

*There is hope in love.*



**GENTLE HANDS, INC.**

*There is HOPE in LOVE*

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**GENTLE HANDS, INC.**  
ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT 2016

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## Message from the Executive Director

*Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves.*

More than ever, these words in Proverbs have spurred me on this past year of 2016.

At Gentle Hands, we continue to provide a home for children who have no where else to go. Children who have been abused, children who have been hungry, children who have been lost, and children who have just been abandoned. At a very young age, these children have seen more than their little eyes should have. They have suffered more loss than many of us have. They are weak and broken.

But as they look at their new caregiver, they look with hope. They open their heart to be loved and the resilience that God placed in them comes alive.

Through the trials, the frustrations, the waiting, and the mounds of paperwork, I have felt a deep sense of responsibility to work harder for these precious children.

Giving food and shelter and education to a child is easy. Giving them security, love, and a place to feel safe, is more challenging. Teaching them that they are special, cherished, and loved despite what they experienced is tough. Holding a screaming child for hours can make you question hope. Having a child reject your love can make you angry. Getting up day after day to be the only consistent, safe, and caring adult in a child's world, can be really, really hard.

But, I have seen over and over, the healing that love can bring. And I know that there is hope for every child no matter what they have seen or how they have been hurt. I am convinced more than ever, that the right intervention, with genuine love, will change the heart of a broken child who has forgotten how to speak.

I encourage you too, to take opportunity to be a voice for the orphan. Get involved. Begin to pray. Think about adoption. Support orphanages with supplies and with regular financial support. Do something to help give a voice to these children.

Together, we can prove that there is hope in love.

Together, we can give words to children who have lost their voice.

Speak up.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charity Graff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**CHARITY GRAFF**  
Executive Director



# What is Gentle Hands?

Gentle Hands has been a child and youth welfare agency licensed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines for almost 13 years. Desiring to be on the front lines of the rescue and rehabilitation of medical, social, psychological, and educational needs of 'at-risk' children and youth, advocating for the rights of children and working towards improving human community life through the love of Jesus and family centered care.

Through Jason's Home, in Quezon City, we exist to provide residential home care rehabilitation services including basic education, nutrition, emergency and general healthcare to children in physical danger, those severely or terminally ill, malnourished, abandoned, sexually and or physically abused, and otherwise disadvantaged children or those in other crisis situations as a result of poverty, uncaring, family environment and other related problems, until such time as they can be reunited with their family, transferred to a long-term family, placed in foster care, or adoption can be facilitated.

Through Babyanne's Home, in Bulacan, we exist to provide residential home care rehabilitation services including basic education, nutrition, and general healthcare to children in physical danger, abandoned, sexually and or physically abused, and otherwise disadvantaged children or those in other crisis situations as a result of poverty, uncaring, family environment and other related problems, until such time as they can be reunited with their family, transferred to a long-term family, placed in foster care, or adoption can be facilitated.

## Vision

To be a center for rescue and healing of children in crisis.

## Mission

To provide family-centered care and hope for children who have experienced trauma.

## Goal

To bring holistic intervention to every child in our care.



# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Residential Care

The biggest part of what we do, is to provide a home where our children can heal, grow and develop in safety and love. While residential care provides all their physical and emotional needs, we make sure we meet their social, educational, medical, psychological and spiritual needs as well.

Two sites, Quezon City and Bulacan, now meet the needs of more than 140 children combined.

GHI residential care anchored the theory of attachment and how relationship with a primary caregiver will allow each child to find a guiding, safe, secure relationship in that primary relationship.

While a child learns to attach to their caregiver, behavior modification and other skilled interventions are employed and implemented to help the child recover from trauma and to become socially functional. Slowly, as wounds begin to heal within the safety of clear set boundaries, they learn to explore relationships and use acceptable and healthy behavior. They are loved without measure and taught that God has a plan for their life no matter what they have been through. It is amazing to see them grow and overcome so many hurts and fears and move forward to a place of physical, emotional, and mental health.



# Rehabilitation and Medical Services

GHI, Quezon City, is complete with a medical wing that includes a pharmacy, treatment area, a large space for children and others who may need isolation or special medication. Malnutrition and tuberculosis are among the biggest concerns for our new intakes. Some come in with much more complicated issues such as prematurity and heart conditions that require surgery. Backed by several local doctors, our medical wing has been full all year.



# Case Management

One of the most active, and crucial departments of GHI is our social work department. Responsible for all the paperwork of our children, including filing of birth certificates, court cases, and the many submissions required for the process of adoption, we have some of the best social workers.

The Republic Act of the Philippines, RA 9523, was created and implemented to protect the Filipino child and to ensure that each child goes through a legal process of certification that declares them legally available for adoption. This process allows a child to move forward to be matched to a potential adoptive family.

Many intakes have very complicated backgrounds, making casework difficult, time consuming and often heart breaking. The social workers do home visits, area scouting, investigations, and counseling to families in need.

For the third year in a row, GHI received the award for the most cases processed towards adoption as well as the fastest turn around of paperwork.



# Statistics

| NEW ADMISSIONS   | 2012      | 2013      | 2014      | 2015      | 2016      |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>16</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>33</b> |
| Surrendered      | 1         | 11        | 6         | 10        | 3         |
| Abandoned        | 1         | 17        | 13        | 3         | 10        |
| Neglected/Abused | 9         | 20        | 15        | 18        | 15        |
| Medical          | 3         | 8         | 4         | 6         | 5         |
| Palliative       | 2         | 1         | -         | 4         | -         |

| DISCHARGES             | 2012      | 2013      | 2014      | 2015      | 2016      |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>31</b> |
| Reunification          | 9         | 6         | 8         | 13        | 6         |
| Int'l Adoption         | 6         | 11        | 5         | 2         | 20        |
| Local Adoption         | 1         | 1         | 4         | -         | -         |
| Foster care placements | 1         | 0         | 1         | 1         | 1         |
| Foster to Adopt        | 1         | 0         | -         | 1         | -         |
| Transfer               | 1         | 1         | 2         | -         | 3         |
| Palliative             | -         | 1         | -         | 3         | 1         |



# Adoptions

On average, it takes two (2) years to complete the paperwork for adoption. We are thankful for that time as many of our children need that long to settle and to heal and to comprehend the concept of a new family and of the meaning of adoption.



## STATS FOR 2016

|         |    |
|---------|----|
| Norway  | 1  |
| Belgium | 1  |
| France  | 1  |
| Spain   | 3  |
| USA     | 16 |

## STATS FOR 2015

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Australia   | 1 |
| France      | 1 |
| Spain       | 1 |
| USA         | 6 |
| Philippines | 4 |



# Unadoptable

He was referred to us from another foundation. Born with visual and hearing impairments, he was surrendered for adoption but complications and slow development made the “powers that be” decide he was not adoptable.

So for 9 years, the foundation loved him and cared for him and did all they knew to do. He watched his friends grow, develop, and eventually be adopted while he continued to struggle and grow older. And as he grew older, he would ask when he would get to have a mommy and daddy and go on an airplane like everyone else. (What other concept of adoption is there for a child?)

But he asked. And when he first met me, that is what he asked me. Was I was his mother?

For a moment, I couldn't breathe. No child should have to wait... never mind ask, to have a mom or a dad.

Upon admission, his behavior was quite unacceptable for a 10 year old, but he had been surrounded by two-year-olds for years. He was just mimicking what he was seeing. A plan was put in place. Sign language was to be his language- he had the most vocabulary in sign and was able to communicate his needs most effectively with sign. Our staff was put in lessons and a tutor was employed to teach him further. He now had other boys his age to play with and to interact with and to learn from.



Though he could hear a little, he had not been taught much English. Though he could speak a little, it was muffled and mumbled; a language of his own. Though he could see a little, after cataract surgery when he was three, he would still tilt his head to get the right angle so he could see and hear and figure out what was going on.

I watched him study, and was amazed at his ability to learn new signs. New concepts. New emotions. I was convinced that he had the potential to be perfectly functional in society.

I was convinced that with a little more discipline and the right special education, he would learn to read fluently and blossom.



He had the softest heart, this boy. He had the gentlest spirit, he was so trusting and loving. I have seen his tears, very real tears for someone else who got hurt. And I have seen him caress a baby's cheek. I have seen him stroke the cat and the dog with such a light hand and I have watched him leave the home he knew for 9 years and embrace us with his whole heart. He was beautiful and so very resilient.

*And I was convinced that he had potential to overcome all his special needs and I was convinced he WAS ADOPTABLE.*

Three years later, our prayers and hard work came to fruition and a family in the USA was moved to love this child as their own.

There is always a family with the right skill set, the right amount of creativity, the right heart, the right amount of love for a child that might be a little more difficult to raise and teach and to uncover his God-given potential.

God-given potential. We all have it, don't we?

There is nothing such as a child that is unadoptable.

I cannot deny that some of our children will require work. I cannot deny that some have more physical needs than the average child. I cannot deny that it may take years to help him stand on his own.

But I also cannot deny any child of their rights.

I believe every child deserves to have someone that they can call “mommy” and “daddy”. And I will work and advocate as long as I have breath and strength and as long as God continues to bring me children.

Open your heart. Open your mind. Be that parent that changes a child's world forever.

# Mission Teams and Volunteers

Short term mission teams and volunteers are a large part of what Gentle Hands does. Sometimes, this means a person volunteering for a few months or a team coming for a few weeks to help with a project or outreach. These are the teams, families and individuals who partnered with us:

## January

Evans (USA)

## February

Tony Lane (USA)  
Carlos (USA)  
Father Terry (AUS)

## March

Beruldsens (AUS)  
Niessents (JAPAN)

## July

Zion's team (Canada)  
Evans (USA)

## August

Jenna B. (USA)

## September

Ryan (Korea)  
Meggy (Korea)  
KOZA (Japan)

## October

Perth (AUS)

## November

Nanny (Canada)  
John (USA)

## December

Koza (USA)



# Donations

We are so thankful for all the people who support GHI by giving not only financially but also those who give donations-in-kind.

This year saw wondrous donations of rice, medical supplies, used clothing, and school supplies. Often we received donations dropped off at the door with no name, but they were exactly what we needed and the timing was so perfect!

*Thank you to those who donated anonymously and thank you to those who asked what we needed and gave us exactly that. Without your generosity, our children would simply not have the beautiful things they have!*



# Education

Many of the school-aged children have never been to school or have been forced to discontinue their education at some point before their admission to GHI. When a child is assessed, based on present knowledge and potential to learn, the Case Management Team will determine the best educational pathway for this child.

GHI strives to meet the different and individualized needs of each student. For children unable to learn in a public school, GHI has developed a homeschool program on site to meet their educational needs.

The beauty of the homeschooling environment, is that each child is able to work at his or her own pace, and the program is catered to the child's unique learning style. Behavioral issues are minimized, as outside factors such as a noisy classroom or competitive classmates. This reduces stress and foster an environment where learning, not simply achievements, is celebrated. Homeschooling also gives the educational team the opportunity to identify gaps in learning and address those needs before moving on to new concepts, thus ensuring a more successful academic future.



# Scholars

Many Filipino youth cannot afford college or university after high school. GHI has a sponsorship program that allows them to be junior staff while studying a college course. These students are able to work towards their dream of education while working in the area of interest while at GHI. Warner Community Church, World Changers, from Perth, Australia, plays a significant role in paying the tuition and covering the cost of these young people going to school.

2016 saw 11 full time university students and 2 high school students in private school.



**Renalyn**  
High School



**Rona**  
High School



**Dave**  
Culinary Arts



**Eddy**  
Culinary Arts



**Jomar**  
Drafting



**Justine**  
Engineering



**Stephen Kyle**  
Engineering



**Louie**  
Accounting



**Divine**  
Nursing



**Jasper Ann**  
Psychology



**Daiseree**  
Education, Elementary



**Gina**  
Education, Math



**Sarah**  
Special Education



# Extracurricular

Recreation and sports are a big part of what we do at GHI. Skateboarding, taekwondo, ballet, music classes, and just playing, allow the children to have a holistic experience of life. We believe these experiences will reduce stress and build emotional well-being in our children. These activities have the potential to reduce self-destructive behaviours and build social cohesion.



# Program for the Deaf

Jay Jay was a little boy who inspired us to learn sign and communicate with the deaf. His successful acquisition of language and his miraculous adoption pushed us to take sign language to the next level. It has become the third language of all our children and staff. We now employ five deaf staff in various positions and our children sing and communicate in simple sign. We hope to be able to have more deaf children in the future, find hope in learning and communication and eventually move on to be adopted.

Jay Jay



# Counselling

GHI employs a multi-disciplinary counselling approach that employs child focused and child directed therapy.

A counsellor is on site every day and the children are free to come at their own request while some formal scheduled sessions occur.

Play and art therapy are both employed in the sessions as a way of facilitating both transformation and healing to each child as they process the recover from negative life experiences.



# Spiritual Development

Recognizing that spirituality is an important part of the healing process, Gentle Hands provides opportunities for children to grow and develop spiritually. Prayer is an important part of each child's life.

They pray before meals and before bedtime. On Sunday mornings, they participate in Sunday school at the Gentle Hands campus, singing worship songs, and learning Bible stories. They learn that God loves them and has a plan for their life, and that they can communicate with God through prayer.



# Staff

GHI would not be an amazing place of healing and transformation without the incredible staff that works here.

Working within an interdisciplinary framework, each department is responsible for aspects of the child's care and case management. Bringing their expertise together, they form a team that works to bring individualised care and healing to each child that comes to Gentle Hands.



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