



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

2020/4

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Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

As everywhere else in the world, the Covid 19 pandemic is shaping people's lives in the Philippines. In Cagayan de Oro, the general community quarantine still applies, which severely restricts freedom of movement among its residents. Due to lack of work and income because of this, many people in our project area are going into debts in order to be able to still feed their families. One ray of hope, however, is that school has started again, even if there are still seeming problems to overcome.

Also moving forward is the construction of the Socio-Therapeutic Prevention and Intervention Center, our Alice Rose Clover Child Development Center. After the shell foundation of the first floor has been completed, work is currently underway on the concrete ceiling of the second floor.

Building Courage - among other things, that's what we are trying to do with the „Safer Kids“ Project because cases of domestic violence and the exploitation of children are on the rise during the current pandemic. Children, young adults, parents, and PIKIFI Staff all took part in a trial run of the said project.

With great grief we bid farewell to founding and board member, Ruth Kellenberger-Gafner. The beloved mother of Thomas Kellenberger passed away on October 6, 2020, after many years of brave fighting against cancer. As a founding member of Island Kids Philippines, Ruth was dedicated to the work started by her son, Thomas. With much heart, professionalism, commitment, and joy Ruth significantly contributed to the success of the organization and thus the welfare of numerous children and their poverty stricken families in our project areas. „Dear Ruth, We miss you so much. But in our hearts you live on and as a great and brave woman, you remain in our memory. „Without you, dearest mommy, I would not have made it“ (Thomas Kellenberger).

Thank you very much for your support and loyalty in these difficult times. We wish you a wonderful Advent Season and hope that the New Year will bring us closer together again, also physically.

■ School Starts In 2020!

Finally, classes for School Year 2020-2021 had resumed on October 5, 2020!

Lessons In The Children's Village

In the morning, there is first of all housework, gardening, and sports. After that, the school lessons start. The children and adolescents are divided into age-appropriate groups, each supported by two people (teacher, houseparent, and/or social worker). The younger children, with module lessons, concentrate on their work and



study hard on their school materials. The youngsters, with online lessons, however, work in the computer room of the school building. Since some of them prefer to watch movies on YouTube or chat with friends instead of following the school lessons, we are now considering changing over to modular lessons for them as well. Children and staff are being served food by our cook Lanie, but they eat in their respective living groups instead of eating in the school canteen. After that, classes continue until 3pm. At the end, there are some games or group work with the social workers. We hope that the very popular evening programs with the volunteer Ma'am Metzie can be resumed soon.

Lessons For the Children enrolled in our Community based Program

Module classes for the community based elementary students (kindergarten through 6th grade) are still in the adjustment phase. Once a week, parents pick up modules for their children, which have been prepared by the school department. At the same time, they bring back the previously answered/solved module performance tasks of the subjects Mathematics, English, Filipino, Music Arts, PE and Health (MAPEH). Great health emphasis is placed on physical distancing, hand washing hygiene, and wearing of masks and face shields. Unfortunately, not all parents manage to pick up the distributed materials on time, let alone bring them back completed. Our staff tries hard to contact or visit these families to assess their individual problems with homeschooling and to find ways on how we can be of assistance to them. For example, since voice recordings of the



lessons are broadcasted over the radio on school days, we check to see if the parents would like to have a radio set for their child - if they have electricity. Some teens in high school have modular lessons and some have online classes. In the Landfill Community Learning Center (old school building), in the middle of the slum area near the Landfill, a teacher, two staff members, and Jeb Bayawon (former student of PIKIFI and now English teacher), are available to all students for their questions on their modules. Although not everything is working as we would like it to, we are very happy that our students are finally getting lessons again after such a long time.

■ Protecting Children From Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

With the „Safer Kids“ Project as part of the OSAEC program (Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children), the international aid organization, Save The Children, together with UNICEF, and the Asia Foundation, is trying to sensitize the population on the rapidly increasing problem of online abuse and exploitation of children. Also, efforts are being made to educate children and young adults about this horrible crime and thus protect them from it. For this preventive work in schools



Test run with selected children

and in poor neighborhoods, Save the Children is looking for local NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) in various cities and regions of the country to implement the project through them as the frontliners in their respective communities. In Cagayan de Oro, they have chosen to partner with PIKIFI. With selected children in two groups (6-11 years old and 12-18 years old, respectively), parents, caregivers, and PIKIFI-staff were allowed to participate in a test run. The results are currently being evaluated, after which a final decision will be made as to whether we will participate in this joint project eventually.

■ Socio-Therapeutic Prevention and Intervention Center/Alice Rose Clover Child Development Center

Construction is progressing rapidly despite the current heavy rainfalls. The foundation has been laid, the shell of the first floor is in place, and the steel deck for the second floor is currently being poured with concrete. The foundation had to be laid three meters deeper due to the results of the soil load test, which lead to a slight increase in construction costs. On the other hand, we are very thankful that after the corona-related delay of the start of constructions, construction works are now progressing within the new schedule and with expenses within the proposed budget. However, we are very sad to report that on October 28, 2020, our engineer and construction manager, Alexander Morena-Vuelban, had suffered a fatal heart attack during his inspection at the construction site. Despite immediate transport to the hospital, our dear friend, long time partner and highly esteemed and capable man, passed away the same day.



Construction is progressing rapidly.

■ We Are Mourning

We are immensely saddened by the death of Ruth Kellenberger- Gafner, the mother of Thomas Kellenberger. Ruth passed away on October 6, 2020, after years of illness. Ruth received palliative care at home from her two children, Thomas and Jennifer, as well as from her partner Martin, despite two short hospital stays in the last weeks of her life. Thus, in accordance with her wishes, she was able to die at home in the presence of her immediate family. Her impressive dying process brought home even more clearly what a brave and special woman Thomas' dearly beloved mother was. She knew her fate, but she never complained. Ruth left us with dignity and reconciled with herself and the world. On October 19, 2020, the farewell service, which Ruth herself had prepared, took place in the Church in Beatenberg, which was filled to capacity. Ruth was fully behind the Island Kids Philippines Project from the very beginning and was therefore instrumental in the success of IKP. She has visited the work in the Philippines three times. She leaves behind a huge gap, also among our staff in the Philippines. We carry her with us, in our hearts, until we see her again.



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Actual information you'll find as well
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