



July 2011

Dear Friends,

My last update letter to you was in October of last year. You may recall from that letter that 2010 was a very difficult and challenging year for us. However, I am delighted to report that 2011 is a different story and it has been a great new beginning. Following a very active summer break, the kids returned to school on June 7. While all were sad to see their summer vacation come to an end, like kids everywhere, they would not admit that they were really anxious to get back to be with their other friends at school.

This year, for the first time, all are now in the private St. Bernard School (which I have mentioned in the past) and St. John of Sahagun Grammar School. We also have 14 college students this year. They are majoring in such things as accounting; hospitality management; electrical engineering; advertising and everything in between. At the end of this school year, we will have our first two college graduates. When you consider that these are children who previously had no hope, this is a remarkable achievement! It is not possible for me to be any more proud of them than I am. They are now serving as role models for the Lingap wards who will follow.

One of our graduating college students sent me an email message about a week ago. In it, she said that she has to write her senior thesis and she asked my permission to write about the Lingap Center and how it changed her life. Of course, my response was an emphatic "yes!" This is a success that can be attributed to your support. You are the ones who made this transition possible.

Our community outreach programs are also growing. In May, we expanded our Street Children's Education Program even further. We average 65 - 85 children every day in two locations, where we still teach them reading, basic arithmetic, values and hygiene. We also have added micro-economic projects to teach them how to make money combined with money management skills. This has been a huge success. The local priest also is providing catechism lessons and we are working to include them as viable participants in community activities, such as fiestas. This is generating a sense of pride and self-worth. We also continue to provide the children with a lunch.

The Peace Corps has again contacted me, asking that we take another Peace Corps volunteer (PCV) for a two-year assignment. (*Typically, organizations request a volunteer.*) Since PCVs are in such high demand, it is not their usual practice for an organization to have two PCV's in successive years. However, they decided to waive the rule for us. They have said that the Lingap Center continues to be one of the best facilities of its kind in the entire Philippines and

they want their PCVs to work with organizations that really make a difference. They also are sending other volunteers to Toledo City to study our Street Children's Education Program.

However, the greatest miracle of all is our Third Saturday Outreach. The outreach is a monthly children's mass and soup kitchen. You will recall that previously street children and orphans were not welcomed in church. However, following discussions with the local priest, I offered to feed all of the less fortunate kids who came to a monthly mass if he would conduct it at the Lingap Center. If you can imagine, in January of this year, we had over 5,000 children in attendance!!! And, we fed them all. In fact, at the end of the day, we handed out 7000 meals.

Many people think that the Lingap Children's Foundation is a very large, international organization. However, it isn't. The Foundation is made up of only my wife Judy and me, along with a few volunteers and the Board of Directors. No one receives any compensation of any kind. In fact, the Board and I still pay all administrative overheads, so that 100% of all donations go directly to the benefit of the children. The Foundation is actually made up of all of you. You are the ones who make it all possible. Without you, none of what has been accomplished would have been possible. For this, I want to thank you all.

If you would like to help us further and are not already a '*Place at the Table*' sponsor, I hope you will consider joining us. Information on it can be found on our website at: <http://lingapcenter.org> or you may just give me a call at 517-529-9702. It would be a huge help to us and as always, since we are a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are fully tax-deductible.

I would like to leave you with one of my favorite quotes from Dr. Seuss. It goes like this:

"Unless someone like you cares an awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not!"

Sincerely,



John Drake

