

Daina's Story: A Child We Could Not Forget

In 2013, a letter was read during a regular meeting of The Dalles Lions Club. It described a young girl living in a remote village in Southern Leyte, Philippines. Her name was Daina Charisse Juera. She was seven years old.

Daina suffered from a large brain tumor that caused constant pain, headaches, vision problems, and seizures. Her family lived in extreme poverty. Their home was located miles from the nearest paved road, accessible only by rough trails through the jungle. Her father farmed a small plot of land, and her older sister worked as a housemaid, earning the equivalent of about \$75 per month. The family had no means to pay for the medical care Daina desperately needed.



When Lion Merlyn Langley returned from the Philippines and shared what he had witnessed, it was impossible to ignore. Daina's suffering was real. Every day brought more pain, and her condition was rapidly worsening. I had never met Daina. Yet once I learned her story, I couldn't stop thinking about her.

What began as a simple request for help quickly became a mission involving Lions Club members, medical organizations, humanitarian groups, government offices, churches, and international contacts. Phone calls were made across time zones. Emails were sent to Lions Clubs throughout the Philippines. We contacted the American Red Cross, the Philippine Red Cross, Shriners Hospitals, humanitarian foundations, members of Congress, church leaders, and anyone who might be able to help. People responded.

Lions in Cebu, Tacloban, and other Philippine cities offered assistance. Humanitarian organizations provided guidance. Community members shared resources and ideas. Everyone who learned about Daina's situation wanted to find a way to help.

As her condition deteriorated, the urgency grew. On February 5, 2013, we learned Daina had finally reached a hospital. Unfortunately, she was denied admission because her family could not provide the required deposit. Within hours, funds were wired from Oregon to the Philippines so she could be admitted and receive treatment for her pain.

For a brief moment, there was hope. But the tumor had already taken too much from her. Two days later, we received devastating news. Daina had suffered a traumatic seizure. Despite the efforts of her family, doctors, Lions Club members, and countless people working behind the scenes across two countries, Daina passed away. She was seven years old.

Many people might look at this story and see failure because we were unable to save her life. I see something different. I see ordinary people refusing to look away from suffering. I see volunteers who invested their time, resources, and hearts into helping a child they would likely never meet. I see strangers from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds working together because they believed one little girl mattered.

The outcome was not what any of us hoped for. We wanted Daina to receive treatment, recover, and

return to school. We wanted her to have the chance to grow up. Instead, we were reminded of a difficult truth: sometimes helping is not measured by the result. Sometimes it is measured by the willingness to answer the call when someone is hurting.

Daina's story has stayed with me for many years. It reminds me that compassion has no borders and that service is not about recognition or success. It is about showing up when people need help. Even when the odds are against you. Even when the outcome is uncertain. Because every life matters. And every effort matters.

Daina will never be forgotten.
— Timothy “Mac” McGlothlin

FACT SHEET

A young child living in Southern Leyte, Philippines is suffering from a tumor growing just behind the left eye. Family is impoverished and living in a remote jungle near Bontoc, Philippines.

Child's Name: **Daina Charisse Juera**

Age: 7 years old

Gender: Female

Address: Bontoc, Leyte, Philippines

Referring Physician: Dr. Mary Ann U. Penalosa (Internal Medicine)

Resident Hospital:

Divine Word Hospital

Avendia Veterans

6500 Tacloban City, Philippines

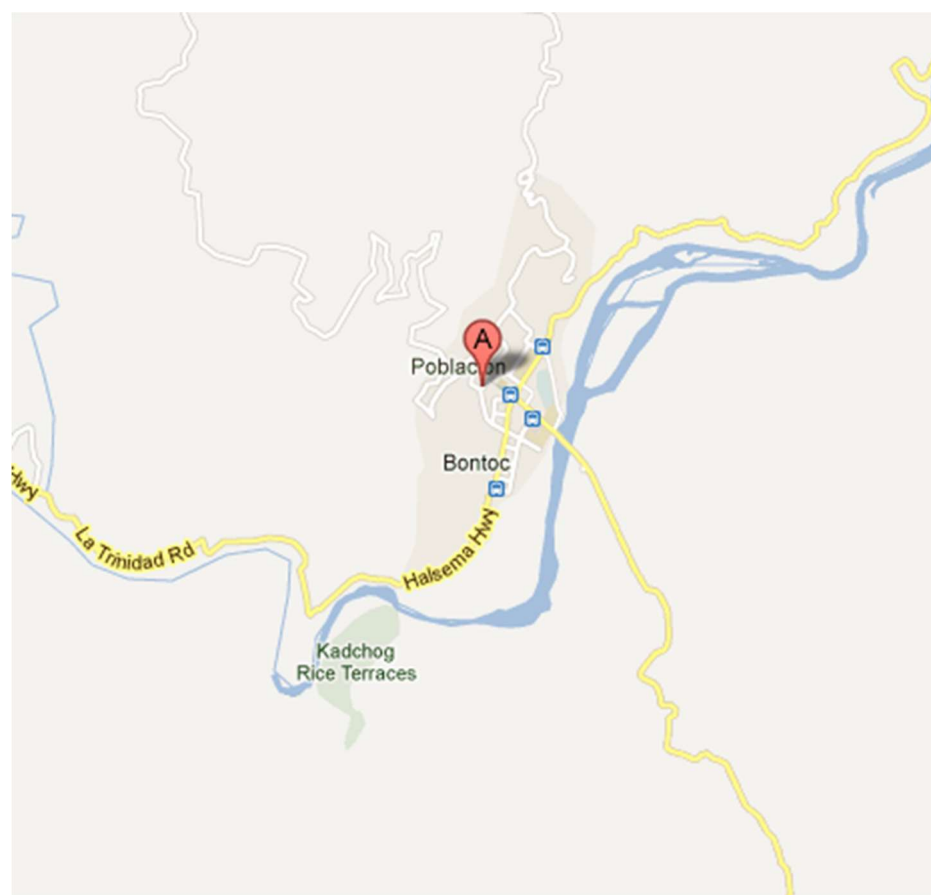
Phone (053)321-2308

Diagnosis: ...

Irregular, Lobulated, Isodense, intensely enhancing, Calcified, Intra-Axial Mass, Right Temporo-Parietal Lobe with Vasogenic Edema Primarily Brain tumor is entertained. Likely Oligodendroglioma Midline Shift to the Left of about 0.5 CM.

In anywhere from fifty to eighty percent of cases, the first symptom of an oligodendroglioma is the onset of [seizure](#) activity. They occur mainly in the [frontal lobe](#) thus affecting personality. [Headaches](#) combined with increased [intracranial pressure](#) are also a common symptom of oligodendroglioma. Depending on the location of the tumor, any neurological deficit can be induced, from visual loss, motor weakness and cognitive decline. A [Computed Tomography](#) (CT) or [Magnetic Resonance Imaging](#) (MRI) scan is necessary to characterize the anatomy of this tumor (size, location, heter/homogeneity). However, final diagnosis of this [tumor](#), like most tumors, relies on [histopathologic](#) examination ([biopsy](#) examination).

Oligodendrogliomas, like all other infiltrating [gliomas](#), have a very high (almost uniform) rate of recurrence and gradually increase in grade over time. Recurrent tumors are generally treated with more aggressive chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Recently, [stereotactic surgery](#) has proven successful in treating small tumors that have been diagnosed early.





Tacloban City Lions Club

- Philippines

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Calendar

Club Projects

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News

Club Officers LY 2010 - 2011

Meetings

When:

1st Wednesday of the Month at 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Where:

Lions Clubhouse, Family Park Compound, Magsaysay Blvd., Tacloban City

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President - Lion Arturo "Art" Gabrieles

1st Vice President - Lion Benito "Benny" Yao

2nd Vice President - Lion Maribel "Bel" Magsambol

3rd Vice President - Lion Napoleon "Nap" Ruedas

Secretary - Lion Virgilio "Vir" Cayanong

Assistant Secretary - Renato "Atong" Espiritu

Treasurer - Vicente "Boboy" Quintero, III

Tail Twister - Lion Domingo "Doy" Fuentesbella

Lion Tamer - Lion Arsenio "Sen" Enderez

Chairman - Membership Committee - Federico "Fritz" Muñoz

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lion Erlinda "Linda" Mendoza - (Immediate Past President)

Lion Neil Benedict "Neil" Montejo

Lion Vicente "Vic" Reyes, MJF

Lion Baltazar "Dondon" Auza

Current President: Lion Benito Yao (email sent 1/29/2013)

Dear fellow Lions Club members.

Daina Charisse Juera, is a 7-year-old and lives in Bontoc Southern Leyte Philippines. She is in severe pain so much she is not going to school. The only income is from her older sister Marygold Juena who works as a house maid and makes 3,500 pesos a month (about \$75.00 US dollars) Her Dad works a small farm.

Daina is in desperate need of surgery to correct a tumor near her left eye (see attached documents). The cost of her operation is 100,000 pesos or \$2,500 dollars. This family is in desperate need of help. Her village is 7 miles from the nearest paved road and travel is a trail only managed by motor scooters or High 4X4's. She lives in a jungle. Daina and her family get little sleep because of the constant crying from

the pain. No one should have to endure this type of pain no matter where they live. It hurts me every time I think of her.

I am asking that perhaps Lions Clubs International could be contacted by our club to see if there is anything that could be done. I know that in the past the Lions had a strong presence in the Philippines, but on my last visit ending a couple of weeks ago, I saw no signs of Lions.

I would so much appreciate any assistance.

Thank you

Merlyn Langley

Log Entry - Journal of Events

1/29/2012 12:55 pm - Regular Lions Meeting - Letter read to membership
1/29/2013 3:00 pm - Research and initial contact with Merlyn Langley - Lion Member that visited family in Philippines and was an eyewitness to the suffering of this child
1/29/2013 4:30 - Stopped and picked up information packet including Cat Scan Report and Abstract Medical information from Lion Ross Cain
1/29/2013 7:00 - 11:30 pm - Research, emailed Lions Club Tacloban, Manila, emailed Executive Board of The Dalles Lions Club with update.
1/30/2013 9:00 am Brett Faike from cognitive edge was working in my lab and suggested contacting the Red Cross and Shriners.
1/30/2013 10:00 - 11:00 - Contacted Red Cross Oregon, Paul Dickinson by phone
1/30/2013 2:00 Received request to share document from Carl Schellenger
1/30/2013 - 6:00 pm Chinese Fortune Cookie read: "You will be called upon to help a friend in trouble. Answer the call." Who is to argue with my fortune?
1/30/2013 10:00pm - Contacted Manila Red Cross and requested return contact from Tacloban City Philippine National Red Cross. Lion's Club Headquarters located on same street a block away.
1/31/2013 9:45 am - Emailed clubs in Cebu City (Centennial and Cebu City)
1/31/2013 7:00 pm - Received first contact from Cebu Red Cross Chapter - Shared information
2/1/2013 8:30 am - Called Shriners Hospital in Portland and spoke with new patient administrator. She directed me to Bonnie Clifford at rooftop519, an organization that aids bringing children to the United States for treatment. Email sent
2/1/2013 9:10 am - Compiled a letter to Greg Waldon, United State Congressman from Oregon
2/1/2013 6:00 pm - met with Rod and Ida Ontiveros. Working to connect the Catholic Church in The Dalles with the Dioceses in Masiin.
2/1/2013 8:20 - Received email from Herbert Walter, 1st Vice President of Cebu City Lions Club
2/1/2013 9:02 - Received email confirmation for RoofTop Foundation
2/2/2013 10:22 - Confirmation that Rod emailed Bishop in Philippines.
2/3/2012 12:00 received email from Ross Cain reporting a turn for the worse - not eating, can't see out of left eye.
2/3/2013 12:00 - 7:00 Emailed and attempted to call Bishop at Diocese. Telephone difficult No answer.
2/3/2013 10:00 - Emailed Vatican and requested contact with Bishop. Email returned undelivered.
2/4/2013 6:00 pm received confirmation from Greg Waldon's Office . Will call tomorrow.
2/4/2013 10:00 pm - Chatted with Herbert. All Lions ready to come to aid in surrounding cities. Cebu, Tacloban and Ormac City. Will contact Red Cross tomorrow and Doug Thompson.

2/4/2013 10:05 waiting patiently for update on Diena. I am extremely worried.

2/5/2013 9:00 Contacted Commander John Howard, Retired Naval Officer. He provided another link to explore. Medical Teams International (Doctors without walls) I called and left a message with Brenda. I expect a return call. Brenda returned a call and directed me to another no-profit. No Doctor team for Philippines, but would monitor our progress

2/5/2013 12:20 Provided a report to our Lions Club. Merlyn provided background information.

2/5/2013 6:00 pm Call from Merlyn reported Diena on the move

2/5/2013 9:00 pm Arrived at hospital and denied admission Required deposit

2/5/2013 10:20 pm \$600.00 US (25,000 peso) wired to Tacloban for admission . Diena admitted and IV with pain drip.

2/6/2012 3:00 pm Called Lions International in Oak Brook, IL. Talked to operator, 1st level staff reported that they don't normally take reports, but under the circumstance moved me to 2nd level staff and told I need to talk to director. I spoke to Casandra and she was most sympathetic and told me she would personally contact Gov. from districts located in Philippines.

Manolo Lao laomanolo@yahoo.com

Roberto Laurel rrolaurel@yahoo.com.ph

2/6/2013 4:10 pm Called John Ricards. 9541) 288-3017 juanputi@yahoo.com John is leaving for Philippines next week. Excellent resource.

2/6/2013 4:30 pm Met with John and his wife at his home. Call was made to Cebu and then to Tacloban to request contact be made to the hospital.

2/7/2013 Call Philippine Consulate in Portland and San Francisco

2/7/2013 Received call from Merlyn that Diena suffered a traumatic seizure . Diena will not survive I am saddened to report. The sorrow that I feel for a young girl that I never met rips at my heart. Diena passed away at her home in Bontac and will rest for eternity with her ancestors.

To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived—this is to have succeeded.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson