



# ORDER OF ASCLEPIUS PARTNERS WITH GO TO NATIONS FOR MED MISSION

Article by: Cher Celeste G. Garcia and Stephanie Grace C. Lucero

Lay-out & photography by: John Ramel Q. Rafael



**T**he tenet of Service was strengthened yet again by both resident and senior members of the Order of Asclepius in an outreach program held on March 22, 2014 at Hope Center, Barangay Calajunan, Mandurriao.

The event, which took place from 8am to 3pm, provided medical needs to 487 individuals, consisting of 330 children and 157 adults from 116 families in the area.

International organization Go To Nations (GTN) spearheaded the medical mission, in partnership with the Philippine Army, Kayang-Kayang Missions International, and the Order of Asclepius.

The medical mission was augmented by the following volunteer doctors:

Dr. Edna Medez (Charter), Dr. Larae Ann Troncillo (Batch 27), Doc Jennifer Escarilla (Batch 27), Dr. May Connie Joy Leda (Batch 27), Dr. Andrea Dimagiba (Batch 28), Dr. Lester Dimzon (Batch 28), and Dr. Leif Bayani Marold (Batch 31).

GTN is a missions sending agency committed to sharing the Gospel to all peoples. Part of their advocacy is to provide outreaches and medical missions for poor and indigent families.

"I want to help people receive healing -- not just healing in their body like what we are doing here; but also healing in their hearts, minds and emotions", said one event's organizers, Natalie Mattes.

Although initially a children's medical outreach, the event also ca-

tered to adults and senior citizens in the afternoon.

Among the services received by the participating families include physical assessment, prayer sessions, consultations with doctors, and even free haircuts for boys. Skits were also put together by some of the volunteers for entertainment. Free medicine, provided by the Department of Health - Iloilo, and medical education were given as well.

Other participating organizations and sponsors in the outreach included Jesus is Light & Hope Church, St. Paul Hospital - Pediatric and Family Medicine Department, Iloilo Camp Sunshine Center Foundation Inc., Full Gospel Community Church, Zdel Pharmacy, GTN Timothy Internship and Fuel.ph.

# GO TO NATIONS: GOING PLACES

Article by: Jayrick F. Aguirre  
Lay-out & photography by: John Ramel Q. Rafael



The setting was in a community church in Brgy. Calajunan, Mandurriao, where throngs of people waited patiently for their turn to be registered and be taken around the area's 11 makeshift stations, marked with crayon-scrawled cardboard propped on bamboo posts. In the midst of that heap of people, is a young American woman, briskly moving and speaking in perfect Hiligaynon, which made people gape in disbelief. Her other American companions stood in each of the stations, beaming at the incoming crowd, as the line started moving and everyone began to do their work.

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"I love people. I really do. And I can say that that love doesn't come from me; that

love comes from God. My heart feels so full of love for people and I don't feel content to be in the United States," said Natalie Mattes, a Go To Nations missionary from Missouri who came to Iloilo four years ago to spearhead various outreach projects.

Go To Nations (GTN) is a missions sending agency, stationed in Jacksonville, Florida in the US with over 450 missionaries in 70 countries. Among its many projects is the recently-concluded annual medical mission sponsored by several organizations including the Order of Asclepius.

"I've been in GTN for a year now and it's my first place to stay long in a place [Iloilo]; to live with the people and really

build relationships," said Ryan Hull, another missionary from Wisconsin. "I've always had the heart to go somewhere [and help people] and I just fell in love with the Philippines."

According to Natalie the medical mission took over four months to organize. "We've been preparing since November, and even this week, we've been very busy just putting it together and making sure everything's in place. It's a lot of work but it's all worth it."

The balmy weather and the smooth flow of queues drew hundreds of patients in, with members of batch 36 and 37 manning the Check-In, Vital Signs, Pharmacy and Medical Education stations, along with Asclepian doctors from various batches.



Prior to the medical mission, the resident members conducted a prescription writing lecture with Dr. Myrna Abello and vital signs crash course. “It was really helpful too with [JMA] Argee [Alonsabe] and Grand Lady Nikki [Portigo]; they’re even texting me ahead of time to have some training and coordination beforehand. It’s really cool to run into an organization like that,” said Ryan.

“In the previous years we’ve never had such help before,” Natalie said with a laugh. “Before [we had] maybe a couple of volunteers here and there, but now it really blew us away with how many volunteers came out and their willingness to help and bring supplies and materials.”

One of the Order’s goals is to be of service to the Filipino community through medical missions like these, intersecting with Go To Nations’ vision of “bringing hope to the hurting” with their outreach programs.

“I enjoy seeing how well all the volunteers are caring for the people, like how they really take time in finding out their stories, just giving them love, [and] giving hugs,” said Natalie. “I just think it’s so great when not only foreigners come to help Filipinos but when Filipinos are helping other Filipinos.”

“At first I was actually scared that we might have too many volunteers but it was, like, just right, and I could see every-

one working so well with the nurses getting along with the kids and the kids smiling. You guys [volunteers] really made it easy, too,” said Ryan. “I’m really happy; it’s been amazing.”

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By three in the afternoon, the community church was still filled with people bustling about. Many children remained behind, playing and laughing boisterously while volunteers started dismantling the stations. And still in the midst of that heap of people is Natalie, still going around with a smile on her face, still speaking in crisp Hiligaynon, thanking everyone for their help—concluding the first of the Order’s acts of service for the current academic year. #