

Acts II: A Love Offering for the Philippines

By: Kelsey Green (OCC Student, Joplin, MO)

In Acts 11:27-30, the Church in Antioch set an example for the modern Church in demonstrating Christian love when brothers and sisters are in need. In striving to live like Christ has called us to live through following the example of the early Church in Acts, our Acts professor at Ozark Christian College, Chad Ragsdale, challenged our class to take up an offering to help our brothers and sisters in need. In the Philippines, families have been devastated by the recent typhoon that has destroyed the farming lands necessary to grow crops, contaminated water which could lead to the spread of diseases, and flooded rivers which has affected construction and delayed transportation in the country. Although Christians' Haven is fortunate that none of the children or staff were injured by this super typhoon, the organization is still in need of extra funds to cover the cost of necessary repairs and to extend help to those in need that were most impacted by this tragedy.

As Christians, we wanted to help, and we desired to make a difference in others' lives—even those in a country thousands of miles away that most of us have never even met (and probably never will meet). Taking up an offering was a small way we, as just one Acts class of students on a small Bible college campus in Joplin, Missouri, could support Christians' Haven in the efforts to help the Philippines recover from the devastation caused by Typhoon Parma. As Chad mentioned to our class, there is truly no better way we, as students, can genuinely understand the Biblical knowledge we are learning through our daily study of the book of Acts than to actually apply the Christian principles God has set forth in the book. One of these important Christian principles is to give to those in need. As we studied the eleventh chapter of Acts and heard of the incredible need in the Philippines, it was apparent what we ought to do: give—both our time in prayer and our financial resources in an offering. Nearly every student in our class was able to contribute towards this cause. It is our prayer that Christians' Haven is blessed, and more importantly, able to bless others in the Philippines by the offering that God's Word inspired us to give for our Christian brothers and sisters in need.



In His Hands

By: Jojo Ratunil, CH Nurse

It was a typical rainy Saturday afternoon. I found myself alone and hypnotized by our lawn with the picture of green foliage kissed with clear raindrops. I sat on a bench trying to embrace all the scenery in front of me. I couldn't stop biting on my lips while feeling the last cool breeze of December. New year's coming, I thought. I felt overjoyed and anxious all at once. Overjoyed, because I know that the year is about to end – time for me to leave any negativity of yesterday and start a positive year full of hope and faith. Then I thought of Jesus. . .

I often wonder, if Jesus was living in our generation, would it be possible that He would be a nurse like me? There is something I'm pretty sure of; I know that if Jesus was living in our times, He would still have the same caring hands that I do. More caring than my hands I suppose. . .



When I entered CH, I presented myself as a volunteer nurse (perfect timing when Mallary, the former nurse of CH, was about to leave and go back home). I never really expected that I would end up working as a part time nurse since I was vocal at first that I was in the process of working on my papers to work abroad. But later on I was amazed at how Jesus was working in my life. Instead of pointing me to pack my things and work abroad, He directed me to fulfill something – that something was to take care of His disciples, the CH kids.

Being a campus nurse is not easy. It may look easy, but the real deal requires a big heart to take care of orphans and street kids. You don't only heal their physical wounds, but also the wounds of their hearts. You don't only teach them how to be healthy, but also how to nurture their faith in Christ. Being a campus nurse is not a job. It's a ministry. Just like what Jesus did, He was more than a nurse to the sick people.

I needed to fill big shoes when Mallary left me the keys of her clinic. While accepting the keys I heard myself think, "You can do it, Jo." It's a tough job but somebody has to do it, and that's me. I believe Jesus called me to do this with a purpose. I know that I have faith in whatever path He may lead me. In His hands that heal the sick, I commit my life. In His hands that protect, I surrender my spirit. I am so blessed that He keeps me close to Him all the time – by doing His will in fulfilling His ministry.

To God be the glory. –jojo

Special Gifts for Special People

Christians' Haven received some special gifts during 2009 for some very special people. We are humbled that you would honor us with a gift in the name of your loved ones.

- James and Melody Jeffrey in honor of Don and Shirley Caspersen
- David and Debbie McFadden in memory of Tara Ragsdale
- Mark Lundy in honor of his parents, John and Judy Lundy, and their work in the Philippines during the 1950's and early 60's.

Any such gifts will be treated with great respect and welcomed by Christians' Haven.


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

Disturbing Trend in Missions Support

By: Lynn R. Ragsdale, President



I wondered if it was just me! I was hearing from some churches that support to Christians' Haven was being cut or even eliminated because the church had "changed its mission focus" or their "philosophy of missions had shifted." That sounds reasonable and they even said that they had prayed over their decision.

At the recent National Missionary Convention held in Peoria, IL I had the pleasure of rubbing shoulders with some great missionary heroes. It was fascinating to hear their conversations. They all shared similar stories about having support reduced or eliminated for the above mentioned reasons. I was not thrilled but was relieved to know that it was not just me.

I then began to pray and seek God on this issue. Questions began to emerge. How can a church shift a mission philosophy or focus to anything that doesn't directly connect to the great commission to "go make disciples" or the direct command to "care for the widows and orphans"? We are even told that this pictures true religion (James 1:27)?

Further investigation revealed that in some cases the churches that were cutting support had some home-grown members who needed financial help in going to the mission field. I am always excited when I hear about new and youthful missionaries. I would, however, challenge churches to stretch their faith and expand their missions outreach rather than eliminate current missionaries.

I have also been told that churches are more interested in supporting missionaries where they can maintain more of a physical connection. They desire to take trips to visit the field and do hands-on projects. That is awesome and accountability like this is tremendous.

Closer examination of this philosophy reveals a problem. As beneficial as mission trips are to the folks in the church and those on the field there are some places where it is too dangerous, too expensive, or too far to travel easily. I recommend that these places be treated with special care as the missionaries there suffer many hardships including extreme loneliness. Send a small group or couple every few years just to let them know you care.

By eliminating missions that are too dangerous, too expensive, or too far to visit you may be saying that only those who make us feel good get our support. "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight." And that is not just in places close to America.

The Philippines may seem like one of those places but please check our web site or call me to learn about exciting and affordable mission trip opportunities through Christians' Haven. We would love to host you and help expand the world view of your church.

Lynn R. Ragsdale, President

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CHRISTIANS' HAVEN
A Ministry to *Street Children* and
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Pumping Up Reading

By: Neneng Agluba, CH House Parent and CH Librarian

The Philippines has been bound by a culture of "not reading" which presents a struggle for us even today. I grew up hearing comments from my grandmother and older folks such as "Reading is no fun." "It is only good for smart people but not to the common tao or ordinary people." "We cannot afford to buy books, it's so expensive, we should buy rice instead." "Yes, your brain is full but your stomach is empty." "When the stomach is empty the brain is also empty therefore reading a book is useless."

Sir Lynn's words during his last visit to the CH campus, "Kids that don't read usually don't succeed," created a great stir in me contrary to what I had heard as a child.

With this in mind, the CH staff began to encourage our CH kids to read books, restating to them the importance of reading and reminding them that we are all in a discipling ministry. We are all expected to be thoroughly equipped intellectually and spiritually in sharing God's Word. We can only give of what we have.

One of our challenges has been that we haven't had enough book resources for all our children to read. But, our God, who is living and active and knows what we need, touched the hearts of people like you to provide the books and now our CH Library looks like a real library with plenty of books on the shelves. Praise the Lord!

The kids are not the only ones excited to read the books. Our staff is too thanks to the many good books for them as well.

The pictures show that even while we were still in the process of taking inventory of the books, the kids could not wait to begin reading them.

Please help us pray to provide programs and activities for everyone at CH to maintain the eagerness to read.

(Our thanks to Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, CA; Town and Country Christian Church Youth, Crown Point, IN; and Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO for providing books!)



Books Arrive.



Books are sorted and inventoried.



Books are enjoyed!

Christmas at Christians' Haven

By: Ruel Billones, CH Campus Director



Christmas preparations began with the lighting of the Christmas wreath candles four weeks prior to Christmas Eve. We then began rehearsing Christmas carols in preparation for singing in different locations like churches, hospitals, community hall, and prisons.

Our cottages continued preserving the essence of Christmas by telling the story of the birth of Jesus in the different arts and they collaboratively created forms of indigenous nativity dioramas made out of cogon grass, corn, hay, and old newspapers. We enjoyed the buying of gifts for

our children, staff and their families.

On the night of the 24th we gathered as a whole Christians' Haven family for a meal. It was followed by a worship service with the theme: "The Ironies of Christmas." It was followed by a variety show that presented the great talents of our kids and staff. We all had a good laugh at the lady staff performance. We feasted on lots of good food. Our children sure know how to have fun! They are such a gift to us and taught us to not forget the kid in all of us. Thanks to all our supporters for adding to our joy this Christmas.

CH in Action This Christmas

By: Jane Salinquet, CH Social Worker in Philippines

Early this Christmas season some of our boys from elementary and high school helped rebuild a neighbor's house that had burned down one month previous. The family of Mr. Capunhag sought assistance from CH stating that CH was their only hope. Through Christ, we were not only able to rebuild their home but also provide medicines, toiletries and used clothing to the family.



Roberto Jobar, and Jansen carry materials from the highway to be used in rebuilding the nipa hut.



CH children were guided in the project by CH maintenance staff under the direction of Bro. Carlo Dapanas.



At project's completion, CH children expressed the fun they had in doing it!

A Heartfelt Thanks from the Philippines to our Supporters

By: Ptr Jun, CH Houseparent and Pastor



Happy new year to all. We thank and praise God for His faithfulness in our ministry. We received gifts for our CH children, gifts for our outreaches including the Badjao, jail inmates, street children, and hospital patients. I know as you prepared these gifts God was giving you joy as you did it for His glory and your love for us. Thanks to all individual supporters, churches and any others who helped provide for us a special celebration of our Lord's birth. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Our CH children enjoyed shopping for the gifts they received.

Most of them bought clothes that they liked and that were much needed.

The Badjao outreach was a blessing as we saw their faces full of joy. We were able to give them gifts of clothing and food. The jail ministry was also full of great joy. We were able to give them a

roasted pig which is a Filipino highlight of the season. They were very thankful. We gave them plywood this year for some are just sleeping on the floor. We also invited children from our local community to celebrate with us. We were able to serve them snacks and give them clothing and toys before they went home. They were overjoyed as they did not expect such a treat. We also visited the hospital nearby. Our children sang and we prayed with many patients.

For the Chinese this is the year of the tiger but to us it is the year of the Lord's blessings and victory. In Galatians 6:9 we are taught to "not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." This is a great challenge to all of us. We ended 2009 with praise and worship at the church and started the new year with prayers of consecration for us and Christians' Haven ministries.

Your co-worker in Christ,

Pastor Jun



CH Kids sing for local hospital patients.

Community Outreach

By: Jane Salinquet, CH Social Worker in Philippines

Christmas with our neighbors...

CH was able to host at least 105 children of our neighbors in Tuod for a Christmas celebration on our campus. CH children did an amazing job as they organized the event, welcomed and served our guests, and presented a program of dance and the portrayal of the birth of Jesus. Special joy for each of the children ages 2 to 13 was a gift given to each one in the name of Jesus.



Gener Naayao enjoys time with local child.

Community Outreach (contd.)

To the Badjao tribes...

8 large boxes of new and gently used clothing were received in the Philippines last fall thanks to Christ's Church of Oronogo and Carterville Christian Church in Missouri to be used in CH outreach ministries in the Philippines. Our CH college students sorted and packaged this clothing for distribution and Saturday morning, December 26, with CH staff went to extend the love of Jesus through the giving of clothing, food and fruit to the Badjao community in Iligan.



T-House Family

By: Alexandra Bergman, Canadian volunteer worker at CH T-House

(Alexandra Bergman, a 19 year old lady from Ambrose University College in Alberta, Canada is in her 3rd year studying Inter-Cultural studies. For the last 3 months Alexandra has served as an intern at our T-House for CH college students in Cagayan De Oro, Philippines.)



Alexandra with Maculate, Christian, Shane and Jake.

T-House as Family

Coming from a Canadian family with six kids, I've heard a great many jokes from people who find us a strange sight. Some tell us we look like a parade in procession, or that we could start our own baseball team! Here in the Philippines eight is a fairly average, if not small family size. The size of my personal family prepared me for spending time with my "siblings" at the CH T-House (Transitional House). Though the T-House is not a traditional home, these 14 youth between the ages of 17 and 23 experience many of the same struggles and joys as any other family. I've had the opportunity over the past three months to get a glimpse into how they interact with each other and their house parents, and observe how unique each young person is. As my time has progressed, the individual personalities have become more apparent.

When I first visited the T House, there was one girl I didn't connect with immediately, but I could tell was really a unique character. She always had a smile in her eyes, and never seemed to take herself too seriously. As I've gotten to know her, she has told me her story and also told me a bit about her relationships with the other students, both males and females.

Though she is right in the midst of the time in life of having a boyfriend and girlfriends become an overwhelming priority, I could see that genuine friendships were really the thing she most desired. She has the great ability to have fun with both the guys and girls in the T House, and when there is relational conflict, she prefers to gain peace quickly rather than conflict. While on the exterior she is a joker, I see now that this reflects her sweet inner nature which longs for harmony between the people she is close with.

I have recently been impressed by one young man at the T-House. In almost any culture, I've noticed that when one is a twenty year old guy, the emphasis is more on being funny than on being serious. It's often difficult to talk about deep matters, either in life or spiritual, without a joke being cracked to lighten things up. This young man, while still often making me laugh in regular settings, has shown his thoughtfulness when necessary such as on discipleship nights. Just recently I was in a small group with him where we were asked to write down the biggest questions we had about faith and Christianity. He asked many questions that really challenged me to think deeper and learn more. I grew to respect not only his ability to make me feel welcome with humor, but also his genuine journey of doubt and faith.

These are just two stories from the perspective of someone who has only been here three months! Though these students experience many of the same struggles as any young person (hormones, rebellion, 'lapses in judgment'), they also each have beautiful, unique qualities which shine through often. As most parents can attest, the joy of witnessing these individual characters reveal themselves much outweighs the more trying attitudes. The same can be said for the house parents here, and myself, even for the short time I am here. I feel richly blessed that I am here to witness such varied beauty displayed in a family.



CH Campus Director, Ruel Billones, leads a challenge to CH T-House students



CH T-House students with houseparent, Jerlinda Panoy

Special Awards to CCH Children

By: Edie Garcia, Campus Director

Ronald Victori and Simeon Lagimon, both of Cornerstone Christian Home (CH North Campus), participated in the search for "That's My Boy 2009" last December at their school. During this competition children show their talents and answer questions. Simeon was awarded Best in Talent for his performance in playing the drums with the support of Lizel Tuliao as guitarist. He was also awarded best in sports wear, casual wear, and finally "That's My Boy 2009". Ronald was awarded "Darling of the Crowd". Congratulations boys!



Simeon demonstrates his talent in 'That's My Boy' competition.



Ronald in his sportswear for the competition.

An Unforgettable Christmas at Cornerstone Christian Home (CCH) - Lallo

By: Imelda Reyes Ramos, CCH Staff

We often hear people say that Christmas is the time of love. Words of a poem say: "Let there be love at Christmas when the entire world was bright". Others say "Christmas is the time of giving; yes, the best gift we have ever received is Christ. When the world was in darkness, Christ came to us and filled the earth with His brightness and became our guiding light".

Christmas at Cornerstone Christian Home was one of the best. Joy and eagerness filled the face of each child as we celebrated Christ's birth.

We began by decorating the home the last week of November. Everyone busied themselves making the place beautiful. Some made stars and put them on top of our plants; others got a tree with many branches and put it in our front lawn. Then they mixed different colors of food coloring, put it in an ice bag and hung it on the tree. The bigger kids made Christmas lanterns out of drinking straws and hung them around the building. The girls brought out their old decorations and decorated their room by themselves. The Christmas decorations were the best they ever made. We were all excited and happy to see the results of what we had done.

We were all amazed by God's unending love at the Home. Our neighbors, friends and family members joined us for our Christmas party on the 25th of December. The children enjoyed playing and having fellowship with our guests. We were all so glad to have them come celebrate Christ's birth with us.

God is really great! He touched so many people's hearts. Those we do not even know came and donated, some in cash, others in groceries and toys. A group of people also came bringing gifts for the children and food for lunch.

For the children's sponsors, thank you so much for your gifts. The kids enjoyed their shopping spree. The children were very happy and thankful for the gifts. We were also for their happiness is our happiness. Praise God for His marvelous blessings to us at CCH.

God is love! Yes, we can feel God's love in this Home through all the people who willingly and unselfishly share their blessings to us and for all those who constantly pray for this mission.

What is Christmas? Christmas is the warmth of home, the handclasp of friends, the kiss of loved ones, the vision of hope, the awareness of peace and the feeling of LOVE. Love should be in our hearts not only at Christmas but in every day of our lives.

Let the beauty, the joy, the inspiration... all that is Christmas be yours in abundance.



Christmas 2009 at Cornerstone Christian Home (CH North Campus)