

# ASCT NEWS

Caring for children in the Philippines since 1975

January 2009

Issue 36

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

## ***BUSINESS AS USUAL***

You have heard it all before, we are bombarded daily with financial gloom and recessions details which will affect many of us personally. It is not just confined to the Western world; it affects the Philippines as well but less so than here. The children we care for and provide education for are just like our own children. They like to have fun, they want to go to school, well most of the time, and just expect life to carry on as normal. That's what we want, as we continue with our projects and the all important new home build; Seedling. Thank you for your generosity in gifts and loans, more details inside. We are finding things tough at times but I hope you will see from this newsletter that we are still welcoming visitors and celebrating ten years of solid progress at Cashew Tree school. I remember the grand opening at which the British Ambassador was the guest of Honour with many local children and parents excitedly giving a presentation.

In late January our latest volunteer, Kirsty, arrived to start her three month stay, and if this idea appeals to you then please do give us a call.

Your support is always appreciated and we will be happy to receive letter, phone calls or emails or why not visit our website!

David Cox MBE, Hon. Chairman

## ***A GREAT TIME HAD BY ALL***

As with all families, Christmas is a busy time for ASCT. There are parties to organise, presents to buy and food to prepare. Many of our Mango children visit their families over Christmas and so bags have to be packed and travel arrangements made. Despite this hectic schedule the children had a fantastic time over Christmas with one of the highlights being a visit from Father Christmas. Thank you to all our sponsors for helping to make Christmas a special time.



FATHER CHRISTMAS VISITS

## HAPPY 10TH BIRTHDAY CASHEW



Last November Cashew Tree School celebrated its 10th anniversary. The theme for a weekend of festivity was 'Just 10 years on the way up'. The celebration started on the 26th of November with a parade and school photograph. This was followed by an afternoon of dance, presentations and singing to a large audience of parents, staff and local

dignitaries. The 2nd day of celebration was set aside for some sporting fun. In the morning there were games and races for the Cashew children. The afternoon became a little more competitive when the parents were asked to compete. Parents were teamed up according to the school level of their child. The sporting events continued into Sunday and culminated in a match between staff of Cashew and the local Papaya Academy, needless to say Cashew won. Overall champions were the parents of Nursery level.

The 10th anniversary of Cashew Tree House School showed the unity of Staff, Parents, Students, ASCT and ASCF. All the Cashew staff would like to pass on their sincere thanks for the support of the Board members of ASCT, ASCF, Staff of Papaya Academy, Cashew Parents, Students and for those who pray and support Cashew.





## ***SEEDLING PROJECT***

Over 40 men are labouring away on the building site constructing our new children's home. The temperatures are rising, we have probably seen the last of the heavy rains and typhoons so we hope that the build will continue without too much interruption with a target completion date of end of May 2009.

The new house will have much improved facilities, but retain its Filipino style. It is situated in a semi rural location, close to local schools and village with plenty of safe outside space for activities, recreation and agriculture. There are mountains clearly to be seen in the distance, the air is cleaner and it will be a good centre for us working with many of our students who are in the Grapevine project who live with a family member and receive our educational support.

You have generously now donated over £105,000 with a further £65,000 offered in loans. We are getting close but so much will depend upon the fluctuating exchange rates and us being able to sell Mango Tree House for the value we have set and also in the time frame we want. We value your prayers and financial giving - we have been well blessed.

Our trustees will soon be looking at the next stage of the work. We have to move 35 young people, 12 staff and all their possessions, set up the new kitchen, laundry, and all the equipment and computer links we have, into the new home. Then there is the relocation of children to new schools or colleges and everything that goes with moving house – only on a mammoth scale! Our staff and trustees in Manila are coping well, but all this is on top of their normal work caring for our children.

There are pictures on our website of the building progress so do have a look on [www.asct.org.uk](http://www.asct.org.uk) .

Donations can be made on line from the website or through Alison in our office 01276 707633. More news in the next issue .



## A VISIT TO MANILA

Lisa and Michael Lawson were able to visit the Philippines at the end of last year. Here is their account of a memorable visit:

*'My husband and I have had the privilege of being a sponsor to Irish (who is part of the Grapevine Project) for the last 3 years. When we planned a holiday to the Philippines it seemed the perfect opportunity to see if we could finally meet up with Irish and her family.*

*We were put in contact with Peter, the Operations Manager at Mango Tree House, who helped us with the arrangements. I can honestly say that meeting Irish was one of the most memorable and special part of our recent trip... so much so, I wanted to share our diary of the day...*

### **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

*Our first stop was Mango Tree House in Manila. Here we got to meet Peter and were introduced to two Social Workers, Lisa and Syver who would be accompanying us to Irish's house. Peter explained to us about the extended family care and educational support offered to those on the Grapevine project. We also learned how all of the ASCT funding comes from voluntary giving. Even as we sat in Peter's office with him, there was a box of donated video tapes that he was sorting through to see which could be used by the children in Mango Tree House. While we talked with Peter, little faces kept peeping into the office window, waving as they passed. There were giggles when we waved back. Everyone seemed so happy.*



*We soon set off to Irish's home. It was a lot further than we'd imagined and we drove through a number of villages. Many of the areas appeared very poor and it was so very sad to see young children rummaging through rubbish in some of the slums and rubbish dumps we passed on the way.*

*When we arrived at the village*

*Irish lived in, we were excited to see her. We recognised her from the photos she had sent with her letters. She greeted us and led us through the front door to her home. We were welcomed so openly into her home and sat in the main room where we were also introduced to her mother, brother and sister. Irish was extremely shy at this point – there were suddenly a lot of extra people in her home than she was used to – so we asked whether she'd like to take us for a walk and show us around where she lived. This seemed to 'do the trick' because she soon relaxed and led the way...*

*Irish is a delightful girl, who clearly has lots of friends. She took us past where each of her friends live and explained how she enjoys spending time with them when she is not studying. As we walked around, some of her friends came out to join us too – we ended up with quite a crowd in the end! At one point we all stopped in the Church hall next to Irish's home where we were shown wall displays of photos from the recent Summer Camp and various outings.*

*Irish told us about her school and how she had just had her end of term exam that morning. She enjoys reading and is very talented at sketching. She excitedly showed us some of the sketches she had completed. Irish truly has a wonderful air of enthusiasm and happiness about her and I was amazed at how eloquently she spoke English. I felt so honoured to be able to see for myself some of the results of the fantastic work done by ASCT – without doubt, one of the most memorable and special parts of our trip.*

*All too soon it was time to say goodbye and wave everyone off. We left with many treasured memories to take away with us ... and our first hand delivered letter from Irish!*

We always welcome visitors - if you are on holiday or business in the Philippines do contact us if you would like to visit.



## FUND RAISING

*Have you ever thought of organising a fund raising event for ASCT?*

*Are you worried about how to advertise the event?*

*Do you need some inspiration?*

Then go to [www.asct.org.uk](http://www.asct.org.uk) and take a look at our new fund raising pack. If you do not have internet access contact the office and a pack can be sent to you.

There is a great A - Z list of fund raising ideas, you might like to organising a 'Dress Down Day' at work or run a 'Karaoke evening' with a group of friends. There are poster ideas and invitations included in the pack.

Why not print off some of our penny collection boxes, hand out to friends and family. Have a competition to see who can collect the most.

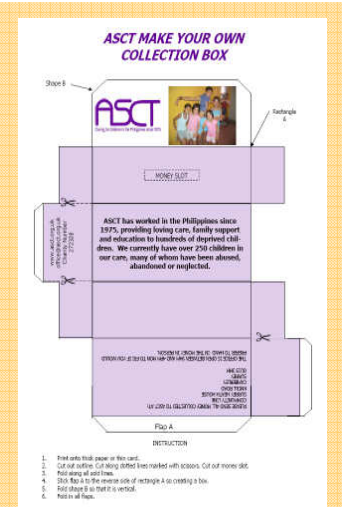
Do you belong to a men's group, fellowship or youth club. If these groups have outings or events why not suggest that these become fund raising events. Charge a small entrance fee, make a collection or combine an event with a cake sale or bring and buy.

We can help by customising posters or sponsor forms. We can send you quiz questions or menu ideas.

Do you belong to a church or school who are looking for a charity to support. Why not suggest ASCT. We are happy to come and talk to groups and schools within a reasonable distance from Camberley.

We have had tremendous support over the last few months. Having completed his bike ride in August Chris Green collected a fantastic £1,475 for the Seedling project. Banstead URC collected almost £2,500 during a recent appeal. Knaphill Methodist Church organised a Youth concert to raise money for ASCT. Several groups collected money instead of sending Christmas cards. David Sherriff ran the Great North Run and raised over £700, see his report opposite.

We have been very fortunate to benefit from fantastic support from



OUR COLLECTION BOX CAN BE FOUND IN THE FUNDRAISING PACK

many churches including St Paul's in Camberley, High Cross Church, Loose Baptist Church, Grace Community Church, Brookmans Park URC, London Road Evangelical Church, The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Heatherside Church, The Bridge Church, St Michaels and All Angels and King's Mission Church. We thank all these churches and many others for their support and prayers.



David Sherriff after the Great North Run

Despite the cold and rain the day before, the clouds disappeared and there was some bright north - east sun to grace the 2008 great north run last October. We travelled as a family by bus to the start area and I agreed to meet up with them all again later in south shields - a mere 13 miles away. My memories of the run are sketchy: it took 25 minutes to get across the start line (something to do with the 50,000 runners!) There was a real buzz throughout though which was fantastic although I seemed to spend much of the 13 miles just dodging discarded empty water bottles and other runners! I managed to sneak over the line in just under 2 hours just in time for the red arrows display above the coastline at South shields - a great way to complete a memorable event.

## THE GIANT SLEEPOVER

The Giant Sleepover is a World Record Breaking Event officially verified and recognised by Guinness World Records. The event is a platform for children around the world to make a difference, have fun and make friends. Participating groups are encouraged to fundraise and it is used by many participants as a platform to raise funds for charities of their choice. So why not organise a giant sleepover and raise funds for ASCT. Get the children to be sponsored for the nights sleepover or organise fundraising events throughout the night!!!

To enter you must register at [www.giantsleepover.com](http://www.giantsleepover.com). For a fee of £2 per child (this money will go to NSPCC) you will receive all the necessary advice, a goody pack and be part of a world record.



## *Alternative Christmas*

Thank you to everyone who took part in the 'Alternative Christmas' scheme. We raised a fantastic £1,637. All this money has been sent to Manila and used to buy the items requested. These have been distributed to the needy families and children supported by ASCT.



## *DAVID'S BIG DAY*

A wonderful time was had by David and his family on a crisp November 11th last year when he was presented to the Queen at Windsor Castle to receive his MBE. He recalls some of his memories:

'The day was perfect, clear and bright, the ceremony was perfection in planning as we British do so well. There were household staff everywhere all wanting to help and offer their congratulations. I met up with the hundred or so other recipients in the Queen's Ballroom where we were told what to do and say, bowing, addressing the Queen as Your Majesty then M'am after that. We were called into lines of around 12 people in strict order, and then escorted through six or so state rooms to the throne room, where we were checked again before finally being presented to the Queen in the Waterloo Chambers in front of the guests. Windsor Castle has not been used for this ceremony before so we were making history! A great day, and thanks to all those of you who supported me in this recognition of my work with young people.'



David with his wife  
Margaret

Asian Students Christian Trust  
Community Link, Surrey Heath House  
Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3HH  
Tel: 01276-707633  
Website: [www.asct.org.uk](http://www.asct.org.uk) E-mail: [office@asct.org.uk](mailto:office@asct.org.uk)  
Registered Charity Number: 272328