

ASCT IS 40 YEARS OLD!

We are celebrating our 40th birthday this year and I urge you to read David Cox's reflections of those early years and the developments seen through the hard work and dedication of supporters and staff. As I read David's story, I am struck by the tenacious vision that God presented to our first Trustees and how that vision remains in our hearts today. Through challenge after challenge, He has kept us strong and focussed on the children and their needs. We are blessed with a wonderful residential home environment for Mango Tree House which was officially opened 6 years ago and have also been able to expand the numbers of children supported in our Grapevine project. Now we face thinking about the future of Cashew Tree School, providing early years education for children of Payatas (the rubbish tip). The land upon which Cashew Tree School is built is now subject to 'title' applications in the Philippine courts. This is very common as slum land becomes more valuable and huge swathes of land have already been through this process in the vicinity and the 'title' is awarded to historic ownership. For Cashew Tree School, it means that we are likely to be needing to find alternative premises within the next 3-4 years and we are going to be launching a special appeal to ensure that we are appropriately equipped to continue with the provision of education for these children. It is too early to say what the solution will be, but as the options emerge, we want to make sure that we are ready and able to choose the best.

Further information on how you can help with this appeal will be available on our website and future newsletters.

This edition is packed with wonderful news, the videos by John Peddie are a key highlight for me. They really bring home the great work and opportunities that ASCT provide for children, the difference that sponsors make to a child's life and the transformation that support from ASCT offers a child. We were blessed to have the presence of Peter Emata for the video launch and it was a treat to spend time with him, showing him some of the sights of London including Oysters in Borough Market which, although delicious, sent Peter into apoplexy when comparing the price to his home village where he could pick them from the river.

I hope you enjoy reading our news and consider carefully how you can help us achieve our goals which are shown on page 12.

With very best wishes

Kay Mackay - ASCT Chairman



We asked some of the children you support to draw pictures representing what ASCT means to them and to celebrate our 40th Anniversary. Here are some of the fantastic results.



40 YEARS OF CARE AND SUPPORT

UPDATE FROM MANILA

While the children we support enjoyed a well earned summer vacation, the ASCF staff had a blast in their 2-day swimming and bonding break in Subic. It was a wonderful time for all of the staff, giving them the opportunity to relax and enjoy some 'team building'.



The students didn't miss out as some of them were privileged enough to spend 2 days of swimming, movie marathon, music jamming, delicious meals at the home of one of the local supporter. Great fun was had by all.

During the holidays staff at Cashew school held a seminar for the parents about a child's cognitive development, family and 4 parts of discipline. This was held to keep parents informed of their children's development and to help them understand their growing needs and behaviours. The day was a great success.

We are incredibly proud of all our students for their hard work and endeavours throughout the last school year over all three of our projects. Many received accolades for their achievements. However we are particularly proud of four of our older students who graduated from college: Jolyn Sumulat, as a social worker, Ellaine Saberon, with a degree in accountancy, Raquel Pabua graduated with a degree in business administration and Rose Anne Gonzales received a BSc in journalism. These four girls had been supported by ASCT for a total of 36 years, showing the commitment we have to the long term educational support of our students. Congratulations to them as they enter the world of work.



We have been extremely fortunate to have a series of promotional films made for us by John Peddie. John very kindly volunteered his time to produce these moving films. Here is an extract of a letter he sent to his local church while in the Philippines:

I have known about ASCT for years thanks to the hard work and dedication of David (Cox) and although I have always admired the work that he and ASCT do, I never thought it would be my kind of mission and suited more to those who are excited by the idea of adventures into unknown conditions and roughing it in foreign climates. However part of me had always expected to end up out here one day!

I'm writing this message from Mango Tree house where I'm staying with approximately 50 abandoned street children, some of whom don't even know their family name. Yet the love that can be found here in Manila is overwhelming and puts into perspective the daily gripes of one's life back home.

Reading the Bible alongside the children in the home, I became very aware of the hope that can be found for those who have nothing living in the pages of the dusty old book I might refer to once in a while. The reading on the night I had visited Payatas was the rich man entering into heaven. I challenge you to sit amongst a group of former street children in a care home and give your interpretation of the reading. Note to self: must check finances when I get home a redistribution of my riches may be in order?... Please Lord let me never forget.

Amongst the heartache can be found hope. God is at work in Manila providing hope and in places the social care and support that people need to survive the conditions. Most homes have a crucifix or an



image of Jesus on the wall and I have attended a bible study for parents of the children of Cashew Tree school, where mothers and fathers worshipped God with joy in their hearts, and shared with tears their burdens. Jesus was their refuge, hope and saviour.



I had the thrill of meeting the little girl that Kate and I sponsor and her mother and although it wasn't the wow experience one might have expected it certainly strengthened my resolve to do all I can for her and her mother to make sure they always have provision and would never go hungry. They feel very much like extended family. Kate, Ella and I already often speak about them around the dinner table. Another note to self, must put my good intentions and words into action.

I had the privilege of spending time with an ASCT student at her school and at their family home. Her story is living proof that the sponsorship of child's education really can change lives, as the eldest daughter in the family recently graduated thanks to her sponsor and has a job in a call centre a far cry from scavenging rubbish from the dump site. A portion of her income has gone to help build an extension on their house, with a front door which closes and has a lock. They have plaster on the walls and ceiling and it is painted. It's a massive improvement on the slums I have visited, but still nowhere near the quality of housing and luxuries we take so much for granted in the UK.

John

Please take time to look at John's films on our website or via our Facebook page. We would love you to share them with friends and family and spread the word about our fantastic work. If you have problems viewing them please contact us on 01276 707633.

REFLECTIONS BY DAVID COX



David Cox at Mango Tree House

As ASCT celebrates 40 years of helping children we want to shout about what we have achieved and tell you about the great strides that we have made over these years.

ASCT was formed on the 15th February 1975 when our Founder David Taylor signed a declaration of Trust with four other trustees. A substantial gift from an American friend of David's was given to help

children in Vietnam, Hong Kong and other areas in Asia, hence the name Asian Students Christian Trust. In the first years of existence ASCT concentrated on housing street children in Hong Kong, dealing more with making them safe as opposed to educating them. In the 70's one of the most difficult things to deal with was communicating without modern technology, letters and money transfers took several weeks to reach their destination.

The trustees quickly identified the need of children in other areas and investigated setting up projects in the Philippines with new projects in Manila and Baguio. In the early years ASCT worked closely with other Charities including Tear Fund and The Amos Trust. As ASCT developed lessons were learned. The issue of running a charity on the other side of the world and monitoring expenses and levels of service provided was always a challenge, with students often living in overcrowded accommodation.

The focus of our work gradually moved away from Hong Kong, as projects were taken over by government organisations, and became centred in the Philippines. The issues of monitoring service levels was greatly assisted when Craig Burrows started living in Manila. He worked closely with Peter Emata to consolidate our projects and improve services. At this stage ASCT did not own property but rented different buildings in various areas. Education was becoming more important and 'outside' and 'residential' students were supported.

In 1991 the decision was taken to buy a property, because of difficulties in property ownership our sister charity ASCF was formed. ASCF had



their own board of trustees. The new home was an unassuming bungalow and we started to raise money for its total refurbishment. June 1995 saw the official opening of Mango Tree House at a cost of £40,000. The building had been transformed into a three storey home for children.

In the UK our office moved location several times, we had a

presence in Stevenage, Maidstone and in 1996 we moved to Camberley . The next big project was to build a school to help the children of the Payatas rubbish dump workers, hence Cashew Tree School was born. At the end of 1998 112 children were supported, 31 at Mango, 40 at Cashew and 41 'outside' students, later to be called the Grapevine project.

On May 29th 2009 the residential students supported by ASCT moved into a brand new Mango Tree House. This new building project was a huge undertaking with £147k raised in the UK to build this fantastic facility.

The success of ASCT has been due in no uncertain terms to the personalities that have led us forward over the last 40 years. Trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters have been incredibly loyal to our cause. One of the trustees who signed the declaration 40 years ago, Ann Turrall still supports ASCT, showing that once the charity is in your heart it is difficult to remove it.

We have touched the lives of 100s of children, giving them the opportunity to succeed. Everyone connected with ASCT should be incredibly proud of what has been achieved in the last 40 years.



MEET THE STAFF - NERIA EMATA

Working in ASCF took its toll on me!

It was 1991 when I first arrived in ASCF to work as a housemother and educational officer. From being a primary school teacher in Mindanao I followed my husband Simon Peter Emata, who was then offered to work to help run the foundation. Along with my daughter Alpha, then three years old, I worked with the children almost 24 hours a day.

It wasn't easy. I felt I couldn't handle all the growing responsibilities. It was already quite a lot of work taking care of my growing daughter and being pregnant with my son Omega. Adding to the pressure was having my husband as my own boss—everything was quite a handful for me. A few times I cried, I thought I wouldn't make it another day working in ASCF.

After some hits and misses working, I eventually learned to love my job and the children I was looking after.

Even though these children were not my own, I felt a certain connection to them almost comparable, if not equal to, that of a real mother to her child. I learned their quirks. I knew about their strengths and weak points. I practically learned how to get and keep their attention. Soon after I noticed that the crying nights lessened and every waking day became more bearable.

I was in a different kind of high.

The long hours of doting for the children, teaching and looking after them were fulfilling. Visiting the schools where both Mango and Grapevine students go, talking to their respective teachers, knowing their problems, just like I am a mother to them. I am



happiest when these very children I took care of graduated and received distinctions and awards from their schools. It was like seeing my own children being rewarded for a job well done in school. The same goes to those children who left the care of ASCF and did not finish studying. It was a privilege taking care of them and sharing a part of me with them. Their failures were mine and I share their successes with them. It was fulfilling to look at them and see how far my love and respect for them has gone. The good values, love and respect they gave me in return were always satisfying and something I always treasure.

To fly to England twice was one of my greatest accomplishments in life. I met the generous men and women behind the success of ASCT. They who gave their unwavering love and financial support to children they never knew and met. I became friends with the people who worked so hard to keep ASCF afloat. I will never forget the memories I've had with them during my visit: David and Margaret Cox, June Cobbet, Fred and Kay Mackey, Colin and Alison Morey, Tom and Valerie Burrows, Chris and Sue Hitchins and David and Sarah Sherriff to name a few, and likewise to the other sponsors.

Twenty-five years (and counting) of being with ASCF I feel I have fulfilled my life's purpose and meaning. It was and will continue to be my share as a Christian and a human being.

I will always be grateful and thankful to God and all the people He used to orchestrate my opportunity to be a part of ASCF. To God is the glory!

We had great pleasure in hosting Peter Emata, ASCF director from the Philippines, in the UK recently. Peter was here to help launch John Peddie's new video and visit friends. We are indebted to Peter and all the ASCF staff for the fantastic work they do in Manila.



FAITH

Every weekday evening the children at Mango Tree House gather together and celebrate devotions. We wanted to share with you how important this is to our students so asked them to explain it to you.



At first Nightly Devotion simply meant to us a short religious

service or a devotional exercise relating to worship, without fully realizing the impact of this activity every night. As the time goes on, we realized that, coming from different family backgrounds and experiences, this simple Nightly Devotion continues to work in our lives as it develops our personal relationship with God, and we have deeper knowledge about His words. The insights we shared every night serve as an inspiration to be a better person and have a meaningful life.

"Personally, being a Christian didn't mean a lot to me, it is just a religion but when I came to Mango Tree House and got involved in the Nightly Devotion I came to know Jesus and accepted Him in my life as my personal saviour. Since then I spend quiet time as my personal devotion with Him and eventually my faith strengthened and understood that God has a purpose in whatever happened in our lives. Before, I did not understand why God ended my father's life early, but He gave me the answer through His words in Jeremiah 29:11, " For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Myrna Acosta

"When I was a kid, I used to hear the name JESUS spoken by other children; I never thought that the name would have such a great influence in my life. Jesus became my saviour, my best friend and my everything. He made me realize that even though my family abandoned me, I will never be alone. He gave me everything I needed and all things became possible. He had given me hope, love and family and with all of this, I will keep my faith to Jesus for I know He will always hold my hand no matter what happens." – Nica May Modelo

"I learned many things in our Nightly Devotion and one of these is that knowing God's word is not enough, so we have to share and live with it in our everyday life. Even though we have a lot of problems our faith always helps us to stand still." – Marry Jane Araojo

FUTURE EVENTS

SPONSORED WALK Saturday 1st August at 9:30am

We will be walking 11 miles around the area of Puttenham (south of Farnham, Surrey). Everyone welcome to take part or look out for details of how to sponsor one of the walkers.



CHARITY SPA TICKETS AVAILABLE

Enjoy a day of indulgence at Frimley Hall Hotel Spa with friends or family. We have 10 tickets available to be used at a time that suits you.

Tickets are just £45 , spaces are limited so don't delay.

Tickets must be redeemed by 31st August 2015 and are subject to availability by arrangement with Frimley Hall Hotel.

ASCT CHARITY GOLF DAY FRIDAY 2nd OCTOBER

Southwood Golf Club, Farnborough, Hampshire.

The day includes:

Bacon Butties on arrival

18 Holes of Golf

Two Course Lunch

Charity Raffle

Prizes

Book a place for just £45.



A date for your diary:

ASCT Quiz night

14th November

St Paul's Church, Camberley

Full details to follow



If you would like further details or tickets for any of our events please contact John or Alison on 01276 707633 or check our face book page.

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The ASCT board of trustees is responsible for the strategic direction the charity takes. In this our 40th year these plans are particularly focused on securing the future of ASCT, we thought it would be a good idea to share them with you:

1. Attract an additional £1000 worth of pledged giving per month
2. Create a donor care strategy to maintain existing pledged giving and encourage regular increases.
3. Encourage legacy giving.
4. Expand geographical base of donors.
5. Increase demographic spread of supporters.
6. Explore all aspects of fundraising to achieve budgeted expenditure.
7. Increase social media presence using website, Facebook, Twitter and linkedin.
8. Enhance Board of trustees; identify and fill skill gaps via training or recruitment.
9. Improve communication with ASCF.
10. Increase profile of ASCF staff and services.



Please help us achieve these plans over the next year in whatever way you are able.



THE NEW FACE WITH ASCT

John Busby has joined the ASCT team . He will be working alongside Alison as the new manager.

We wish John well in his new role.

Don't forget that we have recently moved office. The new address is below.

Patron: The Right Honourable Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath
Life President: David Cox MBE

Community Link, Ian Goodchild Centre, Knoll Road
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