



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

Bugko, December 2025

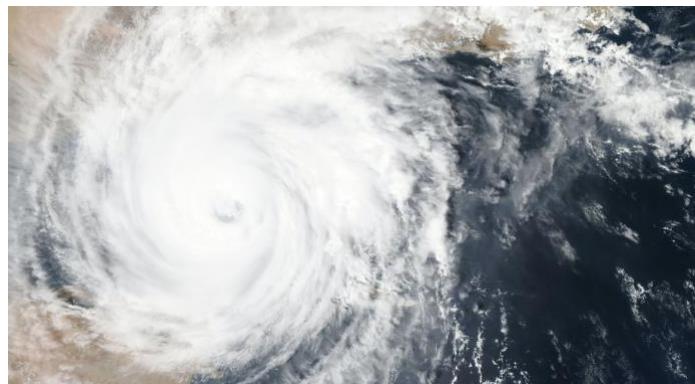
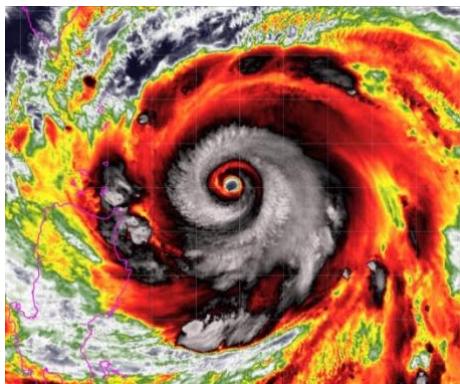
Dear members, friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

As has been the case for some time now, dentists have been coming and going frequently. So on September 24th, Lara K. from the University of Marburg, Johanna K. from the University of Regensburg, and Franziska S. from the University of Würzburg arrived to take over the dental clinic. Right from the start, they had some complex patients, but they worked well together and, with the experience from their different universities, they mastered even the most challenging cases. As always, we are happy when teeth can still be saved.





On September 25th, Typhoon Bualoi, known locally as Opong, approached northern Samar. It brought wind speeds of 110 km/h, high waves, and heavy rainfall of up to 200 mm/h. Thankfully, we were more or less spared. Just 50 km away, the situation looked very different. News reports and pictures made it seem as if it would hit us directly.



On October 1st, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck Cebu. Many people died, were injured, and lost their homes. Thank you all for thinking of us. Here, there was hardly any damage, and we only felt a slight swaying. The worst part is the many aftershocks, which make people afraid to return home. And then, on October 17th, a second major earthquake of magnitude 6.1 struck Mindanao. The earthquakes were related to the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, a volcanic belt that encircles the Pacific Ocean on three sides.

On October 2nd, I participated in German Unity Day for the first time. In Manila, the German Ambassador, Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke, and his wife host the event, and it is a large, dignified celebration attended by many Germans, as well as ambassadors from other countries and people with connections to Germany—some economic, some personal, and some religious. Over 900 guests were invited, and the hall quickly filled up. There was a lovely musical program, several speeches, and lots of conversation. After more than 18 years in the country, this was my first time attending the celebration. The pictures speak for themselves.

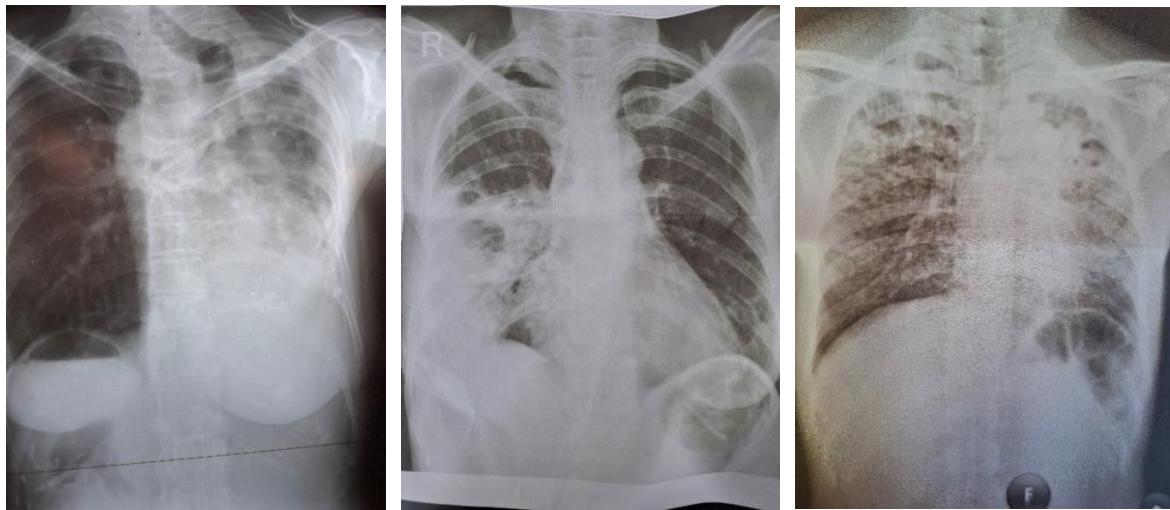


On October 5th, Asghar Khezerloo, a native of Iran, and Zlatomira P., a native of Bulgaria, joined our dental practice. Both had studied in Munich and completed internships abroad, for example, in Peru. Unfortunately, Ms. P. had to leave on October 20th due to health reasons. Mr. Khezerloo continued treatment tirelessly, focusing particularly on wisdom tooth extractions. Fortunately, several teeth were saved.



At the same time, Dr. Alexander Hültenschmidt from Karlsruhe joined us as a young physician. He had studied in Budapest and completed his practical year in Karlsruhe. After his time here, he plans to specialize in cardiology. He saw many patients daily with a wide variety of illnesses. Again, all age groups were represented, but this posed no problem for him. He quickly settled in and established rapport not only with the patients but also with the local community. He was shocked by the high number of tuberculosis patients. Even a layperson can see that the X-rays don't look good.





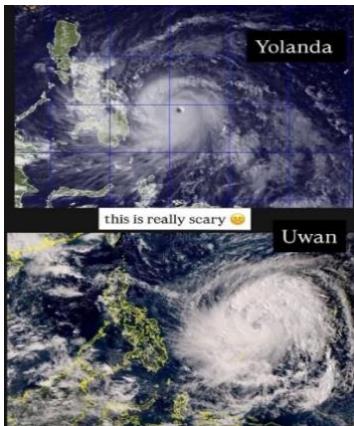
On October 29th, Dr. Hültenschmidt gave a first aid seminar to our volunteers, allowing them to refresh their previously learned skills. It had been three years since the last course, so we were grateful that he offered it. Everyone participated enthusiastically and learned basic evacuation drills and CPR. At the end, everyone received a certificate.



As soon as Dr. Hültenschmidt boarded the plane on November 3rd, Typhoon Kalmaegi (Tino) swept across Cebu, leaving a trail of devastation. Many people died and lost everything. You surely saw the images on television. Much of it was reminiscent of Super Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban in 2013, which also struck in November, destroying Tacloban and killing thousands. In Cebu alone, over 200 people died. The images from Cebu were still circulating in all the media when, in the early morning of November 8th, Super Typhoon Funf-wong (Uwan) was announced. Ferry and air traffic were suspended, and everyone living near the coast was forcibly evacuated. In our senior citizens' hall alone, over 300 people were housed, and more than 30 were still in the clinic.

I've copied a few pictures that clearly show the size of the typhoon, especially compared to Haiyan in 2013.

Many hands helped to ensure everything ran smoothly, assisting with cooking, fetching water, and setting up mattresses. With so many people, a lot had to be organized, especially since you never know how long a typhoon will last. The typhoon was so large that it covered the entire Philippines, with a diameter of 1800 km, and in all my years, I've never experienced a country-wide alert. With wind speeds exceeding 140 km/h and over 200 mm of rain, it was pretty intense. Fortunately, the evacuation—this time a forced evacuation—began early. The waves at sea were 3 meters high. In total, more than 1 million people were evacuated in the Philippines. Luckily, we had hardly any damage to the house. All the banana, papaya, and moringa trees on the farm had fallen over, but that wasn't so bad. The important thing was that everyone was safe, and there were no fatalities in our province.



As mentioned in the last letter, thanks to the support of the German Dentists' Relief Fund, with Dr. Klaus Sürmann and Dr. Klaus Winter, we were able to purchase additional solar batteries, thereby reducing our electricity bill once again. The installation was delayed because the installer was hospitalized with an aneurysm hemorrhage. Thankfully, he survived the serious procedure, and his first destination was Bugko.



Thanks to donations from the Moers-Rheinkamp parish, the Welfare Committee of the German Club Manila, and various individuals, we were able to purchase a rescue boat with a trailer, life jackets, and lifelines. We are now prepared for future floods and can assist in these emergencies. It was a long wish of mine as water levels during typhoons and Shearlines are rising dramatically.



And at the end of the year, we received some more good news. Our new X-ray machine has arrived. Like its predecessor, it's digital and was donated by Siemens Healthineers. We renovated the entire X-ray room. Our staff received extensive training to ensure correct operation. We are overjoyed to offer comprehensive diagnostics once again, including lab work, X-rays, and ultrasound. This not only saves patients from long journeys but also allows us to provide results quickly. Mr. Michael Schmermer from Siemens Healthineers will conduct the official handover next year.



As in the previous year, the second half was very eventful.

Once again, we say THANK YOU/SALAMAT for your continued support. Without you, we couldn't do this and help people. So much happens here in a year; I can't possibly mention and write it all. No two days are the same, and we are glad that you are by our side.

We need continued support to carry out our programs. The work isn't getting any easier, and we are grateful for the support we received from doctors and dentists this year. We hope that in 2026, many more compassionate professionals will come here to support our mission to help the poor. Let us pray for fewer natural disasters, which are often frightening, especially since typhoons are becoming both more frequent and more intense. In addition, there are many earthquakes, usually barely felt but capable of causing entire houses to collapse elsewhere. This year, we were somewhat spared significant damage, but next year could be a different story.

Nevertheless, we look forward to the coming new year with confidence and know you are by our side.

I wish you a blessed and merry Christmas and all the best for 2026!

Yours sincerely,

Sabine Korth

Malipayon nga Pasko (Merry Christmas) from Bugko!

Yours,

Sabine Korth

Salamat (thank you) from Bugko!



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