



February 2013

Dear Friends,

In this update letter, I would like to tell you a little bit about the past Christmas season at the Lingap Center. There were a lot of activities and it seemed as though everyone was going in many directions at once as the children and staff had many things planned.

A number of our supporters donated money to be utilized to purchase Christmas gifts for the children. Part of the money we received was used to purchase gifts specifically for each of the Lingap kids. Everyone received something different, as we worked to ensure that the gifts represented things that the children needed.

The rest of the money was used for a Christmas party hosted by the Lingap wards for the street children from the squatter villages of Larap, Kenner and Lawis (perhaps 300 children altogether). These children have absolutely nothing and are among the poorest of the poor. Things like Christmas and birthday parties are something that they have only heard of. The Lingap wards gave each and every street child a small wrapped gift to open. No one was left out. The smiles on their faces were more than worth it. It was a very emotional moment to see the Lingap kids reach out to those less fortunate than themselves! They presented the gifts directly from their hearts. This was followed by singing and a dance competition between the Lingap kids and the street kids with us serving as 'judges.' They simply love to dance and the singing was great. We followed this up with snacks for all.

The following day, we held a special Third Saturday Outreach program (children's Mass and soup kitchen). Over 2,400 were in attendance - celebrating Mass and sharing a meal. We also sponsored 26 children for baptism into the Church on that day, bringing the total baptized to 100 since the Lingap Center opened in 2006. Later, with Fr. Geoff Rose, we celebrated Mass in the squatter village of Larap. For people who are unable to attend church, this was a very special event. Perhaps it was the best Christmas gift we could have given them. (We had also done this last August).

All activities were simply wonderful. I can think of no better way to spend a Christmas weekend. To hear children who have nothing, laughing and singing and seeing them dance and have fun is an experience that words simply cannot describe. I can only say thank you to all of you for helping to make the Christmas party, the Third Saturday Outreach and the Lingap Project possible. I really believe that this weekend represented the true spirit of Christmas.

With regard to just a few of our other ongoing activities, the twins continue to thrive. They are now almost four years old and they truly enjoyed the Christmas party! They were everywhere all at once and helped to distribute the gifts. Remember, in my mind, the two of them represent the greatest possible gift. They are alive today thanks to you.



**Genalyn, Genelyn and John**

The school year ends in March (and begins again in June). This March, we will have our second college graduate. Marme will graduate from the University of San Carlos with a degree in Advertising. She is currently employed at the Cebu City Marriott Hotel and is doing just fine. Her senior thesis was entitled; *A Six-Month Advocacy Campaign for the Lingap Center*, focusing on how the project saved her life and how she might help to sustain the Center.

Ronna, a third year Agriculture student at Cebu Technological University, is about to complete a six month program in which she studied Agriculture in the Netherlands on a fully paid scholarship. It was the experience of a lifetime for her. She is doing exceptionally well in school and we are extremely proud of her.



**Ronna is studying in the Netherlands**

Aileen will graduate this coming October with a degree in Tourism from the University of San Carlos. She will soon be completing her On the Job Training at the Cebu City Marriott Hotel.

As I watched the Christmas party proceedings, the Third Saturday Outreach, Mass in the squatter village, the twins entertaining everyone and of course all of our students, I could not help but remember a quote, from *The Grinch who Stole Christmas*, in which Dr. Seuss said:

***"The Grinch stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so?***

***It came without ribbons. It came without tags.***

***It came without packages, boxes or bags.***

***And he puzzled and puzzled 'til his puzzler was sore.***

***Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before.***

***What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store?***

***Maybe Christmas, perhaps..... means a little bit more!"***

Thank you all for being a part of the Lingap family and making all of this possible.



John Drake

**Save the Date:** Our tenth annual fundraiser this year will be a Brunch at the Cascades Manor House in Jackson on Saturday, April 27, 2013.

***Invitations will be sent in March.***

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