

Badjao Bridge Annual Report 2018

Child Sponsorship Program

Quality education, nutritious meals, basic healthcare, and spiritual nurture through our Child Sponsorship Program remains to be our main initiative that aims to change the life of a child for less than a dollar a day.

In 2017, we helped 223 children. This year, we have supported 240 in this program.

As the school year started in June, we supplied our scholars with new school bags, notebooks, pencils or pens, crayons, uniforms, and more. For many, if not all, of these kids, buying these things would have been a great financial burden to their families that survive on just \$2 a day or so. The school uniform and educational supplies could cost at least \$30 or more. The kids were provided and were able to go to school through our Child Sponsorship Program.



Thanks to our sponsors, donors, and our local staff and volunteers who continue to help and co-labor with us in making a difference in the lives of these kids.

One of the children who benefit from the program them is Claire. As a little girl, she used to tag along her mother who was tasked to take her cousin to school. During those times, she had a secret wish that she, too, could study. But her parents could not afford it, so all she could do was just dream about it.



This young girl's prayer, however, was answered. Claire Kim Asamsa became a Badjao Bridge scholar. At the age of seven, she was finally able to go to school and she did well. From first to seventh grade, she is the top student in her class.

Now 14, Claire has maintained her academic standing. In 2016, she was inspired to see Lorna Cuham, one of our first two Badjao scholars to graduate, walk the stage in her graduation toga. It gave her hope and motivation that she, too, could finish college and one day become a teacher to help her Badjao community especially the children. She also wants to honor and help her family have a better life. She is thankful to her parents for the support despite financial difficulties. And of course, she is deeply grateful to her sponsors.

"Without them, I do not know if I could ever study at all. For this opportunity, I will give my best."

College Scholarships

Going to college could be a costly endeavor for most Filipinos even with average income, and what more for the less privileged Badjaos. Through the support of our partners and donors, we are able to provide an opportunity for them to go to college. In 2016, we had our first Badjao college graduates - Lorna and Madonna, who completed their Bachelors in Criminology degree. In 2017, we were also happy for another scholar, Carmel, who graduated in Accountancy with Academic Excellence.

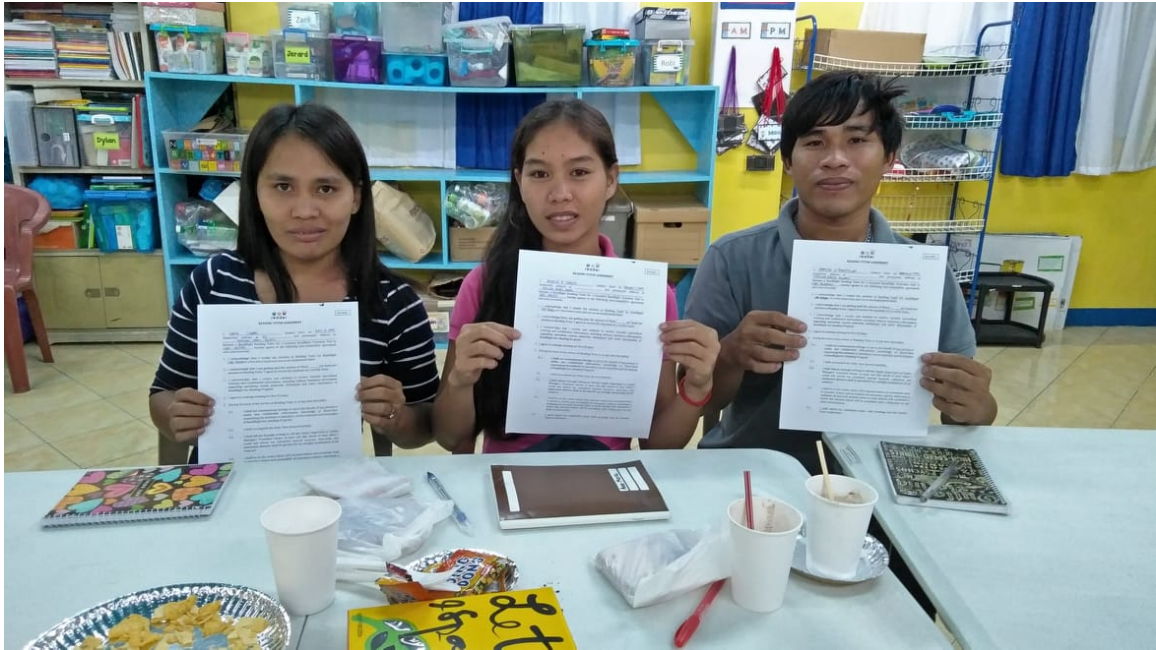
This year, we have five Badjao scholars in college - Mempe, Sabina, Elena, Ricky, and Carla. They have graduated from senior high school in April though not without overcoming many challenges. Mempe, 19, said he never thought he could make it. But with determination and with the support of Badjao Bridge, he did it. Carla graduated with high honors. She is now a Nursing student. She wants to become a nurse so she could help her community that suffers from health problems, malnutrition, poor hygiene, and bad sanitation.

Literacy

The lack of reading and comprehension is a pressing problem for many Filipino students, especially among poor communities. Many of our Badjao children, though some of them are already in elementary and high school, indeed struggle.

To better help them, we have sent our full-time staff Michelle, Marjun, and Lorna for Reading and Comprehension Enhancement (RaCE) Program through Instant Reader Program of ReadRight, Inc at Los Baños, Laguna conducted by Community Hope Alternatives, Inc., a non stock, non- profit organization that assists poor Filipinos by bringing various opportunities that can help them improve their living conditions.

The program certified and equipped our teachers with the skills they need to help our children have better reading and comprehension skills.



Preschool

We continued to provide daily preschool lessons for kids. Children received books, lesson materials, and a healthy meal each day. We finally started conducting our classes at our Lighthouse Learning Center. This year we have 28 children coming for our preschool.

Thanks to our teacher and two Badjao volunteers who help cook food for the kids and assist our teacher in translating to Badjao words some parts of the lessons that they may not understand. The volunteers also help manage the classroom and encourage children's participation in the class.

We also provide daily tutorials for our students who need more help in their studies. We are grateful to our volunteer teachers, leaders, and high school students who give their time every after school day to help our younger students improve their reading skills.



After-school tutorial program provides each child small group and individual attention to help with completion and comprehension of their school assignments

Church Partnership

While we continue to help our students in education, food, and health, we also feed them spiritually. The children listen to Bible stories on Saturdays while our high school students meet for fellowship and Bible study on Fridays.

Complimentary Intervention

Water, Basic Health Care, and Sanitation

With heavy hearts we report that another tragedy struck the community earlier this year. Three-year-old Jovert passed away due to complications after contracting a virus that swept through the tribe. At one point, more than 40 children were hospitalized at the overrun government hospital, all suffering from gastroenteritis and most were severely dehydrated. Our staff and volunteers quickly mobilized to purchase the prescribed medicine, which is not provided by the hospital.

Sadly, deaths among children we work with have become common enough that we've added a line item in our annual budget to help pay for funerals. This reality reminds us of the urgency to help this community.

Most kids we work with are malnourished, which weakens their immune system and easily cause them to fall sick. We aim to prevent that by giving them good nutrition. We've been providing school lunches for years now and have started a breakfast program this year using fortified meal packs from [Kids Against Hunger](#). Thanks to our local volunteers who came and helped packed those meals that were shipped to the Philippines. Each volunteer donated 90 minutes of his time and \$20, which was enough to feed about 150 kids!

Thanks also to our surprise donor who covered the costs for our four new toilets and septic tanks in our new property. We aim to build more, as these toilets are a big help in improving sanitation in the community.

Lighthouse Learning Center and Living Community

This year we finally completed the construction of Lighthouse Learning Center after about five years of prayers, hard work, and collaboration. This multi-purpose facility serves as a preschool, tutorial center with bathrooms and kitchen for our students' meals, and emergency shelter for vulnerable children.

This center, the strongest typhoon shelter available to sea-dwelling families, could protect up to 30 families with small children. It also provides families with access to safe water and sanitation through a rainwater filtration system and access to toilets.



While completing this structure, we were also able to use some of our funds to construct a Living Community, on land, for a second Badjao tribe on a different island. It opened another door for us to help more Badjao children through our Child Sponsorship Program. This new property has a clean water source, is walking distance to the elementary school, and is accessible to a local town where families can sell their limited catch of fish.

Volunteer Trips

A team of four volunteers (DeAnna, Kandi, Aisea, and Christian) from the US visited the community in March with Executive Director Dan Johanson to help assist and set up our learning center, conduct proper hygiene sessions with the kids (how to wash hands, brush teeth, etc), and help in some work at the Lighthouse Learning Center together with our staff, volunteers, and the Badjao community chief.

Board Members

U.S. Board

Rose Abuda

Ron Camaisa
Coleen Dalton
Wency dela Vina
Kim Huggett (Chairman)
Jing Ocampo, Jan-Sept
Suzanne Rothi
Carolyn Sparks
Jan Tsuchiya Treasurer
Nadia Wirolubowich

The Philippines Board

Jelon Billion, Jan-April
Wency dela Vina
Jonar Dorado (Treasurer)
Dan Johanson (Chairman)
Jing Ocampo
Bobot Migraso
Marie Demafelis

Plans for 2018

- Continued expansion, provision, and oversight of our Child Sponsorship Program. We will begin efforts to reach our third tribal area which experiences even greater levels of impoverishment than our current locations. Our goal is to sponsor over 250 children this year!
- Work in close partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Hayward, which has pledged to help raise funds over the next 5 years for our program expansion.
- Completion of two new bathrooms with septic systems and a new tutorial & meal preparation space for our community in Palawan.

– In partnership with new volunteers, we will restart of our livelihood efforts to sell pearl products made by Badjao families.

– To keep up with our expansion efforts, we will be hiring a new in-country Executive Director and and training three new Program Facilitators.