



NEWS FROM CEBU

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

We are delighted to share the outstanding achievements of Jerame, who has earned the prestigious title of Class Valedictorian at Cebu Children of Hope School (CCHS). Jerame's academic journey and dedication have set her apart as a shining example of excellence.

In recognition of her exceptional accomplishments, Jerame was awarded the Don Sergio Osmena Sr. Academic

Excellence Award. This prestigious accolade, granted to all valedictorians in elementary and secondary education across Cebu, comes with not only a cash incentive but also a commemorative medal from the Cebu City government. The ceremony was a momentous occasion attended by her proud housemother, Ivy, and the CCHS Principal, Cris. They stood by Jerame's side as she received the award.

Jerame's dedication to academic excellence and her remarkable achievements serve as an inspiration to all students at Cebu Children of Hope School. Her success not only reflects her own hard work and commitment but also highlights the supportive and nurturing educational environment fostered by the CCHS community.

We look forward to witnessing the continued success and bright future that undoubtedly lies ahead for this exceptional student.



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A WORD FROM OUR FIELD DIRECTOR, *Roberto Atienza*

The rumble of the Kia's engine was all we could hear as we climbed higher and higher. "Are we going to make it?," asked Ryan.

"Yep, no problem ... nothing to worry about," I replied, though the beads of sweat and strained smile on my face said otherwise. Fortunately, within moments, we were there. Finally shifting to a higher gear, vehicle and passengers alike seemed to give a sigh of relief. We had arrived.

Recently, my family and I took the kids of Duterte Home on an outing to Tops. Sitting at the peak of one of the tallest mountains in Busay, Tops gives a unique perspective of the city. The everyday experience of dusty and crowded streets, the noise of motorbikes, roosters, and crowds, and the heat of the sun on the concrete, all give way to a profound realization: taken together, they make for a city-scape that is greater than the sum of its parts.

The lives of our children at CSC are not unlike the experience of making the climb up to Tops. Stuck beneath the shadows of distant clouds, among the noise and the dust and the heat, it's easy to give in to despair, or anger, or frustration.



But, with the help, love, and support of people like you, our children can lift their eyes and gain a new perspective. The road to this new perspective is difficult, and they will often wonder if they can make the climb. But with your support and encouragement, they will eventually see that they are, in fact, greater than the sum of their circumstances and trials. They are, in fact, a beautiful tapestry of experiences with endless opportunities ahead.

PRAYER REQUESTS and PRAISES

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Our social workers recently presented a number of children at a regional matching conference. This is the next step in the process of finding them a new family and home. Please pray that our social workers are encouraged through a process that requires much preparation with no certainty that the children they present will be matched.
- It is increasingly difficult to find and hire certain positions at CSC, especially in our therapy department. Please pray that God would meet our needs and direct physical and occupational therapists our way who are willing to live out their calling at CSC, providing their love and care to our children who are in need of this specialized service.
- We are undergoing a process of re-accreditation in the Philippines. This entails a group from the government that audits and assesses our programs, policies and procedures. We continue to work to provide the best services to the residents, and getting the highest accreditation status is important to us. Please pray for our team in Cebu as they prepare for our re-accreditation visit.

PRAISE REPORTS

- God is good, all the time! We are so grateful for all those who made gifts to our ministry efforts last year. We received enough funds to meet our operating budget AND are well on our way to being fully funded for our building project as well. Each gift has a giver behind it, and we are thankful for their willingness to support CSC and all the children we serve.
- We are nearing the halfway point of construction on the new home and office complex that will serve our older residents and staff. We are thankful for an accident-free job site and for the timeliness of our contractor. Please pray that the schedule for completing the project stays on track and that we can obtain our occupancy permit before the end of 2024.
- It seems like the second half of our school year just began. We are excited to see the ongoing growth and development of our high school and college-age students. Advanced learning is not always easy or enjoyable, but they are all committed to doing their best, and for the most part, they are enjoying their educational pursuits.



BUILDING UNITY *through* FRIENDLY COMPETITION



The Red Pandas



The Royal Blue Raptors

CCHS Sports Fest 2024, our regular sports competition event, includes students aged four to fourteen years old, ranging from preschoolers to sixth graders. The committee divided the students and teachers into two teams based on their grade level and ability to play.

Each team chose its name; this year, they were the Royal Blue Raptors and the Red Pandas.

In the morning, the students paraded around the shelter grounds with the newly formed school marching band. The highlights of the opening salvo were the lighting of the torch and the presentation of each team's chant.

The track and field events included Distance Running, 50-Meter Dash, 100-Meter Dash, Relay, Running Long Jump, and High Jump. The teams competed in individual games by level, which involved Egg Toss, Frisbee Toss, Coin Toss, Jump Rope, Hula Hoop, and Sack Race. The group competitions included Modified Ping-Pong for the primary grades, while the intermediate level featured Modified Basketball and Tug of War for everyone on the team.



The day ended with the awarding ceremony, and this year's champion is the Royal Blue Raptors. Cheers to all the teams that participated in the different events!

WHY DO YOU LIKE TUG OF WAR?



MARIBEL

"It shows the team working together"

REY MICHAEL

"It was fun! Although we did not win, we still received the trophy"



MARCUS

"I like to pull the rope with other teammates"

NEW ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES



SAYING HELLO

Roquesa Hyacinth

At the end of January, a local hospital contacted us about a baby that was left after birth. This little girl, named Roquesa Hyacinth, came to our shelter that next day. We don't know her background, but we know she will be well cared for at CSC. She has been the highlight of the Eicher home. We look forward to seeing her grow.

SAYING GOODBYE

Jhon Lloyd

Jhon Lloyd arrived at Children's Shelter of Cebu at the end of 2016. Before coming to CSC, Jhon Lloyd and his twin brother were sick and needed to be hospitalized. Sadly, his brother died while Jhon Lloyd made a full physical recovery. Jhon Lloyd grew into a boy full of energy, enthusiasm, and questions. He has made huge improvements in school after getting some special individualized help. We have also seen improvements in his development of friendships over the last few years. At the end of 2023, Jhon Lloyd had the opportunity to move back in with his birth family. Please pray with us for his future!



Julieto acts as a father figure to friends & coworkers



SAYING GOODBYE

Julieto

Julieto spent most of his childhood working on a sugarcane plantation. He was exposed to hard labor at a very young age to survive. His mother died when he was three years old, and his father died when he was only four. His grandmother took over his care. When he was ten years old, his grandmother brought him to the Children's Shelter of Cebu because she could no longer care for him. After living at the main shelter in the Cherne home for seven years, he became too old, legally, to be adopted, so he moved to our Teen home. During his time there, he completed his high school education and acquired basic life skills. He loved cooking and could often be found in the kitchen making food for everyone in his home.

Eventually, Julieto wanted to move out on his own. We aimed to encourage his independence and ensure he was set up for success. He found a caretaker position, requiring him to live on-site at a local car center. He works as a night watchman, overseeing the whole compound and ensuring that car or motor parts aren't stolen. He works at night and sleeps during the day. Julieto takes pride in his work ethic and being a reliable employee. He feels trusted and supported by his employer and coworkers, sometimes acting as a father figure due to being the oldest among them.

Julieto's happy and welcoming personality makes people easily like him. He finds simple joy in sleeping, cleaning, and walking around during his free time. His current job also provides him a learning opportunity to develop new skills in driving and repairing cars. After observing and helping his coworkers, he learned about car parts and engines, as well as how to drive backward and park.

We are so proud of Julieto and how well he is doing. We will continue to provide emotional counseling and support to him. We are confident in his current savings and spending habits, believing that he will be successful in his future endeavors. CSC will remain a constant source of support in his life through the outreach program.



Julieto's first day ↩



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NEW BUILDING for Older Residents

We shared in previous newsletters that we started construction on a new home for older residents in Cebu. This home will have dorm-style and apartment-style housing to foster and encourage independent living. We hope to have it completed by the end of this year and anticipate 15-20 young adults moving in when it opens.



RAMP BEFORE



RAMP AFTER



STAIRS TO SECOND FLOOR



ROOMS ARE STARTING TO COME TOGETHER!

Check out the progress!