

I am Michelle Lastimoso Genilan, the only girl in the family of three. My parents are hardworking barely earning an ample amount to feed the family on the day to day basis. We live in the rural area where access to education is limited only to a few. During my grade school days, I have to walk a kilometer to school with barely few centavos for snacks and lunch that will complete my meal for a day. Walking back home in the afternoon, I would carry an extra load of woods for cooking while my brother carry buckets of drinking water from a nearby well. It was a hard routine that we have to live with daily. This challenge of living in a depressed village did not hamper my dreams of getting a better chance for education. On weekdays I would volunteer to work at the farm, help my parents with our daily needs and every day is a continuous survival.

My father worked as a farm laborer within the compound of the school where I was enrolled during my high school days. I was a working student in the convent of the sisters, doing all the domestic errands during the day, and spent late hours in the evening doing my academic requirements. Hard work diligence and perseverance brought honors and awards every end of the semester. When my mother got sick during my senior year in high school, I left the convent as a working student and personally attended to my mother's need, working on weekends and earning just enough to sustain the medication of my mother. I was hard driven to pursue my dream, until I was offered a scholarship from the Kids to school Foundation. Through the recommendation of Sister Gemma, O.P. who was my high school Principal then. I am so grateful to Ms. Ans Groener and the KTS board for accepting me in the program.

In college I enrolled at the University of Iloilo-Philippines and took up Bachelor of Science in Management. This was a four-year course but I was able complete the whole program within a three academic years. I was in my 3rd year when the pandemic broke out. Things became so complicated in school that I have to adjust with online schedules of classes at the same time completing my requirements to be able to graduate. This schedule also allowed me to work part-time in the University as my requirement for completion. To augment my other needs as a graduating student and still have to continue supporting my mother's medication, I started applying for job vacancies that commensurate my skills and competence. Luckily, I was able to get an evening part-time job while still on my final year in school. It was not an easy endeavor, juggling my time in trying to make both ends meet. While I was being supported by the Foundation financially, I struggled much to maintain my grades in college at the same time building in my mind the vision of helping others too when opportunity offers in the future. I would like to give back with gratitude the generosity to others in the same manner the Foundation have afforded me.

To all those who had been very instrumental in bringing me where I am now, particularly to Madam Ans and the people who lent support behind the success of the program of the Kids to School Foundation, I am forever grateful for this generosity of making our dreams come true. There are those may not have this opportunity to continue their education because of poverty and deprivation, but I am strongly convinced that when you have vision and the willingness to pursue your dreams despite of the many struggles and difficulties in life, the Good Lord will always provide you the means to achieve your dreams. With the skills that I have learned in my course, this will probably propel me to explore the possibilities and make a difference in my life and with others too.

In behalf of my parents and my family, I wish to convey my warmest appreciation and gratitude to the Kids to School Foundation and the to all those whom this gift of education was graciously granted.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY.