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FROM THE PHILIPPINES

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Dear Friends,

Author and pastor, Rick Warren, once asked the defining question in his book, "What on earth am I living for? What am I here for?"

Looking at the many events and situations of the last few months, I think somehow we are all trying to make a little more sense of ourselves and our surroundings. One may see everything as a great opportunity, while others can only hope to get through it all more or less unscathed. In the end, however, some unspoken fears and worries remain within all of us because what comes is not in our hands—but it is in God's hands.

So it is good to ask ourselves calmly the question which Rick Warren posed. What does God actually have in mind for me? What am I actually here for? I am then reminded that we are still doing so incredibly well in the western world and this brings in mind the Bible verses from Joshua 24:13-15. On verses 13 to 14, it says, "I gave you a land for which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and yet in which you now dwell. And of vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, you eat. So now fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and faithfulness." Joshua reflects with these words to the people that when each of us has so much, the credit is not to one's self but all glory to God's grace.

These verses urges the thought that we always have to decide anew for whom or what we want to live for. Joshua makes it clear that it is absolutely up to us what we decide: "But if it does not please you to serve the LORD, choose whom you will serve! But I and my house will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15) To serve the LORD, no matter what the situation is, is always the best decision we can make. Our actions do make a difference. Maybe it is not always immediately visible but everything has an eternal, a lasting value.

Above all, God highly values our service to others. He sees our love for others as serving Himself: how many are helped by our love, how many lives are changed, how much hope and new beginnings are made possible. With this, I thank you again from the bottom of my heart for your service to others here in the Philippines. Your partnership, support and cooperation are a lasting help in the lives of so many. So now, I invite you again to be involved in our activities from the last months. The Lord bless you!

Carsten Aust and Family

VHICF Founder
Missionary to the Philippines



ABOUT US

VISION HELP INTERNATIONAL CARE FOUNDATION

VHICF 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.



EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP IN APAYAO

Community-based education assistance among the indigenous in Apayao Province



MERCY MINISTRY

Day-Care Center, Pre-School and other community programs in the Slums of Tondo



HOUSE OF HOPE

Antipolo (Rizal Province)



VILLAGE OF HOPE

Morong (Rizal Province)



CITYLIGHT CHURCH & EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Madridejos, Bantayan Island (Cebu Province)



**VISION HELP INTERNATIONAL
CARE FOUNDATION, INC.**

SALAMAT PO AWARD - BEST NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION




UPDATES ON THE *School Project*



School Building Update: The Foundations are in place!

The struggle for survival as a street child, violence, losses as well as neglect, leave deep scars in the hearts of children. This affects all children who live with us. Among other things, such traumas often result in having concentration and learning difficulties which require intensive personal care by specialized teachers. Since public schools in the Philippines lack basic equipment, staff and quality, it cannot meet our children's needs. This is why we are now building our own learning center in Village of Hope because our desire and vision is to equip and empower children.



We are overwhelmed with how God has provided for us. He gave grace, answered our prayers and moved the hearts of many supporters so that we were blessed with about 250,000 Euros in donations for the school construction! Thus, we were able to start the construction work at the beginning of the year. The old garden was leveled and cemented structures for vegetation were torn down so that the area can be used for the school. On that newly cleared land, the foundations have now been poured and the steel beams erected. Things are progressing and we are happy about the progress that the construction workers are diligently working on despite the scorching heat here in the Village of Hope.



PLANT A PENCIL. BUILD A SCHOOL. HARVEST EDUCATION.

We want to break the vicious cycle of poverty with education. That's why the children who live with us should have quality and well-founded education, so that they can look forward to a more promising future.

Currently, we are still in need of funds for the school equipment of desks, chairs, computers and blackboards among others. We appreciate every donation. As a thank you, there is a growing VHICF organic pencil with herb and vegetable seeds in the end of the pencil, which can be planted after use. Read more at www.VHICF.org



Donate for the school equipment and get a *growing pencil!*



CITYLIGHT CHURCH

A LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

Our Citylight Church (CLC) in Madridejos, Bantayan Island of Cebu, all thanks to God, was spared from the destruction of the typhoon. Aside from this, we are also so grateful that even when all the restrictions and regulations were imposed on the island, our work and service through CLC did not completely stop. We were able to work around the situation. Eventually and gradually, our church's services and weekly Bible studies resumed and its members of about 150 were very glad to meet again as if nothing happened. But most importantly, there are new people who came, attended regularly and participates actively now. Ps. Joseph, the pastor of CLC since 2015, believes that God used the pandemic to bring people to Himself through such a tough time. Church members felt hunger for fellowship and learned to value corporate worship. Because of this, discipleship group meetings were started and held.

” It is so delightful to even witness both old and young enjoying the company of each other during these meetings as they share food, their testimonies, and even their burdens which brings them closer together.
- Pastor Joseph



The youth of Citylight Church have also been very active in the ministries. They are a huge help to the pastor in making new things happen. While it was difficult for all of them to attend classes online and study at home by themselves, they did their best to overcome this and have managed to serve in church. As a matter of fact, once the residents of Bantayan Island were allowed to gather again late last year, the youth held a weekly Children's Outreach every Friday! They organize everything on their own. They even get help from a few mothers to cook a simple dish which the youths bring and distribute to the precious children. Every Friday afternoon, around 50 children from different areas within Barangay Madridejos get excited with the new songs and dance steps they learn! They also have time to play to which Bible stories are incorporated.

Aside from this weekly outreach, CLC started to reach out to more young people (even older ones if it interests them) through music. They hold a once a month night event wherein they invite neighbors, friends, co-workers or classmates to join in just chilling out outside the church to listen to good music that shares beautiful messages of hope, faith and love.

As for the sponsor children, we are glad that the face-to-face classes are soon resuming and all of them are so excited about it! Currently, we have 32 children, teenagers and adult learners (university students) who are in our sponsorship program. Even when life is hard in the island—many of our sponsor children's families lost their source of income due to the pandemic and restriction—we are always encouraged to see how persevering our students are when it comes to schooling and them striving hard to reach their goals. Many of them are highly motivated because they want to help their families have better lives. But the best thing is that while they study hard, they also learn to trust in Jesus. All of those 32 sponsored children are grateful for the support you give so thank you for partnering with us in this!



The youth of the CLC organize children's services every Friday in Barangay Madridejos of Bantayan Island!



RECONSTRUCTION after the *Typhoon*

In December, a typhoon named "Odette" entered the Philippine territory. For a week and a half, it destroyed many crops, brought down establishments and turned many houses and infrastructures to ruins in the southern parts of the country. Odette affected about 1.3 million families. We believe that God uses us to be an answer to the prayers of those crying out for help. So we did that. We announced the need for house rebuilding and repair. And with the help of many friends and partners, we were able to help more than 70 families and churches. With the funds gathered we bought building materials to put up storm-proof houses together with the affected people and to repair destroyed huts.

"One day, our parsonage was still here but it was gone the next day."



A pastor couple, Ferlito and Maria, who plant churches in unreached and remote communities in the mountains, lost their place of worship and fellowship. They would travel up the mountain by motorbike 2 hours one-way every week to minister and serve the people.



Not a permanent solution: A family used scrap materials they had collected on the beach for a temporary housing after the typhoon.



But the small parsonage they used for resting and sleeping in-between ministry work was carried away by Odette. Ferlito and Maria had no means, no connections and no money to rebuild. And so it was such a blessing when they hear that they were one of those who received building materials through this project. Now they can continue their ministry in the mountains!

Many of the houses and church buildings were destroyed so quickly. But with the help of our supporters, we were able to help some. We pray that the local people will come to know Jesus - the only firm foundation and basis for true security.





Under construction:
Affected families
participated actively
in the construction
work. 70 Families
have homes again.



Mercy Ministry

Mercy Ministry in the Slums

Right in the middle of the slums of the Philippine capital, at the foot of the Smokey Mountain, is where our day-care center "Mercy Ministry" located in. It is the place where many poor and malnourished children are fed everyday. They can wash themselves, get new clothes, and they are allowed to play and learn in our preschool classes.

One of the common wishes that all our sponsored children expressed last year was that they prefer to go to school and have face-to-face classes. The past two years were difficult not just for them as students but also with their parents who have had to supervise them at home. Many parents are illiterate and do not have time because they have to work to survive. Illiteracy is a result of the poor quality of education in the Philippines. Despite advancement to higher grades, there are many students who cannot read, understand or write properly.

Instructive Learning Program (ILP)

In March, we came up with the idea of resuming the BLESS program and call it "Instructive Learning Program" (ILP). Since it is hard for the children to learn anything at home because their parents or guardians lack the knowledge and experience to teach, we help such families with this program. We concentrate teaching 20 students, 2.5 hours each day from Monday to Thursday. They are divided in two batches, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so that there is much room for a closer interaction between the teacher and the student. This program compliments their on-going schooling outside of our work.

Adult Literacy Program

As for the many parents who did not have good education and are unfortunately no-read and no-write, we saw it fit to hold such a program for them too. We now offer the "Adult Literacy Program" (ALP). There are 5 students who committed to a 2-hour class every Saturday. Maricel, mother of one of our sponsored children and is a student in our ALP said, "I'm very grateful that now I can learn to read and also write. It was hard at times, especially the part where we had to learn blending of sounds. My tongue and mouth got tired!" Despite this challenge, Maricel wants to complete the course so she can finally read and write.



“ I am very grateful that I can now learn to read and write. Sometimes it's hard, but I want to keep on going.- Maricel
(Mother of one sponsor child)

Church Ministries & Community Outreach

Our Sunday Services and weekly Bible Study sessions continued on without interruptions since last year. We were able to resume our weekly feeding outreach to children who are not in our program. But this year, we were granted the opportunity to work around and do it again in a different way! We partnered with a church and the local officials so we have a regular public place wherein we can gather and serve children in the slums. Every Friday we hold an activity there for children, we give them nutritious food, we pray and play with them. Through this, we try to convey in a playful and interactive way that they are unconditionally loved by God and may have hope.

All these updates remind us that our work are God's work and it is completely in His hands. He makes things work well and allows us to share our experiences with Him so that people experience deep meaning in their lives as a result. We thank you because in your obedience and commitment in partnering with us, many lives are blessed.



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
- Nelson Mandela

The Instructive Learning Program teaches children who need support in homeschooling. Their own parents usually cannot read and write.

OUR FIRST GRADUATE FROM CEBU



We celebrate one of our scholars in Cebu who we have supported since 11th grade. Maybelle Villadolid (23) is our first graduate in our educational sponsorship program in the island! She has successfully completed her bachelor studies on Business Administration (Major in Financial Management)

The Villadolid family alone has six children with Maybelle being the fifth. Aside from this, her parents took in two nieces and one nephew who were orphaned and abandoned. Despite their situation, her father and mother worked hard fishing everyday and selling what they caught to put food on the table for all twelve of them. Still, education was something they valued. So when we opened up our educational sponsorship in that poor community, the family wasted no time and grabbed the life-changing opportunity.

Maybelle was selected as one of our first scholarship recipients in Cebu. After 12th grade, she enrolled in a community college where tuition fee was free. However, even with this, the family could not afford her daily transportation fare, fees for uniform, for books, for school supplies and other expenses.



In all those six years that Maybelle was under our scholarship program, she became seriously involved in church work. She committed to doing the church's accounting and assists the pastor with document work. When asked what her plan now is, Maybelle says that she looks forward to getting a proper job so she can help her family. But she will also continue serving in the church.

Sometimes the impact of your support does not seem big or apparent but it does make a difference. It touches many lives like Maybelle's and her family's whether you prayed, spread the word about our work, or sent financial support. So thank you for your continued willingness to be with us in our work here in the Philippines.

” It was hard [to study] at first but I was able to adjust later on. ... I learned many things especially in my final year.

I am so thankful to all my sponsors because their support is a huge help for me since we're very poor and have no means to sustain our schooling. So thank you so much!

More info on educational sponsorship at
www.VHICF.org

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PLEASE NOTE AND BE UPDATED



We have ended the cooperation with our partner Mastering Your Life e.V. who we are grateful to for the blessed collaboration we had in the past years. Moving forward, donations can be made via our own VHICF donation account in Germany. **We therefore ask all sponsors and partners who currently donate to Mastering Your Life's account to update their standing orders and direct debits and to use the account listed below.** Recurring donations that have been set up online need to be reset at www.VHICF.org. Donation receipts will be issued by Vision Help in the future. Thank you.

BANK DETAILS:

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

VHICF, Inc, Mastering Your Life e.V. and Nehemiah Christliches Hilfswerk e.V. are non-profit organizations and operate on a tax-exempt basis. All three organizations are entitled to issue donation receipts that can be submitted to the tax office for tax reduction.

A young child with a white cloth draped over their shoulders is looking down at a small, round, golden-brown food item being held by an adult's hand. The child is wearing a white cloth with colorful patterns. The adult's hand is visible in the foreground, holding the food item. The background is blurred, showing a textured surface.

Thank you

Vision Help

International Care Foundation

DONATIONS FROM GERMANY

Vision Help International Care Foundation

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HELP US SAVE LIVES.**