

ASCT NEWS

Caring for children in the Philippines since 1975

January 2010

Issue 39

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

Dear friends and supporters. Since our last newsletter we have had much to celebrate with the completion and dedication of our new Mango Tree Home and there are a number of articles to read on this inside. We have a volunteer Trustee June Cobbett who arrived in Manila in mid January for a three month stay and is already well settled and taking on responsibilities in our three projects. There have been some good fund raising events that have also been a lot of fun and we thank everyone who has made these possible in their locality and used the facility that some employers like Microsoft offer, to match the funding raised when an employee is involved.

Your Trustees in the UK are working hard to administer ASCT and maximise income, control expenses and promote the work. We are currently facing a situation where our reserves are very low, income for general work has been reduced, costs in the Far East are increasing, interest rates are almost zero and the exchange rate has been unfavourable.

Many of you, our loyal and generous supporters, have helped us for a long time and to all of you I offer my personal thanks., If there is any way in which this support may be positively reviewed by gift aiding where it is currently not the case, increasing your contributions or considering us for a one off donation, then please do let us know.

We are immensely proud of the achievements of the 250 students in our care at school, in the home and in the community, their achievements are a constant source of celebration. All this is made possible by the true dedication of the team in Manila who work with our young people. We are wanting to increase the numbers in each of the projects as we can handle the capacity, but need more income both locally and from friends of ASCT.

We trust that this will be forthcoming and thank you all for the backing you have given us.

David Cox MBE, Honorary Chairman



David and Craig cutting the ribbon at the grand opening of the New Mango Tree House

Mango Tree House Grand Opening

Our amazing new home was officially opened on October 24th 2009. The opening was attended by a very large group of children and young people from all our projects, friends, local dignitaries, business leaders and members of the British expat community. The British Ambassador, Stephen Lillie was unable to be present but sent his best wishes and has visited a couple of times since. Some of our UK Trustees; Kay, Lydia and David, as well as Alison our Executive Administrator, made the journey, as it was an occasion they did not want to miss. There were a series of wonderful dances from our



Cashew School children perform their dance.



Tirso Peralta giving his testimony.

young people together with some moving and powerful testimonials from past students who had benefitted from our care over the last twenty years or so. So all in all, an event that will be remembered for a very long time.

Tirso Peralta, former ASCT student and now Cashew Tree School head teacher, spoke at the opening;

It's my privilege to witness the new Mango Tree House where I came from. To see the new building gives new hope for less fortunate children like I was once and strong security for the disadvantaged children. More children will be cared for and a good investment for the future to come. In spite of the world financial crisis, still the new Mango project came to reality. Also thank you very much for acknowledging the former students to join the opening program. We are the living testimony

for the project and we are hoping that ASCT will produce better and very productive graduates. Thank you very much for your compassion to the Filipino children.

Christiline Miranda, one of our senior Mango girls, writes of her experiences of the day:

Last October 24th 2009, was one of the most memorable celebrations that has happened in the Mango Tree family. It was the official opening of the New Mango Tree House. Unexpectedly Catherine Acosta and I were chosen to be Masters of Ceremony. In the beginning it was hard as we were very nervous that we would make mistakes. We needed to acknowledge the presence of each guest as they arrived and some of their names were hard to pronounce, but at least we tried. The Grapevine students performed their interpretative dance which was inspiring and the little angels of Cashew School also showed their talents by dancing. I must say that they were really lovely. Some of the Mango Tree students, myself included, also performed our modern dance which was beautiful. In the middle of the celebrations, Uncle David Cox and Kuya Craig gave their encouraging speeches and also former students gave inspirational testimonials about how ASCF/ASCT had transformed their lives. The best part of the celebration was the Mango Tree Planting, representing the name of our home, followed by the installing of the plaque and lastly the ribbon cutting that officially opened the Mango Tree House. Although Catherine and I had to stand for hours and speak in front of many people, we really enjoyed every single moment of the celebration. Thank you very much for all the people who made this wonderful celebration possible and successful.



Members of the ASCT and ASCF boards celebrate the grand opening of Mango Tree House with the planting of a mango tree in the grounds.

First impressions of Mango Tree House

Kay MacKay, an ASCT trustee, and her husband Fred visited Mango Tree House for the grand opening, here are their first impressions:

In October of last year, we were fortunate to be able to visit Mango Tree House and spend a few days there as well as being blessed to join in with the official opening. Upon arrival at the new Mango Tree House, the immediate impression was one of friendly chaos with children coming from everywhere to greet us from the taxi. It was initially somewhat overwhelming the way the children greet you with hugs and hold your hand to walk around. The children want to meet and talk. The girls are quicker at coming forward and introducing themselves than the boys. They are all friendly and direct and treat older people with a degree of respect that is a surprise for someone from today's England...However the respect does not hide the sense of fun in their life.

Once inside we were given a tour of the house. On the ground floor there is a large open space which was to be the stage for the opening and preparations were underway to make it ready. Besides the office there is a large kitchen and a dining room with space to spare for everyone to eat together. Upstairs the children are grouped into bedrooms by age for boys and girls and each group has a staff member that sleeps next to the bedroom. Each child has their own small store cupboard in their bedroom. The house rules required all children to join in house keeping tasks and there was pride in the children when they showed us round the home and in their tidy bedrooms. All the children value clothes, and enjoy going shopping to choose their own and each



Kay and Fred with some Mango Girls

relishes being an individual. Many children asked us if we knew their sponsor back in England and showed us the letters and cards they had received from their sponsor. We were surprised by the love and esteem that children had for their sponsor and would encourage all sponsors to maintain that contact - the children value it so much.

In the evening all the children and staff sit round and worship with hymns, bible

reading and recital and everyone plays a part. In a way this highlights the essence of Mango. The whole is carried out with joy and fun; all participate in a relaxed friendly way and this sense of faith provides a background of trust.

We were to learn the background history of some of the children and the awful circumstances they had endured. However there is neither formal therapy nor treatment. Children seemed to become part of the whole Mango family and individual children had their group of friends. There was a lot of caring for each other and being part of a strong family. All the staff were dedicated to the home and clearly hugely popular with the children.

The atmosphere of Mango is one of optimism, independence and family affection within a framework of faith. It made us confident that the children were not just safe but could flourish there and that there was no barrier to their ambition for the future. This was reinforced on the day of the opening when many former residents of the previous Mango returned to celebrate and share their stories.

On my journey to Manila we had not been sure what we would find there and had some concerns as to whether the life offered by ASCT to its students would feel comfortable with our Western values. We left confident that what ASCT offered was a new life through which students could become confident capable young people well suited for the future and well introduced to faith by example. Any donor could be very proud of how their money was being used. We felt blessed that God had let us see what can be accomplished by his people.



Kay making friends at Cashew

Alternative Christmas Scheme



Grapevine children with new clothes.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our alternative Christmas scheme. This year we raised a fantastic £1683. The items bought were given to the children and families from all of our three projects.



Happy faces with new kitchen equipment.



Books and vitamins for Cashew children.

Fundraising.

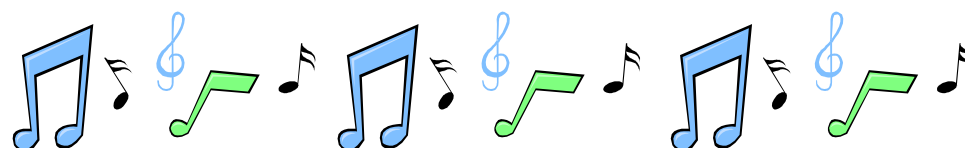
A massive thank you to everyone who has fundraised for ASCT over the last few months. Special thanks go to Peter Kampa from Collingwood College who raised £113 by getting sponsorship to walk the 4.5 miles to and from school for the week. Gordon's School, West End, raised £460 at their carol concert and the Camberley Brownies raised £800 through their Christmas fair. Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Rotary Club of Camberley, The Grove, The Bridge Church and St Peters and St Francis all made sizable donations.

We were most grateful to Michael Gove MP, one of our patrons who hosted a fundraising dinner at the House of Commons in December. It was a most enjoyable and special evening.

The recent ASCT barn dance was also a great success and will be repeated in 2010. Keep a look out for our fundraising events on the ASCT website and please contact Alison in the ASCT office if you need publicity for events that you are organising yourselves.



**The popular Rushmoor Odd
Fellows Male Voice Choir
will be performing at High Cross
Church, Camberley
in aid of ASCT on Saturday May 8th
at 7.30pm.**



Tickets cost £6
which includes refreshments
and can be bought from the
ASCT office.



Having fun together.



June Cobbett our latest volunteer took out a colourful parachute when she started her three month stay at Mango Tree House. The children love it and are making the most of the space at the new Home. June, a recently appointed ASCT trustee, will be helping the staff and children at both Mango Tree House and Cashew School. If you would like to volunteer to work in the Philippines and are able to commit at least 3 months of your time please contact Alison in the ASCT office.

Saving Money

We always try and make best use of the money that is donated to ASCT, and to that end we ask that you might help us along the way. If you would prefer to receive our newsletter electronically please let us know at the email address below. This will save us the cost of both the printing and postage. If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter we would also appreciate you getting in touch with us.



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