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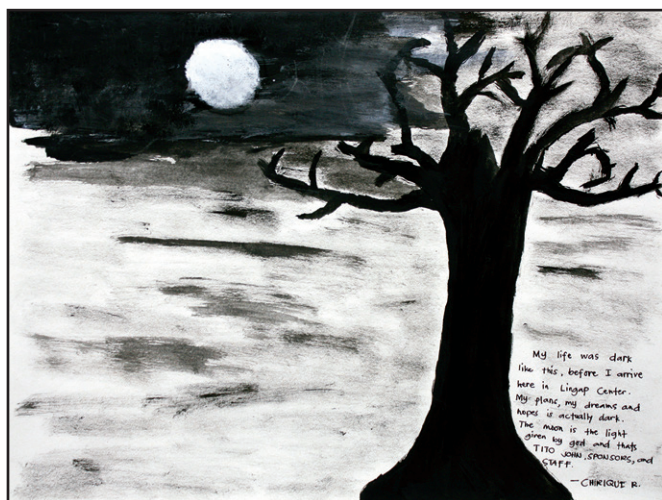


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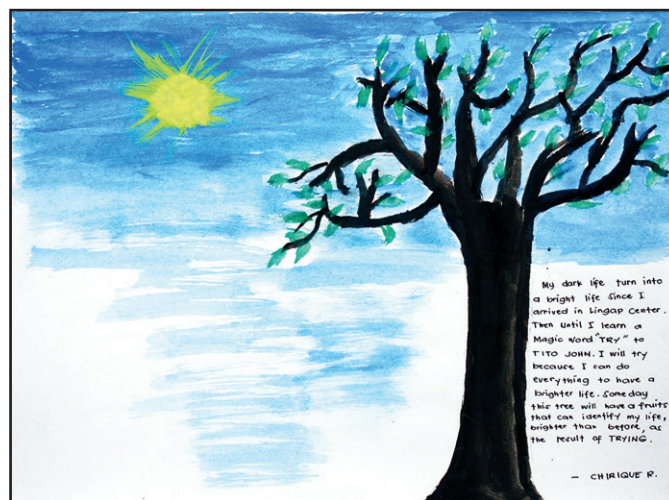
Dear Friends

When I first visited the old Lingap Center back in 2001, I found 26 abused, neglected or abandoned children living in what was a dilapidated, converted pig slaughterhouse. It was beyond my wildest imagination to believe that children were living in such conditions. They were not able to attend school since they could not afford uniforms nor did they have the money for their school projects. Worst of all however, was that as street kids, they were not even welcome in the church! This was because they might beg from people while they were praying! They were all malnourished, and in the ‘kitchen’ there was hardly enough food available to sustain them. The entire situation was simply beyond heart-breaking, especially when I considered that they were just like my own kids in every way except that they had been born into poverty.

After many sleepless nights and much reflection, I vowed that I would do all I could to help them change their lives and give them hope for a brighter future. Since then, so much has changed. In 2006, we built the new Lingap Center, which is a residential child-care facility, capable of handling as many as 132 children. It has always been my hope that this facility would become a ‘beacon of hope’ for many others yet to come. All of the kids are now in school and are very active in church! Since opening the new facility, 769 kids have passed through our doors. So far, we have celebrated with 41 college or vocational graduates with more on the way! As you saw in my January update letter, we are now considered a Level III organization by the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which is the highest possible accreditation rating according to the standards set for all residential facilities in the Philippines. This means that we are one of very few top-rated organizations of our kind in the entire country. We are now a model that all others are trying to emulate. Our Lingap ideas, values, policies and procedures are now impacting the lives of countless kids throughout the entire country.



My life was dark like this before I arrive here in Lingap Center. My plans, my dreams and hopes is actually dark. The moon is the light given by God and that's Tito John, sponsors and staff.



My dark life turn into a bright life since I arrived in Lingap Center. Then, until I learn a magic word “TRY” from Tito John. I will try because I can do everything to have a brighter life. Someday, this tree will have a fruit that can identify my life, brighter than before, as the result of trying.

But most importantly, at least for me, is that the Lingap Center truly has become what I always hoped it would: a ‘beacon of hope’ for children in need. Several years ago, we admitted a little girl by the name of Chirique and her brother Rudel to the Lingap Center. They came to us from a very challenging background and I was more than delighted when they joined our little family. Not long after they arrived, Chirique gave me the two drawings above. She told me that they were the only way that she could effectively express her feelings about being admitted to the Lingap Center.

Chirique is now a third-year student at the Cebu Normal University in Cebu City, majoring in special education. She has repeatedly told me that she is committed to helping other children, just as she was helped at the Lingap Center, but she wants to especially help those with special needs. She recently sent me a note and photo of her receiving a certificate for being named to the colleges’ dean’s list. Her note to me said:

“I was just a little girl when the Lingap Center saved me and my dreams. I was able to go to school, eat three meals a day, and sleep in a comfortable and safe environment. I am forever grateful to the people who have helped me become the person I am today. Soon, the little girl who was once sitting outside with nothing to eat, will be sitting with graduates, waiting for my name to be called to receive my diploma which will be dedicated to the Lingap family.”

Please take a look at the smile on her face as she receives her award. That tells it all. I want to thank you all so much for helping to make this transition possible. Without your help, Chirique would never have had such an opportunity. Also, please think about the many children with special needs that she will be able to help to live their dreams and have a more fulfilling life just as she has. Chirique is just the beginning for them.



When I think about all that the Lingap Center has become and the kindness and support that all of you have shared with us, as well as success stories like that of Chirique, I can’t help but think about the following quote from an unknown author:

“In moments of darkness, your kindness can be a beacon of light, illuminating the path for others. Let your compassion ripple through the world, touching lives in ways that you may never fully realize.”

Thank you all so much for helping to illuminate the path for Chirique and for helping the Lingap Center to go so much farther than any of us ever dreamed possible. Through your efforts, you have changed the lives of not only the 769 Lingap wards so far, but you have also touched the lives of countless others throughout the Philippines in ways that you will never fully realize. Thank you for helping to lift them all. In my mind, it simply does not get any better than that. Thank you all so much.

Sincerely,

John Drake