

Rehoboth®

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2010

REHOBOTH ECO-LEARNING FARM

A piece of once unproductive land has flourished into the RCHI Eco Learning Farm in just six months. In April 2010, RCHI staff, residents and community members finished the challenging task of digging a well on the learning farm after local contractors had trouble drilling. Access to an independent water supply allowed RCHI to get a head start on planting vegetable seedlings weeks before rainy season began. Resident teams chose three main vegetables to cultivate in their planting areas. They were also encouraged to intercrop with additional vegetables, herbs, and flowers for plant diversity. The five teams' respective areas total 2500 square metres. Currently, over 25 different fruits and vegetables are growing. Produce is harvested for meals at least three times a week. Some of the most popular plants this season have been the fast climbing string beans and the big leafed okra. Ornamental giant sunflowers and bright cosmo flowers that attract butterflies are also favourites.



In their off time, residents are working to weed, water, and maintain the peaceful garden areas. It has also become a place for resident (and staff!) relaxation. Multiple hand-made bamboo huts, built by residents and placed throughout the gardens, serve as inviting places for tired residents to rest. The learning farm has been fruitful in presenting the residents with plant-based learning opportunities. Journal entries encourage the youth to reflect on their learning farm experiences. Residents have facilitated lessons on topics ranging from insect pest management, organic fertilizers, and vegetable nutrition facts. The Eco Learning Farm has provided multiple opportunities to facilitate youth development through various projects at RCHI. Some plans for the future include income generating projects, cooking demonstrations, a community outreach plant nursery and the construction of a possible learning centre. **Leah Ferreebe (U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer)**

MEET JENNIFER GARCIA

"I am the tutor of Rehoboth Children's Home, Inc. I'm 27 years old, married, live in Sta. Maria & graduated in 2003 from Tarlac College of Agriculture with a degree in Bachelor of Secondary Education, major in General Science. I took & passed the licensure examination for teachers in the Philippines last 2009. Right after graduation I taught in a private school for a few months then I applied as part-time tutor of Rehoboth & luckily was accepted. Since then, I have taught our residents from the beginners to high school & assist some college students with their academic subjects. Last February 2010, I was approved as full-time teacher & house parent at Rehoboth with responsibility for the REAP students too. I spend my full-time as a regular worker & family member with our residents. I stay at the boys' house to monitor and guide them daily, especially in doing their household chores before going to school. After school I teach our elementary residents & the Sta. Maria REAP students. We study reading, writing & other subjects, including completing their assignments. I also assist our high school and college residents (boys) with their homework & projects. I have just been elected as Vice President of Sta. Maria Parent Teacher Community Association (PTCA). Every Sunday morning I go to Pugo Church in Mapandan to attend Sunday worship & teach the children some Bible stories, spiritual songs & encourage them to remain in God's hand. In the afternoon I stay & tutor our REAP students from Mapandan. It's so happy & fulfilling working at Rehoboth, seeing changes & improvements in our residents is a great reward." **Jennifer O. Garcia**



NEW RESIDENTS

We have five new residents at Rehoboth who joined the family in the last couple of months. Two are nineteen year old lads who are both orphans and spent most of their lives in a closed Catholic institution with very little contact with life outside the compound. Last year they were admitted into a DSWD institution and were able to attend formal schooling. They both graduated from elementary school and took advantage of a Government scheme called Alternative Learning System (ALS) which allowed them to take some extra classes and an acceleration exam. One of the boys, passed so has been able to go straight to college where he is studying I.T. Unfortunately the other did not pass so has enrolled in first year high school but he is preparing to take an acceleration exam this year. The three other residents are all elementary level in Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 5.



GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

On April 24, 2010, all residents of Rehoboth went to different houses in our community. We planted 150 fruit trees for our neighbours. We also picked up over 32 bags of plastic. I was volunteering as a project leader for the Global Youth Service Day project. There was a lot of planning. I was responsible for surveying, organising, and planting in Purok 6. I also went to TCA with Ate Leah, Ermalyn and Jerome. We talked with the President Dr. Max P. Guillermo. He agreed to help us with the project. TCA supplied the trees and he talked at the seminar after the tree planting. I also talked. This was my first time to talk to many people. I am the one who planted many fruit trees such as mango, calamansi, atis, and suha. The fruit trees we planted will help our environment and also provide nutritious food to our rural community members. I feel happy because I was able to help my community members by giving them a gift of fruits. I impacted the community because I showed them I care about planting, cleaned the area and encouraged the youth by leading by example. I am happy and not really tired. This is my first time to volunteer. I like volunteering and I hope to be a leader again next year. **Roberto (1st Year College Student)**

REAP UPDATE

This year we have continued to expand our Rehoboth Educational Assistance Programme (REAP) which seeks to enable local youngsters to receive financial support to enable them to continue their studies. They all come from low income families who struggle to support their children's educational needs. This year we have accepted six new elementary students into the programme. Five of them live in and around our village so attend Sta. Maria Elementary School. During the week they attend tutorials with our residential children to support them in their studies. On Sundays they are encouraged to attend Sunday School and church and are invited to the various activities that are held at the Home. The other new student lives further away and we are keeping in regular touch with her family and school to monitor her progress. Our six REAP college students continue to do well at Tarlac College of Agriculture. Our five REAP students from Sitio Pugo all did well at school last year receiving various academic and good behaviour awards. Ariel graduated from elementary school and has been awarded a scholarship to study at Mayantoc High School.



EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS, SPORT & LEISURE TIME

March and April were very busy months for us at Rehoboth with the end of another school year. We celebrated the graduation of four elementary students with five special awards. We had ten high school graduates and three special awards. Eight of them are studying at college now. Charity & Maureen are studying Elementary Education; Hernie & Ma. Eliza are studying Accountancy; Cristelle, James Lee, Roberto & Shiena Joy are studying Agriculture. Ferdinand and Norwin will start a vocational course in welding, although Norwin has now joined our REAP programme so is living back at home now. Marianne was our only college graduate this year. She completed her two year Home Technology course and is now working in Manila. In April we all enjoyed our annual R&R which was spent at Labrador Beach this year in Pangasinan and we also participated in the Readlani Sports Fest which this year was held in Subic.

REHOBOTH FINANCES

Last year saw some challenging times financially – not only for Rehoboth itself but for many of our friends who faithfully support the work of Rehoboth. But the Lord is good to us and He saw us through the year. The expenditure for the UK charity RCHT during the year was about £53,000. The vast majority (97%) of our expenditure is directly for the home and REAP programme, only 3% is spent in administration and travel related costs. Of the money spent at the home almost half of it (48%) is spent directly on the children – for example paying for food, clothing and tuition fees. About another third is staff associated costs and the rest (17%) is the cost of the buildings etc.

Amy, the Director of the home, and her staff do a fantastic job in keeping down costs – while not putting the welfare of the children at risk. Unfortunately the biggest problem we have with budgeting is the changing currency exchange rate. In August 2009 it was at over P80/£, in May 2010 it had dropped to less than P65/£. These fluctuations make it very difficult to estimate how much income (in pounds) we need. Based on the August 2009 exchange rate we would have said about £52,500, but based on the May 2010 rate the need is over £64,500. Because of the worsening exchange rate and because our income so far this year has been lower than the same time period last year we are having to use some of our reserves. The Lord answered our prayers last year – He is more than able to do so this year.

Roger Hickling (Chairman of Finance Sub-Committee, RCHT)

UK NEWS

It is a joy to have the Rehoboth web-site (www.rehobothchildrenshomes.org) revamped and updated. We now have a Trustees Page and a charmingly evocative pod-cast from those who helped construct the garden well.

One of our sponsors has recently had a small book of poems published. It is a great encouragement that he has decided to give Rehoboth the proceeds from the sale of the book. The poems have blessed me and I would warmly recommend them especially for those who are going through hard times. The book costs £4:50 and may be obtained by emailing or telephoning us. (Details below).

Four of the children on the REAP programme in elementary school still need sponsors. Sponsorship entails praying for the child, communicating with him or her through email or letter and contributing £10 per month.

ATTENTION SPONSORS - Any envelope thicker than 5mm or larger than C5 is surcharged by Royal Mail. If in doubt please take the item to a post office.

We still need a Minutes Secretary for the six committee meetings per year. If you would be willing to consider this important work please get in touch.

It would assist us financially if more people could receive the Newsletter and Prayer Guide by email. The Prayer News goes out four times a year to over two hundred people by email only. We would be delighted to add you to the list if you would like to receive news more frequently than simply having this Newsletter twice a year.

In June I had my second cataract operation and a number of unrelated health checks resulting in my being given a clean bill of health. I am very grateful to God for this and for the timing which has meant that I have been able to make the arrangements for a visit to the Philippines in November. A friend who has supported the work, in various ways, from the very beginning is to accompany me.

I am currently endeavouring to make arrangements for meetings in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire for spring 2011 and for the Aberdeen area and Shetland in May/June. Please tell me if you know of anyone in these areas who would like to hear about Rehoboth. Philip Thompson would also be glad to hear of new opportunities for meetings in the West Country.

Connie Andrews (U.K. Representative)

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