

Hi, Andrew Black from the Rotary Club Roseville.

Last year we worked with the NGO charity International Care Ministries on a aid project in Bacolod in the Philippines.

I want to introduce you to a fantastic, hands on International project that any Rotary club can replicate.

We sponsored 5 severely malnourished children on their Outreach programme and the building materials for 5 new homes in the Gawad Kalinga project. We also took over some medical supplies donated by one of the members.

ICM is run by senior executives from a number of international companies, and they run it like a business, every dollar spent in aid is tracked and its affect and efficiency measured to get the maximum benefit for those in need.

25 million people in the Philippines live on less than 80cents a day

10 million live on less than 60 cents a day

ICM target those that earn less than 50 cents a day.

The Outreach programme identifies the worst malnourished children in a slum community and for 4 months they receive daily nutritious meals with continual measurement of height and weight. Rather than just give food, the children are brought to a community building and while they are fed the parents receive VHL training –Values, Health and Livelihood training.

Examples of the training:

- 1) How to brush their teeth
- 2) How to grow vegetables in empty plastic bottles hung from their homes
- 3) Set up tip taps at the entrance to their homes to clean their hands
- 4) How clean their drinking water by putting bottles in the sun.

The parents are also given help in obtaining Birth and Marriage certificates. When no one in your family has ever been able to read or write these things are hard to come by.

The Gawad Kalinga community building project is sponsored by the Philippine Govt and ICM are working with the same communities. Bacolod has about 200,000 people living in slums with no security of tenure. Where land is donated, Gawad Kalinga projects are started to provide brick homes for slum families. To qualify for a home a family has to provide 2,000 hours of community

work (usually building homes for others). Over the 6 days worked on 6 homes at different stages of construction and our contribution was finishing the equivalent of 2.

We spent half of each day working with the various ICM programmes, we visited previous beneficiaries to help them complete questionnaires on the results of their involvement, we visited the medical centre run by ICM, a Kindie they have set up to educate kids – public schooling is free in the Philippines however, the child has to pass an exam to start and if no one in your family can read or write it is unlikely they will pass. We also help in the VHL programme and helped instruct families on how to run a market stall.

We visited one of the four Rotary Clubs of Bacolod and together we are applying for Foundation support and hope to get RAWCS approval.

ICM made the whole trip as easy as possible, they met us at the airport in Bacolod with 2 mini buses and drivers/interpreters, and we had the luxury of staying in a nice hotel.

The benefits to the beneficiaries were enormous but, all of that went came away feeling that we had actually done some good and my three sons gained some insight into how lucky they are having been born in Australia and that volunteer work is not just manning a Barbeque. The club gained by the enthusiasm the returning members brought back to the club for further fundraising and we also gained some publicity in the local press.

Please get in touch if you are interested and if you want a full presentation at your club from someone from Roseville or, ICM let me know.

Thank you