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APRIL 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear Donors and Prayer Partners,

It's been 19 years that I have worked with the poor and invested in the lives of young people. The last few years we have been reaping the fruit of our labor by seeing seven of our scholars married. But what is even greater is seeing their lives glorifying God whether in Cebu, Dumaguete, or Mindanao. What God has started in the lives of these scholars and the monetary investments of the donors for their college education has been an eternal investment. I want to thank the donors for their patience, their prayers, and their faithfulness in supporting the scholars' program. Raising up the next generation of young people to be God-seekers and church planters.

SCHOLAR UPDATES



We rejoiced at the graduation of **Ian Jonota** (a T'Boli tribal) on March 19 with a BA in Education. Thank you for supporting his four years of college education. Ian has no father and came from a village where he has to walk to civilization. We had the pleasure to raise him in Cebu for the past six years. Thank you, Jesus.

17 years ago, I met an 18-year-old girl who was the daughter of a pineapple farmer and pastor. Life was very tough in the mountains of Don Salvador Benedicto, and **Tata** was the only child that could help provide for her poor parents. So, they sent her to Manila to work at a gas station. Within two months, she was raped and became pregnant. I took in Tata and gave support for Tata's mother care for her newborn granddaughter. Time passed, and Tata graduated as a midwife and became a devoted Christian worker dedicated to scouting for severe medical cases that need special attention. Today, Tata's daughter Sash is a full-grown 17-year-old teenager. Looking at their lives I am reminded of the unending faithfulness of God.





We rejoiced as **Ronel** and Joanne were married on March 30. Apart from seeing the happiness of the conversion of Ronel, this was the second time I've seen him so happy. At 13 years old, Ronel's father was assassinated inside his bedroom. In Ronel's words, he saw his father swimming in his own blood with his intestines on the floor. He had been traumatized for seven years and, without counsel, the experience had made him a violent young man. Ronel was converted a week after he entered GCE. I remembered his first testimony, "For the first time in seven years, I woke to experience peace. No more thoughts of killing." I am

always overwhelmed by God's grace to so many people. Now Ronel is a very anointed preacher evangelist and he handles the Labogon Seaside Community Church. Every Sunday, he finishes preaching by 10:30am before the seawater floods his church to knee level. I have never met a congregation so on fire for Jesus as his Labogon church. Thank you for your wedding gifts to Ronel. And for the roast pig.

PRESCHOOL GRADUATION



On March 21, we celebrated GCE Preschool graduation for the 2018 school year. The 33 children who graduated were the poorest of the poor from two squatter areas. 24 kids from the dumpsite and relocation area of Tomoy and nine kids from the squatter neighborhood of Labogon all looked their best, excited for their most awaited day. The mothers were touched by their children. One mother from Labogon thanked GCE for how much Preschool impacted the life of her son who now knows Bible verses and prays before every meal. A testimony from one of the Tomoy mothers said that not only were their kids blessed with free Christian education but as parents they found Christ through the weekly Bible study. It was a joyous and victorious day for everyone. All the Preschool graduates were given brand new backpacks to get them ready for Grade 1 in the public school. Glory to God.

WEDDING CRUSADE



We have 84 recipients signed up for our summer wedding. We are now conducting 15 weekly Bible Studies with the hope to bring the gospel to these new wedding recipients. Please pray for our Bible Study leaders and especially the salvation of these attendees. We will enroll the last eight couples soon. The wedding is August 24, 2019 and we have closed our mission team intake for this year. Please pray for us as we start the birth certificate process for all the wedding applicants who have no birth certificates for their children. This is a beautiful God-made

program where it is easy to reach people for Christ. Every year, churches fund this wedding program. Please pray for this year's funding.

DISCIPLESHIP TEACHER'S TRAINING

Every year our scholars and staff disciple hundreds of new converts. We felt it was time to start training our staff to teach discipleship courses for church leaders. Last month, we had a dynamic teacher from Singapore who came to help 18 CGE staff become follow-up trainers. It was very successful, and we are excited that this teaching team will now train more leaders in discipleship and conducting Bible Studies. By the grace of God, we plan to use this syllabus in November to train 40 churches working in the Muslim areas in North Cotabato.



NOURISHMENT PROGRAM

We welcomed 31 malnourished children in our program last year. Sadly, we lost one baby back in August due to severe malnutrition and two other babies have relocated. We are grateful to God for the 28 active kids in the program. Most of our recipients are from the Mandaue area, near our GCE Center, while three of our babies live 3 to 4 hours away from the city. Our Nourishment Program coordinator, DJ, together with his assistant, Nicko, have been making house visits to all the families every two weeks,

distributing formulas and conducting Bible studies at the same time. DJ and Nicko admit to seeing most of the recipients in the worst of situations: some don't have a house to live in; others do not have ample income to keep their children fed. In their challenging circumstances, GCE's nourishment program has paved the way for the gospel to reach the poorest of the poor. We praise God that we have 23 mothers who have received salvation through this work. To God be the glory!



Now thriving children: success stories of the nourishment program. Thank you to all sponsors.



SHARON'S 64th BIRTHDAY

On April 16, Sharon celebrated her 64th birthday. She praised God for keeping her alive as she has encountered many near-death experiences; his grace is indeed sufficient for her.

Please pray for the financial support of Sharon and Manny. Sharon is very good in fundraising for GCE programs but bad at fundraising for herself. Thank you.



HAPPY NEWS

Manny and I would like to extend an invitation to all our friends and donors to attend the wedding of our eldest daughter Rose on December 7, 2019 in Cebu. Pastor Manny is looking forward to officiating the wedding. Rose's fiancé, Jeackle Escolar, is the son of a fisherman-pastor in Palawan. Rose was very attracted to Jeackle by his tremendous love for God and people. As parents, we feel it's a match made in heaven as both have great love for God and a kingdom mindset. Please pray for them as they prepare for their wedding.

Thank you, donors and friends. Thank you for your prayers and support. I thank God for every remembrance of you.

In His Vineyard,
Sharon and Manny



If you wish to donate, kindly go to worldmin.org and select from the four categories of donations for GCE – Grace Community Empowerment: General Fund, Malnourished Children Project, Scholars Education Project, and Sharon & Manny Pastre Support.