



Alexander taking temperature for people waiting in the queue



The homes of people staying in the Matutum slum area

During the Food Empire Medical Mission to Manila, Philippines, from 20 June to 4 July 2012, we visited seven different communities and helped them through free medical clinics, vaccinations, health education, free food programmes, provision of school supplies for 500 children, as well as donations of cleaning materials and basic necessities.

Our team comprised three medical students from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM), three doctors from Anglican Crisis Relief Outreach and Support, and St John's - St Margaret's Church. This medical mission supports an ongoing partnership between Dr Lee Oh, a Singaporean GP from Mission Medical Pte Ltd, and Dr Don Cua, head pastor of the Philadelphia Christ-Centred Church in Manila, who is our main liaison in Manila.

### North Cemetery

The first two days of our medical mission in Manila were held at Philadelphia Christ-Centred Church, Tagaytay Street and Matutum for the people who live in the North Cemetery and surrounding slum areas, where thousands stay in makeshift homes.

The North Cemetery accommodates both the dead and the living. It is home to a shocking number of about 8,000 families, where houses are integrated among the graves and tombs are used as beds. The living conditions are dismal and sanitation is poor. Besides seeing more than 410 patients for medical treatment, we also provided the



women from the North Cemetery with capital required to attend vocational skills training and start a livelihood from cloth products, to encourage them to play a part in supporting their family.

### Corrective Institute for Women

We were fortunate to be able to hold a free clinic for the inmates of the Corrective Institute for Women in Mandaluyong City. It was heartbreakingly listening to their testimonies and discovering that many were wrongly framed for crimes committed by others. We saw almost 200 patients out of the 1,926 inmates residing there, treating them with simple medical aid, providing them with vitamins, medications and counselling, and distributing free food. We were glad to be able to help in any way possible to make their lives there a little more comfortable.

### Boys' Home, Foundling Home, Girls' Town and Home for the Aged

On a non-medical mission day, we visited the Boys' Home, Foundling Home, Girls' Town and Home for the Aged in Parang, Marikina City. These are institutions set up by the governmental Department of Social Welfare, sheltering Manila's abandoned and neglected. Here, we fed at least 600 people through our feeding programme, provided cleaning materials and medical supplies for the elderly to enable better care for them. We also gave toys, gifts and books to the children, while conducting day

# Manila

By Shonda Ng, Alexander Ng and Kee Ae Ra



Homes of the Aetas people



The girls with their new stationery sponsored by Food Empire



activities for them with the church members. It had been a fruitful day and we left with the feeling of wanting to do more for these people.

## Mangyan and Aetas tribes

Over a span of five days, we travelled to the Mangyan tribes at Mamburao, Mindoro Island, and the Aetas tribe at Zambales, Central Luzon. They are indigenous tribes who live mostly in mountainous areas and have little access to healthcare and proper nutrition. Our hearts went out to them as we saw so many malnourished, sick and helpless patients, who travelled hours on foot or were brought to us via a sponsored truck from villages that were mountains away, just to seek medical help. We provided these patients with much-needed multivitamins and medications, gave the elderly pneumococcal vaccinations, and also performed six vasectomies for birth control. At the end of the medical mission, we managed to see more than 550 villagers in Mindoro and more than 150 villagers in Zambales, and sponsor school supplies for 350 children, which was much more than we expected and prepared for. Nonetheless, we are thankful for all that we could do.

Even though we went to Philippines in the hope of helping the less fortunate, we returned feeling like we received more than we gave. We wouldn't have managed to pull through this meaningful journey without all the support we had – the compassionate and hospitable local church members, doctors, Bible school students, and missionaries who helped

us relentlessly throughout the entire trip. The love and joy radiating from every person and how they cherish each moment in the midst of their harsh circumstances, taught us that the greatest pleasures in life are, indeed, the simplest. We are truly thankful and this trip has shaped our hearts so much that we now burn with a strong desire to return to Philippines to help these communities again.

We would like to express our thanks to our main sponsor, Food Empire Holdings, for making all our work in Philippines possible by supporting us and responding generously to our requests for both monetary and non-monetary donations. We would also like to thank our other sponsors:

- American Academy for Aesthetic Medicine
- Anglican Crisis Relief Outreach and Support
- Christian Medical & Dental Fellowship
- Grandluxe
- St John's - St Margaret's Church

For more information on Food Empire Manila Mission, you can visit our website at <http://foodempiremanilamission2012.tumblr.com>, like our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ManilaMission2012>, or reach us at [manilamission2012@gmail.com](mailto:manilamission2012@gmail.com). SMA

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