



A child with his banner during celebration for International Day for Street Children. The theme of activities in Manila was 'Batang Lansangan para sa Kalikasan' or 'Street Children for the Environment'

News from Bahay Tuluyan

Change the world. Love children

April 2011

A Season of Graduations

Every child has the right to go to school. Unfortunately only about 60% of Filipino children have that right fulfilled – only 6 out of 10 Grade 1 students eventually go on to finish the ten years of mandatory education.

The reasons for children not completing school are numerous but more often than not boil down to one thing: money. Although education is supposed to be 'free', students are required to pay for everything from paper and pens to floor wax, test papers, electric fans and 'special projects'. The consequences of not paying these contributions are normally failure – of the subject – or the whole year.

On top of the contributions which students are required to make at school, children need the money to get to school and food to eat while at school. For many families who live on \$2 a day or less, this is just too hard and so they don't send their children to school or the children drop out before finishing. Other children work instead of going to school.

Given this situation, the recent graduations of 18 children and young people from Bahay Tuluyan is especially important. Six children graduated from Grade 6, 10 from High School and 2 from



A few of BT's elementary school graduates

BT Kids Speak

On 9 April Bahay Tuluyan held its annual Children's General Assembly. Involving 150 children representing all of Bahay Tuluyan's programs, the General Assembly gave the children an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas about programs and their dreams for the future of Bahay Tuluyan.

More inside!

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Relocating Problems

In developing cities around the world, the push for development leads to the desire to eliminate unsightly squatter communities and slums. All too often this leads to forced evictions, violent demolitions and unsustainable relocations. Manila is no exception.

Bahay Tuluyan, with the assistance of a group of students from Macquarie University Australia, recently completed a community profile of a relocation site in Calauan, Laguna, near one of its centers.

Prior to the establishment of the relocation site, the population of Calauan was 45,000. The government plans to relocate approximately 50,000 people to the site over the next five years, effectively doubling the size of the town. Already, in the first three years of relocations, close to 10,000 people have been relocated, 52% of whom are under 24 years old.

This very rapid increase to the population of a town is likely to cause problems anywhere, especially so when, as is the case in Calauan:

- the relocated population are extremely poor and often poorly skilled;
- services such as schools, health clinics, markets, roads, electricity and water are not available or not ready
- the relocation site is more than two hours travel from where the population has previously worked, lived and have their support networks

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Day by day Bahay Tuluyan's dream of having a home of its own is taking shape. Construction of BT's new center in Manila is well underway, with the flooring of the second floor due to be poured as this newsletter goes to press.

The building will be five stories high and include a crisis center, drop in center and training center. So far construction is on schedule, with the opening of the building due to take place on 11-11-11.

Follow the construction on facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6667194902> . We welcome your contributions. All donations over P4000 (\$100) will be acknowledged on the honor wall of our new home.



Tree of Life Tour

Bahay Tuluyan recently started a new initiative aimed at providing livelihoods to young people and communities while promoting sustainable eco-tourism – BT Eco Cultural Encounters. The idea of the Encounters is to give people a chance to experience parts of the Filipino culture that they may not otherwise experience. The first encounter is the "Tree of Life Tour" run by young people from Bahay Tuluyan. Run in the village of Niing in San Antonio, this tour gives people the chance to see how coconut trees help to sustain a community and how the many different coconut products are produced. Bahay Tuluyan hopes to be able to offer a variety of tours in the coming years.

cont.

vocational training (Electro Mechanics) in the school year that ended in March 2011. All of the children who graduated had faced many challenges before being able to reach graduation.

Joanne (not her real name) had missed several years of school because of poverty and neglect and was considerably older than her peers. Despite this she graduated with honors, receiving an award for being one of the best pupils in her class.

Bahay Tuluyan provides scholarship support for all the children in its residential shelter and those who have been reintegrated with their families. During this round of graduations a vast majority of Bahay Tuluyan's scholars received awards for their performance.

Other problems facing the Philippine education system are a massive shortage of teachers, classrooms, books and other infrastructure. Corporal punishment is illegal but is still frequently practiced in Filipino schools.

In order to help promote more child friendly schools, Bahay Tuluyan has been running a 'Child Friendly Teacher' award for the past three years. Selected by their students the key attributes of 'Child Friendly Teachers' are their ability to treat all children equally and refrain from using corporal punishment.

News in Brief

1.

Bahay Tuluyan was pleased to host a contingent of 22 visitors from Rotary Club of Essendon and Kangan Institute in February 2011 for their annual study tour. This was the sixth delegation from the Rotary Club of Essendon since 2004.

2.

Bahay Tuluyan San Antonio will have a new full size basketball court by the end of April through the support of Macquarie University & AVI and volunteers from Australia. The barangay league final will be the first game played on the court

3.

Two Bahay Tuluyan alumni, Rachiel Neverio and Mary Ann Palomarez have been granted scholarships to college by the US Peace Corps. Facing very stiff competition from hundreds of applications it was a great achievement for both girls.

Five high school graduates



Working on basketball court



A day to remember street children

The first International Day for Street Children was marked around the world on 12 April 2011. Bahay Tuluyan led activities in the Philippines through its role as the Chair of the Street Children Committee of the National Council for Social Development (SCC-NCSD).

Determined to help in raising public awareness about the issues facing street children and changing negative public perceptions about street children, the SCC-NCSD organized an Advocacy Walk for street children followed by a Clean Up of an area around Manila Bay. Attended by more than 1000 children representing more than 20 organisations, the event attracted considerable national media coverage.

It is not known how many children are on the street in the Philippines but it is likely to be more than 300,000. Children go to the street to work, escape abuse or poverty at home or simply because they have nowhere else to go.

The SCC-NCSD is working with the government to improve government programs and services for street children and to prevent children going to the street in the first place.



A work in progress - children painting murals on the new building

cont.

- work opportunities are very limited

Rodel, a 9 year old, child whom Bahay Tuluyan encountered in Calauan is indicative of the problems this and other relocation areas face. Rodel's family lost their house in Typhoon Ondoy (Ketsana) in November 2009. They were relocated to Calauan where they had no work and no means of income. Severely malnourished, Rodel became susceptible to tuberculosis which has now ravaged his tiny body. He and his siblings have been unable to go to school and his family has struggled just to eat, often going without. Having no health services nearby and no money to get to services located in nearby towns, Rodel had to just be patient and persist.

Even more alarming were reports of children in the community exchanging sex for rice.

Rodel is now on his way to getting better, thanks to many generous donors, but the relocation program has a long way to go.

Volunteer

Bahay Tuluyan is always looking for enthusiastic volunteers. Email us to apply.

Donate

We welcome your financial or in-kind donations. Donate online, by check to 'Bahay Tuluyan' or by bank deposit:

Bank of the Philippine Islands
Harrison Plaza branch
Account: Bahay Tuluyan
Account no: 004943049276 (Savings)
SWIFT Code: BOIPHMM

Advocate

Get involved in raising awareness about issues affecting children. Email us to find out more.



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