



Tomorrow's Future Today

Merry Christmas from CRF

Just over a year has passed since the first publication of "Tomorrow's Future Today", and many things have happened in that time. You, the readers, have met several of the Papa John Centre (PJC) children, but not all. You have read about the tragic conditions that beset these innocent kids and many of them have, thanks to you, received a second chance at a normal childhood and a future filled with hope. Every month the CRF provides for the needs of 118 parents and 157 children in its community-based programme, 73 children in its street-based programme and 30 children at the PJC. Through the gracious generosity of our donors the PJC was able to: purchase a motorcycle with side-car in order to bring the children to and from school; connect to the city's main water supply and are now enjoying the benefits that come with having fresh water; and meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of all

the children in its care. None of this would have been remotely possible if it wasn't for the people who have understood the plight and anguish these children have experienced in their lives. This Christmas we ask that you give the gift of life to yet another child; sponsor a child and see the difference you can make in his or her life. These children deserve a chance at a normal life. From all of us here at the CRF and from everyone at the PJC, we thank you for your kindness and generosity and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Christmas on the Mountain

While many children are being helped, there are still countless who wake up every morning, regardless of Christmas, and make their way to the top of the garbage mountain at Payatas. Some have families



they can return to in the evenings, but others have nothing to return to, and no reasons to celebrate. Their day consists of picking through garbage in conditions that are beyond inhumane. But choices are non-existent when survival is the only option. They can only dream of going to school like other children. However, you can make their dream come true.

Children's Relief Fund

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October—Children's Month Celebrations

On 19 October, all of the PJC kids and staff went to the Wildlife park to enjoy the beauty of nature, and to tighten the bonds between the kids and the staff. Special foods, games, group work and other activities involving cooperation between kids and staff were prepared. The kids could be kids and even the adults forgot for a short period of time that they were adults.



Then on 21 October, 20 of the children were invited to a feeding programme hosted by the department of agriculture in celebration of Meat Safety Consciousness Week. There the children sang and danced for the other visitors and were able to enjoy a wide selection of foods prepared by the participating companies.

From 28-31 October, USMI in coordination with UNICEF and Action International provided a Trainer's Training programme on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This was attended by a variety of organisations and churches, allowing for a mixed group of child

leaders, social workers and pastors. Gemma Bacuyag, director of the PJC, was one of the facilitators and spoke on the issue of Unregistered Children. Robbie Santos and Jennylyn Cortez also participated in the convention as child leaders and received training to advocate for children's rights. On the second day of the convention, 10 other children from the centre went to receive their training, after which they were allowed to use the hotel's swimming pool and enjoy themselves for the remainder of the day.



Community—based sustainability training

Presently, 150 families in the areas of Payatas and Zuzaregue are being helped. Of these families, 148 are children and 113 are parents.

During the months of September and October several basic business management training sessions were held in order to teach parents how to make simple project proposals and at the same time providing qualified members with financial assistance. The speaker was a representative from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and conveyed to the participants the importance of planning and discipline when attempting any business endeavor.



In addition to these training sessions, Parent Effectiveness Training (PES) sessions were also held to show and

teach parents how to better handle their children in order to understand one another more. The training was in coordination with the National Council on Social Development (NCSO) and UNICEF. This was a great help to the parents as they acquired new insights into themselves and their communities. The objective being that these parents will return to their communities and impart the knowledge they learned, and in such a way new community leaders will arise. Because it is only at the grass-roots level that change can begin. Not only will these parents teach other parents and hold them responsible, but they will also show their children by example that a child is precious and needs love and care, starting in the home.



Gino Cordial

The child calls himself Gino. According to the woman who referred him to the Papa John Center (PJC), Gino was abandoned by his mother at the doorstep of a Thai couple on the outskirts of Metro Manila, sometime in September of 2001. However, the Thai couple were not interested in the child because he was always seen roaming the streets of that area. Gino experienced living in many different places before finally being brought to the PJC.

Families with whom he stayed before claimed they gave him up because he was too demanding and always fought with the other children. However, that behaviour has not manifested itself at the PJC. Gino is currently the youngest of the children at the PJC. He is considered the cute and charming one by all at the Center. The PJC has made every effort to locate Gino's biological mother, but she has moved and can not be found. His father remarried and has his own family and is not interested in caring for Gino.



Gio Matias' story—family reconciliation is a reality!

Gio was reported to a local child agency due to serious physical abuse by his father Ramon. Gio had acquired lashes on different areas of his body. He had hematomas on his back, arms and legs, and had suffered serious cuts in the genital area seemingly caused by a metal wire of some sort. His head also showed signs of having been beaten. He was referred to the Papa John Center (PJC) for care and shelter. Gio told the social worker there that his father would always beat him for no apparent reason. If anyone attempted to help him, the father would threaten them not to interfere. When Gio's maternal grandmother would try to help him, the father would beat her as well. He was very violent and talked constantly of war and other violent acts. Their neighbours would hear Gio screaming and the father yelling, but he had instilled enough fear in them so they did nothing to help. The father was unemployed and also a drug user and would use their home for this as well. Gio's uncle, a beautician, supported their daily needs as best he could. Gio manifests a lot of anger towards his father for the mental and physical abuse he endured. At the PJC he was quite difficult to deal with, being naughty and mischievous. He is however very active and playful despite his experiences. However, if anyone speaks to him in a slightly raised voice or he encounters a problem, he begins to cry. He is very fragile and has many issues to deal with as a result of his abuse. Gio is primarily interested in playing, finding his studies uninteresting; this creates problems for him at school. On the other hand, continuous guidance, encouragement and counseling has improved his behaviour little by little.

This was the heart-wrenching report on Gio when he was admitted to the Papa John Centre in June 2001. After two years of caring for him body and soul, and a seemingly endless search for his biological mother, the PJC was able to find her. Although she is currently working overseas, it was decided that Gio's maternal aunt and grandmother would re-unite with him and he would once again have a family to love and care for him. The mother had no contact with Gio's biological father after leaving the country and knew nothing of the torture and mental abuse Gio had suffered at his hands. On 11 September of this year, Gio left the PJC with his aunt and grandmother, returning with them to their home. Gio has suffered horribly due to the forced separation to protect him from his father, but he was the happiest of children when he left the centre that day. His mother and her family promised the staff at the centre that they would love and care for Gio in the future, allowing no harm to come to him again. "Gio's prayers were answered", said Gemma Bacuyag, director of the PJC, "but many children are not so fortunate and therefore the work continues to locate other children's families, or care for and educate the children who have no families or whose families abandoned them without a care. However, it was a joyous occasion to see the smile on Gio's face as he left the centre, that smile said it all!"

Children's Relief Fund

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The children's future in our hands



Children's Relief Fund, Inc. is a European non-profit foundation established in the Philippines in order to:

- Raise funds for street children and the less advantaged;
- Implement programs/projects, through donor funds, to alleviate conditions besieging the less fortunate;
- Promote and advocate for the rights of children, provide educational opportunities and skills training;
- Provide basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter for the less advantaged.

CRF was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Philippines under No. CN200259125, on 30 October 2002.

How You Can Help

The United Nations has called the children of today the future of tomorrow. This is a fact that can not be ignored. In a world ravaged by wars, disease, poverty and famines, the only hope that humanity has for a more civilized tomorrow is the children of today. If we can show them love and compassion, and teach them the wondrous things of our world, then maybe they can love and teach their children, and their children's children. However, if we don't help them, who will? What lessons are we then passing along to the next generation?

Giving the street children the chance of a lifetime does work, and it matters. They are receiving an education. They have a home,

whether temporary or permanent. They are learning that the world is not "out" there solely to exploit them. For the first time in their lives they are allowed to be what they really are, children.

Please allow us to continue giving them these opportunities. Allow us to help them so that they may one day help themselves.

If you would like to contribute to the street children's cause, please send your donations to:

Children's Relief Fund, Inc.

CITIBANK, Greenhills

Philippines

Account Number: 8241085751

SWIFT Code: CITIPHMX



"I need your help!"