

## **Bridging Continents, Building Communities through HOPE & HEALTH Aid Program**

**HOPE & HEALTH AID TO THE PHILIPPINES** is a Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS) project with Project Registration #117/2010-11. Rotary Club of Penrith (District 9690) in partnerships with Rotary Club of Tanauan (District 3820) has made tangible efforts to realize Rotary International's theme for 2010-11 with projects below commencing on April 2010.

**The Hope and Health Aid Program has two arms:**

**1. To give HOPE through:**

**a. Microfinance Lending Program**

In coordination with Project Assistant Coordinator: PE Daniel Kellie and Rtn Nelma Galas, both from RC Blacktown, Dist 9690, we were able to form a Microlending group of 50 indigent borrowers on a rotating credit cycle at a remote island in the Philippines named Caluya in the province of Antique. Weekly, 2 names are drawn to obtain loan of P5,000 (\$125aud); those who are granted a loan start weekly repayments the week after, with each repayment contributing to part of the loan money for the next week's borrowers.

The Microfinance group was formed in April with screening of applicants and orientation of key leaders. Most of the applicants were women with an average family size of 4 or more, whose monthly gross earnings were less than \$100/month and grateful for the chance to be granted a loan that is specifically aimed at increasing their livelihood. Majority of these applicants were either seaweed growers or retail vendors, the island being a fourth-class municipality. Borrowing officially started on the second week of May 2011. The completion of first cycle (meaning all 50 members of the group would have borrowed loan money) is targeted to be after 6 months, that is, November 2011.

Repeat of credit cycle will depend on the decision of the members of the Microfinance group. The seed funds in the amount of \$3,000 came from a donation to RAWCS by the sponsor club – RC Penrith; with additional funding for logistic support coming from tax deductible personal donations amounting to \$720.

This year's RI theme for 2011-12 "Reach Within to Embrace Humanity" could be realized in our aim to organize more Microfinance groups in various parts of the Philippines with source of funding coming internally from the National Government of the Philippines (Department of Social Welfare and Development) in partnership with Grameen Foundation Australia.

**b) Educational Scholarship Program**

In May 2011, a Scholar was recruited and chosen from Manila Philippines, his name is Eliezer Inigo, 1 of 2 siblings but breadwinner for the family of 3 ( as his father deserted them when he was young). He is on his 3<sup>rd</sup> year University degree at the University of the Philippines in Manila. We aim to sponsor his studies until 2013 (2 yrs) through tax deductible personal donations to RAWCS.

**2. To improve HEALTH through:**

**a. Annual Health Mission**

**On April 25-May 2, 2011 a Health Mission was conducted at the Felipo Abrigo Memorial Hospital at Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines.**

The project funds (total of about \$26,000) were mainly raised by the sponsoring organization: Mt Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary and Friends based in Mulgoa, NSW through a fundraising function held in June 2010; assisted by a donation of \$1000 from RC Penrith and local support from the Municipality of Guiuan – Mayor's Office, Rural Health Office, Provincial Health Office and the District Hospital staff at Guiuan Eastern Samar, Philippines.

The manpower tapped for this purpose is a local volunteer organization named Maharlika Charity Foundation based in

Davao, Philippines. The following services with corresponding number of cases were rendered:

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- free medical consultations and medications (1,173);
  - free cataract surgeries (102), cleft lip and palate repairs (7), major surgeries (24) and minor cyst excisions (117), and circumcision (139);
  - free dental extractions (546) with a visit to jail inmates to give free dental services to 5 prisoners
  - free pap's smears (121)

The health mission served a total of 2,229 patients – life changing for those whose visions were restored, cleft lip and palate repaired and big tumours removed!

Next year's ANNUAL MEDICAL MISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES is proposed to be in partnership with Philippine Australian Medical Association (PAMA), a Medical-Surgical-Dental Mission to be held at Aurora, Zamboanga Philippines on 21-27<sup>th</sup> of May 2012.

**b. Donation of hospital equipment to Philippines**

With the desire to help each hospital facility achieve self-sustainability and be able to provide affordable, accessible and available health services, brand new medical equipment were donated through the generosity of DAK Foundation as follows:

- ECG machine
- portable ultrasound machine
- Fetal Hand-held Doppler
- Vital signs monitor

Recipients of above equipment are as follows:

- Caibiran Rural Health Unit, Biliran Province
- Caluya Rural Health Unit, Antique Province
- Sinag Foundation based in Davao
- Ugnayan ng Pahinungod Volunteer Corps, based at Philippine General Hospital, Manila
- Guiuan District Hospital, Eastern Samar

All equipment were delivered to recipients on April 2011 in consecutive weeks during Medical Mission

held in the area (the missions in the first 3 areas were sponsored by other Rotary clubs).

Written by:



**DR. GRACE MAANO**

Project Coordinator

Rotary Club of Penrith, District 9690

Attachments for reference:  
RAWCS Project Report and Project Overview  
Microfinance project & financial report  
Educational scholar profile, resume, letter  
Medical Mission census and financial report  
Photos



Microfinance Group Key Leaders orientation at Caluya Island,  
Antique Province Philippines



Surgical Mission Team in Action at Guiuan, Eastern Samar Philippines



Donation of Medical Equipment at Caibiran Rural Health Unit,  
Biliran Province Philippines

Looking on are Rtn Margaret Thorne (second from left with RAWCS badge) and Rtn Queenie Chan (3<sup>rd</sup> from left with RAWCS badge), RAWCS Volunteers from RC Parramatta, Dist 9690