



November 2013

Dear Friends,

I first met Aileen in February of 2002, during my first visit to the old Lingap Center - the pig slaughterhouse. She was not attending school or church and she was sitting on the edge of a pig trough with a blank stare on her face. She had a broken spirit, no future, no hope and no place to go. On October 12, 2013, we celebrated her graduation from the University of San Carlos, with a degree in Tourism Management!! She is our third college graduate thus far. She asked me if it was possible for her to thank all of you who helped to make this possible.

Here is her letter to you.....

Dear Lingap Supporters,

***"You are educated. Your certification is in your degree.
You may think of it as the ticket to the good life.
Let me ask you to think of an alternative.
Think of it as your ticket to change the world!"***

Tom Brokaw



Aileen and her brother, Edmar...2002

I have eight brothers and I am the only girl of the family. My father is a jobless by-stander and my mother was a free-lance photographer. Her income didn't make much for a big family like us. In 2002, after giving birth of our youngest brother, she was paralyzed and got pneumonia. I was only a child then without any hopes and had no idea of the world. Since I am the only girl, I was told by my older brothers that I should be left in our little shanty house to take care of my younger brothers or else they would beat me up. I couldn't do anything but to shut up and stay at home. We didn't have anything to pay for my mother's hospital bills or her medicine since we lived in such poverty.

At the age of eight I could only remember my mother's lovely face, her soft hands touching my face as innocent as a lamb saying *"My daughter, I couldn't give you a better life, I couldn't send you to school and now I'm dying. Momma can't even walk now and doesn't have any pesos to pay the bills, I don't have money to buy enough food for the family. But I just can't easily give up! I have a big God and I know He is up there to always protect us. God will find a way"*.

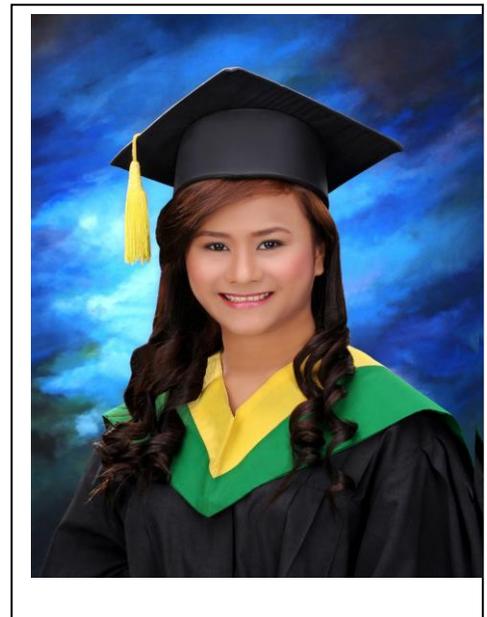
She told me that I have to go where someone could take care of me and someone could provide me with an education. I was crying because I didn't want to live away from her or away from my family. To calm me down, she promised that she's going to take me back when everything got better and she got well. But that promise didn't last long. She died a few days after I was brought to my new home, the old Lingap Center. I was so thankful to her. She brought me to this place that provided me everything like food for my mind, body and soul.

After years of staying and living in the Center, with all those good and bad memories, I am writing this short life story of mine to tell you how big God is and that He finds ways in spite of unbelievable hardship. He sends people

as His instruments to provide life changing experiences to those who are hopeless. The story brings back the memories I had before my mother died. How it hurt when my classmates talked about someone in their lives who they called "Mom". How lovely it is while walking in the mall, in the streets when I could see the happiness of a mother and a daughter holding hands loving each other. What a lucky picture! But I realized that in spite all that happens there is the Lingap Center that I could turn to. I would be begging in the streets or worse without all of you who made my life possible. You are my family now.

Life is filled with so many exciting twists and turns. Life is a great teacher. As we traverse this journey called life, we face challenges. It is not easy to face every hardship with a smile. But we need to remember that with every hardship, we emerge stronger. To everyone who touched my life - all of our Lingap supporters, I say thank you. To my 'family' the Lingap Children's Foundation, the Lingap staff, our special benefactors and sponsors, thank you for supporting my studies. This would not have been possible without all of you. Thank you Tito John Drake for giving me a chance to be a part of your family and to your family for the endless support they have given to you and in turn, to the Lingap wards. To my brothers and sisters at Lingap, I say "never give up! Be strong!" I will never forget any of you and I'll come back to you the right time comes.

To the teachers and Lingap tutors who tried to instill in us a passion for learning; to the administrators who wanted to make our college experiences as amazing as possible; to my alma mater, the University of San Carlos, for molding me into to a better person and to the advisors who helped me decide what path to take, I say thank you. To my friends for accepting me for who and what I am, and for all the laughter and tears we've shared; to the ones who gave me heartache, thank you. To the ones who truly supported me and to the ones who have looked down on me, thank you, for you inspired me to achieve even more. To those who gave me happiness, and to the ones who treated me like their own daughter, thank you. Thank you for you have helped to make me stronger each day. To the ones I leaned on when I needed someone to talk to and to all those others I depend on, I am very grateful for everything. You are truly God's blessing to me. I am a proud Lingap kid as well as a proud University of San Carlos "Carolinian".



***"I do it because I can! I can because I want to!
I want to because you said I couldn't!"***

Author Unknown

Thank you all,

Aileen

Following her graduation, Aileen obtained a year-long internship at the Baltimore Country Club in the U. S., subject to obtaining a travel and work VISA. The internship will begin in the Spring of 2014. The competition for the internships was intense, but Aileen was one of the few selected. Thank you all for helping to make the Lingap Center a reality. As I hope you can see, your support really is changing lives!

Sincerely,

John Drake