



NEWS FROM CEBU

— RISING TO NEW CHALLENGES —

Diomarie, like most children, was apprehensive when he first met his adoptive parents. This transition was made even more difficult by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Children's Shelter of Cebu (CSC) prides itself on the level of care we provide to the children. That care starts the moment we meet a child and take them into our care. We provide holistic care and seek to find a permanent long-term solution, ideally one that involves their birth family or an adoptive family. If a child is matched for adoption, we set up weekly online video chats for the child and new adoptive family to get to know each other, prior to them ever meeting. Then, when it is time for

the adoptive parents to meet their child in person, they typically spend a few days getting to know their son or daughter, meeting their caregivers and friends, and seeing where they have been living. Eventually they help their child say goodbye, and they leave together, a new family.

Due to a few cases of COVID at the shelter and restrictions within the Philippines, Diomarie had to say goodbye to his loving CSC house parents, aunties, and friends before traveling to our office to meet his new family. They had traveled all the way from Italy and were anxiously awaiting his arrival.



←
Diomarie
& his
parents

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FROM THE DESK OF KIRBY STOLL, President



Our staff and children in Cebu had to endure so much in 2021, with the ongoing pandemic and then a super-typhoon to cap off the year, but they did so with an unwavering faith and determination, trusting God for their every need. I am so proud of them all!

And I am grateful beyond words for all who partnered with CSC this past year with prayer and financial support. CSC had a great year, and

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

amid all sorts of other concerns, not once did we wonder how our needs were going to be met. You were there all the while, listening to God's leading and providing a huge source of encouragement to us all. We are happy to report that we once again ended the year with a surplus.

This past year our staff and board took up the challenge to create a strategic plan for CSC's future. We anticipate celebrating many exciting milestones as our staff in Cebu work to create a plan for the programs and facilities that will support the needs of our older CSC residents. These children have hopes and dreams, and we will do whatever it takes to support them in achieving them as well as provide for their physical, mental, social and spiritual development.

We have much to hope for as we look forward to 2022. Please pray with us for all that the year will hold. Pray that we will stay true to our mission to glorify God and demonstrate His love to all those in our care. ■

Serving Him,
Kirby Stoll



A few memories from the last few months ↗



His eyes were wide, and he kept staring back and forth between the familiar faces of his CSC family and the smiling faces of his new mom and dad.

Fortunately, Diomarie had his favorite toy in his hands – his homemade kite. January tends to be windy in Cebu, so the house parents in Banawa often make kites out of old plastic bags and sticks. After a couple of long hugs, Diomarie's new father asked if he could have the kite, and with Diomarie in one



hand and the homemade kite in the other, he started running up and down the parking area of the office. Ever so slightly, the kite rose into the air. But more importantly, Diomarie – ever so slightly – began to smile and found an immediate connection with his parents.



The next half hour was spent playing and getting comfortable with one another. Seeing the joy on the faces of father, mother, and son put into perspective for us what it is we do and why we do it.

Please continue praying for the family and their new son, Diomarie. ■



PRAYER REQUESTS and PRAISES

PRAISE REPORTS

- We give thanks for all those who partnered with us in prayer and financial support in 2021. God provided above and beyond our needs through the generosity of so many faithful supporters.
- Praise God for good health and the extremely positive mindset of our employees and children who have had to endure so much hardship this past year.
- We are thankful that at the time of this writing, Cebu is back down to the second-lowest alert level for COVID-19, giving us a bit more freedom and flexibility to move around the city, island and country.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for precious Diomarie, who was recently adopted by a family in Italy. Pray that he adjusts well to his new family and surroundings.
- Pray for us as we consider referrals of children to CSC and that we would be blessed soon to receive more children to provide the loving, Christ-centered home they so desperately need.
- Pray for the upcoming Philippines presidential election, to be held on May 9, 2022, and that there would be a peaceful transition of power.



Coming Together AFTER THE TYPHOON



Just before Christmas 2021, super-typhoon Rai (also called "Odette") hit the Philippines. It was the strongest typhoon to hit the area in 2021, killing more than 400 people and displacing thousands more. The city of Cebu was hit pretty hard. We sustained a significant amount of damage at CSC, including broken doors on the infirmary and the Duterte home, flooding on the main level of Duterte, and destruction of our guard shack. Multiple trees fell on the Cherne home, on the gate, and all over the property. Debris from other nearby buildings landed on our property as well. Thankfully, our employees and children inside the shelter were safe!

Typhoon recovery efforts in Cebu are going well. Electricity was out for

a month, and we used our on-site generators sparingly to maintain operations, but electricity has now been restored! We also have clean running water. The internet connection is being restored slowly, roofs are being repaired, and trees are being replanted.

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Despite these challenges, the outpouring of support at the end of year was enough to cover the costs of all these repairs. We are so thankful that our children and staff remained safe through the storm. Thank you for your prayers, financial support, and advocacy as we work to care for children in need in Cebu City, Philippines. We are grateful for you! ■



The kids loved helping move
tree branches!



— PREPARING FOR THE Future of our Older Children —

Each of our kids is wonderfully unique. Their individual skills, talents, and interests drive hopes and dreams for their future. Ardian loves drawing, design, and storytelling. Argei Kem is a skilled and enthusiastic cook. Shine has dreams of excelling at STEM and becoming a mechanical engineer. In many ways, dreaming is an act of courage and an act of faith.

Due to changes and difficulties in adoption, both domestic and international, CSC now has the largest population of older residents in its history. We've launched handfuls of kids into adulthood in the past; now we find ourselves needing to do this with dozens.

That's where our Johnson Home program comes in. The Wally Johnson Teen/Young Adult Transitional Home program continues the work we started when our kids were just kids, coming alongside them to foster independence, joy, and hope for the future. When they were younger, we talked and prayed with our kids about the future. This helped them to create a mental scaffold – a bridge between “today”

and “someday.” The Johnson Home program aims to continue strengthening that scaffold by preparing and equipping our kids for a beautiful adult life in the Philippines.

For some, this will involve vocational school or college, leading into a fully independent adulthood. For those with special needs, it may involve livelihood training and semi-independence and equipping them to live as independently as they are able. Our prayer is that we can build resilience instead of worry and that we can help them view problems as interesting challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles. We want them to know that they have a loving support base that will cheer them on as they reach for their God-given goals in life.

We have been in the process of bolstering this program to ensure that it can appropriately serve our growing number of older kids. We have 20 kids in grades 7 through 10, and 2 kids in grade 11. And yes, even more will be just behind them if international and domestic adoptions remain low. Would you pray with us for these children and for the Johnson Home Program? ■



The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. Proverbs 16:9





MOVING FORWARD STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

The US Board agreed on the following strategic initiative, given the current state of CSC in the Philippines and the desired future direction.

To promote and support the creation of programs and facilities that allow older CSC residents to be prepared to live healthy adult lives in the Philippines

THE FOCUS

The focus on older residents is imperative given the reduced number of adoptions in recent years and the growing number of older residents. CSC has a duty to prepare these children for adult life in the Philippines that is apart from the shelter through the following solutions:

- Provide long-term housing and services to residents who cannot live apart from CSC
- Provide sustainable work for long-term residents that benefits CSC
- Provide independent life skills training, encouraging independence and responsibility through services and partnerships
- Launch residents into independent living in the Philippines
- Offer opportunities and job security/stability to launched former residents
- Serve our community and form partnerships by providing greater outreach programming

The big picture need is to both develop a comprehensive program for older residents, including partnering with other local and NGO partners, as well as acquire property and building facilities to accommodate these residents. Accomplishing this strategic initiative will prepare CSC for its next important step of improving its gatekeeping practices (referrals of new children to CSC), which includes freeing up space in the Banawa residences for incoming children.



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**CHANGE SERVICE
REQUESTED**

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Save the Date!

Children's Shelter of Cebu

Summer Gathering

July 22-24 at Bethel University

Summer Gathering

In lieu of a spring banquet, we will gather this summer, and we hope you will join us in person or online! Our hope is that we will have the opportunity for portions of our event to be held outdoors. Here is a sneak peak of what we are planning:

**Friday
July 22
(evening)**

**Former Resident &
Adoptive Family
Gathering**

**Saturday
July 23
(evening)**

**Fundraising Dinner &
Program**

OPEN TO EVERYONE!

(We will live-stream for those who prefer to stay home or who are unable to travel to MN)

**Sunday
July 24
(morning)**

**Worship Service led by
former residents**

OPEN TO EVERYONE!

STAY TUNED

We will continue to keep you updated on our plans and activities for that weekend, and we look forward to gathering together with you then!