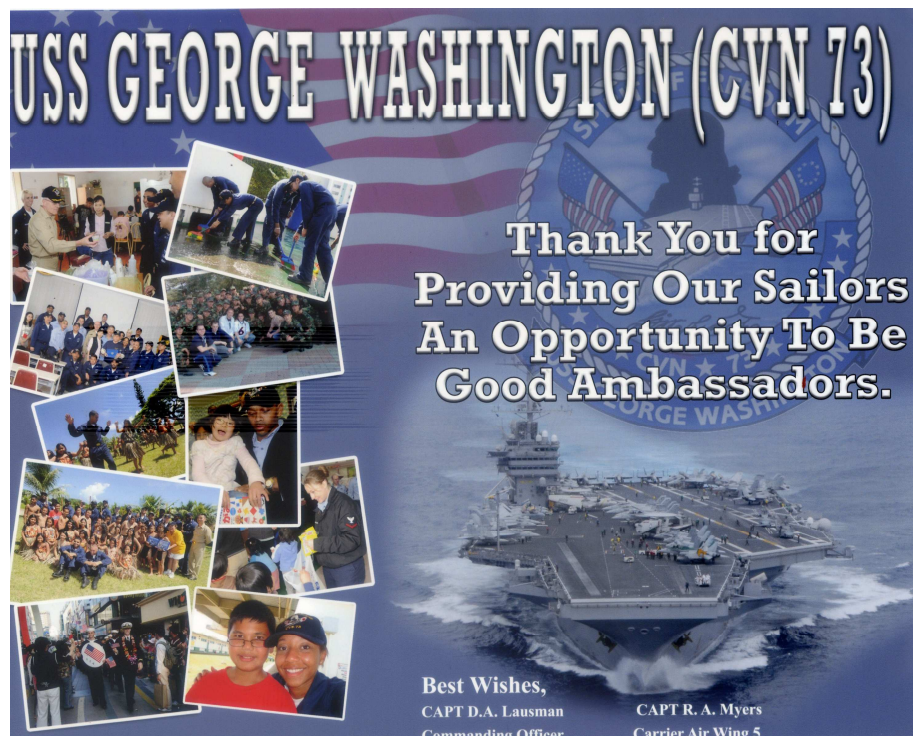


## US and Philippine Navy sailors paint in town

On September 5<sup>th</sup> the Little Children of Virланie Foundation were given a very special treat. did. Ten sailors from USS George Washington (CVN 73), in partnership with ten of their counterparts in the Filipino Navy, visited them at their Marco Polo Care Center (MPCC).



US Embassy staff and members of Springboard Foundation also joined the trip. Their mission: To paint a children's home in bright colors.

29 children between the ages of 3 and 8 live here. They are in need of special protection and this house is their first place of refuge. They have been abandoned, abused or neglected. Every Child has a heart

breaking story. They also received a donation of toys, cookies, juice, clothes and learning materials from the US Navy sailors and the United States Embassy Club (USEC) and this bought broad smiles to each little face.



After meeting the children with the Philippine traditional greeting, where each child takes the hand of the visitors and place them on their foreheads, (This is a sign of respect but also a request to be blessed.) at 8:30am the children also sang for the soldiers and guests and we were touched that despite everything that has happened to them they never give up hope, but remain trusting and hopeful that the will be treated with kindness.



Being a hot and humid day to work extra hard to keep working the entire day. They worked fast and it seemed like an invisible hand had come to change the gloomy colors of the house into lovely pinks, yellows and blue! Laughter filled the air and the camaraderie marked the special atmosphere throughout the day. Annette Helbig, President and Founder of Springboard Foundation expressed the feelings of all “We are grateful that we could be part of this event that made the quality of life of children so much better, but were are equally delighted to have seen the inter-cultural cooperation and exchange in the process. Two of Springboard’s coffee table books “ Dignity and Courage” depicting the lives of children in poor urban areas through poetry and photography were given to the volunteers so that they have a lasting memory of the children they served so kindly.



Now the children have newly painted rooms and common areas (including dining room, reception area and the home’s gate.) The bright colours help them to feel safe and gives them new hope for a bright future.

When the children saw their newly painted house they shouted: “Wow ang ganda” – “Wow, it’s beautiful”.

**A Big Thank You** to the **US and Filipino Navy and the United States Embassy Club** for making the lives of these abandoned and neglected children a little brighter.



From Virlanie: “Sharing Springboard Foundation’s vision of enabling Filipino children to grow up in nurturing homes with access to good education, nutrition, medical care and career opportunities, Virlanie Foundation works to prevent the physical and psychological abuse of children. During its 18 years of existence, it has helped over 12,000 children through its residential, outreach and support programs. Serving approximately 400 girls and boys *per annum* in its twelve homes and double that number through its outreach and support programs, Virlanie’s operational and care needs are substantial. With Springboard’s invaluable support and that of our other generous donors, the Foundation is able to continue reaching out to disadvantaged children in the Philippines.