



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

Bugko, August 2016

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

From April 15th to May 20th we had a visit from Luise F. and Dennis P.. She had completed her dentistry studies in Jena, and he had completed his mechanical engineering studies in Jena. Both of them got to work immediately. Once again, many patients received dental care, with the focus, as always, on preserving teeth. Unfortunately, there was often nothing that could be saved and forceps had to be used. Mr. P. repaired all of our equipment and carried out maintenance services. Unfortunately, that is not common here, so his being here was truly a blessing. In their free time, they gave swimming lessons.





From April 20th to 22nd, Ms. Martina A. from Caritas Germany visited us. As described in the last newsletter, over 800 houses were damaged and over 200 completely destroyed here in Bugko by Typhoon Melor (December 2015). Caritas Germany approved our request and supported us in rebuilding the houses. This

began the second phase of reconstruction. The first phase of emergency aid was covered by many spontaneous individual donations from you, the German Dentists' Aid Organization, and the Olpe Franciscan Sisters. Thanks to this expanded support from Caritas Germany, even more houses could be repaired or rebuilt, and we were able to provide school bags and teaching materials to all children from daycare to high school. We were also able to organize a three-month feeding program for the children in the daycare level. We assembled a core team to coordinate all construction work and provide assistance quickly. At this meeting, the final organizational processes were discussed, allowing the project to begin immediately.



On April 24, our "youngest volunteer," Francisca Thea, was born. Our volunteer Eva became a mother for the fifth time.



On May 9, the Philippines elected a new president. Rodrigo Duterte was elected by a majority and will now serve for six years. Once again, votes were bought, and this is happening at a time when everyone, especially politicians, is speaking out against corruption. Voter turnout was, as always, very high, and Sister Veronica and I were assigned as "poll watchers" to ensure everything was conducted correctly. Luise F. and Dennis P. were the election observers, as they were still our guests. After the election, the voting machines were transported in our ambulance to the headquarters in Mondragon.





From May 14th to 15th, we and our volunteers attended the annual Pentecost gathering in Capul. This is an event organized by the Diocese of Catarman and is held as a star pilgrimage. Pilgrims from all parishes attend the Pentecost event, which is also celebrated as a family festival. Therefore, many children are always there. We, along with our Mabuhay family, couldn't miss it, and it was a successful event under the theme: "Come, Holy Spirit, and make our families missionaries of love and grace." This year, over 3,000 participants attended, and since Capul is an island, transporting so many people was very exciting. Here are the pictures:



From June 3rd to 5th, Sr. Magdalena Krol, Superior General of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Olpe, visited us with Sr. Emilie, Sr. Elenor, and Sr. Nerissa from the Philippine Province in Baybay, Leyte. It was the sisters' first visit, and they wanted to get an idea of our work here, as the sisters in Baybay focus their apostolate on teaching, i.e., they work in schools. Sr. Magdalena was shocked by the conditions in the local provincial hospital. Many patients were simply lying in the hallway, and the hygiene conditions were so inadequate that they cannot be described. Therefore, only a picture is provided.



On June 19th, Dr. Markus Stephan and Karin Spatz, both from Bergisch Gladbach, came to visit us. Dr. Stefan is an ophthalmologist and has worked in Cambodia and Ghana. Mrs. Spatz is an orthoptist (eye therapist) and works with Dr. Stephan. We are pleased to have been able to recruit both of them for our project. The work began the very next day, and since there is no ophthalmologist in all of Northern Samar, patients lined up. Both brought along numerous medications, eye charts, instruments, a device for measuring eye pressure, and, most importantly, a slit lamp. The first mission was primarily to determine the need for ophthalmological treatment. Just two days later, Dr. Stefan went into the operating room and performed the first minor operations, such as pterygium repair, which do not require a special eye microscope. In addition to the many examinations, some of our volunteers were also instructed in simpler eye examinations and how to conduct vision tests. Ms. Spatz conducted screenings at two elementary schools, examining children between the ages of 4 and 6 to detect vision problems early. The need is great, according to the results, and we will try to secure a surgical eye microscope so that other surgeries, such as cataracts, can be performed during the next visit. In the meantime, we will continue to examine patients and, similar to what we do for surgical cases for doctors in the USA, we will also register patients in the eye field who have regained their sight through cataract surgery. One can only imagine how difficult it is to live in a country like the Philippines without being able to see. Unfortunately, most patients cannot afford such a procedure.

A total of almost 650 patients were seen, and many of them were happy to go to the optician with a new pair of glasses, as glasses could already improve their vision. Thank you to everyone who donated the frames.





As you can see from the report, we've had many patients, visitors, and events here in Northern Samar over the past few months. Therefore, this newsletter is coming sooner than in previous years. Sometimes there were overlaps in scheduling, so much was involved. The encounters with visitors continually enrich us and are a blessing for the patients who come to us for help. With best wishes for a wonderful fall, I am yours,

Sabine Korth

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