



MUSTARD SEED DISCIPLESHIP VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

ACTION International Ministries, Philippines

Prayer Update: September 27, 2010

MUSTARD SEED DISCIPLESHIP VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

My favorite time of the day is early morning. Most mornings I am up around 5 am, enjoying the coming day, the sounds of morning and the flowers and plants in my garden. This morning is no exception. The sun is just beginning to creep over the back wall and spill into the office. So I have decided to take this time to send you an update.

SETTLING INTO TERM 3...

All students returned to MS the Monday after break. It was good to see them all after the time off. We have been back for two weeks and begin today Week 3. All of the students are back at it. In the sewing class, Sharon continues to build on the skills the girls have acquired to date. In the discipleship class, Pam is having the students do reports on various cults and non Christian religious groups. At the dorm, Mervi and Iree continue to lead the girls in daily devotions and Bible study. With Jane our social worker, the students are learning about the tongue and how it is a source of problems. With me, we are focusing on measurement and fractions, and starting a savings goal in money management.

It will again be another busy term!

THREE MONTH CHECK UP AT THE DERMATOLOGIST...

A week ago Saturday I had my three-month check up with the dermatologist in Manila. What was to be just a routine checkup ended up with two excisions being made on my back. My doctor found two spots that she didn't like. So, "I can take them out now or schedule you to come another day". I said to do it. And she did. My back was a bit sore for the ride home but I made it back fine.

This past Saturday, she phoned to tell me that both biopsies came back negative for melanoma. I am very glad.

BACK TO 100% HERE AT 2ND MILE...

We are back to our full contingent here on campus. Last Thursday evening, Gary and Melita Root and sons arrived back in the Philippines after spending a 3 month furlough in the States. It was great to see them out and about on Friday morning. Most happy about their return is their dog, Phoebe. She has been very lonesome since they left and now she looks like she is smiling.

Gary and Melita are involved in the woodworking section of the Working Hands program here on campus. They are both involved in the church plant just a few feet from our front door. We have missed them and are glad that they have returned.

SPEAKING OF FURLOUGH...

In March 2011 I will be heading to Canada for a 3 – 4 month furlough. I am already beginning to sketch out a schedule for my journeys. I hope to meet with many, many friends and supporters while back in Canada. I am available to share with a Bible study, ladies group, over a cup of tea, etc. please let me know and I will make sure that it happens.

BUDGET AND PROPOSAL MEETINGS...

This Friday ACTION missionary budget and program proposals are due at the office. The Mustard Seed presentation is scheduled for October 20. I would appreciate your prayers for the preparation and presentation of the MS budget and program on that day.

AND SO....

Thank you so much for your prayers and support for this ministry. I continue to ask for your prayers about the budget shortfall for 2010 and our plans for 2011.

PRAISE:

1. Students are settling into Term 3.
2. Root family has returned safely to 2nd Mile.
3. Biopsies on Barb's back are benign. (oooo, good alliteration!!)

PRAYERS:

1. Students will continue to be focused on their studies.
2. That with the start of Christmas so early here, we won't get caught up in the materialism of the season, that we will be ready to share the true meaning of Christmas.
3. For the 2011 budgets and proposals meetings coming on October 20.
4. Plans for furlough.

Prayer Update: September 14, 2010

Where do the days go? I don't know, but it's way too fast for me!! Just two weeks ago we were preparing for exams, and now, the students are back and starting Term 3. Two weeks ago we were preparing for our mid program break, and now the quiet days at home are just a good memory. But in these two weeks many things have happened that I want to share with you!!

TERM 2 EXAMS:

Well, they did it!! The exams are done and it is with great news and happiness that I announce to you, that ALL 10 of our students passed all of their exams and ALL 10 of our students have passed into Term 3. This is a HUGE first for Mustard Seed. In all of our former groups we have never had all of the students who began the program go into term 3. At our very successful hot dog roast, I announced that the students had passed their exams. Around the campfire we toasted the hard work of the students. It was a very special night.

SPEAKING OF THE HOT DOG ROAST.....

How many hotdogs can you put on the end of a roasting fork? Well, we had 8 forks and 32 hotdogs and they ALL were put on the forks and roasted at once. What great fun!! I was concerned that the girls would eat all 32 hotdogs and there wouldn't be any for the rest of us. Well, I didn't need to worry.

We also had a huge pasta salad, baked beans, chips and all the condiments you could think of. For dessert, of course, we did s'moores, which was a new treat for the students.

With our rainy season, each day has had a big thunderstorm pass through, but the day of the roast the weather was absolutely wonderful. No rain until we were packing things up to go home. Thank you, thank you, Lord.

THE BREAK...

Most of the girls left Friday afternoon for 9 days of extra sleep, fun with family and with church mates. Unfortunately our two from Mindoro did not make it home for their break. At 10 pm the night of the roast, I was taking one of the sisters to the hospital. We had been watching her temperature most of the day. It finally reached 39.6C and we packed her off to the hospital.

After 4 hours in the ER we were no closer to knowing what was wrong. With each doctor, the list became longer and longer. First it was a urinary tract infection, then appendicitis, then typhoid fever, then dengue fever and the last one on the list, a massive viral infection in her intestines. She was in hospital for almost 5 days. Each day one of the illnesses was knocked off the list. On the final day, she had a blood test to determine if she had dengue fever. Well, though her white blood cell count dropped, her platelet count didn't. So the last, viral infection, was what she had. She was released on Monday afternoon and spent the rest of her break here recovering. Yesterday when she returned to the dorm she look SO much better!!

Everyone seemed to have a good break and are ready to get at their studies.

AND SO...

Here we are in term 3. Thank you again for your prayers for all of us. Knowing that we are being lifted before the throne of grace is a wonderful thing.

This week I will be preparing the Mustard Seed Budget and Program Proposal for 2011. Meetings will be held in October, at which time I will present to the Philippine Field Leadership what we hope to do in Mustard Seed next year.

Please continue to pray for the budget shortfall for 2010. We may need to make some tough choices for our next batch.

PRAISE:

4. Our student Amelia has recovered from a severe viral infection.
5. All students passed their exams at the end of term 2.
6. All staff and students had a good break.

PRAYERS:

5. Students will continue to be focused on their studies.
6. That with the start of Christmas so early here, we won't get caught up in the materialism of the season, that we will be ready to share the true meaning of Christmas.
7. For the 2011 budgets and proposals meetings coming in October.
8. Results for my every three months blood work. I pick them up today.

Prayer Update: August 29, 2010

Greetings! And may I be the first to wish you MERRY CHRISTMAS! Yes, I know it's a bit early, but here in the Philippines the season begins early. Sales at the malls in August and September, music in stores at the end of August, and I'm sure that Christmas décor will be on sale this week. Our students are already excited about our Christmas party 3 ½ months away.

TERM 2 ENDING, EXAMS TO COME!

But to things really happening now. Last Friday concluded teaching for Term 2 (ten weeks already!!). Next week we will be having Evaluation Week, exams are given in each class. I know that the students would appreciate your prayers as they prepare for exams in each of their courses; discipleship, math and finance, sewing, dorm life and guidance/social. Marks are due on Thursday in the afternoon, report cards will be sent home on Friday.

MID-PROGRAM BREAK:

With the end of Term 2 comes our mid program break. The week of September 6 – 10 we will have a week off!!! Hurray! We are all looking forward to this time of relaxation and rest. Our two students from the island of Mindoro will also head home, the first time in 23 weeks. They are SUPER excited. It will be for them a two hour bus ride to the port of Batangas, then a 2 ½ hour boat ride to the island, next a 1 ½ hour jeep ride to their home area and, finally, a 45 min walk up the mountain. We are all ready for some R and R.

This Thursday evening the staff and students of Mustard Seed will be enjoying a hot dog roast, with chips, soft drinks and all the condiments on top. We'll make pasta salad and veggies and dip. For dessert, what else? S'mores! This is not a typical Filipino meal but everyone enjoys the time together. The big concern is the weather. We are praying that it doesn't rain Thursday evening so we can make a fire outside to roast our meal. Please pray for a good evening!

A TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL...

No, not me!! But one of our students. Because of family financial concerns, the coming evaluation week, and that her grades aren't that great, the dorm staff took her to the hospital just a block away from the dorm. It was diagnosed as a panic attack due to stress. All of her tests came back normal, for which we gave thanks to the LORD. I am also grateful that we now have a social worker on staff. She has been talking with Jenn this week to help her sort through her concerns and praying with her. Please pray for her.

A SAD TIME...

Not many days after my last letter, our dorm mom, Iree, received a call that her younger brother had been taken to hospital that morning. She left immediately for Manila to be with her family. He suffered a stroke due to complications from high blood pressure and a high fever. He passed away two days after collapsing at home. He was 27 years old and leaves a wife and just year old baby. We were able to visit the family at their home the day of the funeral. It was a great shock to the family.

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS...

We so appreciate all your prayers for the staff and students of Mustard Seed. We are praying that all of our students will pass their exams and begin Term 3 on September 13. If this happens it will be the first time that we will have all of the students who began the program continue into term 3. We will definitely do a dance of joy!

We continue to covet your prayers as our budget for this year has not been met yet. Thank you for standing with this in this need. If you feel led to send a gift to Mustard Seed, please send it to one of the addresses listed below.

PRAISE:

7. The tests for our student who suffered from the panic attack were normal.
8. We have had two different sets of visitors to Mustard Seed in the last month, all from the US.
9. Mid Program break will be coming in one week!!

PRAYERS:

9. Students will do well on their exams next week.
10. That with the start of Christmas so early here, we won't get caught up in the materialism of the season, that we will be ready to share the true meaning of Christmas.
11. For our student who is dealing with a lot of stress.
12. Safety as our students head home for mid program break.

SO UNTIL NEXT TIME....

Thank you again for your prayers. God bless you richly!

Blessings,

Barbara Burchert
Program Director

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