

2015 Summer Camp Summary Report
April 4-9, 2015
Garden of Malasag Eco Village,
Cugman Cagayan de Oro

By Iluminada SA. Domingo
Executive Director

This year 2015 summer camp with the theme “ This is my story, This is my song” is celebration and skills training for the children of Gugma sa Kabataan, Inc. The five-day training was meant for the children to develop Life shaping skills to know their identity as a person “who I am”; taught them how to communicate expressing their emotions and handle their problems , conflicts issues; and, set goals and make decisions.

Together with four staff, 2 German volunteers and 31 children between the age of 9 to 17 years old actively participated the five-day camp. The Eco village Garden of Malasag was the chosen venue because of its friendly environment with so much trees, ornamental plants, mini-zoo and swimming pool provided an atmosphere that the children to explore. Also, it provided them an atmosphere to learn to listen from every creature, the wind that bristles through the leaves, breathe the fresh air. Every morning the camper shout “Good morning eco village” and thanking “Gugma sa Kabataaan Germany” for 21 seconds they kids learned to hold their breath and release to get the fresh new air.

Six groups were created having a big brother “Kuya” and sister “Ate” who look after the small members. Daily each group is assigned to say grace before meal and close the evening with a prayer. Like a family, the Kuya and the Ate prepared hot milk before and after bed. Every member bonds each other and cooperates in any activity. Leadership is developed.

The camp is beyond color and age. A German lady volunteer Nicole Rütten was a resource person in building self-esteem, a very active and supportive in all the camp activities. Ten years old Marcus Jason is one of the facilitators in the swimming lesson daily. Angelika van Kampten had assisted to the small children learning to swim. Grown up kids became facilitators in the camp management in discipline, documentation (writing in-puts, taking photos), and resource persons.

At the end of the camp, 11 small and 4 big kids were able to acquire step by step the skill in swimming from breathing, bubbling, floating, swimming like a butterfly, turtle and jellyfish. It was not easy for the kids to overcome the negative feelings towards parents and other members of the family from the past abusive experience . Handling deep negative emotions was not so easy to let go “wanting to kill alcoholic fathers and fathers in illegal drugs be jailed” “not forgiving unfaithful father to mothers’. Through walking to the woods, hugging and talking to a tree, shouting to the wind have helped them expressed their emotions filled with hatred. The ability to solve problems, control their emotions in a very positive way was demonstrated in the form of affirmation, “I am friendly and helpful . . .” and appreciation “thank you for being a big sister to me...” The skill in setting up goal and decision making was expressed. Ten years from now all children set their goal to have **a strong, faithful, loving, kind, and responsible family**. For the next 10 years the kids see themselves as **engineers, teachers, lawyers, nurse, traveller, having a house, car**. What the children have learned were presented into a drama saving children a) street children b) children from the people selling children into prostitution; c) children who are unto illegal drugs and HIV AIDs; and d) abused and neglected children.

We close the camp by having a sumptuous “barbecue” dinner at the camp ground. While others are having dinner, some are playing badminton, someone plays guitar and singing. There was so much presentation of talents in dance, song, drama related to the summer camp experience. Many kids are gifted and talented.