

Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.
Hospicio de San Jose
December 11, 2010

Sister, distinguished guests, friends of Hospicio de San Jose, *magandang hapon sa inyong lahat!* Allow me to congratulate you, Sister, your staff, and the Hospicio de San Jose family on the 200th anniversary of this special and unique institution.

Thank you so much for inviting me to celebrate the publication of your new book. These are stories that need to be told. They not only highlight the need in our communities, but also provide sparkling examples of what is possible. Your first book was full of happy endings, and I look forward to reading more in this new book.

I also want to extend my thanks to Hospicio de San Jose for caring for Americans over the years. Though this history may not be widely known, many American prisoners of war and Red Cross volunteers were interned at this institution during the Second World War. In spite of great scarcity, the sisters who ran Hospicio de San Jose cared for these Americans, many of whom were in poor health, while continuing to take care of the disadvantaged and disabled of Manila. They shared their rations, provided comfort – they made the time more bearable, and likely saved some of their lives. Sister Corrie shared with me some excerpts from the personal letters written to the administrators of Hospicio de San Jose after the war, and they are remarkable. The admiration the soldiers had for their caretakers at this institution was deep and enduring.

Hospicio de San Jose has in more recent times cared for orphaned Filipino children who have then been united with their forever families in the United States. Since 2005, 32 children have been adopted from Hospicio de San Jose by U.S. families and are now American citizens. In fact, I imagine at this very moment there are children on this island who will be welcomed by American families in the near future. They will surely enrich the lives of their adoptive families, and the strong bond between our two countries will continue to be strengthened through these connections.

Again, thank you for inviting me to celebrate with you this afternoon. I wish you all the best over the coming weeks as you reflect on the successes of your past and plan for your future.

Maligayang Annibersaryo!