My Little Red School House Experience

By: Mr. Paul Mola





I was asked to tell the story of how this Little Red Schoolhouse project came to be.

Five years ago, I was invited to go to the Philippines with my golf buddies. I hardly knew where the Philippines were, but my friends were from there and it involved golf so that was good enough for me.

I had a wonderful experience enjoying all the best the Philippines had to offer: 5-star hotels, country club golf and fine restaurants.

One day, while there, a Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH) member, Gloria Caoile, invited me to a feeding operation. What an eye opener! We went to a church in a poor area and I witnessed 200 small children line up to take their bowl and patiently sit and wait for a nutritious meal. This was amazing since they were obviously very hungry and many had walked for hours with their mothers.

This was my first experience with FtH. I inquired, and found out that all the adults attending were volunteers. No one gets expenses paid or a salary. 100% of the donations go directly to the cause. This impressed me very much.

When I came back to the United States, I could not get the images of those poor and hungry children out of my mind. I wanted to help so I discussed it with my wife and together we came up with a plan to do our little part. Since my occupation is that of a dance instructor, we began having a dance class and party every Sunday night. The proceeds were all given to FtH. The event was popular from the start. We raised a considerable amount in a short time.

FtH, as I understood it, is involved with feeding the poor, disaster relief, medical missions and classroom construction. I decided to apply our funds towards classroom construction.

As I did not know much about the geography of the Philippines, a friend, Mike Jumilla, suggested Cebu. I informed Pepito Solis and FtH went to work on the project. A group of golfers that I play with weekly, affectionately known as The D'Palaos golf group, donated the funds to match my classroom so that we could build a double classroom.

When it came time for the inaugural of the school, I travelled to Cebu. I was hosted royally by Tita Dumagsa and the Cebu Institute of Technology Alumni Association (CITAA). It is amazing to me the network of volunteers across the globe that come together to make a project like this work. It was one of the most satisfying accomplishments of my life.

A special thank you to Tony and Tita Dumagsa for hosting the whole American contingency with a beautiful reception, and coordinating us with Charlie Ng of CITAA who arranged our hotel and transportation needs and overview of the schoolhouse construction. We also extend our appreciation to CIT (Cebu Institute of Technology) for their generous donation of sporting equipment and computers, and, most especially, for training the teachers in the use of computers.

We are now continuing our fundraising efforts and plan to build another classroom in Davao.

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