

Subject: Exciting updates from AFFLIP

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From: Australian Foundation for Fostering Learning in the Phillipines Inc.

To: Roger Saunders

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From the Chair

Mabuhay!

With your help AFFLIP is making a difference. It is eight years since a small group of educators led by Alan Reid and Alastair Douglas came together to create a not for profit charity committed to making a difference to the lives of the 20,000 students attending Elementary (Primary) Schools in Talomo District Davao City, Mindanao in the Southern Philippines. Eight years on we have 374 members who are committed to supporting the five flagship programs:

1. [Health and Nutrition](#) promotes the health and nutrition of students and provides support for agriculture and aquaculture activities to help sustain each school's feeding program.
2. [Schools Learning Network](#) supports principals and teachers from the Talomo District participating in educational exchanges with SA schools.
3. [Learning through the Outdoor Environment](#) assists schools to develop

ways to enhance outdoor school environments in order to promote student learning. It involves Australian and Filipino educators and students working together to explore and then design outdoor learning spaces and teaching materials and resources.

4. [\\$100 Scholarships](#) are provided to at-risk students in grades 4, 5 and 6. The funds provide basic school supplies and the opportunity to engage in leadership programs.

5. [Professional Development Literacy](#) provides quality curriculum resources to each school and works with teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching English literacy.

AFFLIP Fundraiser and Dinner Dance: We could not function at the level we do without the generosity of our members and their friends who gathered together at the Adelaide Pavilion to enjoy delicious food, good wine and great company. Our auctioneers on the night were Geoff Schell (Ray White Clare Valley and Ray White Rural SA) and Russell Brown set the scene for an excellent evening which resulted in over \$17,000 being raised to support AFFLIP programs.





Thank you to all who provided donations for the Live and Silent Auction including:

- **AFFLIP Patron's** Greg Crafter and Stephen Baker
- **Savitas Wines:** Chris Insanally
- **Pikes Wines:** Andrew & Cathy Pike
- **Wine Direct:** Ali Kerr
- **Budget Car Rentals:** Tony Harris
- **Trevor and Di Tiller**
- **Peter Wilson**
- **Mem Fox**
- **Will Morony**
- **Oreon Partners:** Jess Telford
- **Hurley Hotel Group:** Jenny and Peter Hurley
- **MediPedi:** Georgina Jamieson
- **Renior Group:** Charles Figallo
- **Farrell Wines:** Don & Nimfa Farrell
- **Helloworld Travel, Naracoorte:** Charlie Legoe

And of course, the 12-member [**AFFLIP Board**](#) who volunteer their time and expertise to support AFFLIP's work and worked tirelessly up to and on the night to make the fundraiser a success.

Susan Bouchar, AFFLIP Chair.

Focus on Reading

So much of the academic curriculum depends on reading that it is a skill critical to children's overall success at school. Ines Ascuncion, Division Supervisor, concerned about the reading achievement on standardised success, is keen to trial a reading improvement program in Talomo District with a view to expanding it to other districts should it prove successful. The leader of the 2018 Schools Network visit was Evangeline Vicencio, who at the time was the Division Reading Focal Person, with a brief to improve children's reading achievement across the Division. With that in mind, a program was arranged for Evangeline to help her develop a strategic plan for reading.

During the October visit Evangeline visited several schools to see reading lessons in action, talked with principals, and received advice about some of the principles behind the successful implementation of strategic plans, including:

- allowing a change program of this scale to run for at least two full years before a formal evaluation is carried out: this allows for teachers' understandings to be developed and initiatives to be trialled and adapted until they become an integral part of teachers' practices
- building a school culture needs to ensure that "reading is everyone's business" and that reading is valued and encouraged
- building teachers' knowledge about reading and their capacity to teach reading more effectively
- raising expectations of both teachers and children
- gradually introducing a wide range of strategies for effectively teaching reading and allowing teachers to trial one strategy at a time until it becomes integrated into their daily practice
- ensuring that children are reading most material at their 'independent level'
- using assessment as a significant tool to inform classroom programs and drive children's learning
- using monitoring and assessment procedures that measure what we value rather than valuing what can be measured easily



Reading Corner at A. Mabini Elementary School

After discussing *The "Big Six" components of reading* (SA DECD) and the *Nine Components of Effective, Research-Supported Reading Instruction* (Learning First Alliance) the PD: literacy team came up with a draft of the *Nine Elements*

About Reading (NEAR) framework, which is designed to address the Talomo District context. The nine elements are motivation and purpose; concepts of print; oral language; phonological awareness; phonics; vocabulary; fluency; comprehension; and monitoring and assessment. Addressing these in both Filipino and English, with children who in the main speak Visayan as their mother tongue, is no mean feat.

Since her return, Evangeline has gained approval for the strategic plan from Ines Ascuncion, Division Supervisor, and presented it to Talomo school principals. In January, Evangeline was appointed as the District Supervisor in Talomo, and implementing the plan for reading will be one of her tasks. We look forward to hearing about improved results in children's reading achievement as teachers are upskilled and children's enjoyment of reading is fostered.

Maitland Rotary Club funds 4 major projects

A generous donation by the very supportive Maitland Rotary Club has funded major Health and Nutrition projects in 4 of the AFFLIP Talomo schools. Click on the link to learn more.

1. An exciting new three-pronged outdoor learning project is being established at A. Mabini Elementary School which involves poultry farming (native chicken), greenhouse elevation and aquaponics.
Read more: [New Outdoor Learning Project at A. Mabini Elementary School](#)
2. The project at A. Bonifacio Elementary School involved the construction of a plant nursery to support the extensive vegetable gardens which ultimately subsidise the School Based Feeding Program.
Read more: [New Garden Nursery constructed at A. Bonifacio Elementary School](#)
3. Talomo Central Elementary School does not have extensive areas available for agricultural pursuits so decided to establish an intensive aquaculture program in the school grounds.
Read more: [Aquaponics Project established at Talomo Central Elementary School](#)
4. Catalunan Pequeño Elementary School has also established an aquaponics project that has great potential as both a source of food for the School Based Feeding Program and also as a vehicle to foster

learning in other curriculum areas such as Math, Science and Technology.
Read more: [Aquaponics comes to Catalunan Pequeño Elementary School](#)

Profile of a Principal

In this, and subsequent newsletters, we profile a principal in one of the Talomo elementary schools. The principals are the linchpin of AFFLIP projects. They manage AFFLIP's work in Talomo district by writing submissions for money; supporting their coordinators in implementing projects; accounting for expenditure; and liaising with parents, caregivers and school communities. We hope you enjoy getting to know them.

In this issue we profile **Mr Allan Rivera, Principal of Dr Jovito S. Francisco Elementary School.**



Allan Rivera (centre front) with the staff at Dr. Jovito Elementary School.

Allan gained promotion to Principal level at San Lorenzo Elementary School in 2013. From 2003 until 2008 he was in charge of Binaton Elementary school in Malabog District, a far flung area but still within the Davao City Division. This small school catered for fewer than 100 children from a community of largely indigenous people, and Allan was supported by three teachers. Because this was a small school, he taught a combined year 3 and 4 class as well as managing his duties as school head. The school was a pilot project for the IP BEAM project (Indigenous People Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao), which was a funded AusAid program. Through seminars conducted in the IB BEAM project, Allan met AFFLIP Board member Roger Saunders. From 2008 to 2012 Allan was a school principal in Piedad

District.

Allan has been part of the AFFLIP team since 2013, when he was assigned to San Lorenzo Elementary School, Talomo District. Allan has always been a wonderful supporter of AFFLIP, contributing to our aim of helping some of the poorest children in Talomo District. Allan says that AFFLIP's flagship portfolios have been very significant to the teachers as well as school children in terms of scholarships; through the health and nutrition initiatives, as in the provision of medicine and garden tools as well as rain water catchment in the school; PD/Literacy through teacher training; and the donation of laminating machines, book stands, and a sewing machine. Everything sponsored by the AFFLIP has had great impact on the teachers, children and the community. It decreased pupil dropout rate, helped non-readers begin to read, and supported achievement of 100 % promotion rate (from one grade level to the next).

Allan is one of AFFLIP's quiet achievers. Board members who visited San Lorenzo were impressed with the school's initiative to flatten fruit juice boxes and recycle them into aprons, carry bags and covers (to cover TVs, tables, etc) using the sewing machine. These were then sold to parents and community members to raise more funds for the school.

This last school year Allan has been assigned to Dr Jovito S. Francisco Elementary School, still in Talomo District. This is one of the smallest schools AFFLIP supports with 15 teachers and 480 school children for the school year 2018-2019. The school very recently celebrated the eighth anniversary of its founding with members of the Francisco family. As principal, Allan supports all the flagship portfolios, providing leadership to his staff and school community. With the cooperation of the Parent-Teachers Association, Allan has recently put in a submission to AFFLIP for a 'Climb Me Knots' frame to be used for outdoor learning and during children's play time. Allan also serves on the AFFLIP scholarships management group and we acknowledge his important role in this portfolio.

On a personal note, Allan is married to Genna and they have two children, John Benedict and Algen John.

Allan says, "I am grateful and honoured to be part of the AFFLIP family. Mabuhay! Long live AFFLIP!"

STOP PRESS: Allan has just let us know that school buildings at Jovito Francisco will be demolished and replaced by a four storey, 20 classroom building in June this year after the National and Local Elections are held in May. For that reason, the OLEP proposal will not proceed for the moment.



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