



July 2012

Dear Friends,

Many of you have been asking for an update on the status of Genalyn and Genelyn, the identical twins I wrote about in my January 2012 update letter. You will recall that it was a sad story, but a story with a very happy ending. During a home visit in January of 2010, we found the girls (age 19 months). Both of them were suffering from pneumonia, tuberculosis, malnutrition, lice, various body sores, and were in dire need of medical attention. They were too weak even to drink water. The doctor said that they were within days of death. Because the Dept. of Social Welfare could do nothing for them due to the severity of the situation, nor did they want the probable burial expenses, there was no place left for them to receive help. I just thank God that the Lingap Center was there for them at such a critical time. The twins were hospitalized for approximately five months. If you have forgotten the story, you can read it and view the pictures on our website at: <http://lingapcenter.org>.



They are now both extremely healthy and happy. Genalyn has had her cleft palate surgically repaired and Genelyn (who had to wait until her tuberculosis was completely gone) will have her cleft palate surgery this fall. I am more than happy to tell you that on May 4 they celebrated their third birthdays!!! This celebration would not have been possible if not for the Lingap Center and the Lingap staff who were there for them when they had no place else to go and no hope whatsoever. The Lingap Center was there only because all of you made it possible through your donations. On behalf of Genalyn and Genelyn, I want to thank you so much. They are alive today because of your support.



**Marjie's smile  
says it all!**

With regard to more recent events, you may recall that the school year in the Philippines runs from June through March. I am very excited to report that in March we had our first college graduate! Marjie Ledamo graduated from the Cebu Technological University in Barili with a bachelor's degree in Hotel, Restaurant Management. She served an internship with Negros Navigation Company (an inter-island ferry) and hopefully will soon be working at the Marriott Hotel in Cebu City. Her long-term goal is to work aboard an international cruise ship.

I clearly remember the first time I met Marjie. It was on my first visit to the old Lingap Center, when it was a converted pig slaughterhouse. She was sitting on the side of a pig trough with a blank stare on her face. Her future was very bleak and her prospects were nonexistent. Today, she is a college graduate and her future is as bright as the sun! Needless to say, I am very proud of her. This school year we have 16 students in college, majoring in subjects as diverse as electrical engineering, accounting, marketing, social work and virtually everything else you can imagine. They are following in Marjie's footsteps and are also on their way, thanks to all of you. Aside from our college students, we have children attending six different schools. Our educational successes are a tribute to the Lingap tutors and staff who work with them

on their assignments every night before bed. It is my feeling that education is the only pathway out of the

poverty in which they find themselves. Therefore, in addition to food, safety and shelter, education is our number one priority.

In an earlier newsletter I told you about the simply beautiful garden we have at the Lingap Center. We raise



**The Haven Garden Project**

many of our own vegetables and what we don't consume ourselves we sell at the city market. Frankly, our garden is the envy of the Toledo City Agriculture Dept., who have had our kids represent the city at the Provincial Agri-Fair in years past. You will remember that the kids developed the garden themselves. It was not given to them. Armed with this experience, during the summer break, a number of the older Lingap wards, along with Lonnie Cooper, our Peace Corps volunteer, visited the Haven. The Haven is a shelter for survivors of the sex-trafficking industry, located in Cebu City. One of the problems faced by the staff at the Haven, is providing constructive activities for their clients. The Lingap wards, led by Ronna Elladora (one of our third year college students majoring in Agriculture and our Garden Captain) taught the residents of the Haven how to develop a garden and take care of it. They taught them the science of

composting and have returned several times to help oversee the project. What is so exciting about this for me is that the Lingap wards, the poorest of the poor, are now reaching out to help those less fortunate than themselves. They are using this opportunity to give back to the community. What a wonderful tribute this is to the values being taught at the Lingap Center. By the way, this fall, Ronna will be studying agriculture for six months in the Netherlands at no expense to the Lingap Center.

Our street children's education program has expanded again so our reach continues to grow. Additionally, in August, Fr. Geoff Rose will be traveling to Cebu with me to conduct a community mission at St. John de Sahagun Catholic Church. He will also be conducting a number of outreach masses in some of the various squatter areas around the community. This will provide those who are unable to attend the church of their choice with an opportunity for further spiritual development. We are also in the initial phases of planning a future medical mission. This will be led by Dr. Jay Brunette, a member of the Lingap Children's Foundation Board of Directors.

I continue to believe that the Lingap Center is a miracle. Countless lives have been touched and improved and children are alive today through the help of the Lingap Center. For this, I can only say thank you. Thank you all for helping us to make it possible. If you are not already a "Place at the Table" sponsor, I do hope you will consider joining us. The cost of a single recurring sponsorship is only \$25 per month and because the Board of Directors and I personally pay all administrative fees, 100% of all donations go directly to the benefit of the children. Since we are a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are fully tax-deductible. To find out more, please visit our website at [lingapcenter.org](http://lingapcenter.org) or just give me a call at 517-529-9702. It is this program that we depend on. It is what keeps the Lingap Center open. When I think about the request for "Place at the Table" sponsorships, I remember this anonymous quote:

*"Sometimes I would like to ask God why He allows poverty, suffering and injustice when He could do something about it.....but, I'm afraid that He would ask me the same question."*

Sincerely,

*Anonymous*

John Drake

[www.lingapcenter.org](http://www.lingapcenter.org)  
a 501 (c)(3) organization