

Honest Hands Discipleship Home Ministry Manual



Discipling street boys and school dropouts

By Carl Loewen

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Email: honest.hands@actionintl.org

Website: www.honesthands.org

Honest Hands is a ministry of
ACTION Philippines: www.actionph.org

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1. *Introduction and overview*

Honest Hands Discipleship Home is a ministry of ACTION Philippines located near Silang, Cavite in the Philippines. Our ministry home is on ACTION's Second Mile ministry campus, based in a rural coffee growing region, about two hours from Metro Manila and the National Capital Region. Honest Hands can house up to ten former street boys and school dropouts, as well as two staff members. Honest Hands hosts discipleship camps for up to twenty young men per year, and then selects ten young men from the camps to attend the nine-month intensive discipleship & tutorial program.

We work hand in hand with Filipino churches and para-church organizations. Pastors or Christian workers refer the students to us. Honest Hands students return to serve in their churches each weekend.

Jeff Anderson (ACTION Philippines director) asked us to develop a simple ministry manual that others could use as a guide or example of what could be done to start or develop a discipleship ministry for former street boys and school drop outs. We hope that this manual can help you understand how our ministry functions - some of the issues, challenges and reasons for a discipleship ministry like Honest Hands.

I am writing this from the perspective of an evangelical Canadian missionary who has been working in the Philippines for the past eight years. My experiences, background and observations have led to the type of ministry that we have developed (see p.22 for our story). Honest Hand's Filipino staff members have also poured their lives and energy into developing a Jesus centered ministry for a neglected group here in the Philippines – older street boys. The involvement of these Filipino brothers cannot be underestimated or ignored. Without their help, Honest Hands would not exist.

Your cultural context, background and specific needs and questions will be different from ours. However, we hope that you can benefit from our thoughts, stories, ideas, and our mistakes and utilize what we have experienced and written about.

Honest Hand's theme verses are Ephesians 4:28-29, *"If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (NLT)"*.

So far more than one hundred young men have attended our discipleship camps, and by March 2008 forty young men will have graduated from our long-term discipleship program.

2. Overall Purpose of the Honest Hands Discipleship program.

One of the big questions is this - what do we want a student to take away with him after the program? What type of person is an Honest Hands graduate?

A graduate of Honest Hands who has completed the nine-month discipleship program should:

- Have a strong Christian character able to withstand temptations of substance abuse, sexual immorality, crime, and be a clear example of a Christian young man in his community.
- Be willing to share about problems and good things in a group setting. Willing to live in a Christian community, to apologize and work through conflicts and work towards appropriate solutions.
- Have adjusted to a basic daily schedule and responsibilities, willing to set personal goals and make good decisions
- Have good physical health
- Be free from drugs and other addictions.
- Be able to control anger and other emotions appropriately, without violence or running away from the issues.

Our goal is to mentor and train students to become disciples of Jesus.

What are some of the marks of a disciple?

- Personal salvation is foundational, the crucial starting point for someone to become a disciple.
- A disciple reads his Bible and prays regularly. He understands the basic truths found in the Bible, and is comfortable teaching simple Bible studies or sharing his testimony.
- He is involved in a church body and is willing to do ministry with his home church. He is not just a 'back bencher' or occasional attender.
- He is sexually pure.
- He is not addicted to substances – illegal or legal ones.
- He is willing to go and share the Gospel with his family and friends.

3. Original vision – how did Honest Hands start?

- **ACTION** has been actively ministering in the Philippines for the past 33 years, and street children ministry has been a major focus right from the beginning. There has always been a vision for discipling street kids following street contact, camps and so on. Thus Second Mile was born – a place to go the second mile, and disciple and train street children.
- A **network of churches** (Urban Street Ministries Inc) in the Manila area requested a discipleship home for street boys in the 1990's, and ACTION worked on finding a ministry leader and some start up funds for the facility. Carl & Lisa Loewen arrived in 2000 to attend language school and prepare to lead the Honest Hands ministry. The home was built in 2000 by an ACTION missionary and his work crew.
- **Launching of ministry** – Honest Hands Batch #1 started in October 2001 with four students and two staff. We ran a five-month pilot project to see how the program would work, and then took time to evaluate and seek the recommendation of the partner churches. They recommended a longer program, so we ran Batch #2 for one full year. That ended up being too long, as the graduates of our program couldn't easily flow back into the Philippine school system (no time between HONEST HANDS grad and the start of school). So we finally settled on the best program length – nine months, synchronized with the Philippine public school system.
 - Realistic expectations for ministry – we had a slow start in some ways as we only had four students in Batch #1 and 2 as we thought that there would be overwhelming demand for ministry
 - But we had to build trust through deep relationships first. It was surprisingly hard to fill the original batches, but we kept at it. Looking back it was good to have a smaller number of students to disciple and 'practice on' in the beginning.
 - We decided to run our own discipleship camps each summer break, and recruit guys that we already knew a little through the camps. There are two camps of ten each, and then we select ten from those camps for the nine-month discipleship program.
- **Some ideas that have changed** – Originally we thought we would build a home where the missionary ministry leader and family would live in with the guys, but it is much better for our family to have some space apart. The missionary lives on the campus so is accessible in case of problems, but has time and space for his family life. The married discipleship teacher lives in a house beside Honest Hands and is also available during the week if the houseparent needs help. A single Filipino young man lives with the students as house parent, along with a junior staff who is a former student. We have realized that the best situation is to have a Godly single man living with the students. It is not an environment for a newly married couple, or for little children to live with the students, as there are issues of safety and appropriate relationships.
- **Calling & arrival** of Carl & Lisa in country: why did they come to the Philippines? Carl was here for ten months on a college internship with ACTION in 1992-1993, and returned with his wife Lisa for a five-month exploratory trip in 1997. They

- continued to feel that God was leading them into the ministry of discipling former street boys. They returned to Canada, joined ACTION, and started raising support. They continued to be actively involved in their home church. They arrived in the Philippines in 2000 to study at a Tagalog language school.
- **Process** – It takes time, and many years. We had an excellent relationship with our home church, having served there in various ways. So we had good prayer and financial support from them. They sent us out and helped in practical ways. Our home church in Canada has sent over teams and individuals to help us with our ministry.
 - **Training** – Both Lisa and Carl have hands on ministry background, church and secular job involvement, and studied missions, culture, and Bible in college. These are not all prerequisites to working with a ministry like Honest Hands, but they certainly help. You need to be a risk taker to become a missionary and start a ministry like Honest Hands, meaning to say that failures will not be cause to go home or give up.
 - **Language and culture** learning key – Without extensive and focused Tagalog language study over one and a half years, our ministry would be much weaker. Carl would have relied on hiring men who were very good at English, but may not have had a heart for street kids. His ministry and teaching would have been limited as Honest Hands students are not fluent in English and have limited comprehension. Foreigners need to continually be working on improving language skills, as well as understanding the unique aspects of culture as it relates to ministry and relationships. Sometimes we realize that our biggest challenges are not necessarily with morality or theological issues. Rather, the challenge is to understand a different culture or worldview. Our cultural grid is Canadian, but we work hard on understanding the Filipino's point of view.
 - **Coworkers** – I cannot emphasize adequately how blessed Honest Hands has been by our staff. **Melchor de Jesus** came to us in 2001 after ten years of faithful service for another organization working with street children. He felt a passion to teach the Word of God to street children, and has proved to be a very effective teacher and discipler for our program. As we have developed the program together over the past seven years, many times I have turned to him and asked him what he would do in a certain situation, or an area of the program that seemed lacking. Melchor would pause for a while, and then usually give a wise answer. All this to say, there were many times when I did not know what to do, and Melchor would be able to come up with the solution. So he has been an excellent friend and ministry partner as we have developed the Honest Hands program together. His wife **Tess** has been a great help recently as well as she cooks many of the meals. Other staff have been a great help as well – **Mike Quezon** who helped us as the live in houseparent from 2001 – 2003, and then as a follow-up coordinator and part time teacher for another few years. **Alvin Sarmiento** was the houseparent for two years as well, and helped us implement the ALS program and start the flow of students to Working Hands. **Lino dela Pena** is our current houseparent, and has been a big encouragement as he shares his life and God given talents with our students. **Rocky Lucban** is our first junior staff, and a graduate of our first batch of students back in 2002. All of these men along with many other people have shaped and molded our

discipleship program as we seek to be faithful to Jesus and the leading of the Spirit in our ministry.

4. Target group

- **Honest Hands exists to** disciple and teach former street boys who have trusted Christ, so this group is our priority. However, we have realized that it is hard to find ten young men from a hard-core street background who are ready for discipleship and have a pastoral recommendation. So we have also started to accept young men from rough backgrounds – squatter kids – who are school drop outs and are ready for discipleship training. We have also accepted a few students who are high school graduates, but are from poor communities and have an intense desire for discipleship. So far the mix of different categories of students has worked well.
- **Qualifications to enter program**
 - Young men ages: 15 to 20
 - Need to be a Christian for at least six months, have a testimony of accepting Christ or deciding to follow Him that is verified by someone from a church (like a pastor or Christian worker).
 - Not current drug user – we do realize that ongoing drug use or lapses occur. But we are able to see quite easily if a young man is a heavy solvent user, and can also check to see if he is capable of handling the discipleship program by observing him in one of our discipleship camps.
 - Pastoral recommendation or solid Christian member of church or para-church organization backing them. Church or para-church organization needs to sign an agency agreement with Honest Hands (see attached document).
 - Does not have a criminal record – this is not always easy to verify, so we really have to trust the word of the pastor and church organization. We especially have been careful not to allow young men into the program who have sexually or physically abused young children as we have many children living on our campus, and our facility is not secure to keep our students away from the children.
 - Attend a discipleship camp. Most of our students attend one of our discipleship camps. We hold camps that run for 6 days, and cover the basics of what we believe to be the marks of a disciple.
 - Basic literacy – student needs to be able to read and write at a basic elementary level. Most illiterate students have not done very well in our program as they are not used to the structure of being in a classroom, and are not always ready or willing to learn to read.
- **Major focus** – We decided to only take young men who have a pastor recommending them, so that they will stay connected to the Filipino church. There is no shortage of young men in the street kid or school dropout group in the Philippines. So in a sense our ‘filter’ is to stay closely connected with evangelical churches, churches that have some sort of connection or history with ACTION Philippines. Then when the students go home each weekend they connect with their local church body, and also start preparing for life after

graduation when we cannot support and encourage and disciple them in the same way that we do when they are in the program. The church is called to disciple people.

- **Recruitment** – This was difficult during our early batches until we became more established, well known, and trusted. Trust is earned in different ways in different cultures, and we needed to fit into the ministry milieu of the Filipino churches we now work with. We decided we needed to run our own *discipleship camps* as a recruitment tool in order to see whether or not a student could fit into our program. A best-case scenario is that one of the ACTION missionaries or ministries in Manila refer a student to us. In these situations it is quite a bit easier to do follow-up and we know that the sending missionary shares our burden and heart for ongoing ministry and discipleship for the student. We have appreciated the partnership, guidance and help from ACTION's Street Impact Team based in Manila. Honest Hands is part of the SI Team, and they have helped us connect with churches and agencies who want to send young men to be disciplined. We don't just sit back and wait for young men to show up on our doorstep. Honest Hands staff go out to visit churches and agencies, and spend time in squatter communities and on the street as well. Although most of our ministry time is spent based at our center in a rural area, we know the valuable lessons that come from spending time doing our recruitment and follow-up in the communities where our students come from.

5. Discipleship Program

- **Goals**
 - Students become comfortable handling the Word of God correctly – opening up the Bible and being able to find verses.
 - Students are taught the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. We do touch on issues that evangelical churches differ on, but we focus on the important or foundational points of Christianity.
 - Students see that what we teach is based on the Bible.
 - Students are able to share what they learn with others, and teach Bible studies.
 - Students memorize key verses relating to topics covered in the Discipleship classes.
- **Methodology of discipleship program**
 - We teach four classes per week on average, each class about 1.5 hours. The class opens with worship, turning our hearts and minds towards God. Then prayer – asking the Holy Spirit to be with us as we study together.
 - At the beginning of the program, we looked around for material, but not much was available in Tagalog for youth, so we worked on developing our own sessions. This was difficult and very busy in the early years, but now we have a good solid base of material that we can teach. We are trying to continually refine and improve our teaching methodology and materials. Staff attend teaching seminars, and some are attending Bible school.

- Occasionally we have visiting speakers, but mostly our staff do the teaching as all of us enjoy teaching the Bible. Visiting speakers can be late or cancel at the last minute, so it is much more efficient and effective to do the teaching ourselves.
 - We use a whiteboard, and encourage the students to take notes, or we hand out sheets with blanks to fill in. Try to encourage discussion and question times. We have found that it is effective to use lots of personal stories relating to the topics. Humor is important as well. Then we move back to a serious focus again. Sometimes we need to stop for a break, stretch a bit and jump around a bit if the students are feeling sleepy.
- **Discipleship Curriculum** - Focused on basics of Christian faith and developing a Christian character. Each semester is approximately three months in length.
 - Semester 1 – Foundational and introductory teaching
 - Books of the Bible
 - Who is God the Father?
 - Who is the Holy Spirit?
 - Life of Christ
 - Book of Ephesians
 - What is Israel and who are the Jews?
 - Review and exams.
 - Semester 2 – Heroes of the Bible
 - Life of Joseph
 - 12 Disciples of Jesus
 - Life of David
 - Life of Daniel
 - Reviews and exams.
 - Semester 3 – Deeper teaching
 - Victory over temptations
 - Cults
 - Preparing a Bible study
 - Promise & Covenant (Pentateuch)
 - 1 & 2 Timothy
 - Book of Acts
 - How to be a camp counselor
 - Planning and goal setting.
 - **Small groups** – We divide our ten students into two groups that meet with a leader for one hour each morning. They have worked through various discipleship courses, and now are using the Tagalog *Discovery* or *Tuklasin* series. These small groups are intended to help students bond with a leader and help shy students open up and share with their leader. Often the small groups meet outside under the shade trees, and spend time worshipping and praying together as well.
 - **Biblical basis for discipleship curriculum** – It is built on the same foundations as ACTION’s statement of faith, as we share those common goals and foundational beliefs.

- **Bible centered** – As the ministry leader I have encouraged staff to stay focused on the Bible and to use this as the primary source for all of our discipleship sessions. There are many good resource books available, but they cannot become our primary focus. The Bible needs to be our main influence, our inspiration for ministry and practice. How do we practically model this? I lead the staff in Bible studies prior to our staff meetings, and I make sure we are using the Bible to teach. We do individual Bible book studies with our students – perhaps not many people would attempt this with former street kids, but they can handle it and enjoy it. Plus it gives them confidence that they can teach as well.
- **Reading through the Bible challenge** – I challenged students to read through New Testament. They received a prize, a new Bible. If they can read through the Old Testament they receive a bigger prize. This challenge has worked very well, and students have spent many hours in the Word as a result.
- **Supplies needed** – All students have their own Bible, pen, notebook, and folder for handouts. Also good to have an office or quiet place to work on preparing the lessons. We have an office with a number of Bible resource books that staff can use.
- **Verse memory** – Verses learned are connected to specific Bible courses. For example, a week of discipleship sessions may have a memory verse connected to it, and the students need to be able to recite the verse prior to getting their money to go home each weekend.
- **Leaders are also being disciplined** - We teach the students that we are also learning and on the same discipleship path. The ministry leader of Honest Hands is involved with other missionaries in regular Bible study and prayer, and is under the authority of the ACTION director. The Honest Hands staff are praying and studying the Bible as well, and are accountable to the Honest Hands ministry leader. Discipleship is not only for new Christians – we should all be disciples.
- **Counseling** – This is part of the discipleship process. We work through real life issues and issues that come up in the daily life of the discipleship home.
 - Often we use peer counseling which is a regular time of sharing each evening. This encourages students to challenge each other towards living like Jesus. This shouldn't only come from the leaders.
 - This is all built around the principal "don't let the sun set on your anger". If there are disagreements or problems between students and staff, we work to resolve them as quickly as possible.
 - Serious problems are dealt with by all staff in regular staff meetings. Prayer is key, as is discussion and really understanding the issues. Informing pastors and sending agencies as needed is also part of the process, as accountability is so important for young men who are used to running away from problems.
 - The Honest Hands ministry leader is also discipling his staff. And he is under leadership who are checking on him and keeping him accountable.
- **Community sharing** – Each evening one staff member will meet together with the students and each person has an opportunity to share what has happened to him during the day. This is an opportunity to praise God, but also share concerns, frustrations or problems in relationships. Worship is often part of this

time. The leader also leads a devotional. Then students can end their day with personal devotions that may come from the devotional led by the staff member. This time each evening is a very important part of our ministry. Perhaps you could call it a daily debrief, and refocusing on what is really important.

6. **Tutorial Program**

- **Goals**
 - Students will improve their basic skills like reading, writing, math, science, organization, and will know how to study and prepare for tests.
 - Students will take the Alternative Learning System test, and pass the exam so they can enter the regular school system after Honest Hands.
 - Some students will continue on with ACTION and study at Working Hands vocational school, so they will need to acquire skills that help them prepare for the wood working, mechanics, or electronics courses.
- **Methodology**
 - Honest Hands divides the students into two groups – elementary level students and secondary or high school students. This decision is based on an assessment test. There is one instructor per class.
 - Target is four tutorial sessions per week, 1.5 to 2 hours per class.
 - Math, basic English, writing, spelling, science, civics are the courses taught. As the national ALS test draws closer, the hours per day in class increase.
 - There are a variety of approaches used, including one on one instruction, classroom style teaching using lecture, interaction and assignments. Students also work on independent learning using the modules from the ALS program.
- **Background**
 - The original tutorial classes were rather difficult to organize and prepare for, as we just purchased materials from the local bookstores, and tried to do basic reading, writing and arithmetic with the students.
 - Alternative Learning System (ALS) – The Department of Education in the Philippines has now developed a tutorial program focusing on school drop outs who are over 15 years of age, and have basic literacy skills. This fits our students very well. Our staff have been trained by the Philippine Department of Education and are certified instructors for the ALS program, although neither of them are trained teachers. So far we have had 1 student pass the elementary test, and 1 student pass the secondary or high school level test, which means that they can advance to the next level when they return to school. A number have come very close to passing the test. So we are encouraged with this new material.
 - Challenges – Instructors need to continually encourage the students to continue on and improve their basic skills. Important to note that students who are struggling with being undernourished, or have other health problems, will have difficulty focusing on the tutorial. It is important to get eye checkups as we have found quite a few have weak eyesight and

need glasses. There is no quick fix to help students catch up or acquire basic skills quickly. It takes a lot of hard work on the part of the instructor and student.

- One of the biggest challenges is helping students get their requirements together to register for the ALS test (birth certificates, ID photos etc). Even though the program is designed for school drop outs, administrators are not always helpful when we have worked on registering our students. So we need to be politely persistent on behalf of the students, and ignore some of the things that are said about them. Another challenge is making sure that churches or agencies help their students register for school and don't miss the crucial cut off dates in the Philippine school system which means that the student will need to wait for another whole year. Usually the result is that the waiting student will never return to school as he loses motivation and interest, or finds a job etc.
- **Other skills** – we have also had series of sessions on music, which were led by a teacher with music skills. The students enjoyed learning how to be part of a praise and worship group as they practiced guitar, drums, singing, and rhythm together.
- **Supplies** – We needed a good printer and computer to print out the modules from the government that we received on CD. Good tables, comfortable chairs, lots of light, whiteboards, pens, and notebooks are also needed.

7. Staff

- This section cannot be underestimated. Perhaps it is the most important one of this manual. We believe that a solid group of Godly, mature Christian staff men is the core of an effective ministry to former street boys. If a ministry has loving, committed, honest, energetic and above all mature Christian staff, it is well on the way to effective ministry.
- At Honest Hands we currently have **two salaried staff**.
 - Discipleship teacher – also does the tutorial class.
 - Houseparent – live-in single man who is in the home most of the time, does some Bible teaching, and helps with the tutorial as well.
- We also have two staff that work with us on a more informal basis
 - Cook – part-time worker, cooks lunches and suppers. The other staff help cook breakfasts.
 - Junior staff – A graduate of Honest Hands Batch #1 that we are training for ministry. He is involved with discipling the students as well.
- See appendix for attached job descriptions of staff.
- The **ministry leader** of Honest Hands is a missionary, and does the administration, finances, program development and Bible teaching. The ministry leader raises his own support, so he is not being paid a salary by the ministry. As he raises personal funds, he also raises the funding for Honest Hands ministry.

- **Interdenominational and evangelical staff** – All staff are expected to be active in a local church, attending each Sunday, genuine Christians with an obvious fruitful ministry. Currently the two staff men are pastors in churches on weekends, and are doing street kids ministry on their own time as well. So we can see that they are not only motivated by ministry that they are paid for – they volunteer their own time and resources as well.
- **Staff meetings** are important. There should be regular meetings with weekly planning. Staff need to feel free to talk to the ministry leader in his office as well.
- **Evaluations** – at least yearly, contract staff more often. Working through expectations, inspiration, correction etc. Need to closely monitor so doesn't spiral out of control if there are problems between staff members, or problems with students.
- **Encouragement is necessary**, along with one on one talks with the ministry leader – there needs to be an open door policy with access to leadership.
- **Administrator** – Needs to work on understanding dynamics of what is going on. Perhaps test scenarios to see how well staff performs without supervision. Go away for a while, and see what happens.
- **Key concepts** – Pay staff a fair wage, benefits, with vacation time. Encourage strong family relationships as well. We built a house for the discipleship teacher and his family so they would be together while he works at Honest Hands. Now his wife is the cook and they can all live together and model family for our students.
- **Extra training for staff** – We are committed to ongoing training for our staff. They occasionally have time off to attend pastor's seminars and other types of trainings (e.g. Red Cross first aid course, counseling, etc). We are helping sponsor one of our staff to take courses towards a Bible school degree.
- **Junior staff concept** – We are continuing to work with former students, and are currently discipling and training a graduate of Honest Hands as a junior staff.

8. Short term workers, and other visitors

- **Short termers** – We carefully screen short-term helpers, both Filipino and foreign. ACTION requires people to sign a Child Protection document as well as undergo police checks when they want to work in our ministries. We have decided not to have more than one or two short termers at one time, and usually

they will come for about one month – helping with sports, teaching conversational English, and living in the Honest Hands facility. Overall we have enjoyed the short-term workers who have helped us.

- **Other visitors** – There are often visitors who drop by to tour our campus, and we walk them through the Honest Hands facility if they are interested. Ministry leader or a staff member shares the ministry vision and some stories, and gives them brochures.

9. **Community living: life in the home**

- **Basic expectations are to respect** people and objects, not to use bad words, no substance abuse, to share, and clean up. Students also help with outdoor work on campus.
- **Working together** in family atmosphere. Students are assigned household chores on a rotating basis, so they help in all areas of the home from food prep to cleaning the bathrooms. Staff need to help supervise the work so it is done well. We have a cook who does the actual cooking and menu planning.
- **Help with work projects** and household chores on rotating basis.
- **Community sharing and Bible studies** each evening.
- **Exercise together every morning.** We go jogging, then a student leads stretching and push-ups, then we play basketball. After this another student leads a short devotional that helps them get used to sharing the Word with their peers.
- **Movie night** – Once a week the students have a fun night or movie night where they can watch a good Christian movie, or cartoons and so on. We are very careful to avoid secular movies that contain violence, bad language, drug use, or sexual content. So the TV is not a major part of our ministry. They are only allowed to watch one movie per week, and sometimes sporting events like basketball games on TV.
- See the Honest Hands weekly schedule (attached in appendix).

10. **Health**

- We do not accept students who have **serious medical problems** that would mean they couldn't participate in the active physical parts of our program (work, exercise). This would include students with obvious mental health issues. We have worked with students who we discover have TB, so we treat this. Other

students have Hepatitis B, and so we work on educating them on how to stay healthy. So far we have not had any students with HIV or AIDS.

- When students arrive at Honest Hands one of our goals is to help them to get into good physical health. So we do the following in the first two weeks:
 - **Basic physical checkup** – chest X-ray to check for TB, blood tests to check for Hep B and HIV, vision tests, dental checkup.
 - **Vision** – we have noticed that some of our students who have dropped out of school have very poor eyesight and need glasses. So perhaps they were labeled ‘stupid’ or ‘rebellious’ but may have just been struggling with being able to see the blackboard as children.
- **First aid kit** – we have a basic first aid kit in the home, and staff document usage.
- **Health problems** – students are encouraged to talk to staff if they have a problem; then the student is taken to a doctor or dentist as necessary.
- **Medical treatment is not cheap**, but as a Christian ministry we prioritize this and God has provided the resources to pay for the costs. If the sending church or agency can help with the costs we appreciate that.
- **Good food** – proper nutrition goes a long ways towards a healthy student. Most of the young men who arrive at Honest Hands are underweight for their size and age. All of them gain weight and get healthier as they eat a balanced diet. We also supplement their diet with daily vitamins. Since our tap water is not very clean, we buy bottled water for them.
- **Exercise** – students are expected to participate in exercises each morning. They jog for 10 minutes, do stretching, push-ups, sit-ups and so on. Then they play 20 minutes of basketball each morning, and do devotions on the court. We train them in proper techniques. We have a weight bench for the students to gain strength as well. Their favorite sport is definitely basketball, and free time in the late afternoon is often spent playing on our full size court. The staff play with them, and this is a great way to connect. It is also a discipleship opportunity if tempers flare up, and problems need to be talked through on the court. Part of our exercise program is a weekly martial arts class led by a volunteer. The students enjoy this.

11. Mission trips and ministry exposure

- We believe that it is important to work together, sweat together, share the Gospel together, and minister together. This is an important part of the discipleship process.

- Honest Hands goes on a ministry trip with each batch of students. Some examples are as follows:
 - Construction work on Christian youth campsites.
 - Development work in an area affected by a volcanic eruption.
 - Digging the foundations for a new church.
- **Street children camps** - ACTION hosts a number of street children camps each year. As our students develop and mature in their faith, we have taken them to camps to work as junior staff. Our full time staff accompany them and continue training and discipling them as they serve God and minister to other youth and street kids. This is a great experience for all involved.

12. **Fun activities**

- This manual may look quite technical and `serious', but we do have a lot of fun at Honest Hands. This is an important part of building a strong Christian character as students realize what appropriate behaviour and leisure actually involves – you don't need to get drunk or high to have a good time.
- Students have a **fun night** each week where they watch a good movie, play games etc.
- We have taken the students on **outings** to IMAX, swimming, waterslides, PBA basketball games, educational outings to Philippine museums and so on. This is usually a reward for finishing a semester
- We often take students shopping for used clothing at the end of a semester. We give them a budget and they have fun looking for the right items.
- **Christmas party** – gift giving and praise time for the group of students and staff.
- **Graduation** – More than just a fun activity, but we really focus on it as a time of celebration and accomplishment. Also do a graduation banquet for the students at a nice restaurant. For many of them it is the first time they have ever finished something significant in their lives.

13. **Finances**

- **Funding for startup** – The discipleship ministry for former street boys was talked about by ACTION throughout the 1990's before it finally opened in 2001. Various ACTION missionaries promoted it and money started to come in.

- So funds were flowing in little by little through the 1990's and there were adequate funds to build the discipleship home in 2000. There was also another large donation by a foundation to fund the furniture, flooring and a van.
- From that point on the ministry leader did most of the fundraising, but of course was assisted through general promotion from various ACTION missionaries and publications talking about Honest Hands.
- **Fundraising – How?**
 - Most of the support for Honest Hands has come from personal contacts of Carl Loewen in Canada and the USA. Not very much financial support from the Philippines as most students come from churches or agencies in Manila that don't have a lot of extra cash.
 - Ministry leader writes regular prayer letters with stories of students and prayer requests. Usually three letters per year. Honest Hands does not use high pressure fund raising techniques, just lots of stories and sharing what God is doing in the lives of young men from rough backgrounds.
 - Regular contact through emails and thank you notes to donors. Often the students design and write the thank you cards. This is a way for them to connect with donors in North America.
 - Prayer cards for each student that can be handed out to interested individuals when the missionary is back in North America.
 - Missionary regularly visits his home country (every 2 or 3 years) to share and report about the ministry of Honest Hands. These visits will often generate increased donations.
 - Trust is key – Donors need to trust the organization as well as the individuals leading the ministry.
 - Website – not as effective as we would like it to be. Has taken too much time, not enough time to do it well.
 - Also there is promotion by our international director, occasional mailings from the international office of our mission that help raise funds and develop new contacts. ACTION International has a publication called the Children in Crisis letter that helps promote various ministries around the world including Honest Hands.
 - Money flowing through missionary donations as well.
 - Important to share specific stories of students, using assumed names to comply with Philippine regulations.
- **Accountability and integrity**
 - Ministry leader (who is an ACTION missionary) does not receive a salary from the ministry of Honest Hands. He raises his support separately, although many donors support both Honest Hands and the missionary. Connection and trust with donors is very important. Integrity of organization is also important. No money goes unaccounted for.
 - Honest Hands submits yearly budgets to ACTION Philippines, and each budget is approved by the ACTION Philippines council and board. Also submission of plans and goals for the upcoming year.
 - Then reports are due at the end of each year to make sure that the ministry is accountable and doing what it said it would do.
 - One possibility is organizing unique fund raising activities in a home church or a sending church e.g. a Sunday School raised enough money

to pay for all the rice that Honest Hands students would eat over nine months (18 fifty kilo sacks).

14. Certifications and other documents

- **Fire safety** – the local fire department does an inspection of us each year, and we receive a certificate stating that we have passed. Need to have fire extinguishers, proper fire exits and a good plan for evacuating the building.
- **Certification** from Philippine government and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) –
 - License to operate
 - Certificate of registration
 - Certificate of accreditation
 - Certificate of occupancy
 - Certificate of existence
 - We were assisted and advised on necessary documentation by ACTION's Filipino social worker.
- **Staff ID** – Honest Hands staff have ID cards that they carry with them to prove that they are legitimate Christian workers.
- **Student ID card** with emergency contact info – each student has an ID card that they take with them as they travel back and forth to Manila with their picture, and contact info in case of any problems. It shows they are actually students with Honest Hands and gives them an identity card if they lack other ID.

15. Ministry center and vehicle

- **Facility**
 - Size – 3 bedroom single story house, 2 bathrooms, living and eating area, storage, laundry area, ministry office, & classroom.
 - Cost of construction and setup – back in 2000, about \$20,000 US. This includes the furniture, appliances and so on.
 - Type of setup – home style for the simple reason that we want students to feel comfortable.
 - Beds have good mattresses, pillows, sheets and so on. Students receive towels when they arrive.
 - Important to keep this ministry center well maintained so major problems do not develop and lead to major expenses down the road. If the facility is kept bright and clean, it is easy to see if the students are keeping it clean.
- **Vehicle** (15 passenger van) – necessary for our location, to purchase food and supplies and so on. We could probably make do without a van, but would be more challenging and time consuming. However a van is quite expensive to run and maintain, so it is important to carefully consider the costs and benefits of a vehicle.

16. **Communication**

- **With churches and agencies**
 - Regular reports are provided for each student, usually every one or two months. These reports cover physical, emotional, social and spiritual assessments of the student. Also any specific concerns, or problem areas that would need to be addressed by the church.
 - We work on getting copies of any available case studies from the church, and if none are available we work on simple case studies for their files.
 - Each weekend students take home a simple report form for their pastors to sign, indicating whether or not they have attended the Sunday morning service, and any other activities, or concerns. The students have a portion at the bottom of the form to fill out with notes on the message, to help keep their attention focused on the pastor's message.
- **With donors**
 - Regular prayer letters
 - Thank you notes for donations
 - Visits from ministry leader when possible on furlough.
 - Building a good relationship with donors is key.
- **Staff & students**
 - There needs to be open and honest communication between the staff members so disagreements or misunderstandings do not start to boil over into bigger problems. Staff need to communicate openly with students regarding any problems or concerns and work towards a deeper, more open discipling relationship.
 - The ministry leader needs to communicate regularly with students and staff as well about goals, concerns, and plans and to give encouragement. This is an important part of a vibrant and healthy ministry.
 - Students need to feel that they can share openly and respectfully with staff, leaders and other students. It is important to emphasize appropriate words, attitudes, and the right kinds of jokes that do not hurt people.
- **Mission**
 - As mentioned in previous sections, it is important to have good communication and accountability with mission leadership. This is helpful for vision planning for the future as well if regular plans and dreams are shared. Sometimes ministries can naturally become 'ingrown' and not see the big picture, or have awareness of starting to head down the wrong path. This is where accountability and advice are so important.

17. **Connections with Working Hands and other ACTION ministries**

- Working Hands – This ministry is based at Second Mile as well, and offers discipleship training as well as skills training for young men age 18-25 from poor backgrounds and with basic skill levels in math, and basic reasoning. The

training is offered in mechanics and wood technology / woodworking, and electronics.

- In order for our students to enter Working Hands they have to pass the entrance tests. They are treated like any other student at Working Hands, but we will help them if needed.
- So far three graduates from Honest Hands have graduated from the mechanics-training course, and one of them is working abroad as a mechanic. Two other Honest Hands campers also graduated from the mechanics program. Currently two Honest Hands graduates are in the Working Hands program.
- Not every Honest Hands graduate is capable of the level of training at Working Hands, so we are very happy to see some of our more capable young men attending the program and gaining marketable skills.
- On campus – We do not work alone. Honest Hands staff meet weekly with Working Hands staff for prayer, Bible study, fellowship and other concerns as needed.

18. Some unique aspects of our ministry:

- Honest Hands does not use a television to entertain the boys, we limit this entertainment.
- All students have their own Bible and we encourage them to treasure and use it for devotions and study.
- Very low staff to student ratio.
- All male staff.
- Staff are not intimidated by the students.
- Follow up of students who drop out.
- Kind staff – do not shout at students or belittle them. Focus on encouragement.
- Good connections with churches because of ACTION's history in the Philippines.
- Mix of former street kids, school dropouts, and sometimes other more advanced young men. This has worked well for us overall.
- Ministry leader and staff live on Second Mile campus, very close access to Honest Hands. Daily staff presence and steady involvement.

19. After the program – what next?

- ***Working Hands*** – Seven students have entered Working Hands vocational discipleship training school, and three have graduated from the mechanics training.
- ***Back to school*** – some students have returned to public school, but this is very hard for them unless their home church or agency really encourages and supports them. (See tutorial section).

- **Work** – Honest Hands grads can often find work helping as janitors in their home churches, or working on construction crews and other jobs that don't require a lot of experience. However they receive very low wages, and do not really receive enough to do more than provide some extra family support.
- **Bible school** – Although this is a dream of many Honest Hands students, it is a difficult one to fulfill as they need maturity, church support and a very steady personality. One former student was enrolled in Bible school, but got into trouble for breaking rules and was expelled.
- **Follow-up** –
 - Honest Hand staff do follow up during the summer break and as they recruit for camps. These visits usually include snacks or meals with the former student, prayer with student and family, counseling and other advice.
 - Jail visits – we have had two students in jail, so have done follow-up visits. We helped one student have a criminal case against him dropped and he entered the Working Hands wood tech program.
 - Provide employment – A few times we have been able to give an Honest Hands grad some simple repair work around the discipleship home and Second Mile, but it is difficult if there is not adequate supervision.
 - Primary responsibility is the church – when students arrive at Honest Hands we emphasize that the bulk of follow-up has to be done by the church, as our staff cannot make regular visits to various parts of Manila and surrounding provinces. The pastor, lay ministers, and agency social workers need to be involved with this part of a student's life.
- **Reunions** – We have begun regular reunions for all graduates of Honest Hands, held during the yearly anniversary in October. This is a very good time to reconnect with former students and check on how they are doing.
- **Surveys** – At the reunion we did a survey to check on various aspects of life, morality, addictions, spirituality and so on. Very helpful to continue tweaking and improving our current program as we realize weaknesses and struggles of former students.
- **Cell phone** contact with students and pastors as needed. Some are much more open to regular contact, and are willing to text us.

20. Concerns & Challenges

- **Churches**
 - Pastoral heart for discipleship – Many Filipino churches we come in contact with are working hard at evangelism and outreach to their communities. However, it is hard to find pastors who are willing to take the time to disciple individual young men like our students who need a lot of attention.
 - Connections with churches – Filipino culture is very relational, and ideally this means that the ministry leader or staff should be doing more visiting of pastors and establishing better and deeper relationships in order to partner

more effectively. However, Honest Hands staff and leadership do not have unlimited time for this, so it remains a challenge.

- Training churches to disciple young men – Perhaps one solution would be to start yearly training sessions to explore discipleship with pastors and churches that we work with.
 - Monitoring the disciplers – it is difficult because of the distance involved to effectively monitor and encourage the people in local churches in Manila who are discipling our students. At times the discipler assigned will change, and our students need to stay committed as well to going to this person for counsel and discipling.
 - Reporting – Due to the nature of churches, for the most part they are not trained to do regular reporting in terms of case studies, follow-up calls and so on. One reason is that most churches we work with are already stretched to the limit with lack of money and personnel.
 - We strongly believe that churches are the best place for ongoing discipleship to take place, and generally churches we work with are doing this.
- ***Agencies (or Non Government Organizations)***
 - 'Agencies' mentioned in this manual are organizations working with street children and the poor. We are currently only partnering with agencies that have an evangelical Christian focus.
 - Agencies are quite good at providing case studies and paperwork. They have social workers and people who are trained to help a 'client' work through various problems – health, emotional, psychological and so on. They are very good at connecting with us, and responding to letters, phone calls and so on.
 - However, the church connection is a challenge. Usually agencies are connected to a church, but it can be difficult to ensure that the Honest Hands students always attend Sunday services on weekends unless staff from the agency accompany them. So their connection to a local church body is often secondary to connection to the agency that houses and clothes them.
 - ***Philippine government connections***
 - The agency or department that we primarily deal with is the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
 - We have worked hard to comply with their requirements for Honest Hands, and have received a lot of help from our mission to do so. However we are still looking for a Christian male social worker in order to help us with paperwork and other tasks.
 - DSWD inspectors can arrive on short notice, and spend time looking at our ministry and paperwork, so we need to be ready at any time.
 - The Department of Education has not always been easy to work with, as they are not oriented towards helping former street children. The ALS material has been a big help and is a positive step in my view towards remedying some of the problems for school dropouts.
 - ***Student drop-outs and discipline***
 - We have never expelled a student from Honest Hands. Students tend to just drop out, or not return after a weekend back 'home'.
 - Usually a drop out starts by struggling with the program and obeying rules, or falls back into street life on a weekend (drugs, gangs, girlfriends) and does not return feeling ashamed or scared or hopeless.

- We contact the sending agency or church to check up on the status of the student, and then usually go to visit him if possible. Many times the student will be willing to accompany us back to Honest Hands and start over. These situations are often very challenging and can be discouraging as it feels like Honest Hands really goes the Second Mile for the guys, and sometimes they still decide not to come back. Of course, we need to examine the program and relationships inside the home to see if there are problems that have led to the student dropping out, and then changes and reconciliation needs to happen. But we cannot let these discouraging situations get us down or take it too personally, as that tends to slow down existing ministry.
- Originally I expected to have many problems with fights and confrontations between students and staff, but generally I have observed that Filipino youth will tend to withdraw to their room when they are angry and just lie down on their bunk quietly. We give them time to `cool down` and then spend time praying, counseling and gently encourage them to return to class or other activities.
- **Staff problems** – We have had a few challenges with former staff who did not fulfill their job description, so they did not continue working for us. Of course these are stressful times in any organization. It is a key time to rely on God for strength and wisdom through prayer and counsel. It is important for the ministry leader to have regular times of review and communication with staff to address problems before they become too big or divisive.
- One of the biggest challenges for staff and leadership of Honest Hands is the heartache of seeing young men who are doing well, **fall back into their old lifestyle** again (drugs, sex, gangs) and abandon their involvement in a church. There is no easy solution to these intense disappointments and sadness. You just have to give it over to God, share with close friends or spouses, pray, and get up and do it all over again the next morning. We have seen God encourage us in tough times with other graduates who make dramatic changes for the better, and share positive changes in their lives. Pastors and other Christian workers come alongside and keep us going as well.

21. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

- **How do you find the students?** – They are referred to us by local churches, ACTION, pastors, or Christian street kids agencies.
- **It must be very difficult to deal with such bad kids.** – Yes and no. Ministry is full of challenges. But God has been good to us. We always realize we need lots and lots of patience and a long-term ministry focus.
- **How do you deal with drug use?** – We counsel students, encourage them to break free, and so on. In cases of addiction to cigarettes we work with them, giving them candies when they crave a smoke. Students who struggle with addictions to solvents

are encouraged to break free, and are not allowed to have any glue in their possession. Alcohol is also not allowed, and ministry leaders and staff are not allowed to consume alcohol, so we lead by example as well.

- **Can we bring a student to you who won't go home on weekends?** Our church is not quite ready to take him in or take care of him. – No, we only take students who are able to go home on weekends and be disciplined in a local church context. Staff and missionaries are involved in their own churches on weekends and need a 'rest time' from ministry so they are back at full strength on Monday mornings.
- **Will you take a student with a criminal record?** Generally no, but we are willing to look at individual cases. It really depends on the seriousness of the crime.
- **How do you do it?** How do you actually disciple students? – Well, this manual is an attempt to answer the question.
- **What comes after Honest Hands?** How much follow up do you do? See #19 in this manual.
- **Can you use short termers?** Yes we can. Our preference is a Christian male who is over 20 with some life and ministry experience who is willing to live in the home, teach some conversational English, visit churches on weekends and so on. The best length of time is one month.
- **Is money the biggest barrier** to starting a ministry like Honest Hands? I would say no. Discipleship doesn't need to cost a lot. The local church needs to do more discipleship, but some pastors are not geared or gifted towards discipleship. They are more evangelistic in nature or ministry focus. Our experience is that finding the right staff and students is the biggest challenge. God has faithfully provided all the funding we need.

23. Ministry flow chart



