ANAK tnk

Helping disadvantaged children in Manila since 1998

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Editorial

Dear friends,

If music heals the soul, art in general offers many more unexpected virtues which we discover every day at the foundation. Art is indeed practised in all of our centres and in all forms. Music or singing, dancing or drawing, even sports at times can be a creative outlet; offering the children the possibility to find pleasure in them, as well as discovering their talent and expressing it with confidence before their peers. There are many occasions to celebrate and reveal all these talents the foundation is full of. Kindness and enjoyment are always present to wlecome and honor each performance. It is part of the foundation's integral life, just as all the other activities which are a part of the life of each centre.

As we continuously repeat: a roof, clothes, and food are of no use without the accompanying love gifted, but also without the self-love which art can at times help conquer again…

Pascal Breton - *president of ANAK-Tnk*

Art at the Service of Healing

"*In every child lies an artist,*" as Picasso used to say, "*the problem is to understand how to remain an artist as we grow up*". We may need to use this artist's eye to detect this talent in each child, however it remains nonetheless true that artistic activities are a phenomal asset in rebuilding all the broken hearts of the foundation. They undoubtedly reveal specific skills, at times even great artistic abilities, but most of all, they help the children take a step back from their terrible internal wounds which make them suffer so profoundly – often following abuse – and that words no longer suffice to describe. Artistic activities help the children, and the educators who accompany them, project their suffering before themselves in order to better fight it. Psychologists all know that drawing and music, for example, often better express what words can no longer express. One of the teachers at the foundation, Alex, who specialises in artistic training, is himself a former street child. He paints with great talent and his pieces always reflect the fight he has had to take on, his faith holding him firmly together, in order to experience a true resurrection. Today, he picks his younger brothers up when they have a knee on the ground.

Father Matthieu Dauchez - *director of the foundation in Manila*

TNK Band

In music, especially guitar, piano, and singing, these young people have an undeniable talent; they learn at an incredible speed and are wonderfully keen in the area. Even more so, it is a fabulous means of escapism. During the two years of confinement, some of our youth found refuge in music, rendered possible thanks to a providential donation of a guitar and a 'beatbox' (percussion box) to each of our homes. After a few basic lessons and a lot of practice, they revealed great talent. Thanks to the accompaniment of the 'Lord's Flock', a Filippino praise group popular with our children, we now vibrate with them each week during our prayer sessions. They even created a band: 'TNK Band', which now plays at all of the foundations' events. With their acoustic and electric guitars, they light the fire!

Elise Cruse - *communications and partnership manager*

" Music helps me express **all the feelings** at the bottom of my heart."

I love playing music; my favourtie instruments are guitar, piano and 'beatbox' (percussion box). It is truly a passion, even a need for me to play; I can express all the feelings at the bottom of my heart. You know, it hasn't always been easy for me. I come from a broken, separated family. They abandoned me on the street when I was 8. I haven't heard from them since. Music has always helped me keep my head up. That's also why we created TNK Band with the other youth.

My favourite song: 'Still' by Hillsong.

My next challenge: learn to play the violin and drums!

Testimony of Mark, age 22

Finishing high school this year, and studying to become a nurse afterwards

"What is your talent?" Joy, age 11

It is one of the first questions the children ask when we meet them.

At the beginning it is slightly uncomfortable; however talent is truly an asset to be shared here. It is obvious and built into Filippino culture: each person receives a talent to bear its fruit for the beauty and the good of others. And our youth are gifted: music, sports, cooking, drawing, chess, etc. The children put a lot of heart into working on and developing these gifts, as they are much more than simply a skill; they are powerful weapons of resilience for these deeply wounded children and it creates a beautiful scene to emulate in all the foundation homes. Thus, when you tell Joy you have no particular talent, she bursts out laughing and replies, "of course you do, everyone has a talent!"

Elise Cruse

communications and partnership manager

Keith's Drums

Keith is a 25 year-old, disabled man. He arrived at the foundation 20 years ago; he has grown in his home and has become one of its pillars, always ready to lend a helping hand. He his very skilled with his hands and quite active, thus always creating a new invention with bits and pieces. Attracted to percussions, he plays the 'beatbox' (percussion box) and accompanies various prayer ceremonies at the foundation. During one of our weekly visits to the homes, while we waited for the gate to open, we could hear the rhythm of drums coming from Keith's home. As there were no drums in the home, the whole team was surprised to discover an entire home-made drum kit, made with recycled material, and created - as you might have guessed - by Keith himself; drums made with biscuit boxes and rice bags, a recycled wooden and metal frame. The result in terms of music was astounding, a true achievement of creativity; well done Keith!

Charles Cruse – *human resources manager in Manila*

Let's Sing!

In The Philippines, singing is part of everyday life. Be it in the slums or the business district, music and singing are everywhere. A birthday, a party, or any event is an excuse to sing together. From one district to the next, there is always a karaoke out for these occasions, sometimes even in the middle of the street! Not a day goes by without hearing them, a contagious joy to be shared as all are invited to sing, no singing skills are required, and if you join in with your neighbours and sing, they will adopt you! Once, far from Manila, I saw a buffalo walking across a river, pulling a karaoke machine in its cart to reach a village up in the rice paddies… singing to be together and celebrate life.

The children and youth of the foundation are particularly passionate about their music. It is a joy for me to be in charge of the mission of singing and instruments: piano and guitar. Training is simple - once a week, and I am impressed and touched by their passion and talent. In just a few weeks some are able to play along on a piano, while it took me years! When I see our teenagers spend hours practising, so happy and so skilled… it's very touching! They are children of the street, and have gone through the worst possible, unimaginable things, and yet they conquer it. They transcend their past. Music becomes a magnificent form of escapism which I have the privilege to experience day after day.

Elise Cruse – *communications and partnership manager*

Basketball

Basketball is to The Philippines what football is to Europe. Each town, village and district has its own basketball court. It is a fantastic form of escapism, and even to some, a purpose in life. Each of our homes has its own basketball hoop and its team; conversations often focus on this sport and our youth are unbeatable on the topic. Each year, a big tournament is organised at the foundation, called 'Darwin's Cup' (in memory of Darwin Ramos, a street child with Duchenne Muscular Distorphy (DMD), who joined our foundation and died in 2012). In the 'ages 7-14' category, each centre has its own team, trained by one of their 'older brothers'. For the second category, 'ages 15 and above', the teams are a mix of youth and employees. Each Friday, on the baskteball court built on the roof of our offices, the atmosphere and concentration are on the same level as the best NBA matches.

More than just a sport, basketball helps our youth acquire all the qualities required in sports teams: cooperation, listening skills, brotherhood, as well as being a valuable tool in the physical reconstruction of their bodies and wounded hearts.

Charles Cruse – *human resources manager in Manila*

In Children's Words

"I enjoy drawing, I can express my feelings."

Mark Adrian, *age 15*

"I would like to become an architect, so I use drawing to develop my imagination and creativity skills."

Bryan, *age 16*

'I like drawing because it is a stressless activity."

King James, *age 11*

Drawing lessons

At the request of the children of the foundation, Mathilde, another volunteer, and myself have started teaching basic drawing. These are short lessons focused on teaching them, or at least showing them how to build perspective. The exercise is simple and consists of drawing cubes in space, using a horizon line and disappearing dots. It is always interesting to see how many different ways of thinking a group of children come up with- watching those who immediately understand the game and the logic, and those who are completely at a loss and ask for help.

Watching the older and younger kids together around the small issue of

Drawings by Mathilde Alliotte

drawing was very touching. Some very confident children showed pictures with no sense at all. Other, more shy children dared not write on their white sheets of paper in case they got it wrong, and watched their peers get it wrong instead. And then the staff at the centre stepped in to help and got stuck with the same problem, still not finding the key to the problem. The end of the exercise consisted of showing the solution, drawn by one of the children, before the astounded eyes of his peers.

Timothée de Féraudy – *volunteer in charge of food & material acquisitions*

Psychological support

Our greatest challenge is to help the children express the emotions they lock up inside, and which hinder their positive development. Their often very serious experiences and past are particularly traumatic. We organize individual activities, seminars, and group workshops in the fields of arts and sports as forms of escapism to help the children express themselves, reduce their stress, as well as help them create bonds with their peers and staff in the centres. Arts and sports can help them identify their personal interests and bring back their self-confidence and trust in adults too.

I remember John, a Young 15 year-old who couldn't use his right hand anymore due to serious complications after contracting dengue. Yet, thanks to his perseverance, the help of the teams, and his intensive daily training, John can now play basketball again, his favourite sport, and this against all odds.

Vincent Roadel – *head of psychologist teams*

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www.anak-tnk.org

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