

## *Tiwala Newsletter Jan-Feb 2010*

### **'Tiwala's Got Talent!'**

In April Tiwala will be holding a talent show for the children enrolled in our programs. The main purpose of this show is to give the children an opportunity to shine and overcome their insecurities, as many of them struggle with self-esteem issues. We will be mentoring the children in music/dance/drama etc. between now and April and believe that as they master certain skills and then perform them, they will be greatly encouraged by their progress and grow in confidence.

The children will also be making the backdrop for the stage, as a collaborative art project. We really want the show to be all about the children, thus giving them ownership of the project. The process of rehearsing and preparing art work is just as important as the end result and is adding much excitement & stimulation to their regular school routine. After the show itself, the children wish to continue performing in front of various audiences throughout the summer.

We are still recruiting volunteers to mentor children throughout the month of March, so if you are keen to be involved in this way, or if you would like to donate prizes for the show, please get in touch!

### **Santo Domingo Outreach**

In January Tiwala merged our mountain village outreach programs in Santo Domingo with the local church, who's vision is to see entire families restored on all levels - spiritually, relationally, economically and educationally. Tiwala celebrated this union with the church and the mountain village folk, who are greatly encouraged by the level of care and support they are receiving from the church.



## Working with the Badjao Children

The Badjao people are popularly known as 'Sea Gypsies' of the Sulu & Celebes Seas. The Badjao are hugely discriminated against and therefore don't integrate well with the community, and as a result they tend to travel around and re-settle quite often. Apart from fishing, selling sea pearls & other jewelry items, the Badjao largely survive by begging. The young girls & boys are sent out to beg from morning till night, with half-naked babies slung on their backs.

Tiwala has been acquainted with a particular group of Badjao over the past two years. This group have periodically stayed in Legazpi and have now settled in Legazpi, as they have been granted permission to stay by the local government, who have also given them a lot on which to live (in squatter fashion). None of the children or their parents have ever been to school and only dream of being in a classroom environment and acquiring an education. Because of the discrimination that the Badjao have become accustomed to, they don't tend to trust easily, therefore being apprehensive to send their children to schools.

Over the past two years Tiwala has consistently tried to reach out to this group and even more so in recent months. As a result, the Badjao families have finally agreed to allow their children to attend Tiwala's programs at our day centre in Legazpi. On the children's first day at our centre they were overwhelmed with excitement! One of the little Badjao girls started to cry when it was time to draw pictures, as she didn't know how to hold a crayon, but after a bit of one-to-one she was able to do the activity and trace her name - which quickly got rid of the tears!!

Some of the mothers half-jokingly requested that they join our kindergarten! It also came to our attention that some of their babies have severe scabies. They live in very unhygienic conditions and we'll need to educate the parents on basic hygiene and supply medical treatment for their babies. We're delighted to be working with the lovely Badjao clan and pray that they will remain settled in Legazpi!

Every blessing!

Tiwala Team :)

