



Vision Help
International Care Foundation

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IN MORONG!**

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NEWS & UPDATES

JANUARY TO JUNE

2021



Mercy + Carsten Aust

As I was walking past one of our 4 children's houses in Village of Hope, Ailyn (12 years old), already leaning halfway out of the window, called out to me: "Papa John, I need something". It only took me a few steps to arrive at her window. Then I asked, "What do you need, Ailyn?" Her look was hard to describe. It was full of longing, joy and yet also somehow mixed with sadness. With a soft voice, she said: "I need a hug Papa" and stretching out her arms toward me.

Love, acceptance, recognition and security are all fundamental needs that children so desperately need. But like Ailyn, many were abused and exploited. At an early age and often ending up in the streets, they never experienced genuine love of a father or mother. Ailyn is just one of many children we are privileged to care for in one of our children's centers here in Manila. This simple yet absolutely important request of a little hug made me realize how precious it is to invest our lives in others.

This reminded me again that you and I can be a powerful instrument of God in His on-going work of pouring out His love to a broken world. Through all of us, our heavenly Father's love becomes tangible and real to those who are hurting. However, at the same time, I also realize how important it is that I be secured in His love for me as my heavenly Father; for I can only give what I myself have received. And so, it is my prayer that you would experience an overflow of God's love, gripping your heart and mind. Because in His vineyard, the laborers are few but the work is plenty. May you be compelled by this amazing Love to also participate with God in His work.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank all of you who have been an instrument of this love for us. Your love and care truly saves and changes the lives of others! Oh, and of course, I gave Ailyn a big and warm hug. For sure that little gesture carried her through for a few hours. The tightest and warmest hugs to all of you our whole VHICF family.

Yours,
Carsten Aust
Director

OUR PROFILE

1 School Project
Apayao Province

2 Day-Care Center & Pre-School
Tondo, Manila

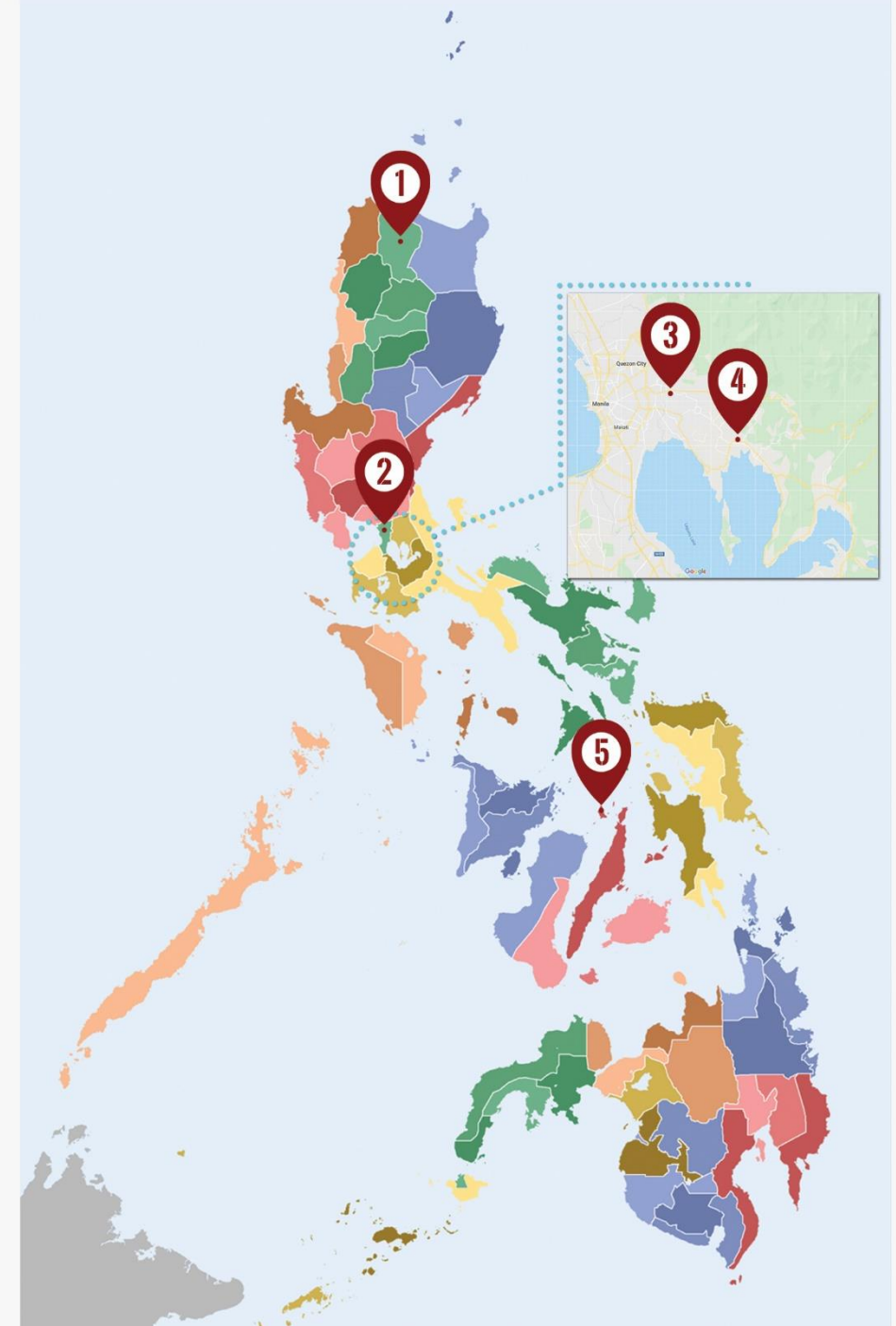
3 House of Hope
Antipolo City, Rizal

4 Village of Hope
Morong, Rizal

5 Church Ministry: Citylight Church & Educational Scholarship
Madridejos (located in Bantayan Island), Cebu

VISION HELP INTERNATIONAL CARE FOUNDATION (VHICF) was founded in 2011 by Rev. Carsten and Mercy Aust who 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.



FROM THE SLUMS TO A NEW PLACE

PAULINO FAMILY: A BRAND NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE

For many long years, the Paulino family of eight (8) suffered from severe poverty and lived in the slums of Tondo, Manila. But now, they are grateful to have moved to the province of Morong where our "Village of Hope" is located! Not only is the family in a completely new environment but they now have the amazing opportunity to experience a better future. The doors are wide open for them.



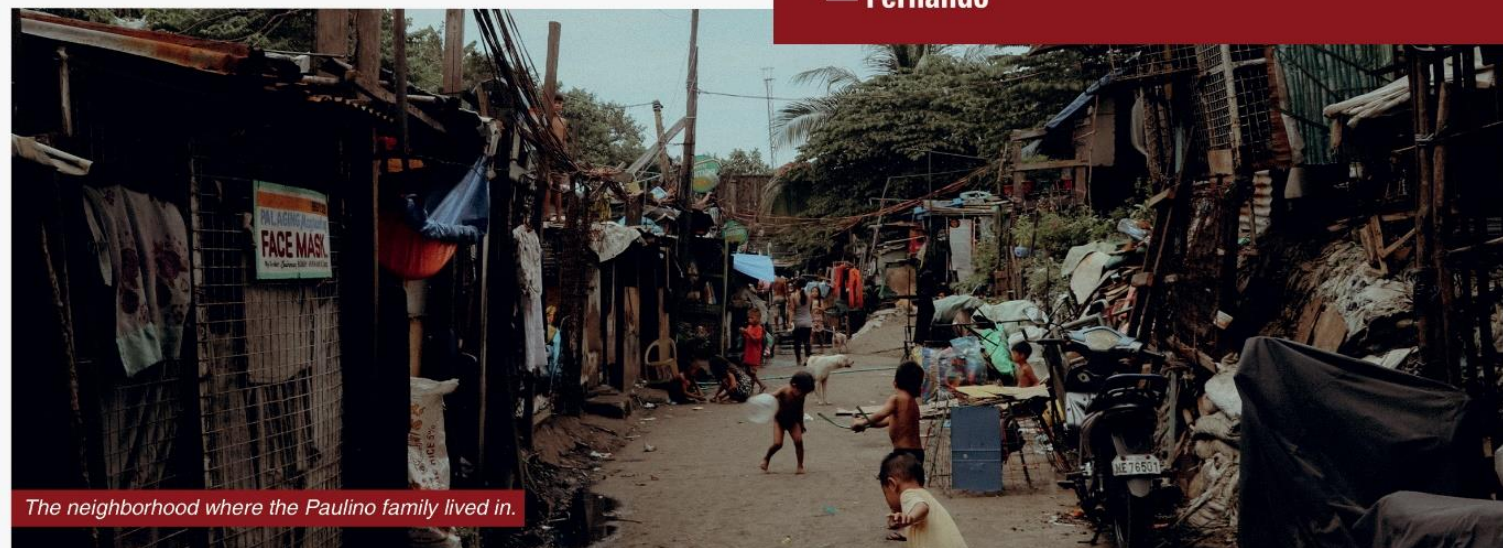
The Paulino family has six (6) children who lived together in the slums of Tondo, Manila. Emalyn, the wife, actually had finished high school and even went to college for two years, wanting to become a teacher. But her early marriage with Fernando and consequently becoming a mother made her drop out of school to focus on her family.

Unfortunately, Fernando himself had to leave school early to earn money but never found a stable job or source of proper income. Hence, their new family begun a downward spiral and finally ending in Manila's largest slum community in the Smokey Mountain (a mountain-like garbage dump) and experiencing severe poverty. Their weekly earnings of 1,000 pesos (\$50) was not even enough to buy the daily food needed by their family.

Being already severely malnourished, Emalyn and Fernando desperately looked for help.

In their search for assistance from others, they came across our missions center located also in the same slum community.

THE FAMILY WAS DESPERATE AND THEY NEEDED HELP!



The neighborhood where the Paulino family lived in.



God truly heard their cry for help and brought them to the right place. Immediately, we started treating the family from their malnourishment. We provided educational scholarships for their children and assisted the family financially; in return, they helped us with the work around our center. Through the family's involvement, they also began to attend church and finally gave their lives to Christ.

By the end of last year, the family received news that their little shanty home was set to be demolished due to the government's effort on removing the squatters to make room for commercial space. **We then decided to bring the Paulino family to our missions center in Morong where our second children's center, Village of Hope, is located.** Since we have an on-going construction work, Fernando was able to earn a living as a laborer while Emalyn is helping us in our school as she is preparing herself to go back to college and pursue her dream of becoming a teacher.

"We really appreciate it because it allows us now to stay together and we can live in a decent and good house. I am relieved that my children are secured. I can see that their future will be better."

— Fernando

As for the six Paulino kids, we are also helping them in continuing their education. Aside from this, since they are used to living in the slums surrounded by pollution and dirt, we are doing are best so they can adapt to the new way of life with us.

WHAT A HUGE AND TOTAL CHANGE FOR THE WHOLE PAULINO FAMILY! IT IS A NEW START IN LIFE FOR THEM, ONE THAT IS FILLED WITH HOPE AND MANY POSSIBILITIES. THEY CAN NOW EXPERIENCE WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.



NEW FAMILY, NEW HOME

We are passionate about rescuing children who are victims of neglect, abuse and abandonment and providing them with a new home where they are loved and cared for. But ultimately, when one of these children would be adopted, this is what makes our joy truly complete.



Anthony

For over two years, we saw how he grew up to be a bright and charming boy. In 2019, we featured him in our January to June Magazine noting his characteristics and how he was such a naughty boy oozing with confidence. **We are so grateful to God that although once he was lost, now, he truly was found!**

This year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our adoption processes still pushed through and two of our kids found families of their own!

The first is Anthony. He was abandoned and left beside a local catholic church. He was found by strangers which brought him to our care. He was named Anthony, after the church where he was found (Church of St. Anthony de Padua). After securing all the necessary legal registration to recognize that he was found with no name and no birth certificate, excitedly, we finally could place him into our adoption program and start looking for a new family. **We are so overjoyed that this February, Anthony met his new Mom and Dad!**



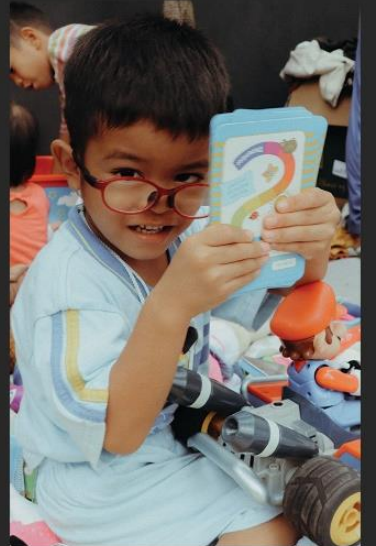
WE ARE SO OVERJOYED THAT LAST FEBRUARY, ANTHONY MET HIS NEW MOM AND DAD!



Isidore

Second is Isidore. He was adopted last May by a Christian couple from Canada. Isidore was a young boy that came to our orphanage in September 2020. In April 2017, just some hours old, Isidore was left to die on a pile of garbage near a small church with the placenta and blood still covering him.

It was his loud cries in the early morning hours that caught the attention of the church's pastor who lived there. He immediately took the baby and surrendered it to the local authorities. Shortly after, he was placed into an orphanage and stayed there for a few years. **Not long after, this warrior boy was matched with a wonderful family with God's intervention!** Unfortunately, the orphanage closed down last September 2020 due to lack of funds, but this led Isidore to our care and he spent a few months in House of Hope.



Isidore weinte, als er im Alter von 10 Monaten zum ersten Mal eine Brille trug.



And so, his adoption process was finalized and in our care, he was placed into the arms of his new Mama and Papa last May 7!

FULL OF JOY, WE GLADLY SAY GOODBYE AND WISH LITTLE ISIDORE: "BON VOYAGE DEAR BOY, ISIDORE. BRING OUR BLESSINGS TO CANADA AND MAY THE LORD MAKE YOU A BLESSING TO OTHERS!"



FROM A LIFE OF SURVIVAL TO TO A LIFE OF ABUNDANCE

For many, using a broom and a mop to clean the floor is nothing special. People know how to use a gas stove, pans and kettles. Many know how to use a modern shower set and bathroom and understand the way life works in a modern city. But the challenge begins when someone is born in a remote mountain village with no bathroom, no electricity, and no modern appliances where water comes from the river and cooking is done on open campfires. It is where families of ten (10) or more people live together in small huts made from bamboo and grass with muddy ground as the floor.



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Such is the case of our teenagers who grew up on the mountains of Luna, Apayao, of Northern Luzon of the Philippines. For many years, Mercy and I ministered to the Agta tribe in the early years of our organization. There, we were able to establish school facilities for free education which catered to many Agta children.

Today, it has become a proper school fully administered by the Philippine government with VHICF continually providing the scholarships for higher education. Today, we have 12 teenagers who we brought from that school to our center in Manila in order for them to receive a higher education and, later, an opportunity for a bachelor's degree.

These teenagers had a lot of first-time experiences once they joined us and two of them had very notable highlights: Richelle (19) and Sonya (16). These two girls come from big families—Richelle has 4 siblings while Sonya has 6 siblings—with parents who worked as farmers and earned only 3€ a day. Both of them lived in a house without rooms, an elevated surface where their family would sleep together on, and the other half of the structure composed of a small area for cooking using wood on a dirt floor. The only electricity that existed in their dwellings was that of a small wire attached to a lightbulb. No electric fan, no refrigerator, no radio, no television and no washing machine.



Everything is done by hand and always for pure survival. This is why when they came here, both of them were delighted to learn so many new things.

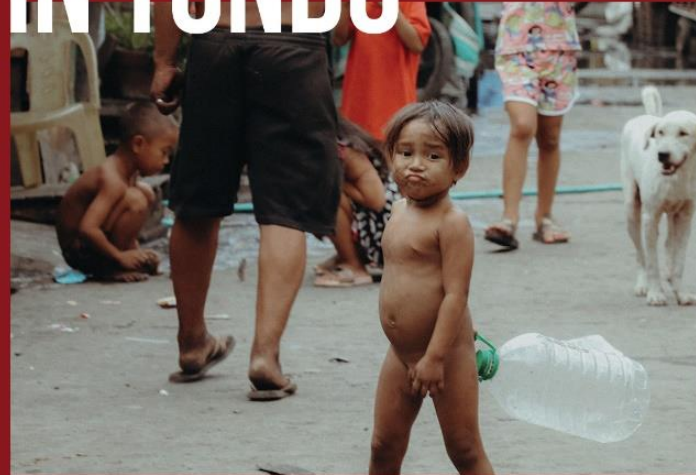
Richelle couldn't stop giggling while sharing that now she can distinguish the floor outside of a house and the inside, and that the one inside needs cleaning by sweeping and mopping. Determining which cleaning product to use was another one that she was proud to learn. This year, Richelle joined our cleaning team and she learned further about the purpose and use of a washing machine. At first, she was so hesitant and even afraid to use an electrical equipment but after several attempts, she enjoyed the benefit of automated washing! Now, she is very good at it and is frequently assigned to manage the laundry of all the children's houses in Village of Hope. Aside from that, Richelle felt accomplished in learning two language ever since she moved: Tagalog (Filipino) and English. In Apayao, she only spoke her native Ilocano mother tongue and learned English in school but never really used it for conversations. But with us, it was a necessity that she had to learn our national language, Filipino, as well as actually speaking English. This was the case for most of our teenagers who came to us at the same year Richelle did.

As for Sonya, she had the same experience like Richelle when it comes to cleaning the floor but on top of this, she gained so much confidence when she worked in our kitchen last year. Back when she was still in Apayao, Sonya knew only of cooking on open fire and the food they would eat was never enough and gathered mostly from the forest. Rice was costly and, when available, only eaten with salt. A special treat would be a can of sardines but only if their father was able to bring home some more money from selling forest plants. This meager lifestyle never hindered her desire and aspiration to get an education and achieve something greater in life. She can't wait to share all these things with her family, she said. "The first thing I will do when I visit my family again is to cook pancake for them because that is something they never had."

In Village of Hope, we put a premium on our relationship with Jesus Christ and do our best immersing and intertwining all our activities and our way of living with what are in the Scriptures—it is the basis of what we do and why we exist. And it is in this pursuit that both Richelle and Sonya share how much they have grown in knowing Jesus and understanding better what being a Christian means. Both of them admitted that in Apayao, it was not their priority to spend their time in praying, reading the Bible and going to church services because they had other better things to do in the farm or in their neighbour's house. But here, being surrounded with a community who does its best to love Jesus, walk with Him and know Him better, the two young ladies come to treasure the faith and salvation they have received.

These experiences are mundane to many of us, very ordinary. But for Richelle and Sonya, it's like finding out that God prepared for them so much more than they could ever imagine. There is hope in breaking out of poverty and knowing life only as a struggle for survival. As they learn practical life skills, gain knowledge through formal education and are exposed to God's word, prayer and Christian discipleship, they are not only experiencing God's blessing now but are also being prepared to be great blessings to others.

PROJECT IN TONDO



Nothing much has changed in the Philippines since lockdown started and quarantine measures were maintained throughout 2020 and persisted this year.

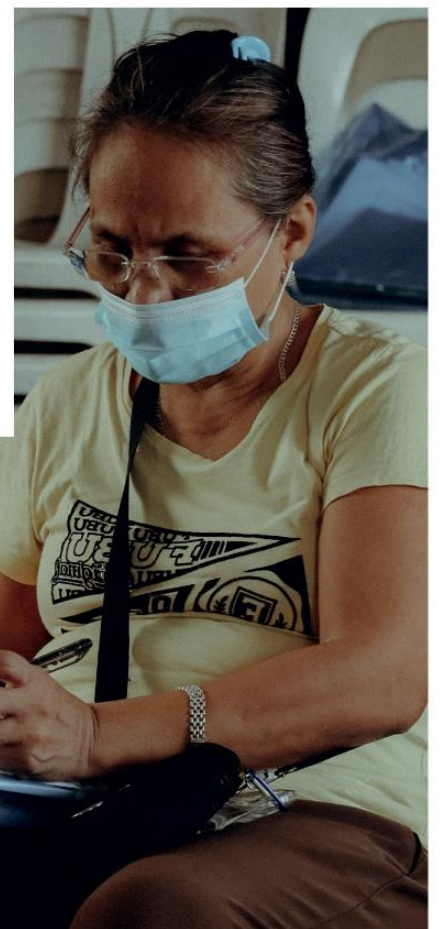
Vaccine distribution is almost non-existing while quarantine and lockdowns are still the daily norm. But we are grateful to slowly resume some of our programs in our Tondo missions center as the struggle for survival is visible wherever one looks. Although often hindered and even prohibited to go out, we still found means and ways to deliver food and medical care to families and children surrounding our location.

Aside from this, our Bible studies and church services resumed this year after many months of prohibition. Finally, we can meet again (though in smaller numbers) to worship God and share His Word together.

Likewise, our treatment programs for children with tuberculosis and those suffering from malnourishment have resumed. On top of this, our social intervention programs for the adults we serve are now allowed to operate again, though they are limited in number.

As for the education of our sponsored children, all classes and school activities are still held virtually. For the little ones who study in public schools and now must finish their school work at home, we offer weekly tutorials in our center. Our teacher schedule a child for two to three hours to catch up on subjects as many parents cannot help their kids on their own since many are illiterate themselves. Hence, learning has been very difficult for kids this past year and not much seems to be changing until 2022.

This struggle seems to stay with us for some time to come. Nonetheless, we are glad to still assist and help all our sponsored families throughout this pandemic. **Educational, medical and food assistance has been our primary goal and will continue to be so!**



MERCY MINISTRY

"OUR PRIMARY GOAL AT MERCY MINISTRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO EDUCATION, FOR THEM TO RECEIVE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND BE SECURED WITH FOOD SUPPLY. WE BELIEVE THAT WITH GOD'S HELP AND YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN CONTINUE STRONG DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES!"

UPDATE FROM OUR NEW FARM



The work in our new farm has been going well. Much has already been done and a lot of its rough patches were turned to be usable for plantation. With the help of the donated tractor-excavator, we were able to clear about 50% of the total area of our site, freeing it from boulders, bushes and wild bamboo. This project has become a source of lots of fun for the children and the teens because they could work with us in the farm. Bonfires are lit up once in a while. Our boys are so excited and absolutely happy to join even in the simplest task of gathering dried leaves and bushes to be burnt.

Right now, there is 2,500 square meters, a total of 2.8 hectares, are used for farming to which the kids are filled with enthusiasm to get involved in. The work encourages their joy of discovery, they learn many useful things which they can use later in their lives. Ultimately, the work in this new farm reduces our food costs since we harvest our own produce.

Update CHILDREN'S HOUSES 4 & 5

A lot has been happening in our Village of Hope over the past few months. As you know, one of our goals is to welcome over 100 children and we are now a step closer. Currently, we are building two more children's houses on our property.

House number 4 is as good as finished while the fifth one has already been started. Both is expected to be ready for occupancy this year. And by this time, in later years, each of the two houses will accommodate around 20 more children each, guided by four to five caregivers. All five children's houses are built in the same style and with the same room layout. We do our best to give all our children a fair and common experience in each house.

We are happy that we have made a big step forward in a short time. It is a great blessing. A big thank you goes to all our supporters. You have made all this possible.

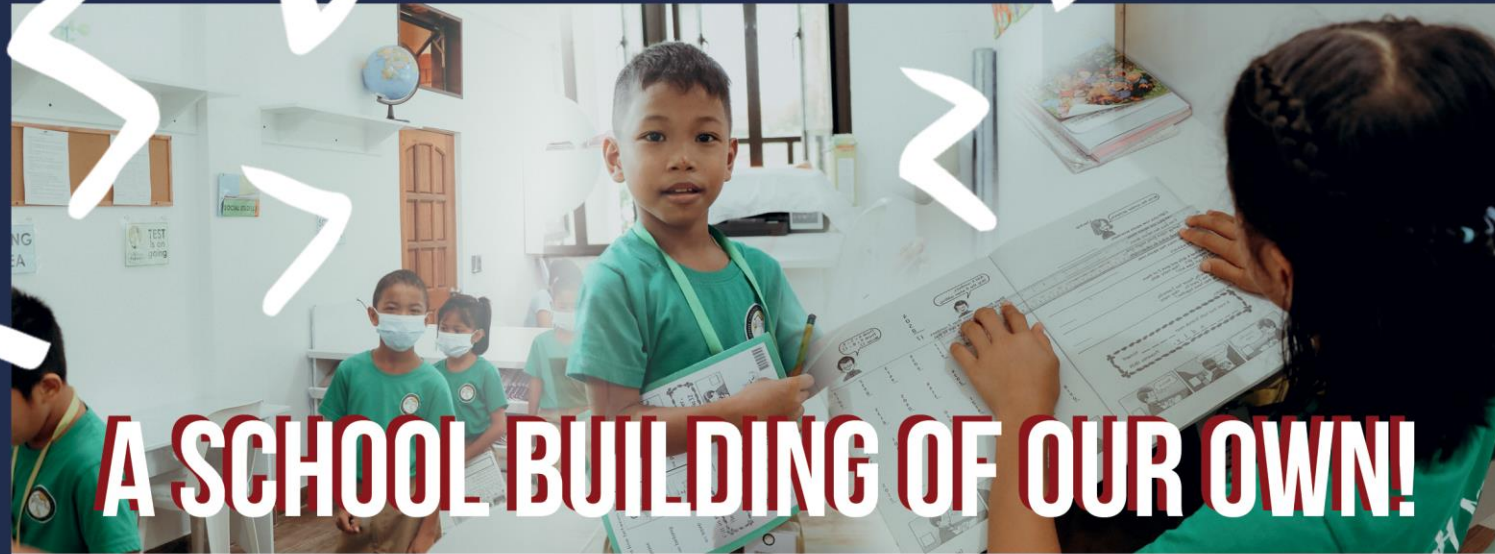


Children House 4 is almost done!



Children House 5's construction is on-going.





Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes at schools here in the Philippines are at an absolute standstill - and have been for over a year. Online classes do not really exist. We responded early last year and established a home school program for our children and youth. Four new teachers were hired and the children's homes were temporarily converted into "schools". According to information from the authorities, no face-to-face teaching will be possible until well into 2022.

In view of the uncertain future, but also in view of the advantages of homeschooling, we have decided to implement a homeschool program for the children on a permanent basis. This way we can offer our children a good school education throughout, regardless of the situation. In addition, we are then also much freer to integrate Christian values more intensively in the lessons.

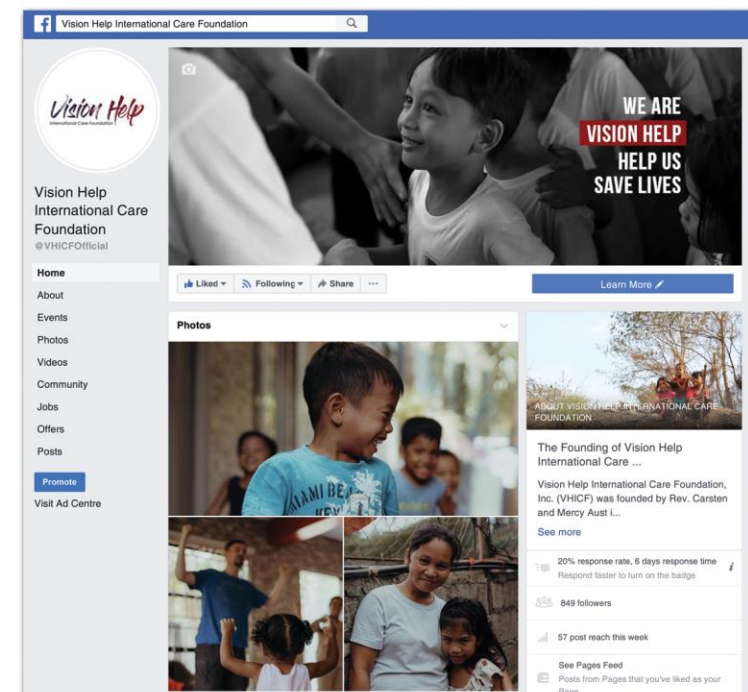
So our goal for 2022? Our own school! We are planning a two-story building with ten classrooms, a computer room, a lounge and a small library. A beautiful, colorful garden is to be built around the building.

AS YOU CAN PROBABLY IMAGINE, SUCH A BIG PROJECT DOES NOT HAPPEN ON ITS OWN. THE TOTAL FINANCIAL NEED OF THIS PROJECT IS ABOUT 250.00€. YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS NEW PROJECT AND HELP MAKE A LASTING IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF MANY YOUNG PEOPLE. THIS CAN CHANGE THEM FOR THE BETTER!



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Vision Help International Care Foundation

VHICF, Inc.

Carsten & Mercedita Aust

Contact Details in Germany

Address: Mastering Your Life e.V.
Dietmar Rieger
Renoistr. 32 | 04157 Leipzig
Email: philippinen.vhcf@gmail.com
Telefon: +49 160 / 721 78 78

Contact Details in the Philippines

Address: VHICF, Inc.
Carsten & Mercy Aust
No. 50 Block 13, Lot 11 Eastport Street, Parkridge
Subdivision, Antipolo City, Rizal Philippines 1870
Email: info@vhcf.org
Telefon: +63 8 / 671 72 12

Editors-in-Chief

Carsten Aust & Buena Velasco

Photos

Buena Velasco & Anja Valencia-Müller

Articles

Carsten Aust, Buena Velasco
& Anja Valencia-Müller

Translation from German

Carsten Aust & Angelika Figura

Map Data

Google | Stand Dezember 2019,
Angaben ohne Gewähr

The Christian and non-profit organization VHICF, Inc. operates internationally and is registered and licensed in the Philippines under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

VHICF, Inc., Mastering Your Life, e.V. and Nehemia Christliches Hilfswerk e.V. are non-profit organizations with tax privileges. All three organisations are entitled to issue donation receipts.

A photograph of two young children, likely of Southeast Asian descent, smiling broadly. The child in the foreground is a girl with dark hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt with a colorful, sequined heart design. The child in the background is slightly out of focus, wearing a red garment. The background shows a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building.

**“WE ARE VISION HELP,
HELP US SAVE LIVES!”**

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