

Jennifer Dinnel, Jenny Shim and Meredith Chan, '09
Manila, Philippines

We were unsure about our placement, and were thus hesitant when we walked in through the gates to Hospicio de San Jose in Manila, Philippines. However, as we looked around the orphanage, at all the smiling faces and welcoming people, it was like we already belonged. When we were introduced to the kids they treated us like we were famous movie stars offering gifts, rather than just simple college students wearing t-shirts with no special talents to offer. We were bombarded with Filipino children surrounding us yelling "ate" meaning older sister, which is the affectionate way of addressing elders. Pretty soon we were literally buried in children striving for affection.





There were three different groups of children. About twelve children in one room under the age of 1, another twelve between 1-2, and about twenty-four between the ages of 2-6. We would bathe them, feed them, put them to bed, and most importantly play with them. The caregivers who were normally there rotated every week, so these children were in desperate need of constant care. It was amazing how attached the kids became in only a couple of days, but even more surprising was how they began to listen to

our discipline over that given by the temporary caregivers and how they would turn to us when they were hurt or needed extra love.







We knew that we would be sad upon leaving, but we never knew it would be that hard. The nuns all sang us a farewell song at a going away dinner, wishing us luck with all our future endeavors and thanking us for our time with them. What was hardest of all, was not being able to explain to the younger children we were not going to be coming back the next day. They had become so accustomed to our presence. We will never forget our experiences with the staff and children at Hospicio, it was a summer that changed our lives and we would go back in a heartbeat.

