

Badjao Bridge Annual Report 2019

Programs

Child Sponsorship Program

It doesn't cost much to make a difference in someone's life. For less than a dollar a day, we help provide quality education, nutritious meals, basic healthcare, and spiritual nurture through our Child Sponsorship Program. Through the years, we have seen how children from these less-privileged communities have benefited from this initiative. For that, we continue to do it as our main thrust.

In 2018, we helped 240 children. This year, 274 kids availed of this program. They have received educational supplies when the school year began in June - school bags, notebooks, pencils or pens, crayons, uniforms, and more.

As prices of these goods among other things continue to increase, it's getting more costly and hard for Badjao parents, who barely make only \$2 to \$5 a day, to provide these things for their kids. The school uniform and educational supplies could cost at least \$30 or more per child. This sponsorship takes off a huge burden on their shoulders.

Thanks to our sponsors, donors, and local staff and volunteers for helping us continue this program.

One of the senior high school students who is grateful for the help is Selma. She is from the second Badjao community that we are helping out in another island. Three years ago, she availed of our scholarship. Now, she is going to be our first high school graduate and soon the first in the community to go to college in 2020.



Selma and her younger brother are single-handedly raised by their mother who solely depends on her income from selling pearls - a job that does not always mean a steady income. Her brother is out of school because he is very sickly. The prospect of having a better life for her and her family through education gives Selma hope and something to work on and look forward to.

"I want to thank my sponsors and the Badjao Bridge for the help. The educational supplies and daily allowance that you provide help a lot," she said.

College Scholarships

This year has given us a lot of things to be proud of and to celebrate.

Carmel, our first Badjao Accounting graduate didn't just finish her studies. She was also one of the 1,699 (out of 10,319) who passed the Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination. What a great accomplishment! Indeed, together, we continue to dream and empower this community.

She said she didn't reach this far without difficulties but her faith in God, her commitment to her studies, and our support together with the others put her where she is now. A promising future awaits to this young lady!

This year, we have four college scholars. Carla, now on her second year as a Nursing student, is one of them.

At their capping, badge-pinning, and candle lighting ceremony, she said, *"I am truly thankful. Through Badjao Bridge I have reached level 2 and I'm given the chance to pursue my passion. I'm learning a lot about health and finding so much joy in being able to care for the sick through my hands-on work exposure in the hospital."*



These four students are getting closer to their educational goals in life. It is our hope that we would be able to continue to guide them and provide their needs, and ultimately, see their dreams fulfilled and lives changed in ways that was not possible before if they were not given the chance.

College education is very costly even for other Filipino families with an average income. For the Badjaos, this endeavor is a big leap of faith. We are thankful to show them that with our scholars' hard work and our donors and partners' support, nothing is impossible.

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 fulltime 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

This is a community effort helping children with difficulty in writing and reading. We continue to provide daily preschool lessons for kids with books, lesson materials, and a healthy meal each day at our Lighthouse Learning Center.

While there are many who come and go at different times, we have 13 pupils who are faithfully active in attending classes everyday, Monday to Friday, 5-7pm, facilitated by our staff together with our selected high school and college scholars.

Thanks to our teachers and Badjao volunteers who not only help in the tutorials but also in preparing the meals for the kids to enjoy after the teaching session. They also help manage the classroom and encourage children's participation in the class.



Church Partnership

While we address their needs for education, food, healthcare, and others, we also help them in their spiritual lives. We have fellowship program for our elementary, high school, and college scholars together with our staff. They meet on Fridays and Saturdays for Bible stories (kids) and Bible studies (high school and college).

We also sent our staff, volunteers, and community leaders for a three-day seminar called D4D (Discipleship for Development) Foundation Workshop - a whole-life ministry approach focused on a biblical understanding of poverty and development, empowering communities to develop a vision, and giving them skills to help them solve their problems. It was facilitated by a team from a partner organization called Community Help Alternatives Inc.



Complimentary Intervention

Water, Basic Health Care, and Sanitation

- Safe water system and tank installed to benefit more than 700 people.
- Rosela was a 9-year old girl who had not yet been sponsored but was getting our help through our Louella's Fund (a fund in honor of a child who perished last year). During a site visit, we discovered that Rosela had been diagnosed with rheumatic heart fever which quickly progressed into acute heart failure. We immediately got her admitted in the local hospital but sadly it was too late – her condition quickly deteriorated and she died the next day.

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

Our Lighthouse Learning Center continue to provide us a place to meet and serve our scholars and community. This is home for the Badjao kids who come to study and learn from their teachers and as well as a place to play and have fun together.

This multi-purpose facility serves as a pre-school, tutorial center with clean bathrooms and kitchen for our students' meals, and as an emergency shelter for vulnerable children. It also provides families with access to safe water and sanitation through a rainwater filtration system and access to toilets.

To involve the mothers of our scholars in our activities, we assigned them to take turns in cooking for their children's meals - Mondays to Fridays. We feed



more than 80 children each day. Salute to our staff, volunteers, and mothers who work in the kitchen to ensure our scholars have food to eat.

Board Members

U.S. Board

Rose Abuda
Wency dela Vina
Kim Huggett (Chairman)
Joseph Lee (Treasurer)
Vickie Panko
Suzanne Rothi
Jan Tsuchiya

The Philippines Board

Kevin Desabelle
Wency dela Vina
Jonar Dorado (Treasurer)
Dan Johanson (Chairman)
Jing Ocampo

Bobot Migraso
Marie Demafelis

Plans for 2020

- 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.