

After a gap of 4 years our chair of Children of the Dump, Kay Mackay, was able to return to Manila along with her husband Fred who is also a trustee. They were thrilled to see how well things are going after the problems during COVID. This is the story of what they found.



UK Trustee visits to Manila are such an important part of our partnership with ASCF who run the projects there, so it was a source of great joy to be able to visit for the first time in 4 years. First and foremost we needed to reacquaint ourselves with the staff team and children, both having lots of new faces as well as well-known and loved ones. Numbers have grown this last year and there are now 100 Cashew Tree students, 110 Grapevine students and 20 Mango residents. We were able to do some detailed joint planning to see further expansion in August for 200 Cashew Tree students, 125 Grapevine and 25 Mango.

On our first day we met over 100 students who attended the Saturday school and feeding day. Many parents also attend and volunteer to help cook the food and supervise little ones. The classic process from children is always – first of all to Bless you by raising your hand to their forehead – a sign of respect and honour, secondly you will be asked if you know their name and if you know their sponsor. Sadly with so many new children, we failed on both counts. We also have many new children seeking a sponsor who will be a vital touch-point in their journey with the charity, If you think you could be a sponsor- please get in touch with John or visit our website which showcases some children who are looking for one.

We were able to visit old haunts like Payatas which has changed significantly in the 7 years since the dumpsite closed. The air is cleaner, there is no stench and it doesn't hurt your lungs to breath. There are some new buildings being

KAY MACKAY CHAIRPERSON

constructed which look good quality and it is officially no longer a slum. However, the economy is still rooted in rubbish, the families we visited were all involved in scavenging or recycling in some way or another and the place is overwhelmed with Junk Shops. These are the places where scavengers sell their goods. If you move just a few yards back from the road, you find squalid one roomed shacks housing six or more people with no running water and no sanitation. These are where our Grapevine students are likely to reside. A bit of foam is laid down at night to sleep on and if you are more than 5 feet tall you have to curl up to lie down.



There are some recently installed communal toilets shared by many families which is an improvement on the 'bag it and chuck it method'



The relatively new community served by your donations is in Sitio Pintor, This is the 'new' dumpsite although it has actually been there for about 20 years. It was only when dumping at the Payatas site was prohibited some 7 years ago when the water supply was being contaminated that San Isidro became the main repository for all the waste of Metro Manila.

I was apprehensive about visiting this community as I found it an overwhelming experience last time we were there, but families were expecting us and a new Cashew classroom for 50 children was waiting for a visit. The population has exploded in this area, it is noisy, dusty and smelly. There were massive garbage trucks entering the dumpsite every few seconds, driving at speed just inches from the roadside shacks where little children play. The actual dumpsite is very controlled and no one except licensed scavengers are allowed in. Children will instead work in the sorting areas and the Junk Shops to help their families earn a living. The empty track I walked 4 years ago is now crowded with shacks and even a church has been built.

KAY MACKAY CHAIRPERSON



Water Pump 2023

Everyone here is involved with scavenging either on the actual dumpsite or in the sorting and cleaning areas.

Our new classroom is just off the main dumpsite entrance alongside the Health Hut and water pump. You may remember reading about the water pump in one of our previous newsletters and it is a real triumph. Local charity supporters clubbed together to refurbish the pump which had been broken for eight years. It serves over 700 homes who now have a supply of water for cooking and washing!

The classroom uses solar power and 20 little people were concentrating learning their numbers when we arrived. There is no sanitation available but a make-shift comfort room is created in a corner. We run two classes a day here with parent volunteers to assist the teachers. The 'health hut' next door is provided by the government and has a nurse available Mon- Fri to treat minor ailments and chronic conditions.



It may also be of interest to you to read a couple of individual case studies to showcase the work that is done.



Cyrus 1st left and far right Lyka in 2016

Renewed acquaintances included Lyka who with her brother Cyrus we met in 2016 in a scavenger encampment where conditions belied believe. Lyka was skeletal, covered in lice and scabies, had lost all her hair and her feet were totally ulcerated from the acid effluent in which she lived. As we left the campsite, her Mum asked us to take her girls as she could not afford to keep them. In due course, and after all the correct processes had been followed, Lyka joined Cyrus, at Mango where they

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have lived very happily ever since. Reminiscing with them about that visit 7 years ago was quite a profound experience because they remembered it so clearly as they scrolled through the photos on my phone talking about it and saying they missed their Mum who unfortunately died in 2021. They are both doing really well at school although the pandemic period was really hard for them both. Lyka speaks extremely good English and was given a special reward at school this term for her excellent grades. Cyrus has been selected by MegaWorld Foundation as an exemplary pupil and is being provided with additional support from them for his education.



Lyka and Cyrus in 2023

In Devotions one night, I noticed a large scar on Lyka's arm as she sat beside me translating. I asked her if she had burned herself, she replied very matter-of-fact – Oh no, Auntie Kay I did not get burned, that happened before I came here when a rat tried to eat my arm. I just didn't know what to say !



In recent years the joint boards developed the family reintegration programme where 20+ children who were resident in Mango could be reintegrated with family members and supported through an enhanced Grapevine scheme. It was delightful to witness how well this programme has gone. We were able to meet a number of students who are settled back with family and doing well with their studies and home life. The ASCF team are to be congratulated for their work in keeping all these young people in education and safe in family environments. We were particularly impressed by

one family story. Three children were admitted to Mango because their mother had murdered her baby grandchild which was witnessed by one of the children. The incident caused the family to lose their home and the father his job. He is an incredibly loving, responsible dad but his earning power was insufficient to sustain his family. ASCF team were able to support the three

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children through their trauma and the child witness during the court process and giving of evidence against her mother. After conclusion of the court case and imprisonment of the mother, social workers set about helping Dad to find a home, a job, and a social support system to enable him to have his children living back at home with him. It was an honour to meet them, they had travelled 3.5 hours to Mango to see us and tell us their story and then they would have the same journey home. A family reunited and healing.

How to win friends and influence people



So what is it that fills our suitcase up when we travel to Manila? Insect repellent ? books? Elegant clothes? No – its Toblerone Chocolate !!
An absolute favourite of the children and staff. Am sure that's the reason they look forward to our visits.

Three little munchkins

These little fellows are residents of Mango Tree residential home who had found their way into my sweetie bag ! I first met them 4 years ago when they were newly admitted. What a difference those years have made, they have boundless energy, can read and write in Tagalog and English. They will speak eloquently in Devotions about their perspectives on a bible passage and what it means in their own lives. Above all, they are on a happy journey to achieve their potential and step out of poverty.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Kay Mackay'.

Kay Mackay—Chair of Children of the Dump

CLARISSA DYSON VISITS MANGO



Clarissa is the Chair of the Berkshire Filipino-British Association which has been a long term friend and supporter of Children of The Dump, but she had never visited Mango House before. Here she describes her experience.

I arranged to visit (Children of the Dump) in Manila with Charity Director Peter Emata. Peter's dedication to the children's welfare was evident when he said, "I will serve these children until my last breath". Cashew Tree School was built beside Mango House with 3 rooms holding a class of 25 children in the morning and 25 children in the afternoon. These children would not have an education without Children of the Dump supporting them and their families. There is now a plan in place to increase the numbers of children attending school by another 100 students. The Charity has also built a new schoolroom with the help of Filipino volunteers within the rubbish dump community. It's in no way similar to our children's nursery schools in Berkshire but the teachers, parents and volunteers made sure that the children have the basic needs to learn. There is no toilet just two urinal bowls for the boys and girls to use, covered by a curtain in the corner of the room. We visited a couple of the families who are living here at Sitio Pinto with no water or electricity. Local donors donated a pump and tank so now have clean water. This tank is helping 700 families in and around the Dumpsite. As we walked by, some of the shacks we saw have been built of bed springs used as the walls and doors.

At Mango it was a privilege to have met the teachers and home parents of the 25 children living here in their home. Even though it was a Sunday, the families got all the children dressed and made sure they were all there to welcome me and my family. The children all turned up and were all well behaved and very polite. They all sang a song just for me and my family. We were thrilled and honoured by this, and it brought us to tears.



Here's the video <https://fb.watch/jxIMhiWKcx/>

HUNGRY KIDS CAN'T LEARN



Making sure that children can concentrate during their studies is vital and this means ensuring that they are not hungry. Lunch is important not only for Mango children and staff but also for the young Cashew children.

The price of food in the Philippines has rocketed just as much as in England so every spare piece of ground is planted to ensure a supply of fresh vegetables all helped by fertiliser provided by local sponsors.

It's a team effort with the older children helping to plant and harvest vegetables and they are also taught cooking skills. Mums of the Cashew children also have a rota of volunteering to help.



If you would like to help out with the increased costs then a one off donation would be gratefully received either online or by posting a cheque.

Maybe you would like to sponsor the charity operations but don't want to sponsor an individual child. Choose how much to pay and when to start and stop with our ESSENTIALS programme.

<https://bit.ly/COTDESENTIALS>

50p a day collected as £10 per month would feed a child every single school day.

For details please visit our website www.childrenofthedump.org.uk or contact John at office@childrenofthedump.org.uk

MARRY JANE FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER

Hello, my name is Marry Jane.

I was a student at Mango Tree House where they supported me for fifteen years until I graduated Bachelor in Elementary Education. At the moment, I am now working as Assistant Teacher at Cashew.

Being able to see one of my dreams come true was an honour and such a blessing not only for me but also for my family. Without your help, I would not be able to accomplish what I am now experiencing this time.



I am really grateful that I was given the chance to work as an Assistant Teacher at Cashew. It was not an easy road to walk through. I have failed and experienced disappointments before, but I always considered these setbacks to be a necessary part of the learning process. After all, success isn't everything in life; failure is also a part of it.



It is a blessing for me to have a mentor like teacher Lyn. She taught me everything she knew. Including all of her tactics. When I was in high school, I recall being terrified of having my work critiqued by my teacher. But now that I've accepted it, I'm working to develop myself despite whatever they have to say about my job. Here I am today, I'm in charge of the afternoon class as their teacher. Yes, I'm excited to be a teacher for the upcoming academic year.

Thank you to all the sponsors and supporters who have made my dream become a reality.

THANK YOU JUNE AND MARGARET



We said farewell to June Cobbett and Margaret Cox this month. We owe them a massive debt of gratitude for their years of dedicated service to the welfare and future of the children we serve. We all wish you the happiest and healthiest retirement.

If anyone reading this has a similar heart for the work and feels they could contribute their skills and time to the charity please contact John for more information.

Margaret Cox - When David returned from a Boys Brigade Camp and told me that he had met the founder of a Charity working in the Philippines, I didn't take much notice as I had no idea how to find the Philippines on a map! David was smitten and wanted to engage with the staff and children working in Manila. He very quickly made arrangements for a trip over there and so began 25 years of involvement with the Charity.

Soon I was excited by the prospect and needed to visit Manila too. What an experience! Nothing can prepare anyone for the sight of abject poverty, shanty towns, rubbish dumps and the sight of children scavenging on the streets.

I soon learned that you can never help hundreds of children, but you can help them one by one to reach their potential. And so our journey began – rescuing, educating and finally saying goodbye to well educated mature adults who had made a success of their lives rather than living in squalor in the gutters.

The Children's Home became a sanctuary for so many street children – they became David and my extended family, and those children melted my heart. Children of the Dump has meant so much to me and I pray that the Charity will be richly blessed in the future.

THANK YOU JUNE AND MARGARET (Cont)

June Cobbett

I have been sponsoring children with Children of the Dump in Manila for many years, amongst them Mylyn, Wilson and Katrina. When I retired in 2008 I felt I wanted to help in Mango, Cashew and Grapevine, and eventually became a Trustee of the Charity.

I travelled out to Manilla in 2010, staying for 3 months, to help at Cashew and live with the ASCF family in Mango. It was a profound experience and an eyeopener seeing the poverty at first hand. It was lovely to be able to talk to the children every day, help them at school, and help older children with their homework. I took part in their activities and went to church, although I couldn't understand the services, which were in Tagalog, the local language. I was sad to return home without being able to bring some of them back with me to England.

A few years later I visited for a week in 2014 together with my partner David, and we were made very welcome by Peter and Neriah. Since then we have taken part in organised fundraising activities here in the UK, as well as visiting local churches to tell them about Children of the Dump. I have continued to be a Trustee during the difficult times when we were struggling to raise enough money to keep it all going. I am so pleased that I have been able, in a small way, to help support the committee, especially Kay and Fred who visit Manilla regularly and do a grand job.

I am pleased to say that most of the children who have been supported by ASCF have been educated to enable them to find a job that will not only support themselves but their family and in the local community. Some even return to work for the charity – “giving back”. I would like to say a big thank you to all the Board and John Busby, our Office Manager, for arranging a small party last week and for our presents and cards from Manila.

I wish Children of the Dump (ASCT) and ASCF good luck in the future, and will still be around to help knowing the charity is in “safe hands”.

Love

June Cobbett

THANK YOU

....To Jonathon Cook who raised money for Children of the Dump doing the Brighton Half Marathon in February



....To 11 year old Zac here in the UK. He heard a talk about the work of Children of the Dump and decided that he wanted to help. What's more, after talking to his grandparents, he decided to push himself with a real challenge. With no previous experience of running he decided to do a 5 km run. Not once, but on 5 consecutive weekends. It hasn't been easy, and Zac had to

work hard to prepare but now the picture shows him raring to go on week 3 with his dad and brother in support and he has raised a ton of money to fund education for the children. What an inspiring story!

These one off events are amazing and thank you to everyone who organises, competes, sponsors, and supports them. But education for the children is ongoing and the costs of providing this are there every day. Are you excited by the success of the charity and want to set up a fundraising activity and get friends and family involved to help the children take their opportunity of education?

Contact us if you would like help setting up a fundraising activity and sponsor page, some information on the charity, or even help with entry costs for marathons. We may be able to come and talk to your club or congregation but if not we can have videos that explain the work of the charity and why it's such a good cause. Email John at office@childrenofthedump.org.uk. He will get back to you by phone or email.

Thanks also to The German European School in Manila which has been a long term friend of ASCF, our partner organisation in Manila. Along with the Lycee France Manila School they recently celebrated their 30th Anniversary with a 24 hour swimathon that raised £10,000 for the charity. We knew the day had been a success but hadn't realised how successful until the cheque was presented by the school, lots of children were present to say thank you. It is so good to see fundraising underway in the Philippines after COVID.



WILL YOU SPONSOR AYESHA A GRAPEVINE STUDENT



Name: Ayesha Nicole

Date of Birth: August 25, 2015

Age: 6 years old

Project: Grapevine

School attended: Grade 1—Tagumpay Elementary School

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS & EXPERIENCE:

Ayesha Nicole is one of the outstanding students in her class. She received with honors award for her studies.

Ayesha's parents have been married for 10 years and adopted her in 2018 as her biological mother was unable to care for her.

Currently they reside in the home of Ayesha's adopted parents daughter who is a domestic worker abroad. They are responsible for managing and maintaining the house.

Dad is a cook in a restaurant earning £5 a day, whereas Mum is responsible for the family home. The family placed a small convenience shop in front of their home as supplemental income for their basic needs.

Ayesha Nicole dreams of becoming a professional teacher someday.

At 80p a day you could help Ayesha achieve this dream.

For further details on sponsoring Ayesha please contact John at office@childrenofthedump.org.uk or call the CotD office on 01276-942030.

CONTACT US AT CHILDREN OF THE DUMP

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