

Buyong Sponsorship Program

Summary 1982-2006

The Buyong Sponsorship Program began in 1982 when Martha Zaiser decided to help Nora Erbito complete her high school education. Starting with this simple plan, the BSP quickly expanded to include many more scholarships for deserving students, assistance to the Buyong Elementary School, and projects to improve the overall health and standard of living for residents of Buyong and Maribago. The program has continued to pursue these main goals through the following activities:



Scholarships: 64 deserving students have been sponsored in high school, and 32 of them received college scholarships. Our sponsors have been individuals, families, groups of friends, school clubs and church groups. Recipients of the scholarships have graduated to become industrial and civil engineers, business administration graduates, teachers, architect, nurse, midwife, a policeman, hotel and restaurant employees, dive shop operators, scuba instructors, and disc jockey.

Elementary School Projects: at the Buyong Elementary School include:

1. Roof repair after typhoon
2. New classroom desks and benches
3. Small medical clinic built on school property
4. Garden fencing
5. Workbooks for the lower grades
6. Electricity throughout the school
7. Installation of running water in the school
8. Mimeograph machine
9. School fencing completed
10. Tree planting
11. Encyclopedias for the school library
12. Laptop computers for school use
13. Computer instruction for teachers and grade six students
14. Desktop publishing of graduation program.
15. Renovation of the cooking area at the Home Arts building.
16. Remodeling the office and conference room
17. Designing a memorial garden for Paul Zaiser in front of the school

School Food Program: The school food program continues to provide a daily hot meal for all students. Since its inception in 1986 the Buyong Elementary School Food Program has dispensed more than two and a half million meals. This food program is recognized as a model program by the Philippine government, as it is the only school in the entire Philippines providing a **free** lunch for every child in the school every day.

Medical Program:

1. Our BSP Medical Program provided education and medicine for Buyong residents with tuberculosis for 10 years.
2. Every sponsored student received a free health check-up.
3. Currently our Medical Program provides quarterly donations of medicines to the Maribago Health Center, supplying the clinic with at least half of their needed medicines.

Village-wide Projects: Working with the Maribago Barangay Council, the BSP has helped with community projects:

1. Typhoon relief – repair and rebuilding of more than fifty houses following a major typhoon
2. Forming water cooperatives and construction of communal toilets in three Barangay locations
3. Developing a trash collection system
4. Participation in the Barangay “Clean and Green Campaign” and “International Coastal Clean-up”
5. Maribago Elementary School roof repair
6. Construction at the Datag Daycare Center
7. Gravel surfacing the access road to Buyong beach
8. Laptop computers and instruction for the Maribago Barangay Council



Buyong Village



Buyong is one of the five sitios of Barangay Maribago, which lies on the eastern side of Mactan Island. Mactan Island is adjacent to the central Philippine city of Cebu. Mactan is the place where Ferdinand Magellan met his death at the hands of the warrior Lapu-Lapu in 1521. The island is covered with coral and rocks that make farming extremely difficult. Island products are guitars, rattan and wooden furniture, and items made of native stone and shells. Mactan Cebu International Airport is on the northwestern side of the island, while the island's only city, Lapu-Lapu, is on the west side opposite Maribago and Buyong.



Buyong, like much of Maribago, is squeezed between beach resorts that claim most of the shoreline. The local people have only a narrow access to the beach and water, limiting the area they can use for boating and fishing. Families of six to ten live in small homes. Pigs, goats and chickens roam freely through the village. Tuberculosis and leprosy are endemic to the village. Most houses have electricity now, and houses near the main road have running water. Some houses have toilets, but there is no sewage system. Shallow, brackish wells provide water for bathing and washing clothes. Many families still have to purchase drinking water. We built communal toilets and helped families form water cooperatives in three barangay locations, one in Buyong village.



Villagers work as boatmen, dive guides, vendors and in nearby resorts. Many adults have not completed their education. A diploma is needed for permanent work. High school and college graduates find jobs in the factories located in the Mactan Export Processing Zone, near the airport. Many of the companies on Mactan avoid paying the minimum wage (US\$4.50 per day) by offering only five-month contracts. According to the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment, the cost of supporting a family of four is approximately US\$10.00 per day, leaving most families in Buyong well under the poverty level.



The Buyong Sponsorship Program works directly with the Maribago Barangay Council to improve the health and standard of living for residents. We have supported the Barangay "Clean & Green Campaign", and have helped to organize the annual "International Coastal Clean-up" each September. The public toilets that we built and the water cooperatives we helped establish serve more than 100 families. The Buyong Village Youth Group, organized by Paul, participates in the village fiesta and community planning.

Buyong Elementary School

Buyong Elementary School has a staff of 15 and approximately 650 students. The school accepts children from Buyong and two other sitios of Barangay Maribago. The Buyong Sponsorship Program has worked closely with the school since 1984. A variety of projects and donations have directly benefited the school, including the following:



- The school roof was repaired following a major typhoon in 1986.
- Fifty school desks and benches were also purchased in 1986.
- That same year the school lunch program was started, giving every student a free, nutritious meal.
- In 1987 the school garden area was fenced to protect from goats.
- The school medical clinic was built in 1987, making the school eligible for more government assistance.
- Workbooks were also purchased for students in grades 1, 2 and 3.
- The BSP and the local PTCA raised money in 1988 to install an electric meter and put electricity in all rooms.
- During 1989 running water was installed in every classroom, and toilets were built for the school.
- A mimeograph machine was purchased for teacher use in 1991.
- By 1996 the BSP had helped to fence the entire school.
- Local jewelry makers sponsored art contests in 1997 with our help.
- In 1997 we arranged a donation of National Geographic magazines through "Books for the Barrios".
- In 1998 complete sets of encyclopedias and dictionaries were donated.
- In 1999 we helped with a new gate for the front of the school.
- In 2000 and 2002 laptop computers were donated for school use.
- The BSP, Maribago Barangay Council and Buyong Elementary School held regular clean up drives and participated in the annual "International Coastal Clean-up". School students in grades 5 and 6 participated.
- Starting in 2000, Paul taught basic computer skills at the school three mornings a week. Teachers and grade 6 pupils were introduced to word processing, spreadsheets and use of the Internet.
- From 2000 through 2003, Paul, grade 6 teacher Morena Dumao and selected students designed and published the graduation program, as well as designing other classroom artwork on the computer.
- In 2005 BSP funds renovated the outdoor cooking area by the home arts building to make food preparation and cooking more convenient.
- Remodeled the conference room in 2005 with stronger ceilings, walls and floors to keep out intruders.



School Food Program

The Buyong Sponsorship Program, with the Philippine Relief Organization at the American School in Japan as its largest donor, started a food program at the Buyong Elementary School in 1986. Pompia Tohay, the Home Arts teacher, attended a seminar on nutrition and began preparing daily meals using UNICEF recipes for malnourished children. During the first years of the program the school saw daily attendance improve and a reduction in the number of malnourished students. Village parents were delighted with the school feeding.



A selected group of grade 5 and 6 students, along with parent volunteers, help prepare the daily meal. Mrs. Tohay shops for fresh vegetables, fruit and meat daily. Students start the meal preparation at 7:30 AM by building wooden fires in the outdoor cooking area. After washing, chopping and mixing all the ingredients in large cauldrons, the students return to their first period class. By 9:45 the food is ready to be served and the students deliver a large pot to each of the thirteen classrooms. The morning recess from 9:45 AM to 10:15 AM is feeding time. Each class has the responsibility for serving food and washing their bowls and utensils afterwards.



The menu varies, but usually includes either binignit (a hot fruit and vegetable dish that includes coconut, banana and camote), a stew with chicken, vegetables and rice, or noodles with vegetables. For many students this is their most nourishing meal of the day. Buyong Elementary School is the only school in the Philippines to offer a free, daily lunch to every student. The Philippine Department of Education and Congresswoman Nerissa Soon-Ruiz have recognized this as a model program.



Three Buyong teachers, Liliosa Soliano (Grade 5), Evelyn Cabanisas (Grade 2) and Pompia Tohay (Home Arts) have volunteered their time to ensure the success of the program. Since its inception in 1986, more than two and a half million meals have been served. The cost of feeding 650 students is approximately sixteen dollars a day.

Maribago Health Center

The local health center is important to the community as it serves mothers and babies who cannot afford to see a local doctor. A nurse and several volunteers are on duty every day, and the doctor visits once a week. Mothers receive prenatal care – babies are given their immunizations. Our Buyong Sponsorship Fund donates medicines four times a year to the center - thanks to your very generous gifts to the program.



Our two medical assistants, Mildred and Poinciana, keep in touch with the health center nurse and order medicines when they are needed. The Lapu Lapu City budget for the clinic is never enough, and our donations are supplying almost 50% of the medicines used. We have also provided medicine for a young girl with TB of the bones and for a villager who needed rabies shots. A little boy, Emmanuel, born with a double cleft lip and cleft palate was taken by Paul to nearby Cebu City for evaluation by the team of doctors with Operation Smile. Lucky Emmanuel had successful surgery.



Poinciana and Mildred
Medical Assistants

Helpers through the Years



Tandia and Gaudi Alegres
Accounts and Medical Program



Pening Taghoy
TB Program Coordinator



Evelyn Cabanisas, Liliosa Soliano
School Feeding Program, Projects



Nila Ompad, Coordinator
Sponsored H.S. Students

Our program has been successful for twenty-five years with assistance from these dedicated helpers, support from the elementary school staff and from other members of the Buyong community. Many of our friends have come to visit Buyong through the years. The residents of Buyong are always anxious to meet the people who have done so much to help them.



Tribute to Paul Zaiser

Paul began managing the Buyong program in 1983. In 1996 Paul left his teaching position at the American School in Japan and moved to the Philippines to expand and extend the range of activities of the sponsorship program. Paul became a part of the local community, organizing youth groups, participating in fiesta and community planning, and offering his help to local residents. His house was a community center - always open to guests. Weddings, birthdays, baptisms and funerals became a part of his daily life in the Philippines. Volunteering in the community, exploring the central Philippines, adapting to the culture and making life-long friends had a profound impact on his life. The Maribago Barangay Council made Paul an Adopted Son of Maribago.



Paul's sudden death in July 2003 was a shock to his family, his friends and to the Buyong community. Paul's remains are buried in a small memorial garden in the courtyard in front of the Buyong Elementary School. Friends, teachers and students visit the garden daily and lovingly care for the blooming flowers.

Continuing Programs 2004, 2005, 2006

The program continues after Paul's death in a more limited way – with the daily feeding at the elementary school and with quarterly donations to the health center. One scholarship student recently graduated from nursing school, and our remaining sponsored student is in her third year of university, studying to be an accountant.

In 2005 our fund provided financial assistance in remodeling the main conference room at the elementary school. The ceilings, floors, doors and windows were redone as intruders were breaking in and stealing everything. The room is now larger, safer, very attractive and intruder free.

Janet continues to make a yearly trip to Buyong to arrange for these ongoing projects. Others have visited the village in the past three years - including Zaiser family members Carl, Andrew, Julie and Erica. Keiko Auckerman, who is advisor for the Philippine Relief Organization at the American School in Japan, visited in 2005 with two high school students who came as representatives of their school organization. The PRO has been an integral part of the Buyong Program since 1986 and is dedicated to raising money to continue the school feeding program.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the initial vision of Martha Zaiser and the generous donations from more than 200 people during our twenty-five year history. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who continue to support the Buyong Sponsorship Program. You have had a positive impact on this small community and helped to improve the lives of many families.



Martha Zaiser



Paul Zaiser and friend Cherry



Janet and Ernie Zaiser



Keiko Auckerman of ASIJ

We hope you will continue to tell others about the Buyong Sponsorship Program and remember us when it is time to give. Your contributions help ensure that our educational and medical work will continue. Donations may be made by check to Janet W. Zaiser at the address below.

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Our website has been updated by Sarah Harrigan Livnat
Visit this site for more information about our program. <http://www.buyong.org>