



## FAST FACTS

**Project:** Philippine Deforestation

**Teacher:** Alana Fournet and Tracey Winey

**School:** Little Children of the Philippines (NGO)

**Location:** Dumaguete City, Philippines

**Start date:** 02/09/2012

**End date:** 05/20/2012

**Unique requests of participating mentors:** Looking for mentors who can speak the language and help students research a topic, form ideas, work on a tangible community project, share with an authentic audience, and celebrate at the end of the project.

**Challenge:** Students need to learn about they can help local environmental issues

**Solution:** Mentors who help students research and develop questions

**Results:** A well-developed and supported plan and presentation

**Contact:** david@telementor.org

# Two Schools Cross Borders, Help Forests

Colorado Middle School teams up with Children of the Philippines with help from Thomson Reuters mentors for a beautiful result.



**Made with Gratitude.** *Within days of receiving four flip cameras in the mail from their Thomson Reuters mentors, mentees from Little Children of the Philippines orphanage in Dumaguete, Philippines, create a series of educational videos, including a thank you video, above.*

**When Alana Fournet,** Peace Corps member and teacher at the Little Children of the Philippines (LCP) orphanage in Dumaguete, Philippines, was introduced to the International Telementor Program (ITP), she wasn't sure if it would work for her class due to a lack of consistent Internet connection. But she thought it was worth a shot in order to expose students of the developing country to others around the world.

"I've come to believe the 'next step' for the Philippines is developing aptitude for global interchange," says Fournet. "I got involved with this program to expose a group of college level youth to the power of global communication."

The program involved communication with students at Preston Middle School in Fort Collins, Colorado. Fournet heard of ITP from Preston's Media Specialist Tracey Winey, whom she has worked with for the past two years. Winey helped Preston Middle School students raise more than \$1,000 for LCP and bought them a class set of the book *Holes* so the two schools could participate in an online book club together. The experience was so fun that Winey wanted to continue the relationship through ITP. "One branch of [Preston's] STEM model includes International Collaboration," says Winey, "so to me the fit seemed perfect."

**Meeting Goals Together.** The fit was right for Fournet and LCP as well. Peace Corps volunteers are required to share their skills and knowledge in their assigned countries,

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The International Telementor Program ■ David Neils, Founder/Director



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**—Alana Fournet, Peace Corps member/teacher, Little Children of the Philippines Orphanage**



**Reaching Out.** *Students from Little Children of the Philippines (LCP) Dumaguete, worked on a cross-cultural tree-planting project with students from Preston Middle School in Fort Collins, Colo., to bring more awareness to deforestation in their region of the world. With help from Thomson Reuters mentors in Manila and Minnesota, students created a series of awareness videos educating people on the devastating effects of deforestation and what can be done about it. The screen shots (left) are of LCP students expressing their gratitude.*

to increase the understanding of American culture, and to increase the understanding of the culture they serve with fellow Americans. “The first goal was met through the mentoring relationship of ITP in which the youth I worked with studied the specific topic of deforestation, increased their knowledge of a topic very relevant to their own communities and gained aptitude for electronic communication,” says Fournet. “The second and third goals were met through video conferences we shared with students at Preston Middle School.” The students in both countries decided to collaborate on the real world problem of deforestation, not only to learn why but also challenged themselves to propose a

viable solution. As a part of the process, students worked with mentors from their own countries.


“The students felt like they had an audience that superseded the Preston walls,” says Winey. “I felt like I had a high level of various experts on my side.”

Mentors in the Philippines not only provided support for the students but for Fournet as well by assisting her in planning the program.

“[Through the program], students receive immediate feedback with regard to the information they share and are challenged to think about the information they share in greater depth,” states Fournet. “As an educator, being able to observe students enter the classroom excited to learn and to share their knowledge is incredibly inspiring.” Fournet found that the mentors also had as much enthusiasm for the program as the students did.

“They joined ITP because they were invested in making positive change in their country,” says Fournet. “I got to bundle up their excitement and ideas to return to my site.” At the end of the project, Fournet’s students had the opportunity to change their roles from learners to experts by sharing their knowledge at a camp for 60 out-of-school, rural youth.

“As I’ve watched our youth leaders prepare and rehearse for this camp, it’s clear they have gained a depth of knowledge regarding deforestation and it’s connection to broad environmental issues,” says Fournet. “They’ve gained deep understanding, they’ve developed confidence, and they’re excited to share what they know with others. To me, this is education in its most powerful form.” Winey has seen a similar reaction in her students, halfway around the world.

“The students gained confidence,” says Winey. “They now truly believe that one person really can change the world. They now know, they can be that one person.” 

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