



MUSTARD SEED DISCIPLESHIP VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

ACTION International Ministries, Philippines

January 9, 2010

Prayer Update: January 4 to January 17, 2010

It was back to work on Monday the 4th. All staff returned, were fine and had had a good break.

Our first week was spent in staff and program evaluations. It went really well. I was able to meet with each department and with each staff member individually. We see where we can tweak and we see what our strengths are.

PRAY: For God's direction and wisdom as we apply what we have learned from our meetings.

Also during the first week, four of our students were placed in an On The Job Training (OJT) position. Our sewing assistant instructor found two shops in our town to take our four girls, two at each place. One makes sports uniforms for teams, flags and other sportswear. The second shop focuses on formal wear, slacks, suits and barongs. All four of our students are good seamstresses so we believe that they will do well.

PRAY: that our students will improve their abilities while on OJT for the next 6 months and will learn many new skills.

Our second week began our 6 weeks of recruitment for the next group. Before Christmas we handed out over 300 copies of our brochure and application forms. Now we wait. During our first week, two young women came to apply. It is always interesting to see just who will come.

We have 10 spots to fill. Applications close on February 18. We then visit all the applicants to visit their homes and talk with their pastors and families. After all this is done, we will make our decision.

PRAY: for those who will fill the ten spots. We will be praying throughout this term the pray in Colossians 1: 9-12 for each of our students. We believe that God will answer this prayer for each one.

My plan for this new year is to not answer the phone before 9 am or after 8 pm. Also, I want to take one morning a week for ME. So far, my plan isn't working. There is always an errand to run, a report to write, someone to meet with.

PRAY: that I will follow through with this!

PRAISE: I am sleeping a good 7 hours each night!!

Last week I visited a dermatologist as I have concerns about two areas on my arms. She wants to rule out melanoma on one and basal cell skin cancer on the other, so I also visited a plastic surgeon who will do the harvesting of the biopsies.

PRAY: that all will be covered by the insurance, and that the tests will show that they are not cancer.

Thank you so much for all the cards and warm wishes over the Christmas season. My house is still decorated with them! Thank you for your continued prayers for MS and for myself!

Prayer Update: December 14 to 18, 2009

Our students are gone, the dorm was quiet, the clean up was done. Can it be that we are done? Yes, graduation was a great time. The fashion show was beautiful. We celebrated what the Lord had done in the lives of the students with families and church mates of the girls. Then they were gone.

This week we began looking for On The Job Training positions for our girls.

We as a staff also began the process of program evaluation and thoughts for Batch 5.

Getting ready for Christmas, we took cakes and brownies to those who have supported what we do here at Mustard Seed; the bank, our fish lady, vegetable lady, grocery lady, rice lady, our landlady Ate Dhoree, the post office and a few others. To say thank you for your help over the last months. PRAISE: for those who take care of us at the market and in town.

I took a small gift for all the traffic enforcers of the town, 39 in all, who direct traffic on a daily basis and take lots of grief from drivers and pedestrians while they do it. A potholder, a small Tagalog booklet of Daily Bread Christmas devotions and candy, wrapped with a ribbon. Just to say thank you and God bless.

PRAY: for these men and women who serve the town that they will take their jobs seriously and serve honorably.

Prayer Update: December 21 to Jan 2

OUR BREAK!!! Hurray!

The missionaries here gathered for supper on Christmas Day. Swedish meatballs, chicken and roasted duck (raised here at 2nd Mile!!). A fun day together.

Then, we got ready for New Year's Eve. I hosted again supper at my house for all who are on campus for New Year's Eve. This year it was 25. We had a nice time together. After supper, we went outside and set off LOTS of fireworks. This is my favorite thing to do!!! Our neighbors also put on a show about the same time. All were fun and beautiful. I bought 60 long sparklers which the kids here had a good time lighting and enjoying. I was in bed by 10 PM, along with my three cats, who went through all the noise without a twitch of whiskers.

January 1 to 3 I could finally put my feet up!!!

We are back to work on Jan 4. We will be doing our staff evaluations and preparation for Recruitment for Batch 5, which begins on January 12.

Prayer Update: December 1 to December 27, 2009

WE DID IT!

Our Batch 4 is graduated and gone! A mix of tears and happiness filled the last two weeks of our students being with us.

EVALUATION WEEK: November 30 to December 4 found our students taking their final exams. The week went well and all passed, and passed well. We were pleased with the progress that the students made. This term almost all their marks were 90% and above. A WOW for sure.

Thursday fun nite: Thursday is fun nite and since all exams were completed by Thursday nite, we gave the staff and students a treat. We had a Spa Night at the dorm! One of the Working Hands staff ladies has trained in massage and spa treatments and agreed to bring some of her fellow students to the dorm and give the students foot spas, hand spas, hair spas and full body massages. It was a fun nite for all, and a first for everybody! A nice way to end the term.

Friday: The girls took marks home to family and church, all excited with the results!

GRADUATION WEEK:

The next week was full of activities for staff and students, finishing with Graduation Day on Dec. 12. But before the girls received their certificates, the enemy tried to get his last kicks in.

Friday, Dec 4: I came home from the dorm and went right to bed. I had a fever and severe chills. I was in bed until Tuesday morning. Saturday I suffered from diarrhea and spent most of the day in bed and bathroom. PRAISE: that I wasn't vomiting as well!

Tuesday, Dec 8: We were to go on an outing to an Eco-Farm near to us. But we found out at the last minute that the town was celebrating Fiesta. It would have been crowded and hard to get there, so the students and dorm staff helped me with errands for grad that I wasn't able to do over the weekend. Then we took the girls shopping for blouses for grad. This was really fun! PRAISE: we completed all on my list and the girls chose lovely blouses to wear. PRAISE TOO: that my energy lasted for the day of activity. We were also able to go out for lunch.

Wednesday: This was our Student Banquet. We chose a restaurant in Tagaytay for supper. The staff did a wonderful job serving our rowdy group. The food was great and the fellowship was great too. We took some group photos before we left the restaurant.

Thursday: One of the dorm staff and one of the students began to feel sick!! They went on the Magic Water that I drank over the weekend (apple cider vinegar, honey and water) and were well by Saturday. PRAISE: that all of us were feeling fine by grad!!

Friday: We decorated the WH chapel for grad. One job we were dreading was the washing of 150 plastic chairs. When we arrived at the venue, the WH students were cleaning the chairs. I promised the guys that I would buy them donuts to thank them for their help. I did the next week.

GRADUATION DAY:

It rained the evening and night before grad. We were a bit concerned about this, but when I awoke on Sat morning, the sky was clearing and the rain had left. Things dried out well for the ceremony.

I awoke with a back spasm but muddled through the morning.

We were expecting 148 people to attend but only 72 arrived. We didn't let this dampen our day.

We started a bit late as our grad speaker was late in arriving to the campus. Oh well.

We celebrated the LORD and His faithfulness and goodness over the last 11 months. And the day finished well.

The student we were so concerned about, Princess, finished well too. In Community Living, her past scores have been in the low 70%. For term 4 she received 94%. She definitely opened her heart and life to the LORD to allow Him to work.

PRAISE: all the students finished well!

PRAISE: 4 of the 5 students will start an OJT placement on January 4, and the fifth student is working already in a family home business located at her church. We are quite happy.

ON TO CHRISTMAS:

The last two weeks have been busy with preparation for Christmas.

The ACTION Christmas party was held on Saturday Dec 19. A good day had by all!

Our campus opened the gate on Tuesday Dec 22 for the kids to come in and carol. We had 63 show up in one hour! It was a fun time.

Christmas day the missionaries on campus gathered for a day of fun, worship and eating. It was our annual Christmas day gathering.

And now....

I'm recovering for all the fun and excitement! I look forward to this week to relax and enjoy some time off! New Year's Eve there is another gathering here on campus, with lots of fireworks!!!

Thank you so very much for your faithful prayer support and encouragement over the last year. We head into 2010, with recruitment happening very soon for Batch 5. We pray that your Christmas celebration was wonderful and we ask for God's blessings to continue in 2010!!

Blessings,

Barbara Burchert
Program Director, Mustard Seed

If you would like to give you can make checks payable to Action International Ministries, P. O. Box 398 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0398 or 3015 A 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta T2E 7T1, Canada. Note that your check is for support of Barbara Burchert.