

# AMADE

## ASSOCIATION MONDIALE DES AMIS DE L'ENFANCE

*Fondée en 1963 par la Princesse Grace de Monaco*



PRESIDENTE : S.A.R. LA PRINCESSE DE HANOVRE

### **Mr Andrea Casiraghi – Press conference 24 August 2006 - Manila**

#### **1. What was your impression of the Philippines before you came?**

It was through my mother's trip and she told me it was a beautiful country with extremely warm and welcoming people, although she was concerned of child rights. She told me it was a country full of hope and that's exactly what I came across.

#### **2. Can you tell us more about your encounters in Philippines and people?**

As I said before the people were so nice everywhere I went and I was impressed with their artistic talent with all the dancing and singing I was lucky to see, and I felt no bitterness even in the most desperate situation. That is a country full of hope.

#### **3. What inspired you to visit the charity works of your mother here in the Philippines?**

First of all, a very kind invitation by AMADE Philippines and Virlanie Foundation through the chairmen Attorney Eric Mallonga and Dominique Lemay. As I planned to engage myself more and more in humanitarian action. I am also here to learn from the wonderful program AMADE and Virlanie has set up here.

As you know my country and my family is very concerned about social action around the world and I want to humbly help myself. My mother and my uncle, H.S.H. Prince Albert, had told me wonderful things about

your country despite the condition of street and slum kids face every day like malnutrition, abuse, slavery and lack of education... The list is very long... as in every developing country. And I am as my mother very concerned about the ecological and human disaster of the ex US military base of Subic bay and Clark field which I will visit on Saturday, where children had born with deformities, terminal diseases and no hope for normal life. This is unacceptable and the fight for the clean up must continue.

#### **4. What do you consider the most memorable experience so far in your visits here in the Phillipines?**

Every child smile every place I went, but in Payatas - one of the worst I ever seen in my life - despite children living on a deadly waste mountain where children scavenging garbage for living, the welcome they gave me was full of hope to continue the fight for the children around the world and I would like to point there the wonderful work Virlanie has doing there helping and giving tools to the community to get themselves out of this dead end. The biggest part of the work being done by community leaders who have no better conditions than anyone else there. All of them mothers.

#### **5. What is the most gratifying thing experience so far in this trip?**

The determination of AMADE and Virlanie and all the different volunteers and such a place rescue action RAC and the different others community I visit Estero Magdalena especially Tondo where the community is ready to take over the work of Virlanie on their own...

I would like to mention the excellent work done by the Magellan center at Virlanie where they're developing alternative education program which complete the traditional education system in extremely clever way making street kids aware of the new information technology which is essential for their future professional life.

#### **6. Have you been to other charity events in Asia?**

No I have not, but AMADE has social programs in Vietnam and Cambodia called *Schools opened to the wind*. This program gives for street children in cities and shanty towns, cigarette traders, bicycle wear repairers, shoe cleaners and so forth, the opportunity to go to school like the others children. The creation of big education center would not be of much help to them because they can not move away from the places

where they earn their living, and they do not have the means to pay for transport from one side of town to the other. The Schools opened to the wind are thus improvised places (sheds, warehouses, simple barracks). These schools thus allow those children to come in at free moment to learn reading calculating and to be monitored in.

**7. Aside from the Philippines, what Asian country would you like to visit and why?**

I have had the opportunity to travel to many countries and I wish to visit many more especially in Asia where I am fascinated by the many cultures and ways of life. Traveling has been a blessing, opening my mind and broadening my vision of the world.

**8. What other causes are close to your heart?**

I am very concerned about the environment, that is why I wish to insist on the terrible situation of Subic bay and Clark field where thousands of people are slowly dying every day by contaminated water and soil.

I would like to put forward my uncle H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco's every day fight for the environment and especially the incredible expedition He went on from Spitzberg to the north pole. It commemorated the expedition of his great great grand father 100 years ago. The goal of the expedition was to see the effects of global warming using His ancestors notebook to compare the diminishing ice cap.

We have only one planet and we can not afford to let her go to waste especially for the sake of our children.

**9. When you go back to Monaco, what memories from the Philippines would you share with your friends?**

A beautiful country with warm and friendly people who have made me feel at home. I am impatient to return and I certainly will encourage all my friends to visit this wonderful country. I am especially impressed by the artistic talent of the philippino children. They are all extremely talented singers and dancers with the potential to become great pop stars.

**10. What would you like to impart with Filipino people especially the youth?**

A message of hope. Despite the situation of the street kids there is a lot of hope for the children. I ask all the people who can help to do so. Every small action has a consequence and makes a world over difference.

**11. Can you share with us the most important lessons that your mother has taught?**

I will share the most important. My mother has always told me that if you have only one glass of water to put out a volcano, you should do so.

**12. Given what you have seen, what would you initiate as your flagship program?**

In the shanty town of tondo where Virlanie foundation is ready to leave in december after many years of wonderful work, the program is now able to continue trough the community leaders... This is our vision at AMADE. We do not stay permanently in any given place and we are the happiest in the world when the community can handle itself on its own. This is the perfect example of how we would like all our projects to be achieved.

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