



Registered association for the promotion
of medical care and social support in
Northern Samar, Philippines

Bugko, April 2011

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

Stormy times! That's the best way to describe the beginning of 2011. On January 15, Sister Veronica and I returned to Bugko. The return trip was delayed because our flight to Catarman was canceled due to bad weather. There, terrible weather awaited us with heavy rains and storms. Many parts of Northern Samar were flooded, making any kind of transportation significantly difficult, as the roads were also flooded and some were even destroyed by the massive amounts of water.



On February 2nd, Dr. James M. from Colorado, USA, and Beth C., PA, also from Colorado, USA, came to us with the ISM (International Surgical Missions) team.

This year, our mission lasted a full eight days! Dr. M. and Dr. C. were busy from early morning until late into the night.



Beth C. & Dr. J. M.



Dr. P. Radway



Examination



Two of our operated Patients

We were able to examine a total of 725 patients and operate on 115 as outpatients in our operating room. On one day, the doctors were assisted by the head of the ISM team, Dr. Radway. They endured long waits just to be examined by the American doctors. Our volunteers were once again working nonstop and showed no signs of fatigue. They registered patients, helped with translations, assisted in the operating room, cleaned instruments, and dispensed medications.



What patients appreciate most is the attention the doctors give them. The medical examinations we're used to in Germany are rare here.

On March 10, my dear parents visited us again. This time, as representatives of Mabuhay - Hilfe zum Leben e.V. Germany, to participate in a meeting of our newly formed board of Mabuhay- St. Francis of Assisi Primary Health Care Program, Inc. in the Philippines.

All seven board members were present, and we were able to discuss crucial steps regarding the future of our programs, a website in English, and a flyer for the Philippines. For the first time, the new seal, which we require for official documents in the Philippines, was used.



The day after the session, my father began the orthopedic consultations. The patients were happy to see an orthopedic specialist, as many of them complain of shoulder, knee, and back pain. Over 300 patients, both young and old, came, so my father was very busy. My mother diligently assisted and administered many of the injections. The two of them make a great team. There would certainly have been even more patients if it hadn't been raining incessantly. But since it was a unique opportunity for the patients, they took advantage of it despite the flooded or completely muddy paths. Many patients treated by my father last year are still free of symptoms and have referred new patients.





They will briefly tell you about their experiences in their own report, which immediately follows mine.

Dear friends,

We arrived in Bugko on March 11th. We had spent the previous night in Manila with Sabine's German friends, the Honer-Wanet family, who welcomed us very warmly.

Bugko welcomed us with storms and rain, which stayed with us for the entire three weeks! Rain? - in Germany, we would say cloudbursts! The streets were flooded, the huts were flooded. No one would go outside in our country, but here it didn't stop people from coming to the clinic. They were in pain and sought help from the German doctor. Sometimes we worried whether the ampoules we had brought with us would be enough for the entire stay. They did, because the orthopedist was also a pediatrician and was responsible for other illnesses, such as coughs, asthma, gastrointestinal diseases, tuberculosis, and skin diseases. It was sad to see that fractures that had been correctly diagnosed radiologically were treated incorrectly, resulting in permanent joint stiffness. The options here are simply too limited.

Despite the persistent rain, people harvested rice in the fields, which was at high risk because it had already begun to sprout due to the rain that had been falling since November 2010. But where would they dry it? They kept waiting for a few sunny days, which unfortunately never came, and so it had to be harvested to avoid losing the entire harvest. When you consider that rice is often the only food or brings in a little money for the household budget, it's enough to make you despair! The families faced additional expenses when they took the harvest to the few rice drying mills, or they sold the rice at far below market price because they had no way to dry it. It's a cruel cycle, as you can see how the poor are becoming poorer and poorer and, despite their hard work - the rice plants are planted individually by hand here - often don't even have enough to cover their family's needs. Sabine told us that she's seen children here eating sand just to satisfy their hunger.

For us, the weather is depressing, but for the people here, it means hardship. Sabine had also planned a few weekend excursions for us, but of course, all of them fell through. Sadly, because she wanted to make us happy and show us a bit of her "adopted home." But there's always a next time, and with that thought in mind, we said goodbye to Bugko and the island of Samar. Determined to continue helping, as the aid is so needed and we saw once again how many people in Mabuhay are being helped and that the funds sent by Germany are being used wisely and purposefully.

We're back home, and so we send you our warmest greetings.

Anne and Bernd Korth



Now it's another double letter with many events, and I also send you my warmest greetings from Bugko.

Yours,

Sabine Korth

Salamat (thank you) from Bugko!

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