



PO BOX 1553 • Jackson, Michigan 49204  
Phone: (517) 529-9702 • E-mail: [helpingkids@lingapcenter.org](mailto:helpingkids@lingapcenter.org)  
[www.lingapcenter.org](http://www.lingapcenter.org)



January, 2024

Dear Friends,

My letters are typically about the activities of the Lingap kids. But today, I thought that you might like to know some of the ‘behind the scenes’ things that the staff at the Lingap Center does for them. I am also very excited to be able to share some **really fantastic news** for us! But first, I want to tell you a little about the staff.

The Center is a licensed, residential child-care facility that has the capacity to handle 132 children ranging in age from five to college level. We typically have approximately 100 children in residence at any point in time. To handle this large family, we have a full-time staff of 25. They consist of Jojin Ladroma, a licensed, registered social worker, as the General Manager. Assisting her, we have four other social workers, nine house parents, a combination houseparent/driver, an educational coordinator, a registered nurse, two cooks, an administrative clerk, a bookkeeper, three watchmen, and a maintenance worker. Together, they provide 24-hour coverage, 365 days a year, in eight-hour shifts, (*except during COVID when they all worked 24-hour, week-long shifts*). We also have four part-time employees: a CPA, a guidance counselor and two tutors.

All of these individuals do everything that you would do for your own family. They help the kids with their homework, they attend parent-teacher conferences at seven different schools, they feed them three meals a day and make sure that they are all safe, especially during the horrific typhoons that often hit the islands. They help the kids to perform all of the other chores that are required to keep the Lingap Center safe and clean. Everyone pitches in. On Sundays, they get the kids ready for church and transport all of them to and from. On school days, they ensure that the kids have their lunches, snacks and school supplies ready and then transport them to the various schools in town. During the summer, they plan and take the kids for a ‘summer camp’ experience on the beach (*something that most would never experience without the Lingap Center*) which is the most highly anticipated event of the year by the kids, in addition to planning fiestas and other special events.

Keep in mind that the kids come from very challenging backgrounds and they often arrive at the Lingap Center without any documentation whatsoever. So the social workers conduct intake assessments and evaluations to determine why the kids need to be at the Center or what special needs they may have. Then they begin to develop documentation for them, by interviewing barangay captains (*somewhat like a township supervisor*), relatives or others in the community. With this information, they can construct such things as birth certificates, and baptismal certificates, so that in the future, the kids will be able to attend school and college, find jobs or obtain passports as needed. This is no small undertaking especially considering that some of the kids come from the most remote villages and were seldom born in hospitals.



*Lingap Center counselor tutoring one of the kids.*



*Our cook teaches cooking and baking.*

The staff also teaches them life skills, including baking and cooking (*the kids love to cook*) and gardening. Our maintenance worker teaches them welding, electrical and other mechanical skills. Several of the kids have gone on to become licensed welders and one is now a baker at a Sheraton resort hotel. These are skills they learned right at the Lingap Center, under the guidance and watchful eye of our staff.

Our counselor helps the kids to deal with some of the difficult life challenges that they may have faced. Our registered nurse monitors their health and takes them to doctors or hospital visits as needed and if they are hospitalized, she stays with them

during their confinement. Our tutors work with them on their homework every evening and we are now in the process of implementing English classes, since English is the international business language and all college board exams are given in English. Speaking of college, the staff also works with our six current college students, at six different colleges or universities.

To ensure the health of the kids and the staff, a Zumba instructor comes in every Saturday to get everyone moving. This is probably the highlight of the week. Everyone loves it! (*I just watch!*)

On Sundays, our volunteer music instructors travel from Cebu City (*an hour and a half one-way*) to work with the choir and our string ensemble and I have to say, that this program is beyond fantastic! There is so much more that I could share about the staff and our activities, but you get the idea. They do a LOT and I have nothing but the utmost respect and admiration for the work that they do.



Now, for some really wonderful news that Jojin and the staff accomplished: In my June 2023 update letter, I mentioned that we had been working on our required reaccreditation by the Philippine DSWD (*Dept. of Social Welfare and Development*). It was an arduous, frustrating and challenging undertaking. Finally, on November 22/23, the ‘official’ accreditor came from Manila to do the evaluation. We had been preparing for it for almost three (3) years!! They looked at **EVERYTHING** and then some. They were there for two full days and nights. They interviewed the staff, the kids and looked in every nook and cranny of the Lingap Center. They evaluated our policies, programs, staffing levels, facilities, safety protocols and so much more. Finally, on December 28, we were informed that we have achieved the Level III status!!! **This is the highest possible rating that can be achieved** according to the standards set for all residential facilities in the Philippines. We are already being contacted by other organizations, requesting our assistance to help them improve their programs. In other



*Jojin Ladroma, Lingap Center Manager*



words, our values and processes are now influencing children throughout the country. There are VERY few organizations in the Philippines who have achieved this level, so it is a real tribute to Jojin, the Lingap staff and people like you who made it all possible through your financial assistance, encouragement, and prayers. The big winners of course, are the kids.

When I look back over the history of the Lingap project, which really began in 2003 as a very implausible idea to help a bunch of kids living in a pig slaughterhouse to have a better life – it has been quite an amazing journey. I remember reaching Level I, thinking we could never do it, then getting to Level II a few years ago, and now as a Level III, to be one of the best (*if not THE best*) facilities of our kind in the entire country! It gives the staff a feeling of tremendous pride to work for such an organization and it has motivated them to do even more for the kids.



*Lingap Center Staff*

H. E. Luccock once said: *“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it.”* How right he was. It took Jojin Ladroma, the entire Lingap Center staff and all of you to make up our ‘orchestra.’ Everyone played a very important part. The Lingap project is a miracle – that’s all there is to it. Thank you so much for helping to make it possible and for being such critical members of our ‘orchestra!’

Sincerely,

John Drake