

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Yolanda-Stricken School Restored through Philam Paaralan



From left to right: Max G. Ventura, President of the Philam Foundation; Petra Nemcova, founder of the Happy Hearts Fund; Robin Yap, President of the Travel Corporation (Asia); Gerry B. Raynes, Principal/Director of Alangalang Elementary School; and Loreto T. Yu, Municipal Mayor of Alangalang, Leyte.

Two years after Typhoon Yolanda ravaged Leyte, local and international humanitarian organizations are still participating in ongoing rehabilitation efforts. Some organizations, though, focused on arguably the most important aspect of the development of the children who survived the wrath of the typhoon—their education.

The Happy Hearts Fund, a non-profit organization founded by philanthropist and international supermodel Petra Nemcova, partnered with the Philam Foundation and The Travel Corporation to rebuild a school within the Alangalang district in typhoon-hit Tacloban. The Happy Hearts Fund, dedicated to rebuilding schools after natural disasters, moved quickly in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan to commence rebuilding efforts in affected areas.



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In partnership with Happy Hearts Fund and Philam Foundation, The Travel Corporation (TTC) generously contributed US\$40,000 towards the rebuilding of the Alangalang school. The Philam Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of the Philam Group of Companies (PGC), launched Philam Paaralan with the Department of Education. The program aims to rebuild schools affected by natural disasters, and to make them more resilient against future disasters.

“We are very pleased to have been able to help Petra and the Happy Hearts Fund in completing the important restoration of the Alangalang School. Robin Yap, the President of The Travel Corporation (Asia) in attending this opening, proudly represented TTC's brands Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Contiki and Uniworld in commemorating this important event and in doing so reiterating our company's commitment to giving back to local communities around the world, especially in a much loved country such as the Philippines. We are honoured to assist Petra, her team and their remarkable mission to rebuild schools wherever possible. God bless them all and may the children enjoy learning and sharing at this important educational institution in the many years to come.” said Brett Tollman, Chief Executive of TTC.

“We work tirelessly to bring brighter futures to children affected by natural disasters, and this school opening positively demonstrates that, with strong collaborations, we can provide safe, resilient schools, restore a sense of normalcy to those affected by natural disasters, and create sustained response after first responders leave,” Nemcova said. “Attending a school opening is such a meaningful and unforgettable experience for everyone, from the students to parents to teachers, the whole community and of course, all of the partners involved. The ripple effect that this school provides is what keeps us pushing forward in our mission to rebuild, safe resilient schools for children who are forgotten for years after natural disasters because of a lack of sustained response. We are so excited for the Alangalang school opening as it marks a new beginning and better future for children, their families and the whole community,” she added.

Max Ventura, President of the Philam Foundation, expressed his deepest gratitude to the groups and individuals who helped make the rebuilding of the school possible. “We are very grateful to Petra and her team from Happy Hearts as well as to their corporate partners like The Travel Corporation for their generosity and trust in our Philam Paaralan Program,” he said. “We honour them by building these disaster-resilient and conducive learning spaces that will benefit hundreds of school children for years to come. Together with our partners, we are able to build back better and offer hope to communities gravely affected by calamities. The schools that we build do serve as beacons of hope for many,” he concluded.

To know more about Happy Hearts Fund and The Philam Foundation, please visit <http://happyheartfund.org/> and [http://www.philamlife.com/en/about-us/about-philamlife/our-affiliates/philam-foundation/philam\\_foundation.html](http://www.philamlife.com/en/about-us/about-philamlife/our-affiliates/philam-foundation/philam_foundation.html)

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### About the Happy Hearts Fund

Founded in 2005 by Petra Nemcova in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Happy Hearts Fund works to restore hope and grant new opportunities to children and communities affected by natural disasters. By the beginning of 2011, Happy Hearts Fund had rebuilt 50 schools in Indonesia, Thailand, Mexico and Peru. They opened their 120<sup>th</sup> school by 2015.

### About the PHILAM Foundation:

Philam Foundation, Inc. is the corporate social responsibility arm of the Philam Group of Companies that envisions an empowered nation through education. In 2011, Philam Foundation initiated "PhilamPaaralan", a project that seeks to address the shortage of classrooms especially in calamity hit and underserved areas in the country.

### About The Travel Corporation:

[The Travel Corporation](#) is a highly successful international travel group of 30 award-winning brands including Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Contiki Holidays and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection. The Travel Corporation's guiding principle is one of providing the most enjoyable, enriching travel experience for its customers across the globe.

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