

# CSC NEWS

Every child  
deserves a  
family.

Children's Shelter of Cebu

Summer 2013

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## Serious Fun on the CSC Playground

by Paul Healy, Field Director



One of the most often-heard comments from people upon visiting the shelter is that “the kids seem so happy.” And indeed they are, even though most of them have had lots of trauma in their young lives. We often explain that behind those smiles are hearts that have been broken and spirits that have been crushed by the neglect or cruelty of adults in their lives.

But our kids do love to play. And playing is part of the healing process for

many of them. They are safe at CSC. They have room to run and play. They learn to be creative and to find activities at which they can compete and excel. They learn important lessons about sharing and respecting others. And they get the exercise that their young bodies need.

Our playground is a place of action, noise, innovation, and, of course, fun. It might be best described as “controlled mayhem.” On a given afternoon there might be a soccer game going on, a half-court basketball game in progress, little ones enjoying the swings, girls playing tag, and kids of all ages circumnavigating the playground on scooters, wave boards and wagons. Babies are learning to walk, kites are being made and tested and friendships are growing. It's just another day on the CSC playground.

For the uninitiated observer, it might seem like the whole thing is unsupervised chaos. But a closer examination finds caregiv-

ers and house parents strategically located around the grounds, watching what is going on to see that the little ones do not wander onto the soccer field, that a kite needs to be pulled down from a tree, or to mediate an argument. Occasionally there is an injury, but with the number of active children using our playground it is amazing how seldom that happens.

Filipino kids are remarkable in their ability to create their own fun. They do not need fancy video games or expensive toys to have a good time. They make up their own games with their own rules. One of the most popular current games involves throwing a few rubber bands on the driveway or ground and seeing how far they can make them fly forward by cupping their hands and hitting the ground behind them. Our kids make their own kites from plastic bags, sticks taken from brooms and some string. And their flip-flop slippers (sinelas) can be used for any number of throwing games.

One of the realities of a crowded place like Cebu City is that kids do not have safe places to play. Open spaces are almost nonexistent and cars, motorcycles, jeepneys and other moving vehicles make the streets and sidewalks dangerous. The first thing they notice when they come to CSC is the spacious grassy area. The three residences all face the playground, so children can go down a few steps or a short ramp and be right in the action. Games form almost instantly, perhaps being continued from a previous day or having been planned on the way home from school. It is an amazing thing to sit, watch and listen to the activities on the CSC playground.

There are aspects of life at CSC that are not fun, like going to the doctor, receiving discipline, dealing with difficult issues in counseling or adjusting to different rules and expectations. There are tears that are mixed with the smiles and laughter. But the most predominant characteristic about life at CSC is fun. Our children have a really good time.



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## THE ROAD AHEAD

### Financial Update by Matt Buley

In June, we sent an e-mail prayer request for the financial situation at CSC. At the time we were feeling, at least for a few days, shell-shocked and discouraged. The year had started slow and was trending down in several months, but May was especially difficult. We found ourselves tracking \$133,000 behind budget for the year, or 18%. You can imagine our alarm.

June was better. We began to reverse the trend. As the month closed we were tracking \$101,000 behind budget, or 12.8%. One of the most troubling parts of our May-end numbers was that we were behind 2012. That was surprising, and at June's end we were thankful to see we'd pulled ahead of 2012. We feel like we're off to a good start on correcting course, but there is plenty of work ahead.

#### What got us to this point?

There are several reasons:

1. We had an aggressive budget plan after 2012 ended well. In hindsight, we may have anticipated too much growth.
2. We are having an unexpectedly difficult year in the Combined Federal Campaign. This program allows federal employees to give to causes they care about out of their paycheck, and they give more than 10% of our income. The total Campaign is down, and our area in particular took a hit.
3. We have lost some donors. For example, our second largest church decided to refocus their missions budget to geographic regions we are not in. A major donor started a nonprofit and shifted all giving there. These aren't bad things in God's kingdom work, but do present us with some challenges at CSC.

#### What are we doing about it?

1. We are praying. The staff in Minnesota gather regularly for prayer. The Cebu staff and our board members pray. Best of all, the kids pray! We are trusting God to lead.
2. A budget is just a plan, so we have adjusted our plan. Part of our course correction has involved spending cuts: timing of new hires, how we invest in technology, employee development and unrealized expenses. These cuts don't come without sacrifice, but we have not needed to cut what is provided to the children yet.
3. We are pursuing and accepting blessings. After the prayer request went out, one of our most generous supporters came by the U.S. office. He chatted for a while and then dropped a check on my desk for \$10,000! Another couple gave an extra \$8,000 in stock, and a church applied \$5,000 of their budget surplus to CSC! We have identified those who may be in a position to give a special gift and are working on new funding sources.

We want to keep you informed of the situation and be up front about where we are. We will keep doing what we can, but without gripping too tightly to our ownership of CSC. All of us are stewards, doing our part in God's work for the children in Cebu. We have faith that He will provide exactly what we need.

I had coffee with a former resident today, and boy did I need it. Being with him was a nudge from God, a "remember who's in control here."

Things are tough at CSC in a few areas. We're under budget on the giving front, and that's hard not to stress over. A couple of key staff members have moved on to new endeavors, and that's tempting to worry about. We've also got former residents facing major trials, and that feels burdensome for our staff.

Every time one of these challenges comes I'm tempted to start gripping everything tighter. Fair enough, it's good to do our part, but trying to be in control is pointless. Kirk is a wonderful reminder of that.

I was only a couple of years into my job when Kirk, one of our Teen Home residents, got an amazing opportunity. A couple wanted to pay for him to attend college in Minnesota - an incredibly generous offer.

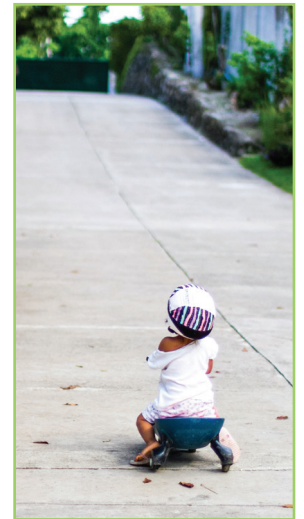


This couple and several of us at CSC did everything we could think of to get Kirk a student visa. Everything we tried fell short. It was heartbreaking.

I was still thinking "now what" when the wife in this couple, the one who refused to give up, heard of Trinity Western University in Canada. All the hurdles we couldn't clear before faded away. Kirk got a Canadian visa, poured himself into his studies and the couple kept their word and more. Kirk's presence near our Canadian office deepened our relationships there.

Today I had coffee with a 25-year-old Kirk. He teaches 1st grade, coaches 9th graders and contributes to CSC. He is an amazing man. I remain proud of him, but it's different now. We sat and talked more like peers today. Afterwards I was reminded how shortsighted I had been about that student visa. God had Kirk in his hands all along.

Right along with CSC.



## Could You Take Her?

That is a fairly common question for our staff here in Cebu. We are regularly asked by government and private welfare agencies, hospitals and community leaders to take in children. But recently the question came to us from a different source: missionary friends who are close to our ministry.

Dave and Hilary Overton lead a ministry called Glory Reborn. They provide high-quality maternity care to less fortunate women and families in Cebu City, and provide outreach services to impoverished communities around the city. During an outreach visit they became aware of a three-year-old girl who was suffering from malnutrition, parasites and infected scabies all over her body. She had been abandoned by birth parents, and her relatives were not able to provide supervision for her. They did not have a home; their shelter was more of a canopy, with no walls or beds. This little girl had to sleep on the ground with the neighborhood dogs. Poverty, hunger, pain and neglect were her constant companions.

Dave and Hilary rescued her, caring for her in their home and at Glory Reborn. But they knew that she needed a more permanent solution. She needed long-term care from people who would love her and minister to her physical, emotional and spiritual needs in a safe environment, as they had done. So they asked the question: Could we take her?



Could we? We certainly had the desire to make her a part of the CSC family. Although every referral is compelling, this little girl's situation tugged at our hearts in extraordinary ways. But there were lots of factors that needed consideration before making that decision. Our social worker needed to talk with the birth family and determine their plans for the child. Our nurses needed to bring her to the doctor and do a battery of tests to determine her health situation. Our child care team needed to talk with her, observe her behavior and try to determine what things she had experienced in the community where she lived. All this took time. And while we were able to find temporary shelter for her in a government drop-in center, we tried to hurry with our investigations so we could make a decision as soon as possible. Could we take her?

## Yes, We Will!

by Paul Healy

The answer turned out to be a big yes! She is our newest CSC child, having taken up residence in our Eicher Home, under the care of house parents Dondon and Ivy. She is an amazing child, full of laughter, fun and mischief. She loves to dance and run around the playground. She is learning about rules and expectations, but she has made a tremendous impact on all of our lives in a very short time. She soaks up attention and astonishes us with her energy and charm.

This is the case of concerned and loving people who made a huge impact in the life of a child by rescuing her from a life-threatening situation and seeing that she got the medical and emotional care that she so desperately needed. And this is also the case of an organization, CSC, that is able to reach out in love to her, and continue the good work that they had begun in her life.

Dave and Hilary and some of their staff were able to visit CSC and see the child they had grown to love. They were excited to see her happy face, the way that she was interacting with the staff of CSC, and the sense of humor that had blessed them so much when she was with them.

Thanks to all of those whose voices have joined with our staff in saying "Yes!" to those who ask, "Could you take her?"



Children admitted to CSC come with a variety of health issues, both minor and more significant. Some are near death when we find them and need months of loving and professional care to bring them through those medical crises. Our CSC nurses and the doctors who treat our children have dealt with the following: malnutrition, sometimes severe; intestinal worms; skin diseases like scabies, boils, and staph and fungal infections; parasites like amoeba and giardia; head lice; tuberculosis; hepatitis A and B; pneumonia/bronchitis; urinary tract infections; ear infections; pink eye; toothaches and major dental problems and anemia.

Tests and doctors' visits are started before we make a decision to admit a child. The tests usually include/urine stool exams, x-rays, blood work, including HIV and hepatitis screening, Mantoux tests and careful examinations by our pediatrician and other specialists. Some of these examinations and tests indicate problems we cannot handle in our homes due to staffing and financial limitations. More often, they alert us to problems we need to address as we strive to give our children the very best care possible while they are at CSC. The generous gifts of our friends allow us to say "yes" to most of the children who are referred to us, in spite of medical problems.



## Updates on the Children We Serve by Sandy Swanson

We have said goodbye to seven of our CSC family members in the last few months. Toddlers **Ciro (2)**, **John Lawrence (1½)**, **Zaisen (2)**, **Arthur (1½)**, and **Francisco (1½)** all joined their respective adoptive families in the USA, Norway and Finland. Siblings **Clifford (8)** and **Lovely (4)** are now home with their new family in Australia. CSC is a world-wide family! It is always bittersweet when our kids leave us. Our prayers have been answered, and they have a family – sweet! But, we have to say goodbye. We will keep working on these (bitter) goodbyes, though, as we remain committed to adoption for our kids.



### We have added family members:



We are happy to introduce siblings **Chosar (10)**, **Cench Marie (7)**, **Kyle (5)** and **Charleston (3)**, better known as Stone. These darlings arrived in April. Chosar is a good big brother to his siblings. He is intense and active. He is not used to following rules but is learning that there are benefits to following them...well at least he is learning there are consequences to not following them! Cench Marie always has a smile on her face. She is very affectionate. She had been living separate from her brothers and is happy to live with them now. Kyle is a sweetheart who has learned to ride a bike and maneuver the wave boards. He, too, has a darling smile and is affectionate. Stone is a joy. He loves life and makes us laugh all the time. He is jealous of almost any other child, thinking that the world revolves around him. He has lots to learn about getting along in the world.

Siblings **Mary Grace (8)**, **Martin (6)** and **Ricky (3)** also arrived in April. Mary Grace had a very tough adjustment for the first few weeks. She was not able to trust us or to accept medical interventions that were needed. In the last couple of weeks she has calmed down and is trusting us not to hurt her and to always tell her the truth – a big step in a short time. She is an excellent student in school! Martin is active and playful. He loves our playground

and always has a helmet on when he is outside, as he wants to be ready to ride the bike, the scooter cars or use the wave boards as soon as they become available. Ricky is active, playful and very cute. He has already had to have stitches to prove the active part! Ricky loves being outside. It is like punishment when he's asked to go inside at the end of playtime.



Here are some of our most senior residents, currently living in the **Wally Johnson Teen Home**:

**Maria** is now 36, and has lived at CSC since she was 14. She has cerebral palsy, which limits her mobility, but she is active with her work (she greets customers at a local grocery store and gives them shopping baskets) and schooling (she goes to school twice a week at the Independent Living and Learning Center). She also has a regular duty in the Duterte Home nursery.



**Arlene** recently turned 30 and she is excited to have her first job. She teaches piano at the Braille Center four days a week. She is also tak-

ing lessons herself. When not working or practicing the piano, Arleen does chores around the Teen Home.

**Julieto** is 23 and is a senior in high school at the FBC Christian School. He worked hard this past summer to complete some needed work, which allowed him to pass, so he was very happy about that. He works with a tutor every day after school. He has made some friends and enjoys inviting them to the Teen Home.



**Roselyn** is 25 and is a Junior in college at the Evangelical Theological College of the Philippines, where she is working on a degree in Christian Education. She continues to serve the Lord by teaching Sunday School at the Banawa Bible Fellowship. She is very good with kids and would like to work with them in some capacity when she finishes school. College is very challenging for Roselyn but she works hard at her studies.



**Milbert** is a senior in high school at ETCP. His main interest is music, and he has become quite good at playing the bass guitar. He is a part of the worship team at the church where the Teen Home residents and house parents attend. He also plays guitar and keyboard. He enjoys visiting his older brother Melvin, who is married and lives in Cebu.





# COMINGS AND GOINGS: NEWS FROM CEBU CITY



Clockwise from upper left: **Dr. Matt Struve**, his son **Evan**, **Brenda Birk** and **Anne Renaker** went to Cebu to provide dental care for our children. **Tammy Vosika** recently ended eight years of service in the Children of Hope School, and has moved back to Minnesota. She is greatly missed. Four friends of CSC, **Bob and Irene Funk** and **John and Alvina Reimer**, who serve on the board of our sister organization in Canada, traveled to Cebu to see the ministry first-hand. **Bjork and Lindsay Ostrom** completed their year of excellent service in June. Lindsay taught in the school and Bjork volunteered with tech matters and training. **Jimmer Jabao** is the newest addition to our Children of Hope School faculty. He will be teaching music, art, and will help with the pre-school class later in the school year. **Paul Reasoner** accompanied his wife, Shari, our school coordinator, to Cebu recently. Paul is spearheading a Habitat for Humanity project that will provide affordable housing to CSC employees. **Terri Holm** went to Cebu with a group from Cambridge, MN, that included her daughter **Liz**, **CSC Board member Becky Hallstrom**, her husband **Doug** and daughters **Megan** and **Nikki**, and **Brock Sivertson**. The group did projects with the children, gave training on the Smart Board that they purchased for the school, and did CPR training for our workers.



## NEWS FROM CANADA

Cebu Children's Shelter Society of Canada (CCSSC) held a fund raising banquet on Friday May 3, 2013. The theme for the evening was "Forget- Me-Not", with flowers of the same name decorating the tables. Before we enjoyed a wonderful dinner, guests could mix and mingle as well as take part in our 'Silent Auction'. After dinner we were entertained with a 'Live Auction', a 'parade' video from the C.S.C. website, and a wonderful, warm address by Matt Buley. The evening was very enjoyable and thanks to people with giving hearts, we will again be able to help the precious children and faithful workers at C.S.C. – Irene Funk, CCSSC Board President

## Our CSC Circle of Prayer

### Prayer

- ❶ Please pray for our children who have been matched with families and are waiting for their visas. Waiting can be difficult.
- ❷ Pray for strength for our Cebu staff as they work hard to provide the best care possible for our children.
- ❸ Pray for Tammy Vosika as she transitions back to life in the U.S.
- ❹ Pray for the adoption program in the Philippines, which is under-going change.

### Praises

- ❶ For the long and faithful service of many of our child care workers, some of whom have recently retired.
- ❷ For the gifts of loving supporters who find thoughtful and creative ways to bless the children.
- ❸ For the wonderful facilities that the Lord has given CSC, and the level of care we are able to provide because of those blessings. Our visitors are always impressed with our houses and school.

## Three Faithful Employees Move On



Recently we said goodbye to two of our faithful caregivers who finished their terms of service to the ministry. Pacita "Baby" Ayop and Anselma Bardin have retired. Each worked for CSC for more than 25 years, Baby as a cook in the Cherne Home, and Anselma as a child care worker and laundress, also at Cherne. And each had an impact on the lives of hundreds of our children through their work. And Joanna Aballe, who has worked as an accountant and office manager for CSC for 20 years, will be moving to another ministry in Cebu by the end of August. All three will be very much missed by everyone at CSC.



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# FOSTER FRIENDS

**F**or the modest sum of \$30 a month, you can be a Foster Friend. You will be assigned a child and will be given a picture and background information on how your child came to live at CSC. You will receive regular updates with pictures so you can chart your child's development. If your child is old enough, he or she will send you an occasional letter. Since it costs much more than \$30 a month to provide for the many needs of a child, your gift will be combined with those of others to form an extended family of support for your child.

*Yes,*

I would like to sponsor a child through the Foster Friends Program. I will support this child at an amount of \$30 U.S. a month.



- ☐ Enclosed find my first payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to cover \_\_\_\_\_ months.
- ☐ I cannot become a Foster Friend at this time, but I would like to make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Please send me more information about CSC.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: *Children's Shelter of Cebu.*

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