

PROCEEDINGS 2017 Gugma sa Kabataan, Inc. Summer Camp

April 17-22, 2017

MAPAWA NATURE Park

Cugman, Cagayan de Oro City

THEME: There must be more to Life ..

Sub Theme: From vulnerability to competency

Introduction

A total of 37 children participated in this 2017 summer camp. This is the first Camp to have a partner organization from Calabrian Children's Foundation with six participants.

"From vulnerability to competency" was the sub theme of the camp from the theme, "There must be more to life. . ." The vulnerability of children turned to be victims of a bad circumstance. However, the theme affirmed that life is beyond vulnerability to competency. The children like any person is competitive when their Life skills are being shape – knowing who they are as a person, able to handle conflict, problems and guided to make decision and long term goals in life.

The children of Gugma sa Kabataan, Inc. from their vulnerability are survivor children from all forms of abused, exploitation and discrimination who turned to be beautiful butterflies from all their achievements.

Highlights of our Faith Journey

Ecotrek provided an opportunity to the children to connect with the nature. It orients the children to see a mountain that remains untouched by development. MAPAWA NATURE PARK is the only mountain within the city which is recognized as "virgin forest." It is owned by the government and presently sustain by STEAG (German company). Trees as old as 400 years old remain untouched that supplied clean air and cool water.

Together with the staff all children have enjoyed **Horseback riding**. Friendly horses have taught the children to overcome their fears while others were taught how to manage riding in a horse. Trust was the teaching – learning experience.

The Elephant walk exercise have introduced to the children of their resiliency during the camp. The exercise taught the kids to focus, work as a team and coordinate beyond age and size. It served as a guiding principle throughout in all the activities.

Situational analysis was explored by the children. The **TREE PROBLEM** has provided a learning opportunity to analyze and critique the problem tree. The problem tree never bear good fruits nor grew healthy. The tree problem was associated with their family children who identified that the problem was rooted in the family situations – violent, abused (physical, verbal, sexual and economic), abandonment, broken homes, involvement on illegal activities drugs and cyber-sex.

The TREE PROBLEM was replaced by a **HEALTHY TREE** that affirmed the children that they have a major part of solving the TREE PROBLEM. The HEALTHY TREE is rooted in the love, faith in God, hope, forgiveness, responsible parents, prayers. The trunk is perseverance, faithfulness, respect and trust while it produced flowers and fruits of disciplined citizen, honesty, leadership, obedience, generosity, interest focus, and teamwork

- **Unmask Painting.** Children were given clean facial masks to paint the colors they chose who they are as a person. They chose happy and bright colors to symbolize the many capabilities, skills, talents that they can offer. Happy colors of red, yellow, orange, yellow green, green, red pink, pink. Eight year old abused boy from Calabrian chose red to express love and forgiveness to his abusive father. Instead of wearing them they hanged them around their neck to show the beautiful colors of their dreams, for affirmation and recognition who they are.
- **MY HERO/HEROINES.** Another activity that the children have to write as many names they look up to/ regarded them with high respect and inspiration in the future. The mother and teachers had been an inspiration to them. They have witnessed the struggles their mothers in nurturing them while others would like to be a teacher as their career.

Swimming, Badminton and Ball games. All children have the opportunity to develop their psycho motor skills engaging in basketball, swimming and badminton. The sports provide an opportunity not limited to one type of what they preferred but to develop their skill in others sports. What counted most was the spirit on camaraderie in playing together.

Evening Prayer time. At the end of the day, everybody has to be united in prayer for families, friends, German benefactors and children's concern was considered most in the prayer.

Morning Exercise. As early as 3:00 in the morning, many children got up to jog. Smaller children were not exempted to join the group to run and enjoy breathing the clean air. It was a kilometer jogging away from the camp area. No one got tired nor sleepy after.

Shibashi, the well - known Chinese meditation was daily observed. Facing the East inhale and exhale breathing exercise was observed. The 10 exercises were imbibed in the spirituality of the children. With the soft music younger children could feel the presence of God in their body movement. Ms. Erica Kaye Mante, our University student working on her Bachelor in Education led moved her body towards spirituality.

Orientation and Training

- **Bullying.** Ms. Jennifer T. Cabatingan, a Registered Guidance Counselor, working a School Guidance Counsellor enhances the awareness of children in handling Bullying. Two awareness raising test (in the form of statements and questionnaires) for the children to know if they were bullied or a bully. All children were both victims of being bullied and bullying. Analysis showed that child became a victim first by the family, neighbors and school. Bullying was a means to hurt someone either by labelling, making jokes and physical and verbal.

Children were taught to ignore, report to authorities, finding some friends in handling being bullied. Republic Act 10627 is the law that protects the children on Bullying.

- **First Aid and Drugs.** Mr. Jundee Lourence Taruc, a registered nurse who works at the Drug Rehabilitation Center, was the facilitator. Mr. Taruc has always been providing capability building to the children. Bandaging on variety of fractures from head to toe were taught to the children. In addition, the first aid on carrying a person who me a vehicular accident. Each child was to perform bandaging style according to the fractured. Children were in partners to take turns in the demonstration.

In addition he made the children aware on **Republic Act 9165 Dangerous Drug Act.** It is our goal to prevent the children from becoming victims as users/in selling illegal drugs. The effect of drugs from the brain to the behavior was clearly understood by the children i.e. hallucination.

The relevant on Dangerous Drugs became vivid to concerned children whose family engaged in using and selling. Other children were witnessed seeing their families in session and beginning to be experience hallucination.

- **Sextortion** was facilitated by Devine Grace Dagang, one of our staff. She received trainings as a trainor on Human trafficking. She differentiated extortion which is asking money while sextortion is asking for sex. Sextortion is an alarming problem in the Philippines to teenage and adult women.

To prevent children being victims of cybercrime, she oriented the children on the use of Facebook as one of the avenues on social media. She taught the children what to do, what to click to delete/block pornography and alarming conversations.

- **Talents Night** is a camp tradition to present all the learnings in the camp life. A varied way of presenting the learning is through songs, drama and dance. It was an opportunity to witness the skill as a leader and a follower. The value of teamwork, cooperation, ingenuity manifest on this activity.

Also, it was night of fun and laughter to enjoy each other's company. Everyone appreciated each other's talent and gift.

- **Biblical & Theological Reflection.** Rev. Lisa Yanez, of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines discussed the story of David and Goliath. She emphasized the many Goliaths of every child. However, she strongly believed that the children of Gugma sa Kabataan Inc. The five fingers were considered most on being a David to kill the Goliath in the lives of children. There are 5 P's to become competitive for the attainment of their dreams.

Past refers to the thumb finger that the many pains becomes a challenge to move on

Prayer is the pointing finger talking to God for guidance and wisdom

Priority tallest finger that looks into all the plans, directions that needs to be considered

Passion ring finger where love takes place in all that we do

Persistence is the little finger that finds ways to pursue what little can do.

- **Healing Eucharist** became the closure of the camp. All the painted facial mask was offered to dedicate the life of every child. The Healthy Tree became the center to remind the children of the many colors in life.

To renew the covenant with God, all children received the Holy Communion in remembering body and blood of Christ shed on the cross.

Our Gratitude

To all our benefactors through Dr. Stefan Wolfenstetter from Germany who made the summer camp possible. All the learnings – concepts, skills and character were enriched. To the Calabrian Children’s Foundation participation who shared their rich experience to other children; to all the Ate and Kuya who looked after the children patiently with love and care.

Recommendation

The past 6 years the summer camp has been encamped and focused on capability building to enhance and enriched the development of a child – thinking, feeling and doing. It is propose that 2018 summer camp will be a 3-day travel tour in Camiguin to explore, expose, experience and reflect to visit other places beyond the vicinity of Cagayan de Oro City. It will provide an opportunity to visit places and people from other culture.