



October 2010

Dear Friends,

I just returned from my most recent visit to the Lingap Center on September 10. As always, there was a lot going on; with approximately 100 kids at the Center, there always is. In my May update letter, I mentioned that since the public schools are so poor, we decided to send our elementary students to the private St. Bernard School. This has proven to be a great move and all of the kids are showing dramatic academic improvement. I attribute this to three things: St. Bernard's commitment to education; our emphasis on education and the efforts of our two full-time and two part-time tutors who are making education exciting. As the kids were lining up at the gate before school last week, I noticed that they were even playing educational games before they left for class! All of their grades are trending upward and attendance has been 100%.

Being a new school, St. Bernard will not be accredited for high school until next year. They also need additional space so they are constructing a new building. I received an e-mail today from one of the boys telling me that he had a big test at school and that he was really worried. He wanted to be at the top of the class to make all of us proud of him. They are really working hard.

All 11 of our college students are certainly challenged, but are doing well. Six came "home" for the weekend to visit me. It was great to see them all and it was fun to hear them tell stories about their new friends and "impossible" classes as they begin to venture out into the world.

In the May update letter, I also told you about the new garden. This garden is simply phenomenal. The children are growing more eggplant than I have ever seen, in addition to other vegetables and flowers. We are now providing most of our own produce, thereby reducing our food budget. Any excess produce is being sold at the market in town. The garden is so good that in July, the Toledo City Agriculture Department invited the children to represent Toledo City by displaying their vegetables at the Cebu City Provincial Capital Building as a part of the annual Agri-Fair. They were so proud to be asked and they loved the experience.

Not all news is good, as there has been an ongoing epidemic of dengue fever in the area. This is a mosquito-borne illness that can be fatal. At one point, we had six children in the hospital and one had to be transported to Cebu City by ambulance (an hour and half over the mountains). Thanks to all of you and your support, we were able to "weather the storm." All are now on the mend and all but one is back in school.

The Street Children's Education program is also making progress. The numbers vary from day to day, from 60 to 85 depending on the weather and other things. You will recall that we are teaching them basic arithmetic, reading and hygiene in addition to providing them with what is all too often their only meal of the day. Most importantly, we are giving them a sense of hope.

Frequently, I'm asked to identify our greatest need. Frankly, our greatest need is sponsors as a part of our recurring *Place at the Table* sponsorship program. It is our most critical sustaining initiative. Information about the program can be found on our website at <http://lingapcenter.org> or you can call me at 517-529-9702 with any questions. Since we are a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are fully tax-deductible. Additionally, since the Board of Directors and I pay all overheads (including the cost of this letter), 100% of all donations go directly to the benefit of the children. What started as an effort to save perhaps 26 children in need has now expanded into the hundreds, but there is still so much that needs to be done. If you are not already a sponsor, I hope that you will consider joining us.



I would like to leave you with a closing thought from St. Francis of Assisi, who said:

"Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, and suddenly, you are doing the impossible."

Sincerely,

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

John Drake

<http://www.lingapcenter.org>
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