

UPDATE LETTER

Dear sponsors and friends,

We wish to greet you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year! In particular, we wish to welcome our new sponsors especially the two who have been very heroic in their support for us. They lost their son and respective grandson, last July 15, and now they are supporting two of our children. Such an act of solidarity and generosity is indeed inspiring!

Watching and reading news from Europe, we also wish to assure our friends and sponsors there of our prayers as we see the escalation of the waves of migrants from the war-torn areas of Syria, Northern Africa and Middle East flocking to this continent. Before such heart-wrenching situations, we want to assure you of our most fervent prayers. We are united with you as we continue on our side to uphold human rights in our works at Pagasa.



Giuseppe Arsi (PSC Chairman)
during a celebration.

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

The last five months have also been quite challenging for us. Last September, we were into a difficult moment as one of our former beneficiaries Niñio Emmanuel Aguinaldo was brutally murdered, and some of his friends, were mauled. Two of these children who were mauled are beneficiaries of Pagasa and they were witnesses to the crime committed to Niñio. Niñio's family and his friends asked our help to seek justice for him. The perpetrators of the crime were quite influential and were trying to cover it up, so our Social Center was on the frontline to seek justice for them. It was a hard legal battle up to the local fiscal court, but we all rallied for the family of Niñio and the witnesses. Conducting a peaceful march during Niñio's funeral, we were about 300 people wearing white shirts. In the funeral mass at our parish church, Pagasa President Arlyn Laroya expressed Pagasa's concern about the future



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of the young people in Tagaytay and pleaded that hopefully no more crimes like that of Niñio would ever happen in the future. It was a unique occasion for Pagasa to serve as a voice for the voiceless and the poor. We also had a dialogue with Tagaytay City Administrators, Village Chiefs, Police and Security heads, religious and civil sectors and members of the academe about how to handle the increase in crimes, violence, drugs, internet addiction and alcoholism in the city. This situation has motivated us even more to work for social justice and the common good. The case of Niñio is now in the trial court and it will be an uphill legal battle, but Pagasa is in the frontline supporting human rights in our city.

A CAMPAIGN FOR INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Last July we celebrated the National Nutrition Month with the theme: Achieve Normal Weight Through Proper Nutrition and Physical Activity. Together with the local government and other non-government agencies, we provided information to our members to make them aware of the role and importance of proper nutrition and physical activity in preventing overweight and obesity. We encouraged them to make positive decisions towards consumption of healthy diets and be physically active so as to prevent non-communicable diseases as a result of overweight and obesity. We saw the need to help in this campaign to prevent sicknesses that will cost a lot financially for our children and their families. In this regard, we continued with our sports activities with the children and to serve them healthy food through our feeding program.

In September: we conducted a Parents' Education with the theme: **Preventive Medicine** given by Drs. Imelda Palomino, and Dr. Arnold Benjamin Mina. There was the School of Life Batch 14 with the aim to help our families in



Arlyn Laroya (PSC President) with Pag-asa staff and trainor during the tile setting training.

practical things like: children's care, on family relationship; budgeting of money and time; health issues and the use of affordable herbal medicines, and their personal relationship with God. All these activities were undertaken for an integral and holistic development of our beneficiaries.

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS

We also saw a number of groups volunteering to give feeding programs in the center like a group of 20 visiting Korean Students. What is also surprising is that present and former beneficiaries of Pagasa did outreach programs in the center like, **Christine Abela**, a present Pagasa Scholar, together with her classmates. They conducted a feeding program as part of their school project. Another one of our graduates, who is now working as a professional teacher, **Mary Anthonette Ramboy**, also sponsored a feeding program for our children from her own money. Indeed the love that we have shared with them is returning back again to us!

This month also was quite extraordinary as local Filipino sponsorship has finally started after 18 years of Pag-asa's existence. In the past we only had Filipino sponsors who were Filipino overseas workers in USA and Europe.

Another support that we got was from Father Miguel de Silva, a Filipino Rogationist priest and a musician. As part of his advocacy, he started giving free music and art lessons to 12 of our selected elementary and high school students. They were taught how to play musical instruments like the flute, violin, guitar, and piano.

There was also the **"From the bottom of my heart feeding program"** of actor/celebrity Hero Angeles, our Favola T-shirt endorser.

Then, there was the Corporate Social Re-



Hero Angeles together with the Pag-asa staff and kids during his charity event.



Mrs. Que together with the Pag-asa kids on her feeding day event.

sponsibility activity of Pure Snack Food House Corporation. They donated school bags, notebooks, pencil, shoes, and snacks and fed 100 of our younger children in coordination with Mrs. Eleonor Que, finance executive of Pure Snack Food House Corporation.

EXPOSURE PROGRAM

Last August, about 100 members of *International Young Catholic Students* (IYCS) and *International Movement of Catholic Students* (IMCS) came for an exposure program in Pag-asa. They tried to learn some best practices from us about how we are conducting a global action on poverty alleviation, environment, and human rights protection.

UPHOLDING HUMAN DIGNITY AND PEACE

Also in August: we started conducting a workshop on the Dice of Love for nearby villages. This workshop promotes human and family development by introducing the themes of non-discrimination, and respect for the dignity of each human person, as well as for the common good. Hundreds of families were reached by this program. This program also bore fruit as can be seen from the beautiful testimonies of reconciliation in families and the cessation of bullying in schools and abuse in the family.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Pagasa is now working on the accreditation by the *Philippine Council for NGO Certification* (PCNC). We are positive in passing their criteria for transparency and accountability. Should we pass it, this will give us the chance to avail of tax incentives and we can participate more in their social development programs.



One of the Pag-asa mothers during the training on haircare.



Pag-asa mothers during the training on housekeeping.

The *Department of Social Welfare and Development* conducted an inspection of Pag-asa about our present and past activities and projects. This inspection was to determine if we were truly engaged in honest-to-goodness social development works for poor communities we are helping. They were pleased with our projects and we are now in the process of applying for more government-funded projects and programs.

PAGASA COOPERATIVE

In October, there was the First anniversary of *Pag-asa One Family Multi-Purpose Cooperative* (POFMP). During the celebration, we offered trainings needed in order to fully participate in the business of the cooperative and its affairs. As of now there are more than 100 active members of our cooperative.

Our HaPag pizza products were also entered in the *Provincial Cooperative Products Exhibit*. We are still operating our Pagasa Cooperative Store, rag-making, T-shirt printing, and our food store. We are also quite excited with how our Pagasa Cooperative is growing in its services not only for our Pagasa members, but also for non-members.

A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY GIFT

Another beautiful gesture of solidarity came from one of our sponsors, namely **Panarello Nicoletta and Zito Franco**. For their 45th wedding anniversary donations, they were able to gather 2,680 Euro and donated it to Pagasa. This donation is being used for the *Skills Development Program* of the center to create more livelihood and jobs for our families. We are concentrating more these days in this *Skills Development Program* to empower our beneficiaries and help them be self-sustainable. At present, we are occupying an old building which needs much renovation.

Their donations are helping to fully renovate the building of this program and set up a small office. Also, we have purchased the materials that we need for the training sessions that we are providing to our students and their families.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

As mentioned earlier, this year we are investing much in the skills development of our students and their families to empower them and prepare them for decent jobs in the future.

There were trainings carried out in partnership with the *Technical Education and Skills Development Authority* (TESDA). TESDA is an agency of the Philippine government under the Department of Labor and Employment which is responsible for managing and supervising technical education and skills development in the Philippines.

The free training sessions we are conducting in partnership with TESDA last from as short as 5 to 10 days and the number of students per module vary from 20 to 50. So far we have finished five trainings in Hair Care, Housekeeping, Tile Setting, and Nail Art, and Welding and Fabrication. There were 200 participants, most of them parents of our Pagasa beneficiaries for 26 days. Trainees who passed the assessment tests are then given opportunities to apply and be hired in big companies and earn good salaries. About 60 persons from Pagasa passed the assessment tests.

The Tile Setting training was offered by **Mercer Institute of Skills & Knowledge**. The son of the Mercer Institute owner, Francis Layug, who is managing the training institution, is very happy to partner with Pag-asa. His school offers much training and he is happy to give training to our beneficiaries free of charge.



Pag-asa Nutrition month

A CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

In November, we celebrated the 23rd National Children's Month with the theme: **Community and Government Unite: Let's end Child abuse**. We organized a program both for children and parents. There were games and special snacks prepared for the children. Then, a human rights advocate gave a talk to the parents about Child Protection.

What a year it has been! Full of new programs and surprises and with your help, we are certain that Pag-asa will continue on becoming better and bigger, able to help and give hope to more and more!

Until our next updating!

Your Pag-asa family