

April 2022 News Sheet

Life is opening up in Manila this month

The government has lowered the COVID risk rating for Manila which has enabled some activities to re-start after a gap of over 2 years. The staff have been magnificent even moving out of their own homes to stay with the children during lockdown and improvising and innovating with new ways to keep education going.

Now, the out of school organised Saturday morning activities are restarting, although just for the child residents at Mango House to start with. The photos show the simple party games that everyone loves. As well as these games there are also opportunities to learn to play musical instruments and practice sports games. In the Philippines, as ever, it's all about basketball



Now it's also possible to bring in outsiders to help with the spiritual life of the students as well. Pastor Vincent from the Door of Faith Church in Payatas has re-started weekly services at Mango House every Sunday at 3pm and Choi one of the staff at Mango provides guitar support for live music. We are playing it safe for now so only 5 helpers from the church are allowed and even though the service is very well ventilated as it happens in the open area beneath Mango House itself, local guidance still suggests the use of facemasks. For the young children of Cashew School, a twice monthly online service continues; a successful initiative started last year during Lockdown.

Another important development is that our Social Workers are now able to go out and physically visit the homes of the older Grapevine students. Some of these live in barrio slum areas where online communication is difficult because of the lack of good Wi-Fi coverage so it's important and exciting to re-establish regular visits to help iron out any problems that these desperately poor families face. The heroic efforts to keep in contact through Zoom and through old phones and tablets have been important and successful, but nothing can replace the value of face-to-face visits. The whole of the Philippines is still waiting for normal schooling to restart. The classrooms have been closed longer than almost anywhere in the world. Everyone is waiting to see if there will be changes with the Presidential elections due in a couple of months.

**Changing young lives, one at a time.
Caring and educating vulnerable children in the Philippines.**

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