



October 2014

Dear Friends,

As you know, the Lingap Center is home to some of the least fortunate children in the world. Without the Center, they have little hope for any sort of future. In an effort to change this dynamic, education continues to be one of the key foundations of the Lingap project. It is their pathway out of the poverty in which they find themselves. In past update letters, I have written much about our college students (this year, we have 16 in college) In March, we celebrated our third graduate. Two more will graduate this coming March (their school year runs from June to March).

My May letter told of the commercial cooking classes conducted by our cook Edgar, and the lessons that the children are learning about running a bakery and keeping up with the demands of managing all aspects of a business. They are all doing great and as I mentioned last time, their warm sugar donuts are beyond incredible (and I can prove it)!

Two weeks ago, we celebrated with our first vocational school graduate! Jenny Marie graduated from cosmetology school. She absolutely loves cutting hair and helping others look their finest. She has worked for a long time helping to get the children groomed for special events - such as graduation ceremonies! She is planning to continue her schooling to also become a certified massage therapist. While I am very proud of and happy for Jenny Marie, I will freely admit that it is somewhat bittersweet to again see the children we have nurtured for so long, go off on their own, but their success is our goal.



**Jennie Marie on Graduation Day**



**Nilo instructing the boys on welding.**

Our maintenance worker, Nilo, can fix anything! In the process, he is constantly seeking the 'assistance' of the children and along the way he is teaching them many mechanical and electrical skills (and they don't even realize that they are learning!!). They gather around to watch him do electrical wiring, build bookcases and virtually anything else you can imagine. Most recently, he was teaching the older boys to weld! There is a huge shipyard, Tsuneishi Shipbuilding, in nearby Balamban and they hire countless welders. Thanks to Nilo, our kids will hopefully have a big head start when it comes to entering vocational schools.

Recently, while watching Janice, our street educator, working with the children, I sat quietly watching the lesson for the day. These are students who for a wide variety of reasons will never have a chance to go to school. They all come from such difficult and heartbreaking situations. Sadly, all too often people tend to consider poverty-stricken children as just sad faces on the cover of a brochure or something they hear about in depressing television ads begging for money. Typically, children like this are unknown. No one really knows them or even wants to.... they are just empty faces. Sometimes we wonder if they are even real people?? But this afternoon, looking into the eyes of the street kids, it was so very clear that they are all real people - with real wants, feelings, worries, desires and everything else that we all want and feel. They have names!! They aren't just faces in a brochure.

*“No one has yet fully realized the wealth of sympathy, kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure.”*

*Emma Goldman*



**Street Education Program  
Rica and Marian - Age 6  
Larap Village**



**Street  
Education  
Student, Ligaya  
Age 70**



Our 'street students' range in age from 2 to 70. Ligaya, our oldest, is so very proud because for the first time in her life, she is learning to write her name!! Additionally, we were able to give her a donated 'pillowcase dress' and for the first time that we are aware of, she was dressed like a queen. What a wonderful feeling it was to see this miracle happen.

You may recall that we hold street education programs five days a week in three locations around the community. On Fridays, we take them to St. John de Sahagun Church for catechism lessons. Their



**Jane during a class with the street children.**

teacher there is Jane Crospero. Jane is totally blind but she is without a doubt, one of the most gifted educators I have ever met. The children simply adore her. She is truly a gift from God to the children and just knowing her is a blessing to me.

The day I watched the street education program with Janice and our Lingap volunteer peer-educators beside them, the children were laughing, smiling and learning! They were happy! The challenges they face are greater than most of us can possibly imagine but all of you were there to help them! Thanks to you, even though they may never achieve the level of success that we deem minimally acceptable, they now have a chance at a better life. At the very least, they will know how to read and understand values. For this, I want to thank you all. Without you, nothing would have been possible. The Lingap Center is truly a miracle!

If you are not already a Place at the Table sponsor, I hope that you may consider joining us. Information can be found on our website at: <http://lingapcenter.org>. Please remember that we are a 501(c)(3) organization and therefore, all donations are fully tax-deductible. Additionally, since the Board of Directors and I personally pay all administrative expenses, 100% of all donations go directly to the kids.

As I thought about all of our educational initiatives, I could not help but recall a great quote from Nelson Mandela who once said:

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world!"*

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John Drake.

John Drake