



Photo By MC3 Beverly J. Lesonik

## GW Lends a Helping Hand Through Project Handclasp

MC3 Beverly J. Lesonik, GW Public Affairs

Sailors aboard USS George Washington (CVN 73) delivered Project Handclasp materials to Children International in Quezon City, Philippines, as part of a community relations (COMREL) project, Oct. 23.



Project Handclasp is a program within the Department of the Navy that accepts humanitarian, educational and goodwill donations and ships them to foreign nations on a space-available basis aboard U.S. Navy vessels.

“We are happy to be able to bring the materials to the Philippines,” said Cmdr. Joseph Coffey, George Washington’s command chaplain. “I am grateful that we are representing the people of the U.S. and our Navy.”

Sailors transported six tri-walls full of supplies from the ship to Manila and brought them to the charity organization with assistance from the Philippine navy and marine corps.

“The Philippine navy and marine corps not only helped us load the supplies, but also organized the safe transportation of our Sailors and supplies to Children International,” said Capt. Victor Smith, Defense Attaché Office, U.S. Embassy. “It

was a wonderful effort between our two militaries to work together.”

Children International kids and staff members greeted the military members from both nations with song performances, gift exchanges and a taste of authentic Filipino cuisine.

“I had a great time and the food was really delicious,” said Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class Mydung Tran, from San Diego. “My favorite part of the COMREL was talking and hanging out with the kids. They were so excited to see us and I was equally excited to see them.”

COMRELs were established by the Department of Defense in order to foster and further good relations with communities around the world. They help to earn public support and understanding of operations, missions, and requirements of the Military Services and to increase understanding of U.S. defense posture and capabilities by increasing public exposure.