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June, 2023

Dear Friends,

I think it's just human nature that we all are easily caught up in the daily routine of our busy lives. We do what we do because it needs to be done, often without thinking why or what the impact of our efforts might have on others. This is not a bad thing; rather it's a simple fact of life and all too often, we find ourselves frustrated with the process and sometimes even discouraged.

I am no different. I absolutely love what I do with the Lingap Center project, but there is a whole lot more to it than just loving the job. This became abundantly clear to me on my most recent visit to the Center. I was there to work on our re-accreditation with the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). We are required to undergo this arduous process every 4 years or so and currently, we are rated as a Level II Children's Residential Care Facility. I have mentioned to you in the past, that this achievement level makes us the highest rated organization of our kind in all of Philippine Region VII, which is comparable to saying the Midwest United States. If we are able to achieve the Level III rating, we will be the highest rated in the entire Philippines! This would be a tremendous achievement, but oh my, is it ever a lot of work!! The bureaucracy is beyond belief. It makes anything here in the U.S. seem like child's play by comparison. So, I visited the Center to help the staff with it. There are pages upon countless pages of requirements that must be



We do it for the kids such as Rocky, Dave, Justin, Kian, Janna and Tricia.

met and reviewed at all levels and then re-reviewed. The staff and I have been working on it now for perhaps a year and a half and the requirements seem to change and become more complex with every passing day. One reason I made this trip is because the staff was becoming frustrated with it all, and their morale was slipping. Is it even worth the effort?

When I arrived, we got busy and had meetings to discuss issues and concerns and I even found myself asking why are we doing this??? Is it worth the effort? It often seems that the Philippine government would be much happier if we just left the children on the streets, with no future, no hope and no place to go. I could just go home and forget the whole thing and enjoy my retirement. We were all pretty down.

Then one morning, one of our newest wards, a little girl (age 9) came up to me and gave me a gigantic hug. She could speak very little English, but I asked her how long she had lived at the Lingap Center. She told me in her best broken English that she had been there for about a month and that she was really happy to be there. I asked why and what it was that she liked about it? What she told me quickly snapped everything back into a very clear perspective. She said in her tiny little voice, *"...because my mommy is in heaven..."* (Her father was no place to be found.) Clearly, she had no place else to go. She was at the end of the line. What would happen to this precious little girl if we were not there for her, to give her a place to live, food to eat, a staff to

love her, to give her an education and hope for the future? I can't even allow myself to think what her fate would be without us. Sadly, this scenario has repeated itself countless times in the past so it was nothing new. But her words served as a sad but poignant reminder for me.

As I mentioned, her response put everything clearly back into perspective. We are there for the children. Thus far, well over 700 of some of the least fortunate children in the world have received some level of support from us. Since opening the Lingap Center in 2006, we have had 36 college or vocational graduates and in July, we will add three more to this number, bringing us to 39. There are children alive today, only because of this project! These are the reasons why we do it. Please remember that we could never have achieved all that we have thus far, if not for the support that we receive from all of you. We did it together. It simply would not have been possible without you, but there is much more work to be done. There are many children who still need our help.



A few of the over 750 children who have received some level of support from the Lingap Center.

So, we got back at it and are continuing to work on the seemingly endless re-accreditation processes. Hopefully, we will be able to submit the final requirements soon. If we are successful in achieving the Level III, we will become the model for all other organizations in the Philippines to emulate! Instead of saving hundreds, maybe we can actually help thousands and be the example with which to break the heavy yoke of poverty that abounds in the country. So, I asked myself again, why are we doing this? Is it worth the effort??? The answer was a resounding YES! The staff enthusiastically agreed! We are doing it for the kids and future generations of children. Then, I remembered two quotes from long ago, both of which sum it up pretty well for me. They are:

“To conquer frustration, one must remain intensely focused on the outcome, not the obstacles.” (T.F. Hodge)

“Frustration always comes before the achievement.” (unknown)

I also recalled a Bible verse that I frequently use, from the Book of Galatians, 6:9 which says:

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

As I mentioned, I love what I do! The kids are much better off thanks to the Lingap Center, but clearly, I am the one who has reaped a harvest far greater than anything I could have ever have imagined possible! But, please never forget that none of it would have ever happened without people like all of you. I hope that you too have ***“reaped a harvest”*** as a critical member of our team. Please keep the Lingap staff in your prayers as they remain ***“intensely focused on the outcome”*** and continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the less fortunate children of the Philippines. I will let you know as soon as we ***“achieve”*** the Level III.

Sincerely,

John Drake