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# Friends World News

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**Friends World  
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Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

## Floods in the Philippines

A remarkable response has been made towards Friends in the Philippines who are suffering as a result of several typhoons which wreaked havoc in Manila, and now in the northern parts of the Philippines where landslides are also taking lives. Donations have come in from Bhopal- India, Norway, Ireland, The Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, Great Britain and North America. The majority of the 3,500 Friends belong to the Philippines Evangelical Friends Church (PEFC). A small handful are unprogrammed Friends, and they have offered trauma counselling and other assistance to victims of the disasters.



If you have ever wondered what it would be like to be in the face of a disaster, the reports from Friends in the Philippines provide insights. The first response would be to thank God that one's life and that of family members is saved. The post-flood immediate needs are for laundry services (clothes soaked in muddy waters can be saved by washing), delivered relief packages for neighbourhoods still underwater" in the metropolis, and medication for leptospirosis, which can be fatal to those who waded in dirty floodwaters.

So far our Treasurer has sent AUD12,000 from donations received. Our Philippine Friends hope that a deeper dialogue will develop between the givers and receivers of material assistance. They are setting up a committee representative of both streams of Friends, to ensure the distribution is targeted and smooth. They will also report on who has been assisted. The PEFC plans are to deliver relief packages to 235 families in Manila and northern Philippines. Feeding centres for children are being established, and more than 1,000 children are receiving daily nourishment. Medical supplies and expertise is being provided in Northern Philippines. If donations continue to come, rehabilitation of Meeting houses and student centres will take place.

The small handful of Filipino Unprogrammed Friends mainly work in universities, where a program of post trauma training and counselling has commenced.

Cristina Montiel writes "Let us make haste slowly. The worst is over, and it is time to rebuild. There is so much to rebuild, inside and outside, on individual and community levels". Trauma counselling in a variety of forms is now available. Teachers, seminarians and NGO workers from typhoon affected communities are targeted. In addition, donations are being used to purchase children's art materials, to assist them to process their loss and grief.

Remember, that in 18 months time April 2011, the AWPS Gathering will take place in Manila for the Section Gathering, on top of a very high hill with stunning views of Manila. The process of story telling and trauma healing can continue at that time. Friends from everywhere are welcome to participate. There is much to learn of struggle and survival in the Philippines. The theme of the Gathering is "Living our Faith" from James 2: 14-17.