

Vision Help

INTERNATIONAL CARE FOUNDATION

OVERCOMING MOUNTAINS

Everest campaign against sexual abuse
Page 8

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Mercy Ministry — Update in the slums
Page 12

HEALTH IS PRECIOUS

Our team as an answer to prayer
Page 4

UPDATES
FROM THE
PHILIPPINES

Bigger FAMILY

We want to have a bigger family!
Page 6

ABOUT US

We are Vision Help, a non-profit foundation that has been working in the Philippines for over 10 years. We help people in need and rescue children from poverty, forced prostitution and human trafficking.

The protection of children and the improvement of their living conditions are central goals of our work in the Philippines, where every third child lives below the poverty line and is affected by exploitation and violence or forced prostitution.

Carsten Aust, a pastor and paramedic who has been doing humanitarian work in the Philippines since 1996, founded the foundation in 2011. Ten years after its founding, in 2021, the Philippine government awarded Vision Help as the best non-profit organization in the field of child and family assistance.

Medical care, disaster relief and reconstruction, education for street children without access to schools, education and vocational training for children and adults, feeding the poor, running children's homes and children's villages, conducting safe adoptions in close cooperation with international authorities, and church work are the areas in which the foundation is charitably active.

We help people to become healthy and independent. With effective initiatives, we protect children, fight poverty, empower and elevate communities in a sustainable way.



OUR PROJECTS

1

EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Educational Sponsorships provided to indigenous children in Apayao

2

MERCY MINISTRY

Day-care center, pre-school and soup kitchen in the slums of Tondo, Manila.

3

HOUSE OF HOPE CHILDREN'S HOME

in Antipolo, Rizal

4

VILLAGE OF HOPE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE & SCHOOL

in Morong, Rizal

5

CITYLIGHT CHURCH & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Church ministries and educational sponsorships in Cebu



Dear friends,

I am happy to share the new edition of our magazine with you. It is inspiring to read the texts and reflect on God's love and grace. I am reminded that these often show through the kindness of individuals, especially when we feel lost or wonder if God sees our needs and problems.

I believe that if we open our eyes and look around, combined with prayer and reflection, we can see that God has not forgotten us.

Psalm 34:18 says,

*“The Lord is close to the
brokenhearted and saves those who
are crushed in spirit.”*



This promise reassures us that our disappointments and doubts are known to God, and that He is ready to comfort and strengthen us.

Yet I do realize that God uses people to be close to the brokenhearted. His love, care, and grace are shown through those who allow themselves to be used by God to make His love visible and tangible. This is at the heart of the Bible passage in Matthew where we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. It is through our actions that ultimately God's work becomes real to others.

Thank you so much for partnering with us and making God's work visible to people in need.

Carsten Aust
CEO & President of VHICF



HEALTH IS PRECIOUS

A German proverb says: "You only appreciate health when you have lost it." Unfortunately, many Filipinos face significant challenges in accessing healthcare due to poverty or living in remote areas. We are dedicated to helping them overcome these challenges.

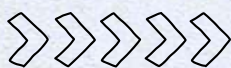
Jake is just fourteen years old and already scarred for life. He was using crutches and had difficulty getting around when we met him during our medical mission on February 22nd in a province called Bansud, situated on the island of Mindoro.

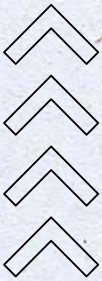


ANSWER TO PRAYER

With his parents' agreement, we brought Jake with us right away to our Village of Hope where he lives temporarily. Together with local doctors, we are working on a treatment plan to help Jake the best we can. He and his family see the encounter with our team as an answer to their prayer. As Christians without means, they have always put their hope in God and trusted that He will provide for Jake. Please join us in prayer for the success of his treatment!

Jake was just a baby when his life took a dramatic turn in a house fire: his father was able to save him from the flames, but his left leg and foot were severely burned. Although the skin healed, it stopped growing and turned into scars, causing Jake's leg and foot to become severely deformed over the years.





WHEN THE DOCTOR IS NOT AVAILABLE

Jake is just one example of how dramatically an accident or illness can change a person's life if there are no doctors nearby or treatment is unaffordable.

An infected wound can quickly become life-threatening, an untreated fracture can cause a lifetime disability or an oversized cyst can be a massive restriction in everyday life. For this reason, we have been visiting remote and impoverished areas with medical specialists since we were founded. We do this to provide people there with general medical or dental care. In addition to preventive check-ups and administering medication, we also carry out minor operations that often make a big difference to the lives of those affected.



During the two-day mission in Bansud alone, we were able to provide help to 800 people. Three (3) US and four (4) Filipino doctors, together with 40 volunteers, worked hand in hand with us. And on May 24th and 25th, we took a similarly large team with more doctors to one of the slums in Navotas. The city lies at the northern part of Manila. Around 50 people, including 21 doctors and other volunteers from Singapore, as well as staff from "Youth with a Mission" and "Samaritan Aid Ministries", treated over 1,000 individuals in those two days.

CHARITY IN ACTION

In addition to the physical need, we as Christians always have the spiritual condition of our patients in mind. In addition to the medical specialists, we are often accompanied by pastoral counsellors. In Navotas, for example, we met a 32-year-old mother of two children -one of whom is disabled. Her situation seemed so hopeless that she was regularly plagued by suicidal thoughts. Our counsellors were able to encourage, pray for her and tell her about Jesus.

She decided to give her life to Jesus, which opened up a completely new perspective in life for her. This young woman was just one of several people who told us about their suicidal tendencies. As Christians, we want to share the hope we have and show love to our neighbours in a very practical way, as taught by Jesus. Every person is loved by God -- and we want to show this to each of our patients.



If you are medically trained, we invite you to join us on our next mission. You can find all the information you need by contacting outreach@vhicf.org





WE WANT A BIGGER FAMILY



We see ourselves as an extended family that only wants the best for each family member. We are committed to this 24 hours a day and we look forward to welcoming new children. We desire that our numbers grow more!

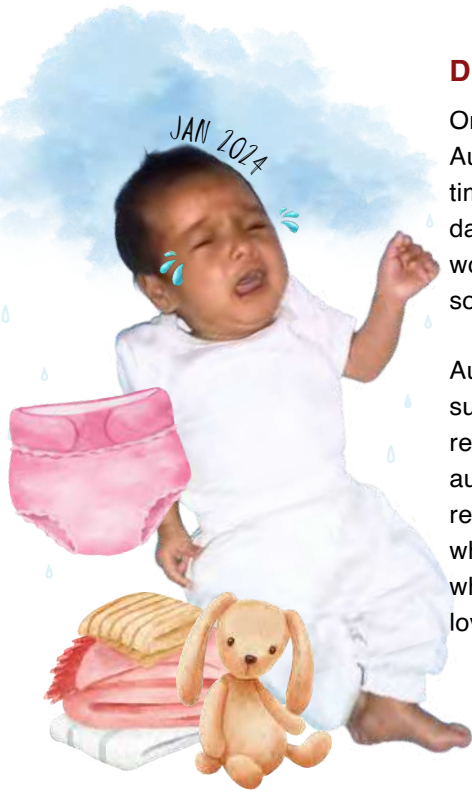
An impressive 107 children romp through our House of Hope (children up to the age of four) and our Village of Hope (children aged between five and above). Yes, sometimes it gets very loud, but we know that the children feel welcome. For many, our centres are the first place where they experience a feeling of security and love. And we are always grateful when we are able to extend this to more and more children. So it was a great pleasure for us to welcome three new children into our homes over the past six months.



DISAPPEARED WHILE BUYING NAPPIES

On January 18th, we were allowed to take in Audrey, who was about two months old at that time. As she does not have a birth certificate, her date of birth remains unknown. It was her mother's worried friend who handed the little baby to the social welfare authorities.

Audrey's mother left her little baby girl, supposedly just to go buy diapers, and never returned. When Audrey was admitted to the authorities' custody, they could not find any relative of hers who wanted to take her in. That is when Audrey came to our House of Hope, where she can now be cared for with love and security.



TIED UP AND ABUSED

Little Raffy Jane's ordeal can hardly be put into words. The scars on the four-year-old's body, head and face speak volumes. When the little girl's father died in November 2023, Raffy's mother quickly found a new husband. For the girl, this marked the beginning of three months of suffering. It was her grandmother who brought it to an end. When she found traces of severe physical abuse on Raffy she immediately filed a complaint to the social welfare authorities.

After the rescue operation, the traumatized child began to tell them her horrific experience of being bound hand and foot and brutally beaten by her own mother and step-father. She came to our care just a few days after her rescue.

With us, at the Village of Hope, not only her physical wounds will heal but we also actively work to heal her emotional wounds. We want to put a smile on her beautiful face.



Life stories like those of Audrey and Raffy Jane break our hearts every single time. They show us again and again how crucial our work is and how many more Filipino children need rescuing and help. Would you like to be part of our work? You can sponsor a child!





OVERCOMING mountains

According to the World Health Organization, around 8,700 children worldwide experience sexual abuse every five minutes. Every five minutes! As a response to this horrific reality, our director Carsten Aust with our Vision Help team decided to attempt a great feat to campaign against sexual abuse.

Along with other three companions, Carsten set off for Nepal on March 27th. Their destination: Mount Everest! What looked like an adventure holiday had a serious and heavy cause to champion. The four men wanted to conquer the base camp of the 8,848 metre high mountain to raise awareness on the worldwide plight of sexually abused children. "We wanted to emphasize the scale of the problem and do something concrete about it," says Carsten. For every metre of altitude climbed, supporters pledged to donate at least 20 cents. The proceeds went towards the construction of a new house on the grounds of the Village of Hope, which began in April. It will be the new House of Hope building where we can accommodate an additional 50 disadvantaged babies and toddlers.

CAPACITY LIMITS REACHED

In both 2022 and 2023, the number of children we welcomed in our care, increased significantly compared to previous years. Even though we are very willing to help, our facilities have already reached their capacity limits. Since the House of Hope cannot be extended, a completely new building will need to be put up. And the construction has already started!! We believe that with the new House of Hope building, there is a great opportunity to meet the needs of more children.





OVERCOMING ABUSE

This campaign to climb Mt. Everest is to spread awareness on the reality of sexual abuse. Each child of ours has some form of trauma from abuse and they must climb each of their own mountains to heal and overcome. "Just like a mountain climber, they need a competent team behind them to help them," says Carsten. To draw attention to the campaign, young people affected by abuse volunteered to take part in the filming of a video. One of them wants to become a social worker herself so that she can help other children later on.

DONATIONS FOR THE **NEW** HOUSE OF HOPE

Carsten Aust and his three friends reached the base camp of Mount Everest on April 3rd at an altitude of around 6,100 metres, a proud achievement for untrained climbers! So far, they have raised around 34,000€ for the new children's home.

However, in order to complete the building as planned to be finished in the last quarter of 2024, around 120.000€ is needed. We would like to invite you to join us in this cause and provide a loving home to welcome other children in need!

URGENT NEED: PSYCHOLOGICAL STAFF



Nonetheless, our children not only need a roof over their heads and a loving environment. Professional counselling is also a crucial need to help them heal and overcome their experiences. If you are psychologically trained and have a heart to help children who were neglected, abandoned and abused, join our team! Feel free to contact us by email volunteers@vhicf.org



A SAFE HOME FOR CHILDREN

According to official figures, at least 17,600 children were sexually abused in the Philippines in 2023. It is often the children's own parents who are the perpetrators. Our director knows that "the authorities themselves have little opportunity to act. If we don't help the little ones, no one will."

Abuse often begins in infancy—what a horrific thought! But this is the reality that many Filipino children experience. The perpetrators often come from the closest environment. Seven of the current 22 babies and toddlers in our care, under the age of five alone were sexually abused by their own family members!

OLD HOUSE OF HOPE
IN ANTIPOLLO, RIZAL



TERRIFYINGLY SIMILAR STORIES OF ABUSE

The stories are often frighteningly similar: Vien (5) and Margarette (4), for example, were both sexually abused by their biological fathers before they came to us. Both mothers worked a lot, Margarette's mom even worked abroad. It was the fathers who looked after the children and abused their daughters in the process. Vien's mom was seldom at home. So instead of looking after her daughter, these visits usually ended in arguments with her husband.

“BOTH VIEN AND MARGARETTE
HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED A SAFE
AND SECURE HOME THEY DESERVED.

In both cases it was the grandmothers who tracked down the fathers' offences and put an end to them.

Margarette refused to let her grandmother wash her private parts because of the severe pain and injuries. As for Vien, she confided to her grandmother about her terrible experiences during a normal conversation. Both grandmothers were unable to take in their granddaughters for safety, but they did the only right thing they could: they reported the children's fathers to the police and social welfare authorities so that the children can be rescued.

Vien came to us in February, just turned four a month earlier, while three-year-old Margarette followed in June 2023. Both were shy at first and very fearful, but thanks to the loving care of our staff and the warm welcome of our children, they quickly got used to their new home and now enjoy just being children in safety.





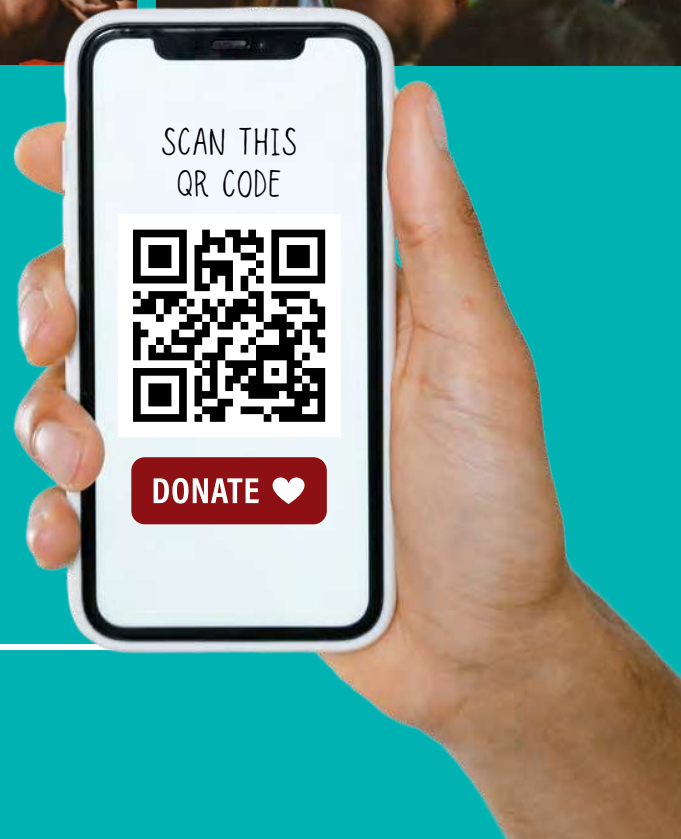
Children trapped in the cycle of abuse and poverty deserve not just sympathy, but relentless advocacy for their rights and opportunities.



INNER CHANGE NECESSARY

Our team is under no illusions: The abuse of children is deeply rooted in the Philippine society. Especially among the poor population, a child's life is worth almost nothing. As a result, they are repeatedly abandoned, left behind or abused. Even if the authorities take action against this, a far-reaching internal change in the society is needed.

But we want to continue to do what we can and take in as many children as possible and give them a better life. We invite you to partner with us! Join us by taking on a sponsorship or making a donation.





Adversity can have many facets, but they almost always have one thing in common: The weakest get hit the hardest---and the weakest, most vulnerable are usually the children. This is why in the slums of Manila, we help in many different ways to meet the needs of people.

In Tondo, babies and small children are abandoned time and time again. Many parents do not know what to feed their children or who will look after them when they are at work. This is where our day-care centre comes in: the babies and toddlers, who are malnourished, are looked after, nursed and given medical care. At the same time, our staff and volunteer workers are ready to help and assist the parents whenever needed.

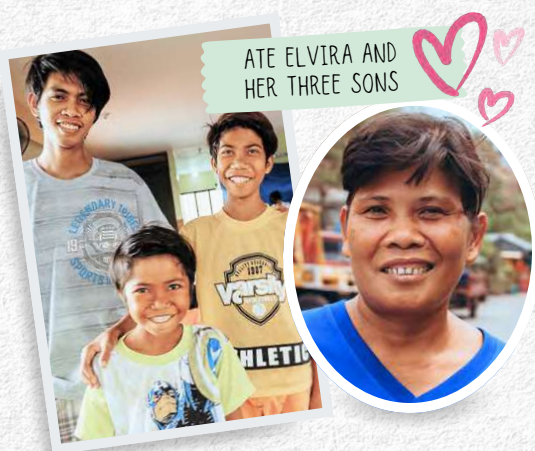
Most of the parents of the 18 children currently being looked after earn between 1.50 and 4.50 euros a day. This is just enough for a kilogram of rice or instant noodles and the occasional pagpag*. Our weekly meals for the poor are therefore often an important additional source of support for them and other poor people in the slum.

*a way of turning leftover fastfood chicken waste to be consumable again.

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE

We also try to provide work for as many people as possible within the Tondo slum community. Elvira Dandoy, for example, has been working with us as one of our amazing cooks at the day-care centre since 2016. The mother of three previously worked as a house helper and her husband as a day labourer in construction. The money was barely enough to live on. But since Elvira and her family came and joined our Mercy Ministry, we were not only able to provide work for her but also for her husband! Through our livelihood assistance program, her husband was able to purchase and drive a Pedicab*. Later, Elvira's three sons received educational scholarships too!



The lives of the Dandoy's took a 180 degree turn - not just because of the financial support. Elvira shares that Vision Help has not only helped them financially but also spiritually. She testifies:

"I used to worry about how our living situation is, but through Vision Help I came to know Jesus. And without it, my children would not be able to study and we would no longer have our house."

Elvira's fear of tomorrow was replaced by a new perspective on life. She now regularly attends our church services and weekly Bible studies, which are also part of our work in Tondo. People like her show us again and again that aside from the social work being done, the spiritual aspect is necessary to provide comprehensive support.

OVERCOMING POVERTY WITH EDUCATION

Over the years, we have supported many families with our various projects. In addition to own educational programs for children and adults, we offer scholarships for students because we believe that poverty should never be an obstacle to further education. Currently, we are able to financially support more than 40 students with our educational sponsorship program in Tondo.



One of them is Maria Anna Abayon. The 22-year-old trainee teacher came from the countryside and has been one of our scholars since August 2021. Due to her parents' poverty, her education almost ended after Grade 12. Maria's father (50) works hard but has no steady income. Her mother (47) only earns around 11€ a month from small jobs. Money is therefore always tight for the family of nine.

Since she joined our sponsorship program, Maria is grateful to her sponsors because, she is the first member of her family who is able to study and pursue her dream of becoming a teacher! She expresses with much gratitude that the support she receives is making a lasting difference in her life.

If you would also like to support making a young person's dream come true and have a different future through education, you can be a sponsor today!

*a bicycle with a carriage used for transporting people

FOOD GOOD, EVERY THING GOOD

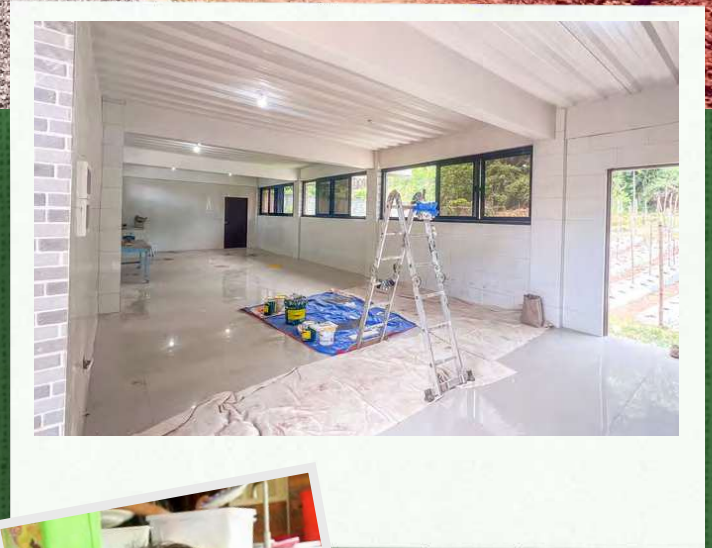


What could be nicer than a lovingly cooked, tasty meal with the family? Since our Village of Hope family is getting bigger and bigger, a larger kitchen is needed.

After many months of hard work, the construction of the new kitchen is finally complete! Our kitchen team has waited so long to sharpen their knives and wield their wooden spoons. In the old kitchen, it was often tedious and cumbersome for them to put 150 meals on the table three times a day. But that is now a thing of the past! The new premises and their equipment make the work of our amazing kitchen fairies much easier and more efficient.

THANKS TO ALL INVOLVED

Special thanks go to all the volunteers from Canada and Germany who travelled at their own expense and helped out making all of this construction work happen with much diligence and generosity! We would also like to thank many German partner communities and private individuals who made the purchase of the kitchen appliances possible because of their donations.



Thank You



LONG LIVE THE VEGETABLE GARDEN!

Carrots, lettuce, peanuts and garlic - the garden in the Village of Hope is thriving. It was not always like this. Here's a little update.

In Western countries, growing vegetables from one's own garden is a growing trend among young adults. Raising chickens and keeping small animals is also no longer a rarity. People proudly broadcast their produce on social media.

RICH HARVEST

We definitely have enough of our farm and vegetable garden to show! After the German landscape architect Stephanie Bolz joined us in 2022, a lot has happened here: In order to get the best possible result from the Village of Hope's hard ground, she carried out numerous experiments. Many were crowned with success, so that we can now grow carrots, lettuce and some types of cabbage such as bok choy (pak choi), as well as onions, garlic, peppers and chilli. We recently harvested large quantities of peanuts and beans.



We also have a newly constructed greenhouse which should help to significantly increase the yield in the future. It offers protection from extreme heat, insects and birds - factors that have reduced our harvest in the past.

Our team also involve our children in Village of Hope with the farm work and it has been a great education for them. They learn the basics of vegetable growing and they are allowed to look after the tomatoes. This not only makes them hungry for the harvested produce, but is also an important life lesson.

MONEY-SAVING LUXURY

More than 150 people are fed every day at the Village of Hope. In a country where the poor can often only afford very little to nothing, our large selection of vegetables is an absolute luxury. And we treat ourselves to it, because healthy food prevents illnesses and makes our children and our team fit and strong. These also save us a lot of money over the years. What a blessing!



STEPHANIE BOLZ

Vision Help

International Care Foundation

Donate on www.vhcf.org



German Donation Account:

Vision Help Stiftung
Evangelische Bank
IBAN: DE13 5206 0410 0005 0289 30
BIC/Swift: GENODEF1EK1
Verwendungszweck: "Spende + Adresse für
Spendenbescheinigung"

Philippine Donation Account:

VHCF, Inc.
Banco de Oro
Filiale: Rizal-Cainta Primark Branch
Account no.: 0050 80 24 6201
BIC/Swift Code: BNORPHMM
Routing No.: 0210 0001 8

**WE ARE VISION HELP.
HELP US SAVE LIVES.**