

MEDIA RELEASE



Students gather together outside their newly rebuilt school to thank Philam Paaralan and US Philippines Society for reconstructing and improving their collapsed facility.

New Philam Paaralan classrooms spark hope for Yolanda-affected children

In 2013, the world witnessed how Yolanda, internationally known as Typhoon Haiyan, ravaged all towns along its path with sustained winds reaching up to 300 kilometers per hour. This left vast number of infrastructures in shambles, including Php 7.99 billion worth of school buildings.

Upon hearing that his school, Jawili Integrated School in Tangalan, Aklan, was one of the thousands of schools damaged by Yolanda, Principal Policarpio Tibar thought that this would spell the end of his students' dreams.

"The whole world knows how destructive Yolanda was. When I heard that it damaged Jawili Integrated School, I felt fear that the students' learning experience will terribly suffer," he said.



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Despite leaving behind a nation shaken to the core, Yolanda sparked the indomitable spirit of bayanihan among Filipinos as well as people all over the world. Help flooded from every corner of the globe. Individuals and even corporations chipped in resources and partnered with government agencies rebuild the country from the ground up.

Among those who became instrumental in the rehabilitation was Philam Foundation. The corporate social responsibility arm of Philam Life pledged to construct 40 new classrooms in schools across Eastern and Western Visayas.

In just a matter of 15 months, Philam Foundation through its flagship program, Philam Paaralan, delivered as promised. In addition to the 32 classrooms turned over in 2014, the recent completion of eight classrooms in the areas of Aklan, Capiz, Negros Occidental and Iloilo will aid in motivating the distraught pupils to continue learning and reach their dreams.

“Thankfully, Philam Paaralan came along and now, we can experience what healthy education is. I am excited for the learners and I am sure that these new, fully-furnished classrooms are enough motivation for them to study hard and reach for their dreams,” said Ma. Angelica M. Domingo, a teacher from Jawili Integrated School.

The recent batch of classrooms was constructed in partnership US Philippine Society through a \$125,000 grant. US Philippine Society also helped in the construction of the Philam Paaralan in Medellin, Cebu in 2014.

Like the other projects of Philam Paaralan, these classrooms were built in accordance to the size recommended by the Department of Education and also came fully furnished with chalk boards, fans, washrooms, students' tablet chairs and teachers' tables and chairs. The tablet chairs used in the classrooms were donated by Isla Lipana Foundation through their Seat of Hope program. In total, Isla Lipana sponsored 1,250 chairs for the Philam Paaralan in Visayas.

“When Philam Paaralan came, I felt great because we can now enjoy beautiful classrooms. We are so thankful and we feel blessed to receive their gift. Now, we are more comfortable with our new rooms. It is a great help because we need new classrooms for another grade level since our school will have Grade 10 next year. Aside from that, these classrooms will also help elementary pupils and the generations to come,” said Ivy Lorraine T. Caligdong, one of the pupils helped by Philam Paaralan.

To date, Philam Foundation has built 60 classrooms all over the nation. Driven by its singular purpose to serve those in need, Philam Foundation together with Philam Life will persevere in its mission to build an empowered nation through education.

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