

**Changing young lives, one at a time.
Caring and educating vulnerable children in the Philippines.**

As we are all enjoying this lovely summer weather, please take a few minutes to read our newsletter which celebrates the achievements of children supported through ASCT. It was a joy to see Crystal here in the UK, able to meet her sponsors for the first time and to experience something so totally different as participation in a London theatre production.

The Street Child World Cup is associated with ASCF and gave lots of children an amazing opportunity to travel to a different country while representing their nation. It kept me riveted to the daily update as the boys and girls teams progressed through the stages. So many congratulations to all the participants and especially to the Philippines girls team who played Brazil in the final. Not to forget our staff that helped to make all that happen and Jocelyn tells us how she enjoyed the event.



Further congratulations are given to all the children who have graduated or been honoured with awards. We are especially proud of Catherine who writes to you in this newsletter as the new head teacher of Cashew, describing her journey from a little girl with no hope to a young woman able to bring her family back together and offer hope to many other children in her role as teacher.

A message that runs through all these stories is the importance of sponsors to provide the funding and support that enables that transformation through education and love. We need new sponsors, please talk to your friends and family to explain the difference that they can make and what a rewarding experience it is to be a sponsor for ASCT and change the life of one child. I wish you all an enjoyable summer.

Kind Regards Kay Mackay ASCT Chair

AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES

I am Ma. Christina Martin but you may call me Crystal. I have been living in ASCF'S Mango Tree House since I was four years old. Rev. Craig Burrows found me living inside a cemetery in Caloocan City, Philippines begging for food to survive. My life has changed from then on. I started my preparatory school in Cashew Learning Center and today, as I write, I am a college student.

I am fond of playing football and have joined different competitions including The Street Child Word Cup in Rio, Brazil in April of this year. It was an honor to be chosen to play for the girls' national team of the country where we ended as runner up in the finals. It was a great experience for me to travel to a different country and meet other street children of participating countries from all over the world.

A month after Brazil, I was invited to the UK by the London International Festival for Theatre (LIFT) to perform in one of their plays called TURFED. I was very excited and could hardly sleep or eat waiting for my visa to be approved. You can say I was thrilled because it was my second trip outside of the Philippines. I was able to finally see my sponsor, who live in the UK, and other supporters of ASCF and meet new friends. I left for London on May 25 with Neria Emata as my chaperone since I was still underage to travel alone.

Arriving in London is another chapter in my book of life. I had to be in Hackney studio every day to rehearse for the play. I was actually



CRYSTAL PERFORMING IN 'TURFED'

two weeks late for the trainings and rehearsals, because of visa issues. It was tough for me at first but all thanks to my determination along with the patience and excellence of our director and other LIFT members I was able to cope with them in time for the play's opening night. At the end of the show, we got a whopping four-star review in various London

newspapers. I am not just proud of myself but the entire team as well.

After the LIFT play, I was able to go around London. I met up with my sponsor and the other ASCT trustees. The LIFT staff showed me around London to experience all the different old and new places to visit in London. Not only that, I was also able to practice football with the Fly Emirates girls team. I am proud to say that I was the first Filipino to hold the FA cup and had an exclusive VIP tour inside Arsenal's Emirates stadium.



My experiences in London were totally unforgettable. It would not have been possible if not for all of your support and love for the children in the Philippines. I will carry all these experiences as encouragement for me to carry on with my studies and to continue to have a positive outlook in life.

Crystal was not the only student supported by ASCT to be part of the Street Children World Cup, Stephen was a member of the boys team. Here is his story:

I am Stephen John Abutog, 15 years old and one of the blessed children living at Mango Tree House. There were several experiences I had but one of the most meaningful for me was when I became a part of the Boy's



Philippine Football Team of the Street Child World Cup. It was my first time to travel outside the country and I learned many things such as gaining friends, sportsmanship, teamwork and discipline. I played the best I can to win the game. At the end of the tournament, I am still happy even though we did not reach the finals because of the memories and experienced I had will always be treasured.

Congratulations to both Stephen and Crystal for representing their country.

CONGRATULATIONS!

March is a time of celebration for Filipino students, a time of graduation and prize giving. We are incredibly proud of all our ASCT students who worked so hard to complete a year of schooling. Four of our students have graduated from High School and now embarked on their College education, while eight students are moving from elementary to High School.

Many of our students have been honored with awards recognizing their



RECOGNITION AND GRADUATION DAY AY PAPAYA ACADEMY

varied skills and achievements as diverse as: best in science; most courteous; achiever of the year and proficient at arts. We would like to congratulate those students who completed their school year with honors, particularly Rhiza Mae Bianzon who was awarded 1st Honor in her class.

We are particularly delighted for the students who have graduated with college degrees and are now entering the working world. These are:

- Catherine Acosta Bsc in Secondary Education
- Rosario Arcilla Bsc in Computer Science
- Jamaica Jumagdao & Irish Reodique both with a Bsc in Business Management
- Shenna Rose Arca Bsc in Hotel and Restaurant Management.

These students' success would not be possible without the support of their sponsors. Opposite is an extract from a farewell letter from Catherine Acosta to her sponsors and the ASCT trustees. Since her graduation Catherine has taken up the position as Head teacher at Cashew Tree School.

As I am writing this letter, my Mother is already sleeping and my brother Bryan is preparing his things for school as it is the beginning of classes tomorrow. I have just finished preparing my lessons for my classes tomorrow. It has been more than a month since I graduated from University and left my Mango Tree House. I am now living with my Mum and younger brother in Kasiglahan, just a short distance from Cashew Tree School in Payatas. I am happy that I can provide now for the needs of my family, that I can talk to my Mum and make decisions with her, that I can be a daughter again and a sister to Bryan, that I can go to church together with them, that I can sleep at night beside them. I have been waiting for this for eleven years since I went to Mango and now I am blessed to have this wish come true and it's a different now... it is more positive with more direction from eleven years ago. Whenever I look back, I always see ASCT, ASCF and my sponsors who had a big influence on my life, of what I have become today.

No words can express how much I thank you for seeing the potential in me and for giving me the opportunity to have a better future. I came to Mango when I was 10 years old, a girl who is lost, a girl with a deceased Father and a mentally ill Mother, a little girl who is afraid to live in a city but who carries a big dream. This girl has been sheltered and taken care of by people like you with a big heart. I was loved like a family member, I've gained so many brothers and sisters, I was educated in good schools, taught Christian values and encouraged to do my best. As I grew up, I became an elder sister to my co-students, an adviser, a friend and sometimes a clown who makes them laugh. When I graduated, I became an inspiration to them, to try harder and reach their dreams.

I am happy that I became a student of ASCF, I would not be an inspiration today if you hadn't inspired me too. Thank you so much for everything and for your hard work. I hope and pray that you will not stop helping and supporting ASCF and less privileged children here in the Philippines. This is not a goodbye but a beginning. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

Love from Catherine Acosta

'And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Galatians 6:9



MEET THE STAFF

Welcome to our regular slot; meet the staff. In this issue we get to know Jocelyn Merabeles our senior houseparent working for ASCF our sister charity in the Philippines.

Hi I am Jocelyn Merabeles, I graduated with a degree in Secondary Education majoring in Maths. I am the Senior Houseparent at Mango Tree House. I have been working for ASCF for 12 years. I can say that ASCF is my second family and I am grateful that I am part of this amazing organization. Working for ASCF has enabled me to help my parents and support my siblings in their University education, they have now graduated and become professionals themselves. Being with ASCF has enhanced my skills and developed me personally. I have learned to believe in myself, understand that I can do many different things and most of all deal with the unexpected! I am very thankful to Uncle Peter, Uncle Craig and Aunty Sarah for allowing me to experience travelling abroad. I was lucky enough to go to Brazil to help with the Street Child World Cup 2014 which was an amazing experience that I will never forget.

As a Senior Houseparent, I carry out all the responsibilities of a houseparent as well as supervising all the domestic staff. I supervise the household chores and take good care of the children. I help the kids in their assignments and projects during study time. I guide them in their social and spiritual life. We see to it that we emphasise to all the children the value of education as a means to a better future.

The work we do is complicated and kind of difficult to handle sometimes. For me every day is challenging- there are success as there are also disappointments but everything is a learning experience. Hearing heartfelt "thank you" from the children makes this ministry a rewarding experience. Being with ASCF is not a work but it is all about commitment. To our supporters, from the bottom of our hearts thank you so much for helping and changing the Filipino Children's lives! May our Almighty God continue to bless you more!!! Maraming Salamat po!



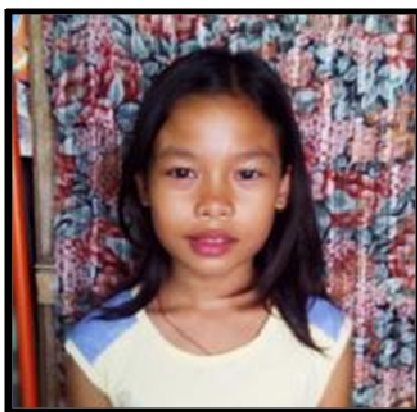
LOOKING FOR YOUR HELP



Have you ever considered sponsoring an ASCT student? As you will have read in previous articles sponsors have an extremely positive influence on the lives of our students. The support received is treasured and remembered well into adulthood.

We have several students without sponsors, including the Artaquin brothers. The three boys have been abandoned by their parents, they have spent the last 2 years living on the street, surviving through the generosity of friends and their own determination and courage. Christopher, the older brother has taken on the responsibility of parent and provider. They are now living at Mango Tree House, adjusting to a very different life and the discipline of going to school. We have given them the opportunity to be children again to enjoy their childhood.

If you would like to know more about the sponsoring please call Alison on 01276 707633 or email office@asct.org.uk.



A VISIT TO MANGO TREE HOUSE

June Cobbett, one of our trustees, and David Swift visited Manila earlier in the year. Here are David's recollections of his first visit to our projects.

In February 2014 June and I set out for Manila. June had spent 3 months as a volunteer at Mango in 2010, however it was my first visit. We arrived late afternoon at a bustling international airport. The journey to Kasiglahan was very slow. Traffic was solid with cars, buses, Jeepneys and motorbikes, all weaving in and out of lanes. Along the roadside were shops, some smart and modern, others little more than shacks and everywhere we saw crowds of people buying food or eating at makeshift cafés. We finally arrived at Mango and were greeted by children's' cries of "Aunty June, Aunty June", they still hadn't met me!

My first impressions of Mango were of a place for children to grow up in a safe and caring environment. With its large dormitories, kitchen, communal lounge and study area, the house stands in its own grounds, which also provides a play area and space for an experimental water garden.



The day after our arrival we visited a modern shopping mall in Quezon City. Travelling by Jeepney was like being on a fairground dodgem ride, with only *very* rudimentary controls. Passengers paid their fares by passing money down the bus from person to person, where it was handed over to the driver, their change was returned the same way. While money exchange was taking place the driver continued to steer, brake and let passengers off and on!

That evening we joined the children for dinner after which it was time for devotions. One of the girls read a bible passage in English, which was then discussed in Tegalo, with prayers and songs to follow. All the children stood up in turn and introduced themselves. Later I tried to help some of the girls with their geometry homework, but soon realised that my maths knowledge from 50 years ago was not up to the task!



Another day we visited Cashew on a Jeepney taking children home to Payatas from Papaya school. No sooner had we climbed aboard but there was a rush of small children climbing noisily into the seats, including an extra row of tiny wooden chairs placed along the centre of the bus.

At Cashew school we met the Headmaster, Tirso, and the other teachers. As it was lunchtime it was decided to distribute the food parcels for some of the local Grapevine families. One house was very tiny, with a sleeping area hidden away behind curtains, and cooking done on a single camping stove. The home of

Marites di Palo was larger and had a small courtyard with hens and cockerels; the latter tied up to prevent escape! We saw the aluminium window, money for which had been provided by June on her visit in 2010. She proudly explained her business project, making purses and pencil cases from recycled coffee packets.

It was quite an experience walking through Payatas, with its tiny houses, shops and food stalls. The dumpsite was huge, with lorries constantly bringing in city rubbish. We saw people cutting up old foam and recycling it to make "new" mattresses. Everywhere we walked we were on top of compressed rubbish, it was very hot and dusty. When we returned to Cashew the children greeted us with cries of "Welcome Auntie June" and "Welcome Uncle David". We watched as they were taught their numbers and I was allowed to write an answer on the



blackboard to great amusement and cheering!

On another day we visited some of the schools attended by Grapevine students and delivered greeting cards and presents from their sponsors. At Papaya Academy, next door to Mango, we saw the craft workshops of Pinya, where women from Payatas met to produce goods made from recycled materials.

Saturday is the day when the Grapevine children come to Mango for extra lessons and playtime. We watched the Mango children play games and enjoy team races, but not before they had cleaned the whole house, everyone had their job to do!

Sunday saw everyone up early for the swimming pool party and BBQ. These trips are a rare treat for the children and we were pleased to be able to fund it on this occasion. The afternoon was taken up with swimming and karaoke singing, the latter much enjoyed by the older girls.

On our last night we said goodbye to all the children, and they gave us "thank-you" cards and sang a song for us. Peter announced that I was going to provide the funds for new personal lockers in their dormitories; they were all very excited about that. It was quite an emotional farewell.

After leaving Mango we spent a day exploring the historic parts of Manila before flying south to spend a week on the island of Cebu. We travelled home via Dubai, where we stayed with friends. We couldn't but fail to notice the enormous gulf between the great wealth of Dubai and the poverty in the Philippines. However we saw many more smiling faces among the Filipinos, who are determined to make the most of what they have, and strive and better themselves through hard work and education. *David Swift*



GETTING SPONSORED

Thank you to everyone who has helped raise money for ASCT over the last few months.

We have had two extraordinary feats of endurance completed to raise much needed funds for ASCT:

Thom Disney, a teacher at the St. Gilgen International School in Austria, ran the 100km Salzburg super marathon and raised a fantastic 1,800 Euros on our behalf. We are hoping that Thom will write a short article for the next newsletter.

Adam Williams has competed in the Etape du Tour a 150km race which enables amateur bike riders to attempt a stage of the Tour de France. The race includes over 4000m of ascents! The event took Adam 10½ hours to complete, he hopes to raise in excess of 800 Euros. A massive thank you to Adam and Thom.

On a gentler note we would like to thank everyone who took part in the ASCT sponsored walk. Despite a dismal forecast, 13 walkers completed



the 12 mile walk around the Tilford area of Surrey, enjoying some good company and fantastic views while managing to stay relatively dry.

Don't forget that if you plan to raise money for ASCT by doing a sponsored event you can use the fundraising website virginmoneygiving.com. This site allows you to create your own fundraising page and pass your details to friends and family through social media sites. Supporters can donate using credit or debit cards and gift aid can be claimed on their donations.

So get inspired by Adam and Thom and start fundraising.



LEGACIES

It's a common myth that only the rich and famous leave money to charity when they die. This couldn't be any further from the truth. The reality is without the gifts left in Wills by people like you, ASCT would have struggled to provide the services we do over the last few years.

Thankfully 74% of the UK population support charities and when asked, 35% of people say they'd happily leave a gift in their Will once family and friends had been provided for. The problem is only 7% actually do.

That's why, if we all leave some money in our Wills for charity as well as our family, we can make a huge difference. So, you don't have to be rich and famous to make a contribution that can make a difference.

Whether you are making a new Will or updating an existing one, we recommend you speak to a specialist legal advisor. They have the legal expertise to clearly express and carry out your wishes.

Please consider leaving a gift to ASCT when writing your Will.



GARAGE SALE

Many congratulations to all our students and staff involved in the recent 'Garage Sale'. This annual event is a major fundraising opportunity in the Philippines and is a massive undertaking for all involved. This year was a great success with just over £1,000 raised, the funds will go towards the 10% of budget that we ask ASCF to raise locally.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The ASCT Annual General Meeting will be held on the morning of Saturday 18th October at Camberley Heath Golf Club. As supporters of ASCT you are all welcome to attend. If you would like to come along please contact Alison Morey on 01276 707633.



***RUSHMOOR MALE VOICE CHOIR CONCERT
18TH OCTOBER 7:30PM
HIGH CROSS CHURCH CAMBERLEY
PLEASE CALL ALISON FOR TICKETS***



ASCT GOLF DAY
Friday 3rd October at 8:00am
Blue Mountain Golf Centre, Binfield
£45 for breakfast, 18 holes and lunch.
Contact Alison for more details.

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

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