



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

Bugko, August 2024

Dear members, friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

On April 14th, Kyra K. and Katharina H. from Leipzig, Tabea K. from Aschaffenburg, and Katharina W. from Munich arrived to continue the dental treatments here. Although they came from different cities and universities, they quickly became a team. Katharina H. decided at short notice to extend their stay for two weeks, so the dental clinic was always well staffed. In addition to the dental clinic, they also started the dental prophylaxis program at the elementary school. In my last letter, I mentioned that we donated a dental unit to the local elementary school. They examined the children by grade, applied fluoride, and taught them proper dental hygiene. Parents, teachers, and children responded positively to the fact that there is now an established school dental program and that dentists come regularly to examine the children. Children who then need treatment are scheduled to the dental clinic at the clinic.





On May 5th, Leornard (Lenny) E. joined the team. He had studied at the University of Göttingen and, having spent three years in the Philippines as a child, was drawn back there. He had actually wanted to explore the Philippines more, but the first typhoon of the year, Aghon (Evinar), on May 24th, put a stop to his plans, as his flight to Manila was canceled. Lena K., a trained oral surgeon, and Franziska S. also joined the team. The two had met at the University of Freiburg and wanted to do this mission together. So we now had five dentists here! They continued the school program, and with Lena B. even the most difficult teeth were in good hands. The dental clinic is also supported by the German Dentists' Aid Organization, which helps us keep the clinic up to date, which benefits all visiting dentists.



In addition, the garden project continued steadily. On April 30th, the greenhouse with hydroponic system was installed. It's an automated system developed by a young man at a nearby university to supply nutrients to the young lettuce plants. Lettuce is still a rarity here, and when it's available, it's almost prohibitively expensive, so growing lettuce in the greenhouse is one of our goals. After the installation, we held an initial training session for the farm staff. A lot had to be learned before we could harvest the first lettuce.

Other plantings, such as pumpkin, beans, bitter melon, water cucumber, and chard, were easier and immediately very successful. We were able to recruit a gardening specialist from Calbayog who regularly provides our farm workers with training on planting, planting sequences, fertilization, and irrigation, as well as composting. The workers receive a weekly schedule and can follow it. We've already seen the first successes of this training, and we believe that this will further increase production on the farm.



We received more wonderful news when the German Dentists' Aid Organization agreed to buy us a new off-road vehicle. Our old vehicle was 15 years old and had been in the workshop more and more, making it unsafe to drive long distances. In addition, the road conditions are terrible once you leave the main road. The vehicle is also used for our relief missions after typhoons and floods because it is equipped with four-wheel drive. The large cargo space is particularly valuable because we need a large loading area for both relief missions and our shopping. We were very grateful to Dr. W. and Dr. S. for agreeing straight away and we hope that this new vehicle lasts as long as the first one. Once again, the German Dentists' Aid Organization has helped us in our time of need. A vehicle like this has great value and makes a significant contribution to our safety.



We received a large donation of dairy products from Alaska, which we were able to distribute to the children here. After speaking with the local director of Alaska, even more dairy products will be arriving for the children to contribute to their nutrition.



From June 1st to 4th, we went on a city tour of Cebu with our volunteers. It was our annual outing to build team spirit and as a thank you for all the help we provided. In addition to an extensive city tour, there was also time for shopping, socializing, and enjoying local delicacies. The days were filled with lots of joy and laughter, and it was good for everyone to meet outside of the clinic.



On June 17th, we set off for Germany to report back on-site on how the project is progressing, what help we need, and where problems exist. As you read in the last letter, a lot is happening here, and of course, there are still "stumbling blocks" to overcome. It was a stressful and sad time, as we lost some dear people who had supported our work here for a long time.

When we flew back to Bugko on July 24th, Dr. Georg F. and his granddaughter Nika L. from Bonn came with us. Dr. F. was coming for the fourth time and, in addition to working at the clinic, wanted to give his granddaughter a glimpse into another world where people aren't as well off as in Germany. After a short time, Dr. F. was back "fully at home" and managing the clinic, and I had time to work through some things. I was more than grateful for his help, especially since he was able to help the patients a lot with his years of experience. Nika helped out at the clinic and visited the nutrition program and the school. She was also able to see a bit of the island and I think she will still be busy with some of it at home, because at the age of 13 it was like immersing herself in another world.



On August 4th, the dental clinic reopened, and we got four dentists, all of whom were German but otherwise had multicultural backgrounds: Martin F. (German/Filipino), Philipp K. (Korean), Jasmin K. (Indian), and Thanja N. (Vietnamese/Chinese). They all studied dentistry together in Mainz and got straight to work here. After the dental clinic was closed for five weeks, patients lined up on the first day. They made a fantastic team, and in addition to their work in the dental clinic, they got to know the country, its people, and a bit of the culture. After their deployment, they traveled further through the Philippines to visit Martin F.'s family.



Now I wish you all a nice rest of the summer, a colorful autumn, stay healthy everyone and so I greet you all warmly until we meet again hopefully in December at our annual general meeting

Yours,

Sabine Korth

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