

Kay Mackay—Chairman ASCT

I have just returned from visiting Manila and ASCT services for children of Payatas dump. I am writing this while the memories are vivid and before the comforts afforded to us here in Britain dull the intense feelings my experience generated. This trip has been a roller coaster of emotions. As always, the joy of spending time with the children in Mango, getting to know them better and relishing their development was a major highlight. However, with an arrogance that now makes me ashamed, I was convinced that I had become acclimatised to the appalling conditions that is 'home' for most of our students on the dump. I was privileged to visit many families and it is truly awful the conditions in which they live. I was humbled by the dedication shown by parents and children to transform their futures by gaining an education, the sacrifices parents make to support that and the pride demonstrated in educational achievement. However, this year our social worker said she wanted to take us to a different area which she called temporary housing. A little boy who joined Mango last year came from there and this would be an opportunity to allow him to visit his mum and sisters. Mum and Dad are scavengers with addiction issues but the little boy was being badly abused by the father and was admitted to Mango for his safety. Dad is now in prison for other crimes. On arrival, we were assigned guards to prevent us being attacked. To get to the site we had to cross the equivalent of the M25, which was brought to a halt by the guards to allow us to cross. I cannot find words to convey to you the horror of what we entered and even the pictures just don't begin to illustrate how ghastly this place was. It's a rubbish tip but part of it has kennel-like constructions that are homes for these families. Mum and our guards had been issued with Wellington boots because there was nowhere that wasn't



CHAIRMAN KAY MACKAY

inches deep in stinking filthy liquid. It was alive with rats and fleas, and the area that mum and her 2 daughters lived in was a cess pit 6' x6' with a shelf about 2' wide being the only place for the three of them to sleep out of the slimy filth. The RSPCA would prosecute you for keeping a dog in these conditions. Mum scavenged at night because the entrance fee to access the rubbish is less than during the day- her daily earnings will be between 50p-£1. There is no safety net – no social security – no soup kitchen to turn to for help, they manage by what they can earn, beg or steal. The place was filled with little children and the two sisters were proudly introduced to us by their brother. The youngest was covered in lesions and they both looked seriously malnourished. Mum asked our social worker to take her eldest daughter to Mango as she is scared for her safety and she cannot afford to feed them both. Obviously proper processes have to be followed and the child's case will be considered along with many others. I was truly shaken to the core I felt helpless and tearful leaving these vulnerable young girls but the truth is that they were just a tiny drop in a massive ocean of need. We can only help one at a time and continue to pray.



*The light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
The presence of God watches over us,
Wherever we are, God is,
And where God is, all is well.
Please God, be with these children and protect them.
Amen.*

A NEW PATRON FOR ASCT

Nathan Dyer - Premiership Footballer, Leicester City FC

ASCT would like to welcome Nathan as a new Patron. Nathan is an English professional footballer who plays as a winger for Leicester City on loan from Swansea City. He started playing as a teenager at Southampton and making the first team.



'I first heard about ASCT when my wife's Uncle started work in June as Charity Manager, he had described to me the work that both ASCT and ASCF provide for children in Manila. It brought home to me just how fortunate a position I am in to be able to provide for the daily needs of my son, who is the same age as many of the children the charity care for.

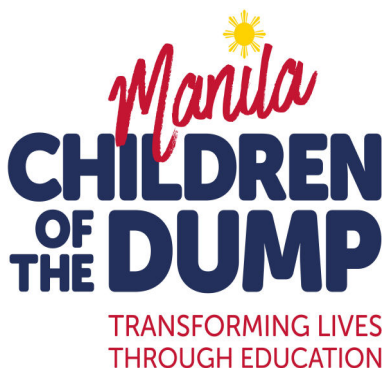
I felt privileged to be asked to act as a patron for ASCT, and will hopefully be able to promote the charity and the work that is provided by the charity through education and care for over three hundred children'

Nathan Dyer.

BRANDING OF ASCT - A PREVIEW.....

We have frequently been told that the current name of the charity does not help us to get our message across about the work we do. Our Trustees have debated long and hard how to give the charity a refreshed name and a design that will be attractive and impactful. I took the opportunity to discuss this with the ASCF Board during our visit to Manila in February and am delighted to tell you that they are very supportive and encouraging of our proposed new operating title.

We have been blessed with wonderful support from Emily Rolfe Creative Director of Luna Studio who has designed the new logo and we are now starting the process of updating the website and all our literature. We are still ASCT and nothing has changed about the work we do or our value base, we just want to make sure we are noticed.



FIRST VISIT TO MANILA

I still find it hard to put into words my first impression of my visit to the Philippines. I decided on my arrival at Mango Tree House to create a daily blog on how I was feeling, what I was seeing and the effect it had on me. I have included my first day blog in this newsletter.

31/01/16 - Day 1

As the plane started its decent along the coastline of Manila I began to wonder what would face me, I had heard so much about the Philippines from previous visitors. I could see from the aircraft window, miles of small tin roofs that stretched as far as the eye could see along the Philippine coastline. As the aircraft turned on finals and we got ever closer to the airport I could see what only could be described as blocks of corrugated iron sheets placed one on top of another with people scurrying about their everyday business. The scale was immense and shocking .

Once I had cleared customs I was met outside by Peter the Director of ASCF. We started our journey to Mango driving on roads that were



filled with every mode of transport that you could imagine and most of them totally illegal in the UK. My first impressions of the metropolis buildings as we drove past were how dirty they looked, but then again we were in central Manila and pollution would be high. Every now and then you would see little alleyways with scores of children and their parents sitting on their haunches sorting out rubbish. I thought of my children and couldn't imagine them sitting sorting through our black rubbish sacks let alone someone else's.

Peter was explaining the economics' of the Philippines, but I'm sorry to say the view outside took my attention. As the journey unfolded and we reached the suburbs of the Capital, more and more shantytowns appeared, tin roof after tin roof, and children running around without a care in the world.

The poverty was over whelming, I can't believe in 2016 that people still have to live this way, I wish I could put into words the sick feeling I had inside, as I watched the children and adults sort through rubbish which

to them was the everyday part of their lives, but to myself was disgusting. It reminded me of a conversation I had with someone at our golf club, when he said we had just as much poverty in the UK so he would only support them, I wish he could be here, maybe just maybe he would feel different. I'm not sure how so many people live way below the poverty line and survive.

We arrived at Mango house to be greeted by the children of ASCF, a crowd of smiling young faces that were genuinely pleased to see us, they crowded round, all wanting to extend their greetings and treating us like a long lost family members. As the evening wore on I sat with the children while we ate. I watched as the children shared their food with each other, never giving it a second thought. I was told the story of a young girl who was almost feral when she came to ASCF nearly two years ago, she would gorge her food in seconds and then try to eat the other children's food as though it was her last meal, from where she came from it could well have been. Now this young girl was sitting in front of me sharing her food with others. How humbling was this for me, a lesson learnt of hope even when all appears lost.

John Busby

CASHEW UPDATE

When Cashew Tree School was built, it was understood that we did not have ownership of the freehold and we have known for some time now that in common with all the surrounding area, the land is subject to court proceedings for the ownership of the title. We will be evicted eventually as the land is reclaimed. Our Board and the ASCF Board have agreed a strategy to purchase some land nearby and build a new school so that the fantastic work of Cashew can continue.

We were able to view one potential plot while we visited this February and have started the development of a business case to provide all the necessary assurances to the Boards while we seek new funding.

More information will follow in future newsletters and on our website.



SPONSORSHIP & FUNDRAISING

Each year raising money to support our projects becomes more difficult, ASCT are looking at new ways to be able to provide our continuing support for the ASCT students in the Philippines. Without the continued support through sponsorship, donations and gifts from our sponsors and friends this task would be impossible.

Once again we are turning to our supporters and friends and asking them to participate in the following new ideas for ASCT.

Could you be an Ambassador for ASCT

We are looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our Ambassador scheme and become the face of ASCT in their communities.

ASCT Ambassadors are a network of volunteers across the country, who support us by organising fundraising activities, representing ASCT in their local area and helping to engage people with the work and aims of our charity.

There are lots of different ways in which you can make a difference and support ASCT, here are a few suggestions:

- Organise a fundraising event; from a coffee morning to a jungle party – the opportunities are endless!
- set up a small fundraising group or committee with friends, family or colleagues
- Encourage people to support our campaign
- Give short talks or presentations to groups in your area about the work and aims of ASCT
- Distribute collection tins to shops, cafes, restaurants etc. in your local community
- Hold or help out at a street or supermarket collection in your local area
- Source auction or raffle prizes for our supporter events
- Take part in an organised event to raise funds for ASCT
- Volunteer at one of our forthcoming events

We do not expect every Ambassador to do all of the above; just doing one or two things can really help.

A CHILD'S STORY

John Chris Artaquin is just 11 years old. six years ago his Mother and Father separated, they both walked out on John Chris and his two brothers leaving the boys to live on the street. Since that time the three boys had been surviving as best they could by begging and scavenging for food. They have relied heavily on each other and the good will of ex-neighbours. All three boys are now in the care of ASCT, living at Mango Tree House, our residential home. They are enormously grateful for the opportunity that they have been given and are determined to make the most of the new start that they have been offered.



CHILDREN WITHOUT SPONSORS

There are still children in our care who are without sponsors. Which option you choose will depend on how much you can afford to give. We are very flexible and can offer options from as little as £15 per month.

For details contact John 01276 707633 or email office@asct.org.uk

Option 1:

Sponsor a Cashew Tree school child. Your money will help a student to be educated at our preparatory school You will receive a photograph, annual report and Christmas card.

Option 2:

Sponsor a Grapevine child. Your money will help the student to be educated up to University level while being cared for by their own family. You will receive the same communication as option 3.

Option 3:

Sponsor a Mango Tree House child. Your money will help clothe, feed and educate a child who lives in our residential home. You will receive a photograph, regular reports, Christmas and Easter cards. Your child will respond to any letters that you send them.

FUTURE EVENTS



For further details of upcoming events please visit the ASCT website or ASCT Camberley Facebook page

The new Trustees with ASCT

We are delighted to welcome new trustees to the Board.

Colin Shoveller – Colin has volunteered for ASCT for the past 6 months, helping with administration and fundraising events.

John Peddie – John runs a video production company and visited Manila last year to create a series of videos for ASCT. He will be looking for ways to raise the profile of the charity through different channels of marketing.

Fred Little – Fred has worked in healthcare in the UK and abroad before retiring last year. He is going to be taking a lead in making grant applications.

Joan Kerr – Joan has been involved in the voluntary sector for 6 years and works for a local charity in the Camberley area. In 2014 she had the honour of visiting the children in the Philippines and is looking forward to contributing to this great cause.

Patron: The Right Honourable Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath

Patron: Nathan Dyer Premiership Footballer, Leicester City FC

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