

BLESSINGS

2nd Quarter 2011

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF OPERATION BLESSING FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC.

Asia



OPERATION BLESSING@15

LOVE AND COMPASSION PREVAIL

Because We Care



One of my memorable outreaches: an Operation Blessing medical mission in China with volunteer Filipino doctors.

OPERATION BLESSING AT 15

LOVE AND COMPASSION PREVAIL

by **Kim April Pascual, M.D.**

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Operation Blessing Foundation Philippines

My journey in Operation Blessing began in 1995 when I joined Operation Blessing International (OBI) on a medical mission in the Philippines. During the last quarter of that year, I joined OBI's outreach in Vietnam. That was where I heard God's calling that I will go and volunteer in this ministry.

“Even after more than a decade of serving, one of the things that have remained unchanged is Operation Blessing's love and care for our beneficiaries and volunteers.”

On May 1996, Operation Blessing Foundation Philippines was officially established. It was literally unknown. Introducing it to churches, organizations and government units took a lot of hard work. It was an uphill struggle because everything was done from scratch. It was during that year when I regularly volunteered for OB and helped prepare

for OBI's Flying Hospital Medical Mission here in the country.

A year later, I became OB's full-time director of medical missions. We started giving help to 5,000 families in Payatas, Quezon City, searched for malnourished kids and held pediatric clinics. It was also the time when OB's feeding program in Payatas started. Later on, OB held a one-day medical mission in Talim Island

in Binangonan, Rizal, and then a weeklong medical mission in Davao Oriental. And the rest, as they say,

is history.

By the grace of God, Operation Blessing in the Philippines is now on its 15th year. What began as a simple healthcare and feeding program to children in Payatas stemmed into different humanitarian efforts that cater to the different needs of indigent families all over the country.

The past 15 years had been a whirlwind of unforgettable memories. I experienced the foreboding threats of terrorists and rebel groups, the pressure of deploying teams in disaster-stricken areas, the helplessness to comfort people because of language barriers, and the funny anecdotes during missions. But in all that, I saw that even in tragic situations, the joy of the Lord still abounds. And it was God who was in full control of everything that happened during those 15 years of sweet grace. All glory and honor belong to Him alone! We are excited to see where He will take us from here.

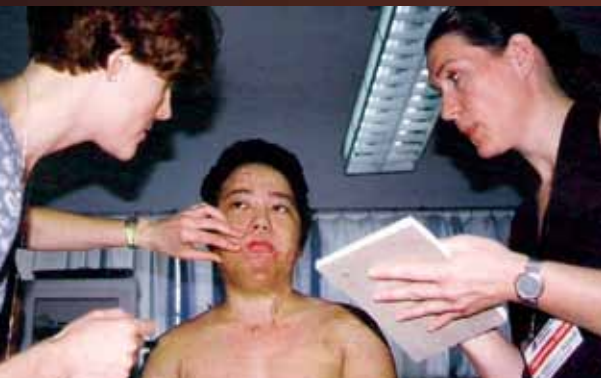
God has used my experiences in Operation Blessing to change my life. I used to be a very worldly person, but He allowed me to meet people who changed me and my perspectives. I learned to be selfless. My faith in God started to grow. It drove me to be more desperate for God so that others will also be desperate for Him. He stirred in my heart the passion for the lost.

Now, I'm thinking of how I can impart to people the beautiful life in God even in the midst of hopelessness. After all, He made me see the beauty of the world in the midst of tragedies. I believe one can always choose to see beauty in bad times because God will strengthen you.

Even after more than a decade of serving, one of the things that have remained unchanged is Operation Blessing's love and care for our beneficiaries and volunteers. OB loves taking care of them and showing them how special they are—just the way the Father sees and loves them.

May God continue to fan the flame of compassion in YOUR heart, our dear OB partner. Just like the clasped hands enclosed in a heart in our logo, let us join hands in helping each other rise up against the perils of this world, and let the love of God bind us together in perfect unity.

MILESTONES THROUGH THE YEARS



1996 • Operation Blessing Foundation Philippines was incorporated, becoming the humanitarian arm of the Christian Broadcasting Network Asia.

1997 • Operation Ozone provided reconstructive surgeries for survivors of the Ozone Disco fire tragedy. OB began its first feeding program for malnourished kids of scavenger families in the Payatas. This gave birth to the Bless-a-Child program and various community transformation projects. OB launched its first medical missions in the city (Payatas), the provinces (Talim Island, Rizal), and overseas (Fujian, China).

1998 • OB Philippines lent its hand in putting up Operation Blessing in Indonesia.

LOOKING BACK

Champions of Blessing

We asked two of OB's faithful servants on how compassion all began.



Tatay Nanding has seen Operation Blessing grow beautifully to what it is now.

Tatay Nanding Salivio

Tatay Nanding, a long-time OB warehousing staff, has witnessed it all—from OB's humble beginnings in 1996 to today's extensive outreaches.

What do you remember most of OB's early years?

'Yung pagpunta ko sa isang lugar na wala akong kakilala habang dala-dala ko ang mga mahahalagang gamit ng OB na kailangan kong ingatan at pangalagaan. Hindi pa uso ang cellphone at computer noon, kaya lahat ng bagay na ginagawa ko ay manu-mano.

Any unforgettable OB experience?

'Yung na-stranded kami ng volunteer

nurse papunta sa isang medical mission sa Palawan. Nabalawah 'yung sinasakyan namin at muntikan pang bumaligtad. Naglakad kami sa gitna ng putik at ulan. 'Yun pala ay hindi na rin puwedeng daanan 'yung lugar dahil may landslides na rin. Kahit gabi na, naglakas loob kaming tumawid ng dagat sa isang maliit na bangka. Awa naman ng Diyos at nakarating kami ng matiwasay sa lugar.

What didn't change in OB after 15 years?

Hindi nagbago sa OB 'yung calling nito na maging daan sa expansion ng Kingdom ni Lord. Hindi rin nagbago ang passion ng OB na tumulong sa ating mga kababayan sa abot ng ating makakaya.

How did Operation Blessing change your life?

Nakita ko ang kamay ng Panginoon sa lahat ng bagay. Ninais ko rin na paglingkuran Siya ng buong puso sa pamamagitan ng pagtulong sa aking kapwa. Nabago ng OB ang paraan ng pagtulong ko sa iba.

Doc Nancy Diaz

A hardworking volunteer since OB's inception, Doc Nancy never tires of sharing her heart of service to the needy.

What didn't change in OB after 15 years?

Kailangan may prayer time bago magsimula ang misyon. Mas matindi pa noon, very early in the morning. Talagang 'yun ang hindi nawala. Kailangan 'yun.

Any memorable experience with patients?

Sa Maguindanao medical mission noong 1998, 'yung mga walang gamot,

may instant healing. Mga Muslim ito. Grabe, ang ganda. Mga bedridden, 'di nakakalakad for many years, tapos nakalakad!

What made Operation Blessing last this long?

Nagtagal ang OB because of the grace from God. Talagang it's the Almighty God's power ang nag-sustain dyan, kasi alam ng Lord na ang ginagawa ng OB is to reach out to people, and then 'yung goal natin is also the will of God.

What is OB's impact to your life?

Nakikita ko 'yung miracles, nakikita ko 'yung grabe ang blessing sa mga tao, at nakita ko kung paano nagkakaroon ng community transformation. Ang ganda. Kami 'yung nag-blees sa mga tao, pero in the end, the volunteers are more blessed.



Doc Nancy has traveled with OB to distant places in the Philippines to serve with compassion.

Be part of something life-changing when you volunteer your time and talent to Operation Blessing. Go to www.obphil.com now and fill out the online volunteer form.



- 1999 • OB helped in medical missions in Beijing and flood-stricken Anhui province, leading to CBN's humanitarian ministry in China.
- Operation Blessing held its first disaster relief mission in typhoon-battered Catanduanes.

- 2000 • OB Philippines assisted OB Thailand in launching their first medical outreaches.
- OB's first water well was dedicated in Agusan del Sur. As of May 2011, more than 700 Living Water wells were installed in needy communities.

- 2001 • The Back-to-School program began in Payatas with 15 scholars. Now, this program has already benefited 400 kids.

BLESS-A-CHILD

Enrico is All Grown Up

OB's legacy of improving lives of children is alive and well in Enrico.



Benedicta, Enrico and former OB coordinator Mely Dizon reminisce OB's beginnings in Payatas.

Enrico belongs to the first batch of Operation Blessing's Bless-a-Child program in 1996. He was a skinny three-year-old back then. He suffered from chronic malnutrition, and her mother Benedicta was desperate to find a solution.

Good thing OB came just in time with the Bless-a-Child program. Not only was he fed with nutritious meals to correct his condition, but he was also regularly checked up by OB volunteer doctors.

"There are no traces that Enrico suffered malnutrition many years ago. God is really good!" said Mely Dizon, former OB coordinator in Payatas.

"I was so young then and I couldn't remember anything, but now that I'm grown up, let me say my heartfelt thanks to OB for taking good care of me!" said Enrico, now 18.

He stopped going to school when his father died three years ago, but he found a reason to pursue his studies when OB paid him a surprise visit.

"OB is a living testimony of God's goodness here in Payatas. I promise to finish school. I don't want to waste OB's effort in my life 15 years ago," Enrico said full of determination.



BUSINESS SUCCESS

Sewing Her Way Out of Poverty

Thanks to trade skills OB taught her, Lerma is now confident of the future.

Faced with hardships, Lerma and her husband struggled to support their nine children. But that changed when Operation Blessing came to their barangay in 2008 with the Mobile Out-of-School Training (MOST) program.

"Taking the dressmaking course helped us a lot!" Lerma said. Just a few months after the training, she availed of a small business loan, bought her own sewing machine and began making clothes.

"My business grew and grew! Sometimes I even hire two more dressmakers to help me make more clothes," she said proudly.

"Now, I am teaching one of my daughters to sew, and we have plans to start a family business. I now have more income, and my children have better lives."

Lerma's children now help out in her small business, and together, they sell dresses, blouses, skirts and handbags in their community.

"I am so thankful to the Lord for using Operation Blessing as a way to end poverty in my family!" Lerma said gratefully. "God bless you more OB!"



2002-2003 • OB's received two consecutive "NGO of the Year for Peace Efforts" awards from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (and two more in 2007 and 2008).

2004 • A Filipino team flew to war-torn Afghanistan to conduct medical missions, serving 2,800 locals.

2005 • The first Mobile Out-of-School Training classes were held in Payatas. The first batch took courses in cosmetology, dressmaking, practical electricity, and refrigeration and air-conditioning repair.

2006 • Massive disaster relief missions helped thousands of Bicolano families affected by typhoons Mileny and Reming.

LIVING WATER

How Precious is an OB Well?

Water can spell life or death, as one mother discovers.



A bittersweet smile crossed Nora's face as she tried the clean water coming out of the new Operation Blessing well in their village. She understands how precious this well is and how it can save lives.

Nora, a Dumagat mother, lost three of her children to severe diarrhea. She and her husband blamed their poverty for these deaths. They couldn't afford to bring their children to a doctor.

In their barangay high up in the Sierra Madre, people fetch water from a stream. They would dig a hole close to the stream and scoop the water that trickled into the hole. This would be their drinking water.

"We didn't have any other source," Nora said. "It's not only my family who suffered death because of diarrhea."

When Nora heard that OB is going to drill a well in their place, her heart was gladdened. She knew this well will finally give life to their community.

"It's hard to express how much this well means to us," she says. "We are truly grateful to the Lord!"

BLESSING PASIG

Love Thy Neighbor

OB celebrates 15 years and a new home in Pasig with what it does best.

Operation Blessing chose to commemorate its incorporation 15 years ago by showing love in action for the people of Pasig. This is a way of thanking the community that served as host to OB's new office located in C5 Road corner Corporal Cruz Street in Barangay Bagong Ilog.

Hundreds of Pasigueños benefited from various OB medical missions: one right inside the OB office, a second outreach for Bagong Ilog residents, and another inside the Pasig City Jail.

Last May, OB opened its doors to drivers and operators of a nearby jeepney terminal, as well as their families, much to their delight.

"Thank you for showing love and care for me and my family!" said Mang Benny, a jeepney driver. "We are blessed to have OB in Pasig!"

At the jail medical mission, Arnafe, who was imprisoned for stealing but claims innocence, was elated to have her painful tooth finally removed by a volunteer dentist.

"You make all of us here feel special and loved," Arnafe told OB. "I now believe that even for someone like me, God has His ways of answering prayers. Thank you!"



Mang Benny and his family feel blessed for having Operation Blessing in Pasig.

MILESTONES THROUGH THE YEARS



- 2007** • In partnership with Free Wheelchair Mission (FWM) and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), OB Philippines distributed 490 wheelchairs during the year.
- 2008** • OB Philippines opened its first satellite office in Davao City, serving the whole Mindanao region. Its first major activity was a medical mission held from Nov 1-8, 2008 benefiting more than 1,800 individuals from 20 villages in the city.
- 2009** • OB held its largest disaster relief effort yet in the aftermath of typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng. Around 380,000 typhoon victims from Cagayan to Quezon were served with help from Germany's Humedica International, Israel's IsraAID, and OB Indonesia.

Cebu Kids' Wheel Power

They may have walking disabilities, but nothing is stopping these three kids from Cebu to dream. Thanks to Free Wheelchair Mission and to YOU, our dear OB partner, their new wheelchairs will help them achieve great things in the future!



DEXTER DIOCAMPO
Hometown: **Tudela**
Condition: **muscular dystrophy**
Loves to: **write, go fishing with his father, gather seashells**



GENEVIEVE SANSOB
Hometown: **Medellin**
Condition: **lost her leg to an accident**
Loves to: **dance (even with one leg!)**



MARIO DACAL, JR.
Hometown: **Bogo**
Condition: **congenital phocomelia**
Loves to: **Facebook, swim, play basketball**

Even with his disability, Dexter helps his mother gather seashells for food or firewood for their house. He does these by crawling, thus scratching his already calloused knees. He even helps his younger brother learn how to write.

This school year, it will now be easier for Dexter to go to school using his new wheelchair. Finally, his mom will no longer need to carry him up on her arms going to school.

When she was four, Genevieve climbed onto a cement mixer and fell inside. Her father immediately pulled her out, but it was too late for her maimed right leg.

At the hospital, Genevieve realized she can no longer walk. But her loneliness is now replaced with joy, thanks to OB! She now happily attends kindergarten aboard her new wheelchair from Free Wheelchair Mission.

Mario was born without feet, but his mother made sure he was brought up not feeling he has less than other kids. Now Mario dreams of being a computer engineer someday, because he won't need feet to work in front of a computer, he explains.

To help him with his ambitions, Operation Blessing brought him a new wheelchair he can use in going to school and reaching for his dreams.



BLESSINGS ASIA is the quarterly newsletter of Operation Blessing Foundation Philippines, Inc., the humanitarian arm of CBN Asia, Inc. © 2011 Operation Blessing. All rights reserved, including permission to reprint in whole or in part any of the material within this publication, except by written permission from the publisher. Write to: OPERATION BLESSING, P.O. Box 2572 MCPO, 1265 Makati City, Philippines. OB may also be reached at telephone numbers +63 (2) 477-7802 to 08 or via the Internet at www.obphil.com.



- 2010** • CBN initiates its Orphan's Promise program in the Philippines through OB. Various orphanages and institutions received assistance, benefiting the children-at-risk who they serve.
- 2011** • Back-to-back medical missions in Camotes Islands and Bohol, and wheelchair distributions in Cebu, Aklan and Antique, were held to pay more attention to Visayas, hopefully leading to a new OB office in that region.

Want to be part of Operation Blessing's history of improving lives? Be an OB partner and help uplift Filipinos from poverty. **Call (02) 477-7806 to begin your partnership TODAY.**