

THE FTH FEEDING PROJECT IN CABUYAO, LAGUNA

April 12, 2010

LZL (pronounced *Lezel*, short for *Flordeliza*, I think shortened for *texting*) is the current President of Rotary Club of Cabuyao Circle (RCCC). RCCC is composed of about 20 very active members; all except one are women, business owners, entrepreneurs, professionals. Lzl invited us to witness the feeding project funded by FtH through RCCC. The recipients are pre-school kids from Brgy Southville, from families of former squatters along the railroad tracks in Cabuyao and those relocated from Manila whose homes were damaged by Typhoon Ondoy. The venue was a covered court, somewhere in Southville, near the shores of Laguna Bay, where the kids were treated to lunch every day, 5 days a week, for the next six months.

As I have not been in Cabuyao for a long, long time, since the Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX) bypassed Cabuyao and ended in Calamba, going to Los Banos and other towns further South, I asked Lzl for direction, coming from SLEX exit to Cabuyao, and emailed her a day before our trip. Lzl texted me the direction like starting with “Then, derecho po sa papunta Metrobank, ask na lang po; after Metrobank po, may canto papunta munisipyo, bla, bla, bla.” I checked my EZ Map of the Philippines, clicked on “google earth” and located Cabuyao and felt confident that I will find the place.

At 8:30 AM, Tess and I left our place at 72 Canterbury St., Hillsborough, next to Alabang Hills, for the 10:00 AM appointment to meet the RCCC at the Cabuyao Municipal Hall. The traffic was very light, going the other direction away from Manila. We passed the exits to San Pedro, Binan, then Santa Rosa and getting uneasy that there maybe no exit to Cabuyao. As I was about to exit at Eton City, a new development named for “Makati of the South”, being compared to the “Palm” in Dubai, I saw the sign “Cabuyao, 2 km” and I felt better, not lost yet!

So far, so good, until I reached the ‘old’ National Highway and I made a right, being a dead end, with no directional sign. We kept on driving, looking for the Metrobank or McDonald or Jollibee until we asked a traffic monitor for Cabuyao Hall and we were told it is the other way and we’re already in Calamba City. I called Lzl for help and she txted me 2 ‘business card’ of other RCCC to give me directions. “wer r u now?” asked Ate Barbs; I said in front of ‘Bargain Tile Center’ and we just passed the “Crematorium” seeing no other street signs or other landmark to tell. No problem, just go straight until you reach a fork, take the left road until you see ‘Nestle’, then Allied Bank and then Metrobank on the right. Make a right a Metrobank until you see a big building, the Cabuyao Municipal Hall and we’ll meet you there. Just after we passed by ‘Nestle’, another Ate Iren called to give me further assistance. We reached the Municipal Hall in one piece, parked and waited for LZL and 3 cars came with RCCC members in purple shirts with Rotary logos, ready to escort us to the venue.

One member rode with us and told me to follow the lead car towards the venue somewhere. As we left the munisipyo, I was blocked by a tricycle and as I turned right, the lead car was already no where in sight. The other member riding with us directed me to make a right, a left, a right and another right after a railroad track until we reached the covered basketball court.



Photo No. 1 Plates of spaghetti ready to be served.



Photo No. 2. A mother assisting her son while the other boy concentrated on his lunch with Nestle tea drink.

There were more than 30 kids waiting for us, with their mothers in tow, some with other kids on their arms. There were 30 plates already filled with spaghetti noodles on a table ready for distribution. We said a short prayer and lunch was served. Ate Iren pointed to me a little girl, the 3rd girl from the left on Photo No. 1, in her nice blue dress, about 6 years old and she is the second oldest in a group of 8, a non-stop baby factory family. I was told that the kids are especially clean today for the visit. Spaghetti with iced tea donated by Nestle is a special treat since FtH is visiting; normally it is lugaw (porridge) with some Vitameal for nutrients. I guess that the lugaw is better than no meal at all.



Photo No. 3 Incoming RCCC President receiving a check for \$1,400 for the six months feeding project from Tess Alarcon in white shirt, of FtH



Tess, in white shirt, turned over the box of medicines and explained the role of FtH in funding the feeding project and distribution of the medicines.

After the feeding, Tess turned over the sum of \$1,400 to cover the expenses for six (6) months. This is the first time the RCCC was able to secure funding outside of their inner circle, from an overseas source to boot! A box of medicines was also donated to the group to be used in the Rural Health Unit of Cabuyao. We said goodbye to the kids and their moms and head for the farm of Ate Iren for a pot luck lunch by the members of RCCC. One member told me that she still remembers a FtH lady with very long nails.

The road to the farm is a one-lane, paved road, between a river and the fence of Nestle. The space on the river side was occupied by squatters with their kitchen across the road, on the fence of Nestle. We met a big truck almost near the farm and the truck had to back up a few hundred feet until there was enough space for it to park on the side, to let us through. We had a nice lunch of pancit canton, pancit bihon, relyenong bangus, barbecued pork, with desert of kutsinta, pitsi-pitsi, banana and cheese-flavored ice cream. We left the RCCC with their meeting and head for home, without getting lost.

Pablito
 April 13, 2010