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Dear Friends,

During my trips to the Lingap Center, the Lingap kids are always curious about many things, but they are especially curious about all of you - our larger Lingap family. "Who are the people who help us?" They ask questions about everything! They want to know what the schools are like in the U.S., the churches and about the well-being of everyone. I do my best to answer all of their questions, especially the ones about you, our supporters. The Lingap kids realize that without you behind us, nothing would have been possible at the Lingap Center. I always tell them that we are all one very large Lingap family and that as a family, we are here for each other and that helping others is the greatest gift that we can give to ourselves!!

**Most of all, they want to know if snow is really like cotton!!!** In the Philippines, the coldest temperatures they have ever experienced are perhaps 75 or 80 F. Usually, it's in the 90's or higher!! I can only suggest that they go sit in the refrigerator for a while! They tell me that it's absolutely impossible for anything to be as cold as the snow that I have described!

During my visit to the Center earlier this month, two of the kids asked me if it would be possible for them to thank you in some way and tell you what their life is like at the Center. They asked if they could write you a letter. I promised them that if they did, I would do my best to get it to all of you. They asked what they should say so I told them that they could say anything they wanted. Here are the two letters, exactly as they were written, with no edits whatsoever. I have clarified just a few things in ( ). Please remember that English is a second language for them.



*Princess Kate (age 14, grade 9)*

*Dear Lingap Family, I am Princess Kate from the Lingap Center. I'm from Balamban (Cebu) and I now live at the Lingap Center. Because of the poverty in my family, my father and my mother became separated and when my parents became separated my mother give us to our grandfather and grandmother. Then when my grandfather got sick, we had a hard time and so that I couldn't finish my study in our home. So, Ate. Rubi (Lingap staff member) admitted me to the Lingap Center so that I could finish my study and I will become successful in life. Then when I was admitted to the Lingap I learn more by having skills like baking, cooking and others. Then Lingap Center provide us supplies and they also provide us education. And they also help me to cure my disease (she had a serious goiter when she arrived – but was unable to afford a doctor's visit). Then when my illness was treated, I was happy because there are many people who needed medicine and I was included in our nurse's priority! Then that's all I can say about my life outside and inside the Lingap Center. I wanted to say thank you for all your support to the Lingap Center. We are all so grateful to have you as our sponsors. You*

*give us a fighting chance to achieve our dreams and purpose in life. In gratitude, we promise to give our focus and best of effort to our studies and in our learning skills so you will be proud of us.*



Neil (age 16, grade 11)

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*Dear Lingap Family, Lingap Center is the only place where I can feel safe, secure and loved. Through your help, we keep the fire of hope and our dreams burning. In Lingap, everything is provided, health check-up, education, needs and they also monitor our mental health. We are one family here. We always pray the Rosary before dinner. We also have morning devotion in the morning and praise and worship in evening and every Saturday. Additionally, we attend and sing (he is a choir member) for the Mass at church every Sunday. Lingap Center is the only safest place I've ever live-in and I look forward to seeing this place open for the children who want to live a better life, like me. Before I come to Lingap, my life was miserable.*

*What I like about this place is that I know that I can sleep at night under the roof and have a comfortable bed and foods to fill my empty stomach and water to satisfy my thirsty. House parents to guide me in crossing to the upright path and in decision making. My Lingap brothers and sisters talk and laugh every time we exchange funny jokes or school experiences.*

*We have a library where I can spend my time reading book after books. Furthermore, a computer lab to use for educational purposes.*

*Exceeding in my studies and helping my brother and sister siblings here in Lingap might be the only way to repay all your goodness. I am forever grateful of your unconditional support and assistance to make my dreams come true. We all will never forget your goodness.*

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The one thing that I am never able to effectively convey to you is how important you all are to us and the impact that you continue to have on the lives of so many. Well over 700 children have received some level of support from the Lingap Center since we opened in 2006. We have celebrated with 34 college or vocational graduates so far, with more to come. Collectively, you have changed their lives and their futures for the better in so many ways. There are children alive today, only because of this project and you!

As I thought about all of this, I could not help but recall a quote from AA Milne, the author of Winnie the Pooh, when speaking of the character 'Piglet.' He said:

***“Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart,  
it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude.”***

Speaking on behalf of the Lingap kids, I want to tell you that the gratitude felt by the kids, the staff and especially by me, is far beyond anything that we can simply hold in our hearts. Thank you so much.

Sincerely

John Drake