



MATUTINAO FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL VISIT IN THE PHILIPPINES

February-March 2016

What an extraordinary trip! We visited many people, communities and schools including our friendship school, Matutinao Elementary who are living a life of extreme poverty. We saw the old classrooms destroyed by the ocean storms.

Matutinao Elementary School put their best foot forward and showed us the best that they had. They live and go to school in a beautiful part of the world. The school is on a beautiful beach and it looks like paradise but that is not enough if you don't have enough to eat and not enough energy to walk to school let alone to learn.

We brought a prayer cloth, candle and uniforms as a gift from St Elizabeth's to Matutinao Elementary and the Matutinao students sang and welcomed us. The students were so excited to meet us and placed our hand on their forehead as a sign of welcome and blessing. They are a deeply religious and faithful community.

The teachers work extraordinarily hard, long hours with the very little resources they have. Each class has about 65 students and not one computer in sight. Their day starts much earlier than ours and ends much later than ours. The day we visited the students were asked to wear the school uniform if they had one, socks and shoes. As a result many students didn't come to school that day because they don't own a pair of shoes or even a pair of thongs. The students usually come to school barefoot! A large amount of students are on a government 'Severely Malnourished' feeding program. Many more stay at home because they are hungry. Teachers use their own money to buy pencils and food for the students. We bought 2 sacks of cornmeal for the school so the teachers, who cook every day for the hungry students, could feed more of their students.

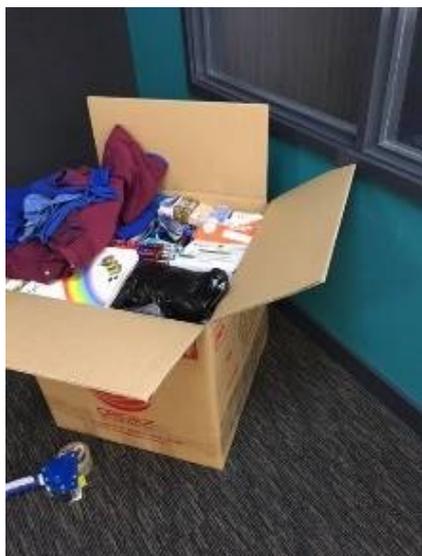
The principal, Felix, burst into tears when he saw what we had brought with us to give the school to help the students with their school work. We bought grey leads, pens, coloured pencils, solar calculators and more. We brought what we could carry in 2 suitcases but the school needs many more resources so each class can have a complete set of materials for the teachers to be able to teach and the students to be able to learn.

Mr Andrew and I spent time with the students in the classrooms and in the playground. We loved being with them and now that we have met them and have got to know them, we worry about them and their wellbeing. We as their friendship school have always helped Matutinao and will continue to do so.

It was trip I will never forget!

DONATIONS FOR MATUATINAU – *First box to Matutinao is on its way!*

Fantastic effort everyone.



Many of the children at our friendship school do not have anything to write with or write on.

It would be wonderful if each child could have a pen or pencil of their own.

We are looking for donations to help our Matutinao students learn at school.

You may have many of these items at home already.

For example: pencils, pens, coloured pencils, crayons, textas, rubbers, sharpeners, rulers, lined exercise books, folder paper, writing pads, etc.

Please bring all donations to the school office.

We will send all new donations to our friendship school in the Philippines.

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