



September 1, 2006

Dear Friends,

Much has happened since the April 21 Lingap Center dedication ceremony and my last “update” letter. We have gradually increased to 80 children living at the new Center, and during the fourth quarter of this year, we will reach our maximum capacity of 100 children. This means that 100 children (and countless others in the years to come) will be off the streets, living in a place of safety and security, and attending church and school, most for the first time in their lives. It is a wonderful project in more ways than I can describe – and it was all of you who made it possible.

I visited the Center along with Katherine Sorrell, a narrative writer, during late June, to “document” the project for fundraising purposes. To further understand the situation, Katherine and I went on approximately 25 “home visits” to better determine what conditions the children were escaping. What we found defies description. I think I was given a glimpse into what Mother Teresa saw, did and felt. I have seen a lot of poverty in my travels. The story is the same. The despair, physical abuse, neglect, hunger, and sadness are very real..... and the victims are always the children. I will not go into detail except to say that poverty is an insidious thing and I am not exaggerating when I say that in some cases, (not all) the Lingap Center has meant the difference between life and death. It truly is giving the children a better life and hope for the future. I will also say that observing first-hand the former living conditions of the children who I know so well, was emotionally very difficult for me. What a haven we have created for them and I can only thank God that I was able to be a part of it. I was reminded of a quote from Bob Pierce which goes something like this, “*Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God.*” Quite frankly, my heart was broken. I have so much work ahead of me.

I did make some progress on my pledge to develop a transition plan for the children to integrate them back into their social structure when the time comes for them to leave the Lingap Center. However, my first and foremost priority must be to sustain that which we have already built and perhaps expand that to accommodate more.

Now, I would like to share some very good news of a different sort. I am delighted to announce that The Lingap Children’s Foundation has been certified as an eligible agency by United Way of Jackson County for donor designations. Donors can designate that their pledges, or a portion thereof, be directed to eligible charities which now includes the Lingap Children’s Foundation. This is the first year we have been eligible, so if you make a pledge to this year’s United Way campaign, please keep us in mind. This can be done through employer payroll deductions. I would also like to add that while I hope and pray that you will consider us, please keep in mind the needs of the local charities, which are also focused on the less fortunate in our own community.

<http://www.lingapcenter.org>
a 501(c)(3) organization

I have received inquiries about whether we are affiliated with any other charitable organizations, including World Vision. The answer to this is no. We are not affiliated with any other organization since we incorporated as the Lingap Children's Foundation and obtained tax-exempt status in May of last year. I am working at this time to incorporate "The Lingap Children's Development Center, Inc." in the Philippines and obtain tax exempt status there. This will broaden our base and provide a greater opportunity for Philippine support.

In my last update letter, I enclosed a brochure describing a sponsorship program that we have called, "*A Place at the Table*." This is a program that helps to ensure that children do not need to be turned away from the Lingap Center or be returned to the streets. We have fallen far short of our goal and as a result, I would like to ask that you perhaps reconsider participating if you have not already done so. If you are already a sponsor, perhaps you can help to recruit others? It is easy to enroll online by visiting our website at www.lingapcenter.org. The program is fully described on the website which has been updated. (You may need to refresh your browser to get the latest updates).

And finally, I would like to ask that you mark Saturday, February 10, 2007 on your calendar. This is the date of our fourth annual "Hearts for Orphans" Valentines fundraiser, which will again be held at the Gene Davis Banquet Hall in Jackson, MI. It is our only major fundraising activity and it has been a pretty incredible event in each of the past three years. More information, including invitations will be sent to you later.

In closing, I will tell you that it is very clear to me that God has expressed His will for me and I am resolved to make a difference in the lives of these children and those who will follow them. I can assure you that I will do it, no matter what it takes. I know too that you will be with me on this journey and for that I extend my most heartfelt thanks.

Mother Teresa is someone from whom I have learned much. When I think of the "home visits" I described above, I am reminded of one of her quotes in which she said,

"At the end of our lives, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.' "

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Drake". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

John Drake