

## Spotlight on CHARIS Affiliate

### acts29

Established since January 2006



Sherlyn Khong, a founding member of acts29, is ever passionate about working with the marginalized, especially at-risk children. This extends to those in the Payatas Dumpsite of Quezon City, Philippines. Eight years on, she inspires and invites others to 'Come and See', hoping that the personal encounter will seed action of some kind, whether immediately or later in the future, within acts29 or elsewhere, so long as it is for the benefit of others.

The founding members' call to action was inspired after their homestay experiences in the Philippines, which put them in the shoes of the residents allowing them, glimpses of the latter's spirituality, identity and culture. Their mindset has always been to experience and walk in the shoes of the people they meet instead of initiating disruptive changes based on their own precepts. This opened their minds and hearts as they reflected on the social issues they witnessed. For Sherlyn, the sharing of the people at Payatas Dumpsite caused her to think about the commandment "Love your neighbour as I have loved you", and sparked subsequent trips and activities.

acts29 came about from a collaborative experience between the Singaporean missionaries and their Filipino counterparts. Both learnt from each other, and found synergy in working together to help the community at Payatas Dumpsite in ways that could enhance their daily living.

When asked what keeps them going, Sherlyn shares that the acts29 community feels strongly that we (*everyone around*) haven't loved enough, and we should love more, until there is no injustice in our world. They believe in taking ourselves out of our comfort zones and that when we think about the interests of others, inevitably we deepen our own encounter with God. For them, seeing how others live their lives, serve as a reference point in their decision making.

The members of acts29 continue to work tirelessly for social transformation starting with the education and formation of at-risk children. They strive to be good stewards of the material resources they receive, and constantly look for opportunities where those in need can be accompanied through their trials and life journeys by those who are able to give. This governs every aspect of their work, allowing them to go beyond the constraints that sometimes result from material resources.

*acts29 works largely in two areas in Philippines - Payatas (Quezon City, part of Metro Manila) and Erap (in Rodriguez Rizal, 30 minutes from Payatas). As at beginning of 2013, acts29 is working with a total of 14 boys and 25 girls, spread thus: 17 scholars in Payatas aged 7 to 14 years, and 22 scholars in Erap, aged 10 to 22 years.*

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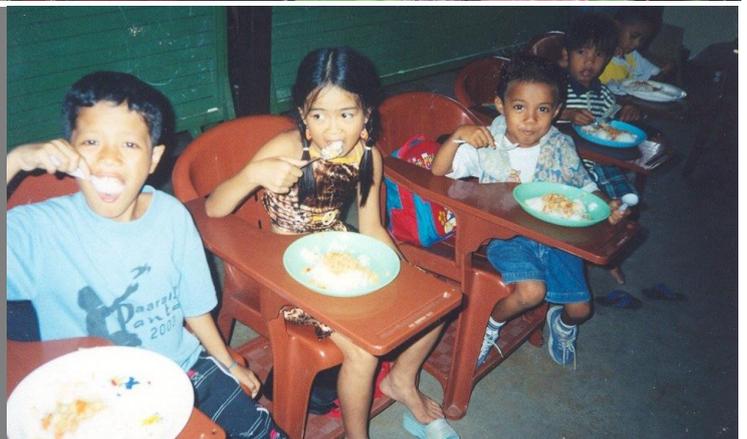


### Did You Know...

For S\$300 or S\$400 a year – you can sponsor a child through elementary or high school under the acts29 Scholarship programme. You will receive quarterly progress reports on how well the child is doing. Children on this programme have a chance to progress to better schools once they show excellent academic results.



Some children survive on 3 meals a week. These meals are food they scavenge from the dumpsite.



Many children are orphaned because their parents died of Tuberculosis.

Those infected with Tuberculosis often either have little access to treatment or are resigned to their fate due to existing social stigma around the illness.



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## 2012 Key Activities...

- Mission Trips – Quezon City, Philippines
  - Feb 16-23 2012
  - Mar 10-17 2012
  - May 26-30 2012
  
- Finding more sponsors for scholars  
Looking for sponsors for children who keen to learn but are unable to afford to go to formal school.  
Sponsorship cost: S\$300 a year for elementary level and S\$400 a year for high school.
  
- Finding Sponsors for stays at Formation House  
Looking for sponsors for children who stay at the Formation House.  
Sponsorship cost: \$800 a year a pax, inclusive food and lodging
  
- Obtaining NGO Status  
Working to obtain NGO status in the Philippines
  
- Securing permanent physical facilities  
Acquiring a hectare plot of land for the permanent site of the Formation House
  
- On-going search for volunteers
  - Long term - Volunteers/Missioners with an attitude for mission for 6 months to 1 year to provide faith formation
  - Short term - Volunteers/Missioners with an attitude for mission to conduct children's rights sessions
  
- Youth Speak! With Paul Petrus  
A series of 4 talks by Pau Petrus a peace builder from Papua New Guinea specially for Youth Mission members from 5 CHIJ Sec Schools, the Secondary 3 and 4 students of Catholic High School.