

Lingap Center Update, March 13, 2004

Dear Friends,

The last update I sent out was following my January trip to Cebu, when we held the fiesta for the children and in conjunction with World Vision, made some final plans for construction. Today, I write with an update of our financial progress to date and a brief summary of our construction status.

I am very pleased to report that we have raised \$160,000 or 53% of our \$300,000 goal thus far!!! This is really exciting. We have come this far thanks to incredible community support – including five feature articles in four different newspapers!! The Jackson Citizen Patriot has been following us very closely, including the efforts of the Hanover/Horton Girl Scout and Brownie bottle/can drive. If you have read the articles, you know that the Girl Scouts & Brownies worked very hard collecting thousands of bottles and cans – which were subsequently stolen!!! Following a Jackson Citizen Patriot front page article,

the community rallied to their cause and donated many times more bottles and cans than they had in the first place! I have no idea yet how much they collected, but they tell me that it is A LOT, and they are planning to surprise us with the amount during an “official presentation” of the money in April. The girls, the parents and their leaders worked tirelessly for the Lingap Children. It was really cold that weekend too. I’m really proud of them.

Family Life Radio did an extensive interview of me and ran it for a week during their 7:00 AM and 12:30 PM news broadcasts. I appeared on the Bart Hawley Show on JTV and have made presentations to the Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary and others. However, the biggest fund raiser to date was the Valentine’s Dinner Dance at the Gene Davis Banquet Facility, sponsored by Jim and Teresa Sosinski, Ray and Nedy Javier, Lumen Brillantes, Fe Busse, Gina Imperial, Daylinda

Lademan, Annie Taruc and Manny and Fely Tuazon. It was a tremendous success, with approximately 300 people in attendance!! (I was hoping we would have maybe between 100 and 150)!! This brought in approximately \$24,000 and was a wonderful evening – the food was great! We have reserved the facility again for next year, so please mark February 12 on your calendar.

You may recall that I had an anonymous donor who after contributing \$15,000, offered a challenge that if 15 individuals gave \$1000 each or one person gave \$15,000, he would match this year's donation next year. Well, we made it!!! We now have ½ of our operating expenses for next year. We also had a donor just today who has offered to match up to 10, \$1000 contributions for \$10,000. With the matches, this would mean \$20,000. I hope that if you are able, you will consider such a contribution.

While I am very pleased and really excited that we are as far along financially as we are, I can not help but feel a bit insecure about the remaining \$140,000. I expect that this will be harder for us – but I don't doubt for a second that we will make it. We do have some more fund raising efforts in mind, but they are only in the planning stages at this point. More later. However, your help is needed – if you know of anyone who might be interested, please tell them about the project.

There have been other initiatives as well. One individual donated money so that the children could all have dental check ups (first time ever for them) and the CMS Club of Consumers Energy and CMS Energy sent toothbrushes. Numerous businesses around town have also done things to raise money, such as sponsoring “dress down days,” (CP Federal Credit Union) to setting donation cans by the cash registers (Office Depot) to a bread stick campaign (Fazoli's). I am told that WalMart of Charlotte will be sending things soon. And, there are others looking for ways to assist.

With regard to the construction, you may recall from my last update that we ran into a snag. It seems that the neighbors of the current Lingap Center saw an opportunity to further exploit the children and decided to charge a “toll” for access to the site. Consequently, we are moving to a new location. This meant that the City needed to acquire new land and do all of the work required to obtain a clear title. It also meant that the engineering drawings needed to be redone. This slowed things and it may impact the ultimate cost – but I am sticking with my original financial goal – at least for now. The City, World Vision and I are working very hard to stay within our original budget.

Further complicating matters is the fact that this is election season in the Philippines. An “election ban” goes into effect on March 25, meaning that no contracts may be issued by the City until after the election. This is a good

policy, but it might slow things for us, until possibly June. If we are able to begin construction BEFORE March 25, we will be ok and consequently, the City, the Engineering Office and World Vision are working feverishly to begin construction by the 25th of this month. I have my fingers crossed and am saying prayers so that we can get another 75 children (in addition to the 24 already there) off the streets, into a safe, secure environment and into school soon.

This pretty much brings you up to speed with regard to our current status as of March 13, 2004. Jeff (my son) is working on a website, which is still under construction, but it does have some pictures and information on it. He will be posting updates to it as we go along. This can be accessed at www.lingapcenter.org. We should have it fully operational in a few days. Also, I am sending this update to my E-mail list as well as my mailing list. If you

have received a hard copy (U.S. Mail), it would be helpful to me if you would send me your E-mail address (if you have access to E-mail) at jfdrake48@comcast.net. I promise I will do all I can to keep you informed. If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact me by E-mail or by mailing me at John F. Drake, P.O. Box 1553, Jackson, MI 49204.

Finally, I would like to share with you a quote that I got from my good friend Mark Sorrell, which I believe very accurately describes all of you and your concern for the Lingap Children. He said, "Friends are the gloves that God wears when He wants to touch us." So my friends, I want to again say on behalf of the Lingap Children, thank you for your support and encouragement. It means a lot more than you might imagine.

John Drake