



# NEWS FROM CEBU

## MARY JHOANA'S STORY

*Mary Jhoana* came to Children's Shelter of Cebu (CSC) in 2015 when she was only two months old. Her young mother was unable to care for her. After a few days in our infirmary to monitor her health, Mary Jhoana moved to the Eicher Home with houseparents Dondon and Ivy.

As she grew into her toddler years, she experienced some delays and challenges in meeting standard growth milestones, but she always worked hard and maintained a positive attitude. Mary Jhoana was loved by all the caregivers, but she had a special bond with "Uncle" Dondon and liked to follow him around. She was always wherever Uncle Dondon was.

Mary Jhoana grew into a sweet girl

who loves to spend time with the other children. She is cooperative and helpful but has the tendency to be a little bossy. She usually wants to make sure all the other kids are following the rules. Mary Jhoana also has a caring disposition. She doesn't like to see any children playing alone or left behind and works to make sure everyone is included.

Throughout her years at CSC, Mary Jhoana longed for a family. She watched a few other children at CSC return to their birth families or leave with new adoptive parents and waited with hopeful anticipation for her turn. When she was six years old, she received the news that her dreams had come true! She had a family waiting for her in Italy. While the paperwork was processed for

the adoption, Mary Jhoana had the chance to video chat with her parents. This allowed her to get to know them and be familiar with their faces and voices before meeting them.

Finally, the day arrived. The morning her parents were coming to meet her at the shelter, Mary Jhoana did not leave Uncle Dondon's side. She followed him through his morning

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♪  
"Count your blessings, name  
them one by one, count your many  
blessings, see what God has done."  
♪



## FROM THE DESK OF KIRBY STOLL, President

A blessing is something you can receive, but I believe it is also something you can give. Long ago I copied a tradition an old friend used when signing letters, to end the letter with the word "Blessings." Maybe you've been the recipient of a letter or email from me with that ending. I use this word intentionally, both to bless the recipient and to serve as a reminder that we are called to be a blessing.

Here are three blessings I'd like to share with you today that come straight from the heart:

**I am blessed to have the opportunity to lead a ministry that puts God first in everything we do and to look to God to provide for our daily needs and for direction for the future. What a blessing it is to serve a God who calls us His children and promises to never leave us or forsake us.**

**I am blessed to serve alongside an amazing team of leaders who give of their time and talent in many generous and sacrificial ways. They serve God with their whole hearts, minds and strength. What a blessing they are to me and to each other.**

**I am blessed to know that CSC supporters here in the U.S. and abroad trust us to carry out the mission of CSC to its fullest and back that up by providing abundant resources to make this ministry happen. What a blessing you are to each of us here at CSC.**

Would you consider how you are blessed and how you can be a blessing today? You may have opportunities coming up to be with family and friends. Don't take these moments for granted. Pray in advance of your times with one person or many people, that God would use you to be a blessing. All for His glory! ■

Blessings,  
Kirby Stoll

routine. She even went with him to water the plants. When asked how she was, she shared that she was "very nervous but very happy too."

When her parents arrived, Mary Jhoana took the hand of her

comfortable with each other in Mary Jhoana's room, where she showed them her bed, her personal things, and the bag of clothes she was bringing to Italy. They visited CSC for multiple days to spend time getting to know

and pray with the new family), Mary Jhoana was excited to see everyone present. She received many hugs from friends and CSC employees. When it was time to go and get inside the vehicle to leave, Mary Jhoana beamed and

*CSC is not the same without Mary Jhoana. We miss her smiling face and her in-charge personality, but we are overjoyed for her and her new life.*

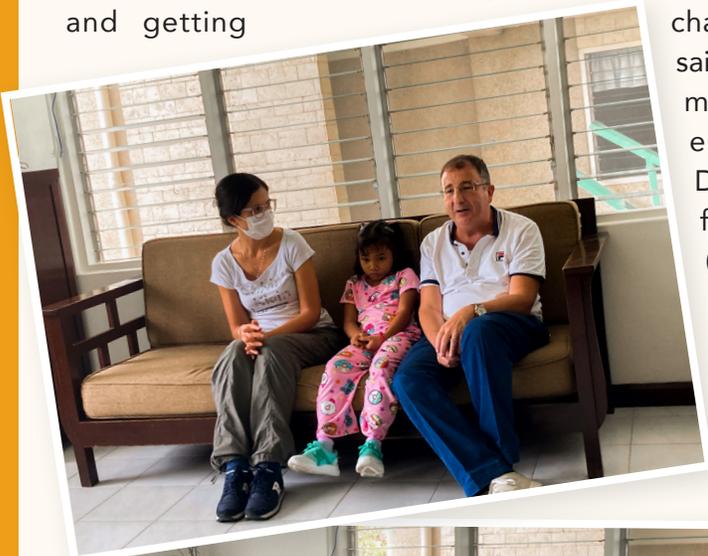
"Mama" and "Papa" and walked with them inside the Eicher Home, where she lived when she was at CSC. They spent time talking and getting

each other.

On her last day at CSC, Mary Jhoana seemed nervous and cried a lot. It was a big change for her! She said she was going to miss all of her friends, especially Uncle Dondon. During the farewell ceremony (where we sing the song, "God Will Take Care of You"

ran to get her bag. She was ready to go!

CSC is not the same without Mary Jhoana. We miss her smiling face and her in-charge personality, but we are overjoyed for her and her new life. Her adoptive family seems like a wonderful fit, and we are praying for their future together. We know God has big plans for Mary Jhoana, and we are honored to have been a small part of her life. ■



# OUR NEW BUT SEASONED HELPERS: Joemar & Wilmar



**Cebu** Children of Hope School (CCHS) is blessed with new helpers this school year. These helpers are older shelter residents,

great job! It's been an enjoyable experience for him to be here and at the same time a great help for us in school.

*"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day."*

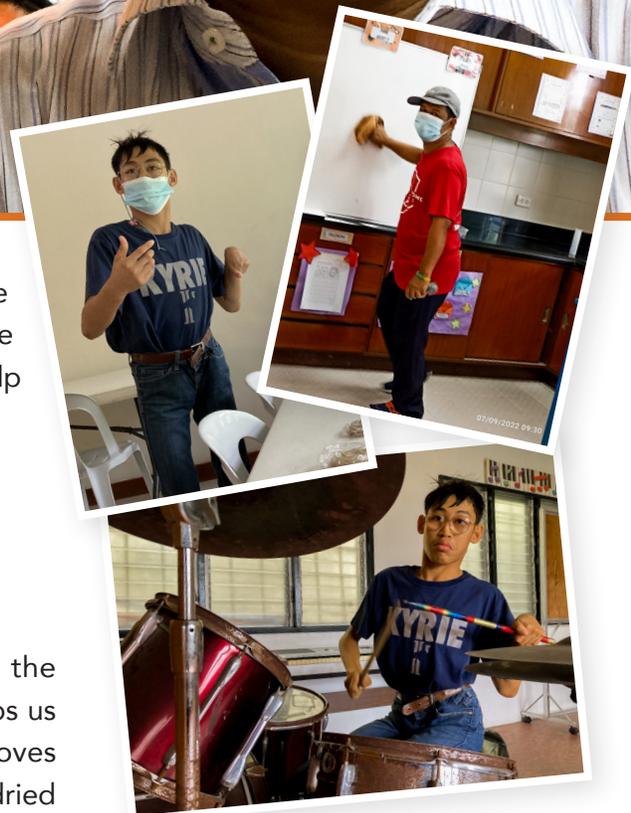
*- Sally Koch*

Joemar and Wilmar. They assisted with various tasks before the pandemic, but they had to stop for two years during the CSC lockdown. We are glad that they are back doing a wonderful job assisting at our school!

Wilmar stays at CCHS for an hour every day. He assists the school staff during snack time, and he does a

Joemar has been a part of the school for a long time. He helps us every weekday morning. He loves to work outside sweeping the dried leaves and inside wiping surfaces and mopping the floor. He always wears a smile whenever he does his tasks.

CCHS is grateful for the helpers who are in the school. We are also



thankful for all of you who make this work a possibility. You have made a safe and friendly environment that enables the students to be successful in what they do. ■

# PRAYER REQUESTS and PRAISES

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise the Lord for providing an adoptive family for a sibling group of two boys, Lester and Dioswa. They are being adopted by a family in the US, and they are so excited! Please pray with us for this process and their hearts as they prepare for this huge adjustment.
- We have a number of children who are sick at the shelter. Some have tonsillitis, and others have COVID. Most of them are in the infirmary to receive needed medical care and attention. Some are in isolation rooms. Please pray with us for healing and for our team of nurses and child care employees attending to the needs of these children.
- With just a little over two months left in our fiscal year, we are mindful of the ministry needs we have yet to accomplish and trust that God will provide through His people the remaining 30% of our budgeted expenses for the year.

## PRAISE REPORTS

- Our school has continued to be in person in our school building. This is a huge blessing, as in-person learning seems to be best for these students. Not all schools are in person in the Philippines. We are thankful to God for our current situation that allows for this learning opportunity.
- We have a sibling group of three girls whose paperwork has been delayed for years, due to errors on birth certificates and other important legal documents. We recently made slight progress in their case. Praise God for each step in this process! Even if these girls are not adopted, clarifying their paperwork will help them to gain employment and live independently in the Philippines some day.
- With a series of retirements over the last year in our Home Life department, we are excited to welcome four new employees to the team. Judeta, Junefer, Annabelle and Ruth will be great additions and will do a wonderful job caring for children in our homes in Banawa.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CEBU?



## CSC & THE FILIPINO GOVERNMENT

Recently, CSC hosted a large, quarterly interagency meeting for the Filipino government. This was the first time CSC has hosted, and

we are excited to be able to forge strong partnerships with all the organizations involved. It also furthers our advocacy for children who are orphaned, abandoned, and neglected all over the Philippines.

## HOUSING UPDATES

As we make plans for the new building for our transitional home residents, we are remodeling the orange house next to the CSC main campus. Our older residents will use it for housing during the building phase. Afterwards, it will be used for much-needed office space.



## THE RETURN TO IN-PERSON CHURCH

The children at the shelter are once again able to attend church in person! What a blessing it has been to be back in that routine again. The children get dressed up, grab their Bibles, and pile into the large vehicles to make the short trip down the road to the local church. We believe it is important for the children to be a part of a local church community, and we are so thankful for this opportunity.



## A MUCH-NEEDED OUTING FOR OUR TEACHERS

Our school recently ended the first quarter of this school year. This means testing for the students and planning and preparation for the teachers. The teachers went on a much-needed outing to bond as a team. They visited Ocean Park, a local zoo, and were given the opportunity to hold a snake. These dedicated teachers work so hard to help our students, both during the day and in the evenings with tutoring. We were glad they could spend a day off site together, having fun.

## WHO'S GOT HOMEWORK?

The students at our shelter often have homework every night. Our high schoolers in particular have a heavy homework load, and they start on it after dinner and chores. One evening a few weeks ago, one of our highschoolers named Meriam was just sitting down to start on her schoolwork. Maribel, an 11-year-old girl living in the same home, approached Meriam and asked her to help with her homework. Meriam set her own work aside and helped Maribel first. What a wonderful example Meriam is of putting the needs of others before her own.



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## — LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE ❄️ Christmas Gift? — ❄️



You can give back this holiday season by sponsoring a day of school at the Cebu Children of Hope School. For \$425, you can cover the expense of operating our school for one day. You choose a date to sponsor, and we will list you or your group on our website that day! A donation from you, your family, your business, or even a group of friends will provide a quality education to children in the Philippines.

Go to [www.cebushelter.org/donate](http://www.cebushelter.org/donate) and choose "Sponsor a Day of School" or send your gift to CSC in the envelope provided, and we'll connect with you to arrange which day you'd like to sponsor.

