

ASCT NEWS

Caring for children in the Philippines since 1975

June 2009

Issue 37

Patrons: The Right Honourable Michael Gove MP, *Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath*
The Right Revd Christopher Hill, *The Bishop of Guildford*

A Moment of History.

In the thirty four years ASCT has been working in the Philippines, the opening of our splendid new Mango Tree House on May 29th was indeed a true milestone. The traumas of the vision becoming reality in just over eight months together with the global economic shake up and impact on costs and exchange rates, have been countered by a truly dedicated building team, loyal and generous supporters with lots of prayer. This has culminated in a purpose designed home that will serve us and our children for many years to come. Although not all the building has been completed, with a staff house still under construction, and landscaping and levelling needed, we are getting close and an official opening ceremony will be held in October.

Of course let us not forget the children and staff in all this, they have a new home with all the uncertainty that comes with such a move, but they have survived the first week and are very happy.

Our other two projects are doing very well with over 180 children at Cashew Tree school starting their new school year with lots of enthusiasm. The teachers are basking in the success of some of last years children who have graduated to their next school. The Grapevine project has taken in seven new young people who have real potential but from very poor homes. They will join the group of 37 children who receive visits from social workers, additional funding and extra tuition on Saturdays to help them achieve their full potential.

These and other topics and news are featured in this issue so do read on and share our excitement.

*David Cox MBE
Hon chairman*



THE NEW MANGO TREE HOUSE



The Seedling Project



April 2007 it is agreed by the UK trustees to buy a parcel of land from reserves and to draw up plans for a new children's home. Fund raising begins. The Seedling Project is born!

Over the next 18 months plans are agreed, a builder appointed and contracts drawn up. In October 2008 the first bricks are laid. Fundraising continues as prices escalate with the global recession and adverse exchange rates.



January 2009 building work is progressing well. An on site visit by Brian Higgs, UK Trustee, in March confirms a good standard of finish. All is looking good for a completion date of May.

Just 8 months after the first brick was laid the building is ready for the ASCT children who move in on 29th May. Fantastic support from the UK has raised almost £150k. A grand opening is planned for October.



Thank you to everyone who has supported us both financially and with prayer in the fantastic achievement of building the New Mango Tree House. We estimate the total cost of the project to be £250,00. You have raised the magnificent figure of £147,000 in gifts and £87,000 in loans.

Our staff in Manila have worked incredibly hard over the last few months to bring this project together, culminating in moving all the children, equipment and staff across Manila on the 29th May. After a long, hot tiring day they settled into their new bedrooms to start life in a



bigger, better, cleaner, healthier environment, with space to play and grow vegetables.

The new home is right next to the Papaya Academy, an independent school funded by a Dutch charity. It is hoped that a large number of children from Mango will attend the school.

After the move our students were asked about the change. Some said they would miss friends, others said it was closer to some relatives they could visit. However one complaint was universal; "we cannot sleep at night, the frogs are too noisy"! It is far more peaceful than the old place but they were not accustomed to frogs singing in the rain so had not slept.



Unfortunately the old Mango Tree House remains unsold, but every effort is being made to sell the property, which will allow us to pay back the loans given.

As our Seedling Project draws to a close and the New Mango Tree House becomes a home to our children we bless you all for your support; we are truly thankful. Please pray that the children and staff will settle in quickly; the old Home sells promptly and for financial provision.

Kirsty's Visit

Kirsty Costello recently returned to the UK after spending several months as an ASCT volunteer in Manila, here is her story:

'As to be expected, my first week was a whirlwind of new experiences, interesting food, sleepless nights, scary experiences on the road and general culture shocks! But I lived to tell the tale and settled in more and more each day. The things I really had to get used to were the lack of showers and hot water, the roads, eating rice at every meal and the heat but when I got home, funnily enough those were the things I missed the most, except the children of course!

What I first noticed was that the people were amazing, so polite, courteous, friendly, kind and sweet. They made me feel so welcome from the outset especially the children. I shared a room with five of the high school girls, and two elementary girls aged 14 and we had so much fun together. I always regretted staying up late talking to them though when they got up at 4am for school and woke me, and I soon got accustomed to the little ones waking me up shouting 'Ate Kirsty, Ate Kirsty time to eat' right in my ear at 6.30am!! Some of the kids were shy with me at first, especially the older boys but more and more they grew in their confidence to speak to me and by the end I had made 30 new wonderful friends.

I grew especially close to the high school girls but the younger ones were also adorable and I loved to play with them and help them with their homework. I usually had at least two of them hanging onto some part of my body and if I dared to sit down I would have around five. This was lovely except in 30 degrees heat it makes you very hot. They also had trouble saying Kirsty instead of Kristy and so I am now known as Ate K instead.



GAMES IN THE PARK

and is a sign of respect, something which they are very keen on showing. My favourite time of the day was the evenings after dinner when we had devotion followed by a few hours chatting to the older girls and doing their homework with them. During my stay I spent a week at the pre-school 'Cashew' where I shared a room with a really nice lady who took me under her wing. In the daytimes I observed the



lessons and did some marking. I also spent a week at the Papaya Academy where I did individual reading with the children, something I really enjoyed as I am going on to do my teaching training qualification next year. I really noticed that the schools were very different to the UK. Everything is done verbally and they speak in both English and Tagalog even at age 4 so that they get used to it from an early age. I loved their devotion to God where every morning they would sing worship songs and pray and then before they went home they would do it again.

As a gift from my church I also took the children swimming one Sunday after church. We bought lots of nice food and played games for prizes. The kids had a lovely day and I really enjoyed spending the day having fun with them. It did tire me out though because a lot of the children can't swim and so they spent the whole time hanging on to me and making me swim up and down! I generally had one on my back, one on my front and one on each arm. I was in bed by 8pm that evening, totally exhausted, very sun burnt but also very happy! On my last night I organised a games night with prizes and then little gifts for the children and staff to say goodbye and although we had fun it had a sad feel about it. I was also given many gifts from the children and an amazing present of model replicas of the Philippine Jeepney and Tricycle as a remembrance. They were so fitting because they are two things about the Philippines that I will never forget.

I had a wonderful experience staying at Mango, I was welcomed in with open arms and I still feel part of the family. I cannot wait to return as soon as possible to see the children and the staff who not only now feel like friends but also like family.'

If you would like to volunteer please contact Alison Morey in the ASCT office for more information.

Fund raising

A great day was had by all at the recent Surrey Heath Show. We were blessed with some fantastic weather and several thousand people attended the event where ASCT had a stall. We raised some much needed funds and increased our profile in the local area.



Thank you to everyone from the Berkshire Filipino Association who organised a Ball in support of ASCT. The event was a great success and the Association were able to donate £500 to our Seedling Project. This event will be repeated in January 2010, so watch this space for more details.

If you live in the Camberley area we have a couple of fund raising events coming up:

- ◆ A series of Lunchtime Organ Recitals are being held at High Cross Church in Camberley on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays in June, July and August. The recitals start at 12.45, entrance is free but there will be a retiring collection to be split equally between ASCT and church funds.
- ◆ You are all welcome to join us on an ASCT sponsored walk on the 18th July starting at 10am. The walk is 11 miles long and will be along the Jubilee River in the area of Dorney. To receive a sponsorship form and details of the event please contact Alison in the ASCT office.



We may not have had our summer yet but just so you are aware ASCT will be producing Christmas cards this year. You will be able to buy them in October using an order form in the next newsletter.

Why not organise your own fundraising event for ASCT?

We have lots of ideas in the fundraising section of our website, www.asct.org.uk, or you might like to consider the ideas below;

Bring-A-Dish-Lunch: Ask friends to lunch, get them to bring along a dish of food and charge them a few pounds to attend. While you have a captive audience why not organise a raffle, cake sale or bring and buy.

2-4-1 or 3 for 2: For one month check your supermarket receipts and put aside the money you have saved on 2-4-1 or 3 for 2 offers. At the end of the month send the money to ASCT, don't forget the gift aid form.

Garden Party: Open up your garden to friends and family. Charge a small entrance fee or offer refreshments for sale.

Sell unwanted produce: As we enter the summer months you may have a glut of fruit and vegetables, why not sell them in aid of ASCT?

We are always happy to help with any fundraising activities. We can provide posters, invitations, sponsorship forms or advice. Just call or email Alison in the ASCT office.

Congratulations.



Cashew Tree Graduation Day

Well done to all our students for completing another school year. They have all worked incredibly hard and attained some excellent results.



Danny Monterde who graduated from Elementary School.

Forty four children graduated from Cashew Tree School and now move on to Elementary School. Three Mango students have moved on to High School having graduated from Elementary School, while one Mango and two Grapevine students are now entering college. Congratulations to Maribel Labro, one of our Grapevine students, who has finished her degree in practical nursing and is being helped to find a job.

'An Awesome Artist'



Myrna's winning design

Congratulations to Myrna Acosta, one of our Senior Mango girls, for being chosen as a winner of the Asian Development Banks 'Awesome Artist' award. Her winning design has been made into a card and sold to raise money for needy people within Manila.

Could you sponsor an ASCT child?

Have you ever considered sponsoring an ASCT child? Would you like to write to and receive letters from a child in Manila?

We have recently taken on 11 new children, both in the new Mango Tree House and our Grapevine project.

If you would like to sponsor one of these children or would like to receive more information about our sponsorship programme please contact Alison in the ASCT office.



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