

CRIBS Talk

C.R.I.B.S. Foundation Inc.

30 Major Dizon St. Industrial Valley Complex

Marikina City, 1802 Philippines

Phone:(02)681-59-21/681-80-78

Fax:(02)647-13-29

E-mail: cribsnet@info.com.ph

Website:<http://www.cribsfoundation.org>

The Official Newsletter of CRIBS Foundation, Inc.

WHEN LOVING MORE MEANS LETTING GO



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARIE VICTA LABAJO

Welcome to the second edition of the CRIBS Talk Newsletter!

This edition highlights two articles, one written by a girl survivor of sexual abuse and another, about a mother who made the ultimate sacrifice of giving up her baby for adoption. Both their stories are heart-wrenching and evoke very powerful feelings from their readers. Both stories can infuriate us—the first against the abuser and the latter against the mother.

For those of us who care for children in need of special protection, the line between anger and sympathy is not too clearly delineated for we realize that mothers who come to us to give up their babies are not those who are totally irresponsible and uncaring about them. The irony is in that only in giving up their child can they truly love him/her more. For the girl-survivors of sexual abuse, they realize that it is only in facing up to, and eventually coming to terms with, their vulnerabilities, fears and powerlessness can they begin to experience enlightenment, power and ultimately hope for the future.

Everyday, we are blessed with the opportunity to witness the journey of each mother, each child and each girl in their remarkable struggle to defy the odds and courageously face up to the seemingly insurmountable adversities in their lives. It takes courage to heal; it takes love to let go.

As we commemorate a new year, let us continue to celebrate and be inspired by the joys and victories of our little ones. For they are the ones who have truly helped us to understand the meaning of love and sacrifice, of pain and joy.

IF LOVING MORE MEANS LETTING GO

By: Joan Cruz
 RH Volunteer Caregiver In-charge
 and
 Marie Victa Labajo
 Executive Director

To be a mother is a choice; having a baby is a gift.

There are circumstances though in one's life when being able to give birth to a child may not necessarily mean being able to provide for the daily sustenance of that child, especially if there are other older children to feed and provide for and no partner to share the struggle of life's daily choices with.

Joseph Carlos or JC (not his real name) is the fifth child of Mary Anne, his biological mother. Mary Anne had three abusive and failed marriages. Her first union ended when her live-in partner abandoned her totally after their first child. Her second marriage, though blessed by the Sacrament of Matrimony, ended when she left her husband after he abused her physically and emotionally, and made her use illegal substances, for a living. Her third union was still not that blessed because her partner, even after their second child (JC) was born, was in and out of work and would totally leave it to her to fend for herself and her children. Mary Anne was two months pregnant with another child when she gave up JC to CRIBS; he was just 3 months old.

JC looked so cute and fragile when he first came to CRIBS in the Receiving Home. His mother came to visit him only once in the nursery, having been too preoccupied with earning a living to provide for all her children, who literally and figuratively, were without a father. It was a most precious time between mother and child, but it was the *only* time. After borrowing a small amount of money from where she worked and not able to pay for it, she too disap-

peared into thin air.

After almost a year of waiting, CRIBS finally found a new family for JC. We were all very happy for him. When his adoptive family came to take him "home", we knew it was time to say goodbye. We were in tears but our emotions were mixed—we were happy that JC had finally found a home, with a pair of parents who will kiss, hug and love him forever and a family who will give him the unconditional love and affection, undivided and individuated attention that each child so badly needs. But we knew we would miss him. We thought to ourselves: *if JC's mother were here, what would she have felt? Would she be happy to let him go? Or would she regret having given him up to another family?*

Nobody knows how painful it can be for a mother like Mary Anne to give up her own child. We may never understand how and why a mother can let go of her baby. In the end, though, if loving more means letting go for these mothers, they may have made, after all, the right choice.

It is a tough decision to make. We know in our hearts though that Mary Anne, like many other mothers who have given up their children, firmly believes that her child will have a better and more secure future in the arms of another family. And in all humility, we do admire their courage to let go.

No one knows what future awaits every child who leaves our home; only God knows. But wherever life may lead them, one thing is for sure—they will always have a special place in their mother's heart, filled with a love that will last beyond a lifetime and a bond that only the two of them can know.

HOPE is WITHIN our REACH:

A testimonial of a victim- survivor

By: Jen-Jen

I can recall my worst sexual abuse experience - the moment that totally wrecked my life. During the time of resistance, violence started at home. Until I ran away from home. In the streets, I discovered that I was not alone and there I found friends with worse experiences than me. I engaged in illegal activities with them and later became a leader capable of organizing them. We were noisy; we blamed our parents, the Government, God, the Church, people, even our own selves. Our moments together were filled with anger, hatred and violence.

One day, I started talking about my dream but they shut me off and said there is no time to dream; what we need to do is to teach ourselves to survive. But I insisted only to realize that they have no dreams. I thought to myself maybe they think, poor & destitute as they are, they are not entitled to dream.

I began to realize that it was my past that kept me from moving forward. *My past seemed like a person with its own war and yet the key to open the gate*

to tomorrow is inside that prison cell.

My attempt to step out of this cycle, that made me see what's inside, this is precisely the cycle of victimization & it was hatred, anger, violence, revenge and survival that left them no windows of hope and enlightenment.

This was the time that I myself admitted that I needed HELP. I came to realize that I was looking for someone who can help me. I found myself in the Barangay seeking for help. From there, I was referred to the ABC channel 5 show titled, "Problema Mo, Sagot ko". Since they do not have temporary shelter for girls like me, they referred me to CRIBS. They explained to me that there are Institutions that can help me most...I finally found shelter in CRIBS who I know can help me heal, and protect me from being harmed again.

An NGO, CRIBS Foundation inspired me to restore the broken pieces of my dreams... they involved my mother, father and other siblings who I thought didn't



Art therapy workshop

support me. Through the help of CRIBS I was enlightened that my family will be there always to support, love and care for me. My family is now involved in our Parent Support Group Meeting held every last Sunday of the month aimed to enhance; empower us on establishing helping relationships with one another as a FAMILY... *I know it's not easy to pick up the broken pieces of my dreams but with the help of my family, the donors, the staff and other people who believe in & support me, I know I can move on & achieve my aspirations in life. I know being a victim of abuse is not our fault...and keeping in mind that our journey does not end here, I look forward to healing and recovering from the trauma brought about by the abuse..*

NEWS UPDATE :**RECEIVING HOME**

In Medical City Hospital, there is a program of the Out Patient Department (OPD) of the Pediatric Department called "Divine Mercy", which provides free consultation and treatment service. CRIBS is one of the NGOs who was privileged to avail of this opportunity. Every 1st, 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of the month has been designated as "CRIBS Day", a day exclusively for the CRIBS babies in the OPD Pediatric Department of Medical City. On September 19, 2008, a MOA was signed between The Medical City (represented by its Department Head, Dr. Xeles Luz) and CRIBS Foundation Inc. represented by its Executive Director, Ms. Maritona Labajo. It was witnessed by CRIBS Receiving Home Supervisor, Ms. Marilyn Bognalbal and CRIBS Foster Care Social Worker, Ms. Debbielyn Bustamante.

**NEW BEGINNINGS**

In an effort to help improve the lives of the 15 families in our aftercare program, CRIBS is trying to provide access to funding for small livelihood projects. It has developed a Microfinance Project that will give beneficiaries access to credit to put up a small scale business, or to improve an existing business. The actual implementation of this project is scheduled for January 2009. In addition, 5 aftercare beneficiaries were granted educational sponsorships: in college, 2 girls are sponsored by Mr. Keith Bradley of INGRAM-MICRO and 3 girls by Caritas Manila, the social welfare agency of the Archdiocese of Manila.

VRP PROGRAM

Metro Bank is one of the corporations in the country that practices corporate social responsibility among its employees. So, in the second half of 2008, 300 Metro Bank employees from different branches joined two volunteerism programs, namely the "Meme na bunso" and "Byaheng Abakada", to serve the children of CRIBS. "Meme na bunso" is a nursing care service for our abandoned babies and "Byaheng Abakada" is a tutorial service for our sexually abused young girls. Every Saturday, from 9:00 to 11:00 o'clock in the morning, 20 volunteers are deployed by the bank to tutor our young girls.

MY LIVELONG DREAM CAME TRUE JEROME VAN DER LINDE

Jerome was adopted from CRIBS— years ago and is now happily settled in Netherlands. As part of tracing his roots, he come with his whole family to visit the Philippines.

Hello! I am Jerome Thierry van der Linde Conde. I was born on June 10th 1992 in Manila. My name then was Jerome Conde. I was adopted by Johan and Loes van der Linde from Holland and I came to live with them in May 1993. Then, in July 2008, I was able to come back to the Philippines to visit my Motherland. Here is an interview I had some time after I returned to Holland:

Q: Are you the only child of Johan and Loes?

A: No, Johan and Loes adopted my little sister in 1997. She was a girl from Manila with the name Inyah. She was born on February 12, 1996.

Q: Was it a surprise that your parents organised this Motherland tour?

A: They promised me ever since I was a little boy that someday we would go back on a "roots" trip. At the end of 2007, we decided we would go in the summer of 2008 (in Europe, July is when we have our summer vacation). It took a lot of organising and preparation. We had mixed feelings;

excitement, a bit of uncertainty (How would it feel to everyone of us to be back). Also, I was pleased to hear we would travel together with the Jongsma family, who also adopted two Filipino children (their daughter Biana also comes from CRIBS). We planned to see and experience Manila; have a tour through Northern Luzon, spend a week in a beach resort in Mindoro and, last but not least, visit our former children's homes, Kaisahang Buhay Foundation (KBF) and Inter-country Adoption Board (ICAB).

Q: How did it feel to be back?

A: From the moment I set foot on Philippine soil, I felt at home. The differences between Holland and the Philippines are massive, shocking even, but we were more or less prepared. However, you have to feel it yourself, including the temperature.

During the first weeks, really, really FANTASTIC. I enjoyed myself so much, as did my whole family. So happy to be back.

Then came the great moment I had been waiting for my whole life: A visit to CRIBS!

We were warmly welcomed by Ms. Liway M. Flores and her staff.

Q: And then?

A: I must say at that moment of truth, I felt totally overwhelmed. To finally, really be here.

I had dreamed about it, talked about it, yet it felt so

strange; a bit like being torn in two. I had mixed feelings: Love for my parents who brought me back to the place where they took me from long ago; sadness for everything I missed here while in Holland. Knowing I wouldn't have had a chance if I stayed in Manila. Love for a country which I belong to but feel I am no longer a part of. Feelings of hope for my birth mother who is still here somewhere and wants to be found by me.

It was all a bit too much for me at that moment. When Liway came to us in the Children's room, I had a sort of emotional breakdown. I saw the little children on the floor and was instantly so very sad. In my memory (built from pictures and videos made by my parents) I see myself in the same situation as those children are in now: nothing has changed. Little children are still crawling on the floor in CRIBS. They do so much good work here, but I still felt the pain for these kids; their future and all they will be going through.

Liway and my parents supported me in my sadness and we cried together. And Liway, dear Liway, comforted me saying: "Boy you're so blessed". She was so right but, at that moment, I felt a bit shattered. I felt a lot of happiness but also a lot of pain, with missing bits and gaps.

Continued on page 8...



Jerome's Mom and adoptive sister.

OFFERING ONESELF SELFLESSLY

By: Gina Tibang and Romelie Capiro
Receiving Home Caregivers



Indoor activity of the toddlers

Offering ourselves for service to others is not an easy decision to make. For many, it might be a sacrifice: but for those who have the heart to do it, it is a mission.

It has been many years since CRIBS has been accepting volunteers as part of its Volunteer Resource

Program. Some just walk in, while others ask over the phone how they can be part of CRIBS. Others drop by to give donations, but once they know about the program, they usually come back to do volunteer service in their own simple way. Many people from different walks of life want to do something good: they all have one thing in common in their hearts- to offer service to the less fortunate children in CRIBS.

To see volunteers everyday wearing big smiles on their faces as they enter the Receiving Home, inspires every caregiver-on-duty and makes our children happy. Volunteers not only bring joy to our little angels, but also are of great help to us, the caregivers. They help us feed the children, change diapers, cuddle

the babies, kiss, embrace and play with them as if they are their own children.

Nobody knows what joy it brings to the volunteers every time they spend their time with the babies, but surely volunteering has a meaningful and positive impact on them. Being with less fortunate children surely touches anyone's heart and manifests no higher value than the giving of oneself.

We are very blessed to have committed volunteers who truly love our little angels and are willing to give themselves and their time unselfishly.

To all the volunteers, thank you and may God bless you all.

MUSIC THERAPY

By: Ruth M. Ignacio
Guidance and Healing Activity Coordinator
New Beginnings

Music Therapy first started last January 24, 2008 with Ms. Marisa Marin and Mr. Christopher Carandang. Music Therapy is an interpersonal process during which the Therapist uses Music and all its facets--- physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual, to help the girls improve or maintain their health. Every session involves the girls in a musical experience of some kind. The main ones are improvising, re-creating, composing and listening to music. In those sessions which involve improvisation, the girl makes her own music, singing or playing whatever arises at the moment. This kind of music experience may include

learning how to produce vocal or instrumental sounds, imitating music phrases, learning to sing by rote, or musical rotation, participating in sing-along's, practicing, taking music lessons and performing a piece from memory.

The girls then respond through various activities such as: relaxation or meditation, structured or free movement, story telling, imagining, reminiscing and drawing. The girls are encouraged to talk about the music; their reactions to it, their thoughts, images and feelings which were evoked during the experiences. Drawing, painting, poetry writing then

became channels for the girls' free expression of their innermost feelings and thoughts. It is music that is spontaneously drawn from their hearts; from the depth of their souls.

Music Therapy allows the girls to communicate their feelings with one another and learn to work with others for a common purpose. It builds their self-esteem, reduces stress, supports physical activities and enables them to organize their thoughts and ideas in a more meaningful way.

Sessions are held every Monday, from 1-3 p.m.

BEVERLY'S "ANKYLOGLOSSIA"

By: Emely Tugade-Mendoza
Early Child Development Program In-charge

Beverly Manza is a one-year and five month old baby who was diagnosed to have **ANKYLOGLOSSIA** last August 13, 2008. **ANKYLOGLOSSIA** is a severe restriction of the tongue movement as a result of fusion or adherence of the tongue to the floor of the mouth causing a condition called "tongue tie". Dr. Lyra Veloro, Beverly's doctor, recommended a surgical reconstruction of the tongue and the floor of the mouth for her to be able to utter words correctly and properly.

At around 9:00 o'clock in the morning of September 11, 2008, CRIBS brought Beverly to the Philippine Children's Medical

Center for the said surgery. On our way to the hospital, I felt like a real mother to her. I remember praying very hard continuously to God, the greatest Physician, to bless her during surgery.

After surgery, Beverly or "Beverlay" as she is fondly called by the caregivers, has been observed to have improved tremendously in her developmental skills. Now, "Beverlay" can utter words such as "ate", "mama", and "papa" clearly, unlike in the past. When someone plays with her and tickles her, she laughs aloud. When she is excited, she lets out shrieking squeals. She expresses



Beverly while playing.

her joy by smiling, giggling and laughing. When a caregiver or a visitor sits on the floor, she runs and throws her arms, expressing her desire to be cuddled and embraced.

Indeed, the surgery has allowed Beverly to enjoy life's little joys.

MY LIVELONG DREAM . . .

We went upstairs to "come to ourselves" again and after a few minutes, I felt calmer and started to talk to Mum in Dutch. She translated to Liway what I told her about my feelings, my dreams, my love for my parents and my love for the Philippines. I wanted to come back here again and again, because now that I've found it again, I want to keep it. I know I belong here as well, and my parents understand this so well.

Liway was touched by my words.

Q: It was certainly very emotional.

What happened then?

A: We went back downstairs. I had calmed down. I went again to see and enjoy the little children. I sat down with my little countrymen and played for a while.

After half an hour we all went back to the office, to exchange names, addresses etc. Liway asked me to write something about this visit for the CRIBS news bulletin. So here I am. When we left, I hugged everyone, assuring them: "I'll definitely be back!"



Miss Liway and Jerome

TEEN DEPRESSION: A Silent Menace

By: Ms. Felicitas C. Evans

TIC, CRIBS SPED Teacher

And

Janette P. Danao

Academic Activity Coordinator

Teenagers face a host of pressures, from the changes of puberty to questions about who they are and where they fit in. The natural transition from child to adult can also bring parental conflict, as teens start to assert their independence. With all this drama, it isn't always easy to differentiate between depression and normal teenage moodiness. To make things even more complicated, teens with depression do not necessarily appear sad, nor do they always withdraw from others.

Depression is a serious problem that impacts every aspect of a teen's life. Left untreated, teen depression can lead to problems at home and school, such as drug abuse, self-loathing—and even to an irreversible tragedy such as homicidal violence or suicide.

According to Dr. Rodney Tan, a person is diagnosed with depression when five or more of the following symptoms are present for most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two (2) weeks.

D – delusions

E - eating and sleeping pattern changes

P- poor performance in school

R- restlessness and agitation

E –excessive use of alcohol and drugs

S- sadness and hopelessness

S- suicidal thoughts or action

I – indecision, lack of concentration or forgetfulness

O- Over-reaction to criticism

N- Nightmare disorder

The encouraging news is that depression may be successfully treated, and as a concerned parent, teacher, or friend, there are many things you can do to help.

Offering gentle and tenacious support; validating their feelings; listening; seeking the help of a specialist and exploring some treatment options are some of the most natural ways to reduce cases of depression.

“Declaration of Abandonment Bill From Judicial to Administrative Proceedings”

By:
Jalil M. Usman
 RSW, OIC Placement

It is a common problem for all child caring agencies to find early placement for abandoned, dependent and neglected children, given our existing legislations governing adoption. Presidential Decree No. 603, otherwise known as the Child and Youth Welfare, mandates that the declaration of abandonment of children shall be secured by virtue of a judicial order. This judicial proceeding, though summary in nature, has uneven time and can be an excessively long, cumbersome and excruciatingly tiresome process.

With the bill introduced by Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. known as **“PREREQUISITE FOR LEGAL ADOPTION: DSWD CERTIFICATION” (An Act Requiring The Certification Of The Department of Social Welfare And Develop-**

ment (DSWD) To Declare A 'Child Legally Available For Adoption' As A Prerequisite For Adoption Proceedings, Amending For This Purpose Certain Provisions Of Republic Act No. 8552, Otherwise Known As The Domestic Adoption Act Of 1998, Republic Act No. 8043, Otherwise Known As The Inter-Country Adoption Act Of 1995, Presidential Decree No. 603, Otherwise Known As The Child And Youth Welfare Code, And For Other Purposes), the Declaration of Abandonment for these categories of children will be expedited. The bill aims to transfer the resolution of Declaration of Abandonment cases to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, thus changing the nature of these proceedings from judicial to administrative. It also shortens to three (3) months the period in the Child and Youth Welfare Code whereby a child may

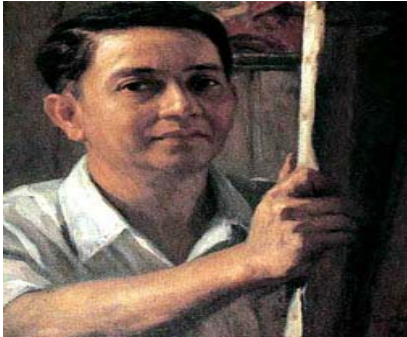
be deemed abandoned and will simplify the adoption proceedings by providing an administrative process to declare the child available for adoption. This ultimately serves the best interest of the child who need not wait for an unnecessarily long period of time to seek the State's approval for adoption. With a shortened period and an administrative declaration of abandonment, the permanent placement of these categories of children through legal adoption can now be easily facilitated.

The bill was been introduced in the Senate last June 2007. Last 10 October 2008, it was sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence. It is the hope of ACCAP (Association of Child Caring Agencies in the Philippines), its principal mover and lobbyist, that it will be passed before the end of the year 2008.

In many child caring agencies like ours, passage of this bill means a lot for our children.

HIS ART, OUR HEART: The Amorsolo Retrospective Project of 2008

By: Marie Victa Labajo
Executive Director



Amorsolo: The Philippines first national artist

During a Grand Gala Night last 19 September 2008 at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel, the Amorsolo Retrospective Project "His Art, Our Heart" was launched to re-awaken and elevate once more the pride of all Filipinos in our race, history and identity. Over 100 works of Fernando C. Amorsolo, named *National Artist for Painting in 1972* (the first Filipino to have

ever been given that distinction) will be simultaneously exhibited in seven national museums in Metro Manila from October 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009.

Also called the "Grand Old Man of Philippine Art", Amorsolo's work covered a whole array of subjects, from his idealized female images of the Filipino, to scenes of traditional Filipino customs, fiestas, occupations and celebrations, to his series of historical paintings on pre-colonial and Spanish colonization scenes.

CRIBS Foundation Inc. is proud to have been chosen as one of the partners and beneficiaries of this ground-breaking project.

In this most trying and challenging time in our contemporary history, when ordinary Filipinos fervently desire to look

up to a hero or heroine as a model and symbol of our deepest and most ardent dreams and aspirations, reminiscing about a man whose works embody and symbolize our core values and quintessence as a people seems to be the most appropriate thing to do.

The master painter's works and art depict fervent idealism, respect for women, love of beauty and love for one's country of birth and origin. It is a celebration of our country's rich history and heritage, values which we hope will be embraced and upheld by the children of today.

Proceeds of the project will go to CRIBS Foundation Inc., the seven participating museums and the Fernando C. Amorsolo Art Foundation Inc.

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Contact Person: Marie Victa Labajo
Executive Director

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