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Vision Help
International Care Foundation

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ABUSE,
NEGLECT &
REJECTION**

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JULY TO DECEMBER

NEWS & UPDATES
2020



Carsten + Mercy Aust



"AND THE ANGEL SAID, BEHOLD, I PROCLAIM UNTO YOU GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE: FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY A SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD."

How bad would it be if there was no rescue service? No fire department, no police? One is in need, but no one comes to help. Such a thing cannot be imagined at all. We have all experienced how good, important and of utmost necessity it is for us that people stand by us in our time of need. Helping one another has also always played a central role in the Bible. "Bear one another's burdens and you will fulfill the law of Christ," says one of the biblical letters of the apostle Paul. There we are encouraged to lend a helping hand to others. But often it takes looking beyond our comfort zone, to realize that the abundance we have is often lacking somewhere else--and that it needs people to share acts of kindness with other and not tire in doing so.

God himself has come into our world to take care of our need. A need for a savior. In the midst of a world lost in sin, misery, selfishness and egoism, lives lived distanced from God, he came to adopting us as sons and daughters. He carried our burden on the cross and gave us Life. His love for us is the central message of Christmas. Jesus came into our world to become my Savior. How many of us have experienced this salvation and celebrate it again during this Christmas season?

But as the angels proclaimed, this joy shall be to all people. Everyone should hear about the Savior, who is Christ the LORD. And this is what drives us as a whole Mission. Because the message of the Savior must be heard--even today! Let yourself be encouraged in this special Christmas season and yourself a part of it!

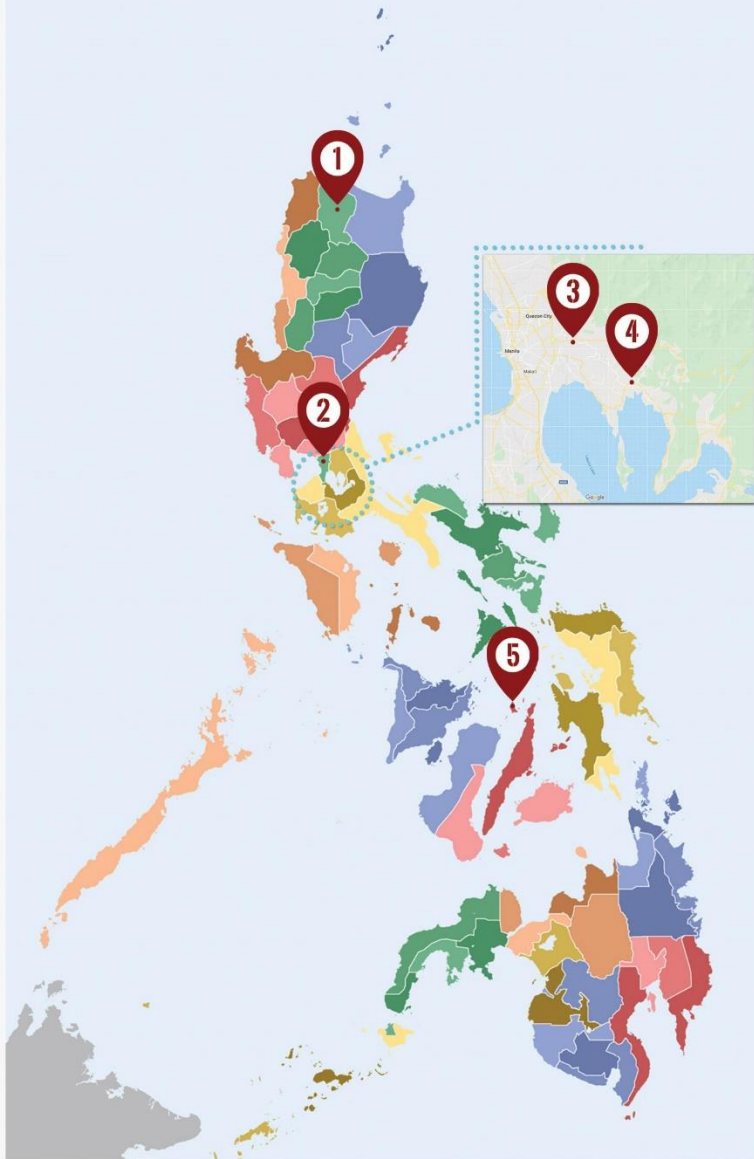
Carsten Aust
VHICF Director

OUR PROFILE

- 1 School Project**
Apayao Province
- 2 Day-Care Center & Pre-School**
Tondo (Manila)
- 3 House of Hope**
Antipolo (Rizal Province)
- 4 Village of Hope**
Morong (Rizal Province)
- 5 Church Ministry: Citylight Church & Educational Scholarship**
Madridejos (located in Bantayan Island, Cebu Province)

VISION HELP INTERNATIONAL CARE FOUNDATION was founded in 2011 by Rev. Carsten and Mercy Aust. They have been working as missionaries in the Philippines since 1996.

We aid and assist social and community development projects, addressing social needs. Our main projects are medical missions, disaster relief operations, schools and scholarships for the indigenous and the underprivileged, operating of daycare centers, conducting of livelihood projects and feeding programs, as well as the operation of residential child care centers.



OUR NEW CHILDREN

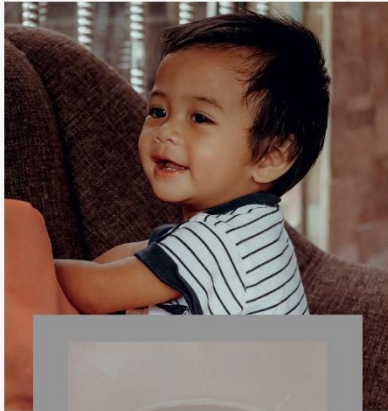
HOPE DESPITE ABUSE, NEGLECT AND REJECTION

Rescuing children from distress—this is our mission. In the slums of Manila, we try with all our might to protect children from abuse and homelessness. And we are very happy that despite the lockdown and quarantine measures, we were still able to take in and welcome eleven little boys and girls. Here are some of the children's stories:



LEANDRO

Leandro was born in June and his first breath alone is a miracle. His mother roamed the streets, having neither money nor a place to live. Dark street corners and alleys were her "home". Under some bridges, she sought shelter from rain. She eventually became mentally ill and pregnant, but was unable to take care of herself. Fortunately, she was approached by a compassionate woman who helped her find shelter with a Christian organization. However, since the mother made it clear that she did not want the child, we were contacted and asked to take the baby in after the birth. Tragically, after the delivery, the mother suddenly left the organization that was trying to help her. Unfortunately, no one knows where she is today. For little Leandro, a hopeful life has begun.



MOISES

Three months after Leandro came to us, we received another call. A mother had severely abused her ten-month-old baby. The authorities decided to take the little baby immediately. He was covered with bruises. That same day, they handed Moises over to our organization. The condition of the child was very bad. His stomach was full of parasites and worms and it took several weeks for him to recover and be healthier. We are happy that despite such tragic circumstances, a future awaits him where he can be loved and well cared for.



MERWIN UND ISIDORE

One week after Moises, we were able to take in two more smart and charming little boys. A bit shy at first, but they quickly made friends with the children in our House of Hope. Their smiles are totally contagious, and they are very lovable and curious. However, they also had a bad past. Merwin's mother lived in the streets and was heavily addicted to drugs. For two years, she would beat him whenever she felt mad or just felt like it.

Isidore was thrown into the dump as a baby to dispose of him. A pastor who was passing by there heard his cries. What a leading of God! Both children were given to an organization that took care of them for two years. Unfortunately, however, the facility had to close due to lack of funds. So, in the end, the children came to us.



HERMILANDO

Hermilando came to us from the streets. We call him "Lans" for short. This boy roamed the streets for many years. He survived by begging and rummaging through garbage to satisfy his hunger. He slept there and eventually ended up in a garage where trucks parked. Some drivers took pity and cared a little for Lans. However, fearing for his life, they involved the authorities. At the insistence of the truck drivers, the social authorities finally made contact with us and shortly thereafter handed the boy over to our care. Lans was in a very bad condition. He had many open wounds, skin infections and rashes. He was severely traumatized. Obviously bad things had happened to him.



THE BROKEN HAS TO BE HEALED AGAIN ...

He must have been abandoned in the streets at a very early age since he cannot remember his parents or other family members. He only knew being alone and what street life is like. We thank God that he was allowed to come to us now. Lans is slowly beginning to have hope. The boy was illiterate. But after just three months, he was already able to write a card and participate in our home schooling program. His sad eyes became joyful when he learned that the Village of Hope is a safe place for him. Lans loves to play basketball with the other boys and slowly he is becoming whole, in mind, spirit and body.



JANE

Just a week after Lans arrived, we were notified of another case. A small team of ours drove seven hours to a mountain town called Baguio. Their goal: to meet Jane. The 12-year-old girl's life was one of great poverty and neglect. She could never play, nor could she attend school as she cared for her parents who were terminally ill. Her 6-square meter hut was a pure dump: dirt, thick cobwebs everywhere, exposed tapped electrical cables, cats and dogs that helped themselves whenever they wanted.



The parents knew they didn't have long to live and wanted to give their daughter to someone in care. Our Heavenly Father led it so that Christians took care of the situation. They were worried that the young girl might fall into the wrong hands. So they contacted our organization. It was heartbreaking when Jane had to say goodbye to her parents. But she knew that she had no future in their small house with her parents. She was especially looking forward to the fact that she could get a school education with us. This had always been her dream. Now this dream has come true for her. Shortly after Jane came to us in Village of Hope, her mother passed away. Her father is currently being cared for by a small local Christian church, to which we were able to establish contact. Jane herself has really blossomed in the last few months with us. A truly new life has begun for her.

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT NO CHILD'S MISTREATMENT, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND REJECTION SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS NORMAL NEITHER SHOULD IT BE IGNORED."





NINE MORE PRECIOUS CHILDREN

Aside from Merwin and Isidore, we took in seven more children from the aforementioned organization. This totals to a nine children.

Among them are five siblings Angelo (12), Aignorengela (10), Adrian (9), Aleena (8) and Adelaide (6), as well as Mariza (12), Ailyn (11), Jayson (8) and Rafael (7). Everyone was so happy to be welcomed to the Village by our children. It didn't take long before they all felt "new" at home.

Every single child comes from the slums of Manila. Their stories all similar, tragic, unbearable. Either sexually abused by their father or physically abused by their parents. Some abuse went on for years. Others were abandoned in the streets, often so young that the children can't remember when they ended up there. And some were passed on from one person to the next. No one could or would take the children in. In the end, the street or dump took them in harshly. As babies, they were wrapped in cloths or bags and thrown in the garbage dump, or left on the side of the road.

The older children were simply driven out of the house. What awaited them was constant exploitation, sexual abuse and mistreatment. Many struggled for years to survive. If someone offered help, the kids unfortunately experienced being exploited and abused all over again. Their bodies malnourished, full of inflammation and rashes, near the end of their young lives until the turn came after all. Someone did not look away but took pity and informed the authorities. This became the salvation for all these nine children.

No child deserves to be abused or abandoned. Yet this is a bitter reality. We can do something about it. Our children's center in Manila is a practical response to this need. Here the kids should hear and experience that they are valuable and precious and that God wants to write new stories of their lives.



HOMESCHOOL & ONLINE CLASSES

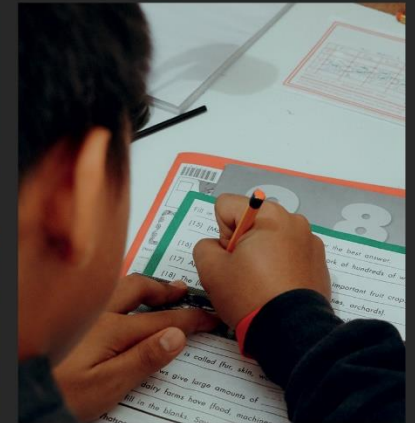
The pandemic radically changed the mode of education. At the beginning of the year, schooling came to a standstill. It was cancelled and students were stuck at home without any formal learning for almost half a year.

Due to the still high risk of infection and the very limited medical care that only the rich can afford anyway, face-to-face classes has currently been postponed until next year. Online courses were introduced, as well as days when students were supposed to catch up on lessons on their own using pre-printed school materials provided by the schools. However, almost no one had online access and the school materials were just as scarce. In our centers in Tondo and Morong, we try to make online classes available to the higher grades as much as we can. So our teenagers would put on their headsets and interact with their teachers and classmates through their smartphones from 7:00 in the morning until the afternoon.



It is clear that they are struggling with this new way of learning, but they are still eager to continue their studies. In return, they are happy to adapt and do their best.

As for our younger children, online classes are just not possible. For this reason, we launched our own homeschool program. We worked with another organization that has provided us with all the materials, and trainings. With all those provisions and resources, we have been able to launch and teach our kids from grades 1 through 5.



This is a full-fledged homeschooling program. In addition, the children are encouraged to think independently and critically.

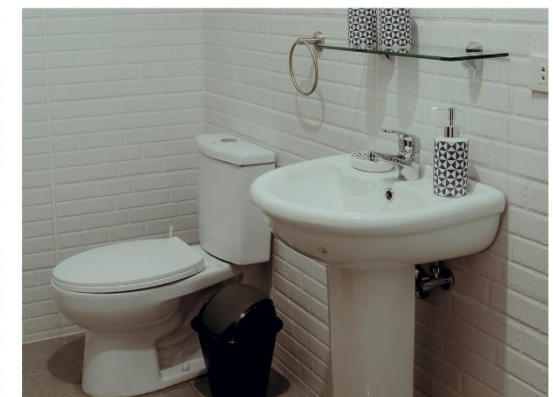
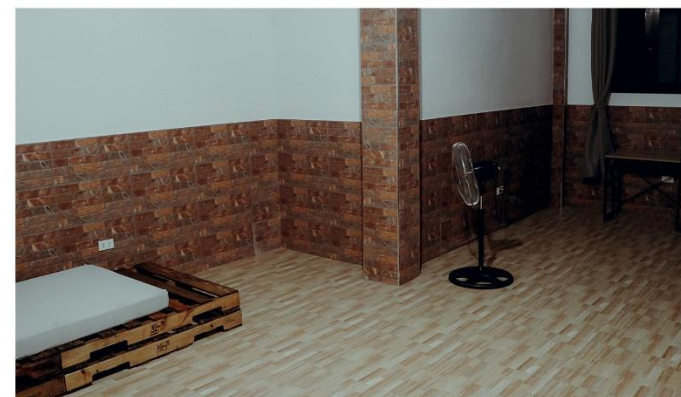
It was difficult at first, but our children are now able to gradually adjust to the discipline of the system and enjoy learning. For this school program, we have had to convert staff and children's rooms into classrooms. Walls were knocked down and new room layouts were created.



Our hope is that the homeschooling program (School of Tomorrow) and the BLESS program will continue to lead our children to discover their potential for a good future to strive for. In the next few years, we hope to go one step further and put up a school building which can accommodate all 120 children who we plan to serve in the future.

A NEW HOUSE FOR OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Before the Philippine government imposed a lockdown in March because of Covid-19, we began construction on an additional building in our Village of Hope. We really wanted to have a house for our staff and volunteers to live within our property. While our long-term goal is to serve about 120 children, there has to be a place for our team members to retreat and relax. We also believe that a rested team has more strength and motivation. And after eight months of construction, the house was finally finished in October!



“IT IS NOT ABOUT HOW MUCH WE GIVE, BUT IT’S ABOUT HOW MUCH LOVE WE PUT INTO GIVING.

#HelpUsSaveLives



FARM UPDATE

As for our farm at the Village of Hope, there is both good news and not so good news.

The African swine flu has spread to the Philippines. Unfortunately, our entire pig farm was affected. All the pigs died.

Our pig farm started with only 4 which became 57 in just one year. As much as we wanted to source our own meat to be more cost effective, pigs will no longer be part of our livestock for the time being. Currently, however, we still have a well-functioning fish, goat, duck and turkey farm. All of this not only benefits our food supply, but gives our children the opportunity to interact with animals and to learn about them.

They totally love to observe the animals and their behavior! We hope that in addition to raising animals, our vegetation will continue to progress especially with the recently bought almost-3 hectares of land to grow more food.



Our new backhoe



We are especially happy that we got the urgently needed excavator for our farm. A lot of rubble, rocks, stones, trees and bushes are still on the new land. Without an excavator it would be almost impossible to make the land usable. In addition, we also want to train some of our young people in excavator driving. This will give them a job opportunity in the future since someday they have to become independent. We thank you all for your loyal support in making this happen!

THANK YOU!

MERCY MINISTRY UPDATE

In our last magazine, we told you how we were able to alleviate hardship in Tondo during the nationwide lockdown in all the islands of the Philippines.

The ongoing quarantine measures meant suffering and hardship for millions of people. Many facilities considered "non-essential" remained closed and there were heaps of restrictions. Transportation, especially the smaller ones (i.e., driving motorcycle cabs, bicycle cabs, or jeepneys), was brought to a standstill for long periods of time. As a result, many families of our sponsored children were in urgent need of assistance.

No work, no money, no food.

Remedy had to be found.



We are very grateful for the continued support of all our friends and partners who made the help possible. Immediately after the lockdown, we were able to distribute rice every month and grocery supply for all of our sponsored children and their families.

This project continued to give our workers in Tondo the opportunity to earn money for their families. Apart from this, we also resumed our treatments for malnourished children. Since it is still forbidden for the children to leave the Tondo area, we personally bring the food to them every day. In this way we can still provide for the malnourished babies and toddlers in many households.



It fills us with joy and hope that we can help the people of Tondo despite the many problems. We look forward to what the next year will bring. We hope that we can continue to serve the people of the slums in Tondo without so much hindrances.



We distributed relief goods to the families.





FUNDRAISING

FOR A NEW SCHOOL BUILDING!

Our idea for the future is to build our own school in our property at Village of Hope. There, not only our children but also kids from the neighborhood will be taught with a homeschooling program. In the next two years we want to complete the school building. This is also important with regard to adapting school education to the needs of our children. Many have behavioral and learning disabilities due to their pasts, some even have complete learning disabilities. In a "normal" school, with up to 70 children per class, effective learning for our children is hardly possible. However, through our own school, with its own school system and adapted school program, we can provide the children with an effective education.

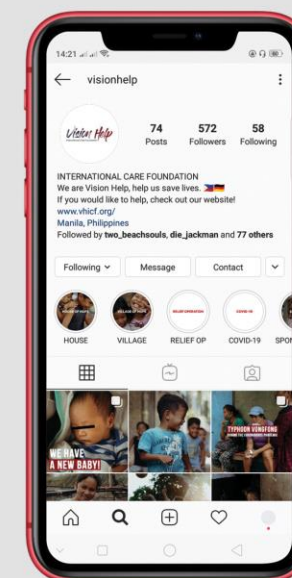
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NEWS & UPDATES

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Translation from German
Carsten Aust & Anja Valencia-Müller

Google Map
Google | December 2019,
Date without guarantee

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