



September, 2008:

For this month's newsletter I want to try something a little different. I want to give you a picture of what you might call a typical kid in Agdao; the kind of kid that we are reaching out to. What follows is a fictional story and it is based solely on what I have perceived in my limited time here in the Philippines. I am not an expert in the culture. I have chosen to write a fictional/hypothetical story because I do not want to exploit or embarrass an individual by talking about their personal situation. My goal is that through this you would be better able to pray for and understand some of the children that we work with everyday. Please continue to seek God and call upon Him on our behalf. The children and families here need to experience God's love, like all people (including those in North America) who have not met our wonderful Savior.



A Story:

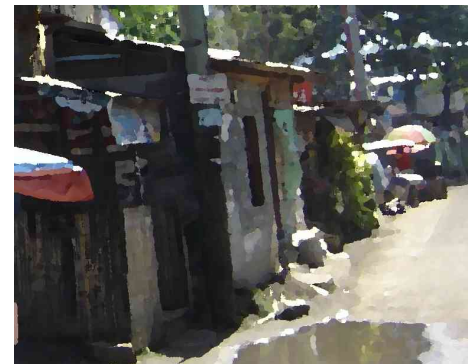
My name is Jared. I live in Agdao, Davao City in a very densely populated and poor area that you might call a squatter area. I am 10 years old and I live with my three younger sisters, my older brother and my mother. My father lives far away in another city. Sometimes he sends us money, but not very often. I have stayed with him a few times during summer break at school, but he has never been back to Davao since he left when I was 6 years old. My mother takes care of us but she is rarely at home during the day because she works 6 days a week at a local factory. Her pay is barely enough to put me and one of my younger sisters in school and provide enough food for us. I really don't know what she is going to do next year when the second youngest sister needs to start kindergarten. Sometimes we are not able to buy enough rice to

make it through the week and we have to go without for a day or two. We sometimes get fruit or vegetables but usually all we have for dinner is a scoop of rice and a little bit of meat. I notice my mom does not always take a lot because she is saving for us. I try to help to make sure that my little sisters get enough. My brother is trying to find work but he cannot find a good job. I think that is why he is mad all the time. We are hoping he will be able to work abroad so he can send us money but he needs to get more training.

When my mother and brother are out, I am left in charge of the home. Sometimes our neighbor will come over and check on us but it's usually just me for the day. I don't always know the best way to take care of them but I do my best. I really love my little sisters and I work hard in school so that one day I will be able to provide for them. My dream is to be a



fighter pilot one day so that I can buy them a nicer house to live in. Our house right now is pretty small. It's made from old pieces of lumber and metal. It is good enough unless it rains really heavy. When it does the floor gets wet and it's kind of hard to sleep. Our whole neighborhood floods pretty bad too when this happens. I think that this is what made my little sister sick last year. When we took her to the hospital, the doctor there said we needed to get some medicine but we could not afford it. Luckily, she got better on her own but she was sick for a long time.



We do not have a bathroom in our house. We need to go down the street to the public bathroom. When we need water to cook or to drink we need to buy a bucket of water from the neighbor. It's hard because our neighbors fight all the time and sometimes I can hear the man hitting his wife. She never says anything to anyone because she is scared. But there are lots of friendly people in my neighborhood and we look out for each other. I love basketball and I love to play with my friends. I also love to watch the t.v. at the store across the street. Life is hard here, but there is always hope that the future will be better.

Ok, Dave again. I hope that you found some value in this. Please pray for the Jared's that we work with everyday. God bless.