



MUSTARD SEED DISCIPLESHIP VOCATIONAL PROGRAM
ACTION International Ministries, Philippines

June 29, 2010

Prayer Update

Greetings to you!

It is the eve of the Inauguration of the new president of the Philippines, Mr. Noynoy Aquino. Yellow banners, ribbon, etc, which is his campaign colour, are everywhere. It will be an exciting day for the country

What a difference two weeks make! In my last letter to you, we were waiting for rain. Now, we are getting it. The southern monsoons began not long after I wrote to you. Gardens are again green and the grass needs cutting more often. Unfortunately, the temperature remains the same even with the rains, in the high 90's.

Since my last letter the 2010-11 school year has begun here in the Philippines. Jeeps and busses are full again of students, decked out in school uniforms, traveling to and from their classrooms. This is always a great time of the year for me. New books, new back packs, new pencils and crayons. And with them, new hopes of what the school year will bring. Our prayer is that more children will be able to complete the year in school; it's not always possible.

First Evaluation Week:

Last week we finished our Evaluation Week for Term 1. We are pleased to report that all 10 students passed their exams and have moved on into Term 2. This is the first Batch since Batch 1 that this has happened. This is thrilling for us! It was a joy for me to hand out the report cards on Friday.

PRAISE: That the students finished well their first Term. Thank you for praying.

Recovery:

Three weeks ago our social worker, Jane, underwent surgery for ovarian cysts. The operation was successful, removing three cysts. All three were found to be benign! She will be away from Mustard Seed until July 12.

PRAY: continue to pray for her complete recovery from the surgery.

PRAISE: that the operation was successful.

Guests at Mustard Seed:

We had two young ladies from Minnesota stay at Mustard Seed for the week. Both are the ages of our students so we felt that the fit was a good one. Lori and Jacki had a great week with our students, leading devotions, drilling math facts, making two Filipino sweets – Maha mais and Biko – during the livelihood class, and sharing about their lives in Minnesota, with popcorn, apple cider and sugar cookies. The Mustard Seed girls had a terrific time with both of them. Many tears were shed as they left the dorm last Friday.

PRAISE: that our students were able to have this opportunity

PRAY: for Lori and Jacki as they begin a new ministry this week.

MS Budget for 2010:

I would like to share with you our need in this area for this year. Our budget need for this year is \$37000. We are very grateful and blessed for the funds that have come in. But we are still short \$20000. It does seem like a huge amount, but if 40 people each gave a gift of \$500 we would meet our goal for 2010. May I ask you to prayfully participating in helping us meet our budget needs. It is through your partnership with us that we can train our students both in the word of God and in a vocational skill. Thank you so very much.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!

For your support, concern, prayers, encouragement. You are greatly appreciated! Our students know that they can attend Mustard Seed because of the many people who are helping with this ministry.

Until the next note, God bless you!

Prayer Update: June 21, 2010

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First Evaluation Week: Our students begin their evaluation week for term 1 today. Students are nervous, not knowing what will happen, what the exams are like. We know that they will do well. Grades are given out on Friday at lunch.

PRAY: That the students will review well and do well on all exams.

Concerns: Three weeks ago it was reported to us that one of our students was seen cheating on some of her exams. Not just once, but many times. After investigating the claims we met with the student and shared with her what we had learned. She flatly denied that she was cheating. One report was that she had a piece of paper on her lap while she was taking a weekly exam in the discipleship class. Her explanation was that she was studying for the sewing quiz while taking the discipleship quiz. Hmm, after all my years of teaching, I felt that this was a very creative excuse. She had many more to explain what the other students really saw. We turned the problem over to her pastor. We said that we could continue to counsel her.

A week ago last Friday, I was giving the weekly time math facts quiz in my class. I noticed that this student was finishing her quiz in record time. The reason was that she was copying the answers from the paper of the student sitting across from her. We met after lunch and she told us that she was cheating because she had a very bad stomach ache.

PRAY: That this student will take her studies seriously and not cheat. I have met again with the pastor and his wife. They will be speaking with the student and the student's family. She was told that if it happened again she would be dismissed from the program. She does need prayer.

Health Update: Amelia, our student with TB, had her first checkup last week. According to the doctor, things are going well. She had been given a different medication for the maintenance stage of the illness, and she is feeling better these days. Thank you for praying for her.

PRAISE: That Amelia's healing will continue

Happy, Happy Birthday! A first birthday here in the Philippines is a very BIG thing. Yesterday was the first birthday of the daughter of one of our students from Batch 4. She left the program at the end of the first month; her daughter was born 5 months later. Georgia Ann celebrated with many, many from her church, her first birthday. It was a fun time!

This week is the 3rd birthday of Miles, the daughter of our former student Gigi, who is living near the dorm and interacting with our students. I was present for the birth of this lovely little girl. I can't believe how big she is, already talking about going to school next year (nursery).

Turning Over The Shepherd's Staff: Over the last two months we have been praying and discussing the choosing of a new Field Director for ACTION Philippines. The candidate was approved by the ACTION Philippines board this last week and he will be installed on July 16 at our next team meeting. Our new Field Director is Mike Gingerich. He has been with our field since 1999. He is married and has four children in high school and college. I look forward to serving with him as leader.

Leaving the position is Jeff Anderson. He will concentrate now only on directing the Street Impact Team, working with street families and kids. Jeff came into the position the same year that I arrived in the Philippines, 1998. It has been an honor for me to serve under his leadership over the past 12 years.

In reading back over this note to you, I realized that this is pretty much a usual week for MS. Something is always happening.

I continue to thank you for your prayers for us. Without them, it would so much more difficult.

Until the next note, God bless you!

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.