



THE LINGAP CENTER



The Lingap Children's Foundation
P.O. Box 1553
Jackson, MI 49204

Dear Friends,

May 2015

We returned from our most recent visit to the Lingap Center on May 20. What a trip it was and I am more than happy to tell you all about it. It began with one of the most exciting events of the year: the annual Lingap Honor Society awards celebration. Each year, we hold a huge special event for the kids to emphasize the importance of education. You may recall that education is about the only pathway out of poverty available to the children. Therefore, we do all we can to reinforce its importance. The party was complete with all sorts of Philippine delicacies including lechon (roast pork), lumpia, rice, buko pandan (a coconut milk gelatin dessert), cake and other wonderful menu items. After dinner, the children and the staff presented beautifully choreographed cultural dances and songs for our guests.



The Lingap Children's Choir filled the air with cultural songs.

The newly elected President of the Lingap Children's Council, Jeron, gave a welcoming address which came straight from his heart. Mary Joy, age group winner of the U.S. Peace Corps creative writing contest from among 340 other entries throughout the Philippines, gave a very moving speech. She had just returned from receiving her award in Manila. She told the children how education, the Lingap Center and Lingap staff had changed her life. She was fantastic and there was not a dry eye in the house!

The culmination of the evening was the awarding of certificates for academic achievement and then the awarding of beautiful acrylic plaques for the highest achievers in elementary, high school and college. These students will have their photos framed and prominently displayed on the honor roll wall in the Center to serve as role models for the other wards.

All of our college students were able to come home for the event. Additionally, we were able to celebrate with most of our eight college graduates who also attended. We anticipate having three more graduates before the end of the year!! Celebrating their collective successes at this event was truly one of the highlights of the year for the children, their school principals and teachers (many of whom were in attendance).... but most especially for me.



The children enjoy the evening's events.

The following day, we were given some very welcome news. When we opened the new Lingap Center in 2006, I announced to the staff that my goal was to have it become the very best facility of its kind in the entire Philippines!! This was just a dream of course, but it never hurts to aim high - so we did. There are currently 232 NGO's (non-government social welfare organizations) in the DSWD Region VII (Dept. of Social Welfare and Development). This region encompasses the major islands of Cebu, Negros and Bohol. Of the 232 agencies, only 30 are accredited and of these, only five have been able to achieve the Level II rating. I am excited to announce that we are one of them! If we achieve the extremely challenging Level III during the next accreditation cycle, we will be the ONLY organization at that level in the entire region!!



**John and Jojin, Lingap Center Manager,
present the Level II
DSWD Certification to the Staff.**

The dream is coming true! This is a gigantic leap for us and I could not be more proud of the staff who worked long and hard to develop the policies and procedures needed to pass the stringent guidelines. Additionally, the accreditation team interviewed many of the children to evaluate their treatment, the food and many other factors. Happily, we passed with flying colors! On Monday, May 18, four of us went to Cebu City to accept the award - in front of the entire Region VII staff consisting of several hundred people (I gave a short acceptance speech). It was a proud moment for the staff, for me - and for all of you, our donors who helped to make it possible. Without your support and encouragement, we would not have made it to the top five in the region!!

Just to give you a quick update, since opening in 2006, 351 children have received residential services at the Lingap Center. We currently have 101 children in residence; 19 are in our independent living program and we have 21 college students living near their respective schools. To date, 122 children have been sponsored for baptism into the Church.

Our street children's education program is currently under revision in order for it to make a greater impact on the street students and to provide measurable results. My hope is that someday, our program will become a model for other street programs in the Philippines.

There is much more that I could tell you, but I will save that for a future letter. I simply wanted to share some tremendous news with all of you – our extended Lingap family, since as I said, it is only possible thanks to you. Remember, 100% of your donations went directly to the benefit of the children.

As I think back to my original goals when we built the Center, I was reminded of a quote by David Frost:

***"Don't aim for success if you want it;
just do what you love and believe in, and it will come naturally."***

Clearly, he was right.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Drake'.

John Drake

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lingapcenter.org**

Lingap Center Highlights



**Top Award Winners
Mark Jay, Rose Mae and Geferd**



**Mary Joy receives her award in Manila
from the National Peace Corps
Director, Jean Seigel.**



**Sammy Boy proudly
shows his academic
achievement certificate.**



**A "Gumamela" (Hibiscus) in the Lingap
Garden!**

**Below is a letter from Esmeralda, one of the Lingap Wards.
While it is addressed to me, I am sure it was written to all of us.
As you can see, you really are making an impact on the lives of
the children.** ↓

Dear Tito John

First and foremost I would like to say to you, thank YOU for sending me to school, "ST. BERNARD SCHOOL". and I'm so thankful to you because you Tito John if you're not here, I can't go to school, there's no house to live, there's no water to drink, there's no food to eat, and there's no clothes to wear everyday. You know what Tito JOHN first, I enter this, your little Kingdom I'm so happy because all the things that I'll never saw when I was in my previous house, now I found it, and I saw the difference between my real house and here which the Lingap Center. and I try my best Tito to make you proud of me, I will study hard because this is for my own good.

Esmeralda