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# **Dare to Love - school students head to the Philippines**

In September 2019 a group of sixteen students from Tangara School for Girls in Sydney started their final year (Year 12) with a service project to the Philippines.

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s a recent graduate from Tangara, I was invited to go with them to help as a leader. It was a breathtaking adventure to love, anchored firmly in

hope, daily demanding the ability ‘to dare to give of oneself’.

My name is Michaela Munasinghe. I am a 20 year old university student studying part time accounting, whilst working full time at an accounting firm.

The Philippines is a country of sheer joy, song and dance but also various needs; especially including caring for the most vulnerable. We went to Balete Family Farm School in Batangas and continued the work done in the area by previous groups to improve the school facilities. We painted and furnished their science laboratory, built with funds raised by the Tangara girls in the year leading up to the trip. We also taught first aid, visited the poor and sick in hospitals, nursing homes and an orphanage.

Each day called for sacrifice and an effort to remain cheerful. The time

spent with the orphaned, those battling cancer and the elderly, enabled us young people to grow in love for God and for his children. The experience with the Tangara girls showed me that if we forget about ourselves, our own wants and desires, we are able to give ourselves more fully, and inevitably we become more free.

People often say that children are the closest to God. Personally I think that the Filipino children may even be a bit closer. Their bravery to open their hearts to us, and fully love with a joy that never ends, made it one of the most painful of goodbyes. The girls and I dared to lose our hearts at moments like these, allowing the most little and wounded, to move us to love more. Now our hope is we meet them again.

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