

August 24, 2015

## A Triple B Case Story

A little girl who turn three next week was referred this week to Triple B Care Projects for care after sustaining flame burns to her face, head, both arms and legs and her chest. The cause of the house fire is thought to be a kerosene lamp, an all too popular method of light in homes where there is no power source here in the Philippines. The bamboo home was totally destroyed. Since the children were alone and their father was at a neighbours watching TV; a vigilant neighbour rescued the child and her 4 year old sister, who miraculously had minimal injuries and not hospitalised. The rescuer sustained burns but was released from hospital after 2 days and so far we have not been able to trace that hero.

It will be a long journey for this little girl who is a great risk of developing contractures and will be scarred for life. Everything that can be done to minimise the scars and the trauma for this child is being undertaken and Val is grateful to the Swinfen Charitable Trust UK (Telemedicine) which links her with experts in the field of Paediatric Burns from Australia, UK and the USA. Thanks also to Grace from Helping Hands Healing Hearts Ministries who found the child in a local Govt hospital, in very bad shape, with no wound cover in a crowded general ward.

Solar lighting has become very popular in the Philippines lately. Using clear plastic 1.5L soda bottles fitted into (mostly corrugated) roof space, this brings much needed daylight into closely built abodes without power. A terrific program is being undertaken by Project Life Subic to bring free light into the homes of the poverty stricken in and around Olongapo City. This solves the problem of light during day time. Unfortunately candles and kerosene lamps are still widely used at night time, often in homes made of bamboo, known as a ' bahay kubo ' which are extremely flammable and have unstable surfaces where candles and kerosene lamps can easily fall over and quickly set alight structures. A great solution to this problem has been developed and designed by an Australian company with a solar lamp that can be hung from a simple hook and provides up to 6 hours of bright light in the dark nights. They can be recharged in a few hours of sunlight during the daytime. Through our partners-in-care in Melbourne, Kadasig Aid and Development, solar lamps are being distributed to families here in Zambales who have had casualties from burning candles or kerosene lamps. It is a huge task. Kadasig Aid and Development focus mainly on the Island of Cebu, but Triple B Care Projects have been blessed to receive a supply of solar lamps for our families in need here.

On a personal note, I would like to see local by laws implemented which would prohibit the use of kerosene lamps and candles for lighting in all homes, but especially those in poverty. Whilst burns can affect anyone, regardless of financial status, those in poverty are at a much higher risk of injury due to their circumstances such as lack of electricity and water.