired for the poor to be restored and healed, or if my giving was only a way to assuage my guilt and subtly feed my own prideful tendencies. If it is true that we really want to help those in need, we must go further than just sending a check to a charitable organization. We must examine the methods these organizations and our churches employ, asking if they help, rather than hurt. Moreover, we must examine our own hearts and strive to love and serve the poor in ways that honor God and bring holistic healing to those in all forms of poverty. To do this, we must become more knowledgeable of the issues related to poverty alleviation and economic development. *When Helping Hurts* is an excellent introduction and starting point for this process.

I would recommend this book not only to those who work specifically in poverty alleviation organizations, but also to all Western Christians, financially blessed as we are, who have a responsibility to love those who are materially poor not only in words, but also in "action and truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). May God use this book to move us from good intentions to holistic healing of the poor in our cities and around the world.

*(Nick Parsons has served as a missionary and church planter in Thailand and Japan. He is currently the director of Mustard Seed Global Fellowship an organization committed to planting churches in the largest unreached cities of the world. More information about Nick and the ministry of Mustard Seed Global Fellowship can be found on the web at [www.msgf.com](http://www.msgf.com).)*

## Spotlight on CH Youth, Flor Bilango

By Jane Salipngat, CH Social Worker



Flor Bilango spent her early years at our north campus where she lived for almost 14 years before being transferred to our south campus in Mindanao. From her early years to present Flor has loved playing basketball. Even though as a young player she was not always aware of rules and regulations, it didn't matter to her. She just loved the fun of it. As a teenager, believing sadly that basketball was just for boys, Flor did not play for four years. Upon graduation from High School and entering a four year course in education at Bukidnun State University she learned that quarterly departmental contests called "PALAKASAN" are held featuring many different activities and sports including basketball. She decided to join a group playing basketball. She was observed by team leaders and chosen to play in their 2009 Inter School Varsity competition. Initially, she was a bit nervous but also excited because it was her first time to compete with other schools. She accepted the invitation and joined their daily practices and games. Their final contest was held December 11-14, 2009 at Bukidnun State University, Malaybalay Bukidnun, with Flor's team ranking 4th out of 54 schools and Flor being named athlete of the year. Congratulations, Flor!



Flor (back row, 2nd from L) with team.

## Having problems with Pay Pal?

If you have experienced any problems using Pay Pal to make a contribution to Christians' Haven please try, try again. We have learned that Pay Pal has experienced intermittent problems since January and is attempting to correct these problems. Anytime it tells you that you have an "internal error" simply try again a little later. That seems to work. Please let us know if you have this problem and we will continue to seek resolutions. Call us at 417.673.8641 or e-mail us at [office@christianshaven.com](mailto:office@christianshaven.com).