



SOCIAL CENTER

UPDATE LETTER

PHOTO by AURELIO MA. RODRIGUEZ



Christmas 2010

Dear Friends,

After only a few months, here again we have the latest news of our activities from July to November this year. Thanks through your continuous support and love, we are now able to improve the lives of 471 children from 274 families (October 2010)! Our gratitude also for all of you who gave us such encouraging feedback on our latest update-letter! We really feel more and more that we are one great family with all of you!

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 🌱

During the earlier years of Pag-asa, we were organizing mass Church weddings to benefit many poor couples who had been living already together for years because of lack of money to get married. This program gives the couples the opportunity to have their matrimonial union in church and give them a decent ceremony without spending too much. We were able to accommodate most of them for their marriages except for those who had difficulties processing their papers. Last July, after a very long wait to have their papers fixed, three (3) of our poor couples finally exchanged vows during a mass wedding held at our local Parish Church.

We also discovered that many children were born to Catholic parents but grew up without having their baptism in Church. Lack of time, money, education and sometimes a question of faith were the reasons in most cases. Preparing the families on their way towards faith, this year we were able to celebrate a mass with baptism for five of our children.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAMS 🌱

In Light, there is Hope...



Chiara Luce Badano, a young girl from northern Italy, died 20 years ago at the age of only 18 years. She has been beatified last September 25, 2010 in Rome, and so she became the first



Blessing of the Medical Clinic October 29, 2010



member of the Focolare Movement raised to the Altar. During the mass they quoted one of her sayings "What matters is not so much speaking about God, but above all, I must proclaim him with my life."

Inspired by Chiara Luce's simple acts of love and strong faith to God, our youth put their voices into writing which you can also see in Facebook just add pagasacenter@yahoo.com

I feel happy whenever I am helping my family and my friends. I am helping my mother in cleaning our house. At school I am sharing my lunch with my classmate at times when she doesn't have one. Whenever I do this, I feel happy because I feel like it is Jesus I am helping. – Iriks Maria Dalanon

While leaving the school ground one

afternoon I saw a fellow student who unknowingly dropped his money. I picked it up and gave it back to him. – Jericho Eliazar

One day my father and I went to the market to sell our harvest. I saw a beggar asking for money. The money I had that time (20 pesos) was exactly the amount I needed to buy the basketball I had been longing to buy. However, I thought that I could still buy that some other time so I gave half of it to him. Right after that I saw my godfather coming in from the fruit section and he gave me 20 pesos, and so I was still able to buy the basketball. – Michael Eliazar

In memory of Chiara Luce as a model of modern sanctity for all young people and to remind us of her admirable courage and



Monthly birthday celebration

undying spirit, on October 29 her feast day, we finally had the blessing of the small medical clinic in our center which will now carry the name **Blessed Chiara Luce Badano Medical Clinic**. Chiara Luce's dream was to become a doctor and help poor children in Africa. Because of her deadly sickness she was not able to fulfill this dream...

The final realization of this clinic was made possible also through a big amount donated and collected during the 40th wedding anniversary of our faithful foster parents Nicoletta Panarello and Franco Zito from Milan, Italy. Thank you so much!

HEALTH PROGRAMS 🌿



Our Daycare children with vegetable drawn masks

After the pandemic AH1N1 virus last year, the Dengue (Hemorrhagic) Fever became the killer disease of 2010, affecting many Filipinos, especially children. Also some children of Pag-asa became victims of this mosquito-transmitted virus. To build awareness, our volunteer doctor, Dr. Sarcia, gathered the Pag-asa parents for an orientation about the disease's background, prevention measures and its treatment.

July is also the Nutrition Month in the Philippines. Pag-asa joined the campaign with the theme "A child with a bright future: Start it with a proper nutrition". Our Daycare students paraded around the compound with their vegetable-drawn masks. They also watched a video about the benefits of nutritional foods and the disadvantages of not taking them.

Our nutrition-related activities, including daily feeding programs in three public elementary schools, are giving our children an edge in fighting malnutrition. We have been doing this for many years now.

PEACE-PROMOTING PROGRAMS 🌿

The 17 university students from Pag-asa, together with the youth of the Focolare Movement have joined the "Arms Down" signature-drive-campaign. With a pledge to shoulder one million signatures, they have linked up with other youth leaders across the globe in collecting 50 million signatures to lobby at the United Nations General Assembly for the abolition of nuclear arms production. Some of them even appeared on national television to promote this campaign which was originally organized by the youth

members of the "World Conference on Religions and Peace" (WCRP), the world's largest multi-religious organization.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS 🌿

The upper-middle-class high school students of the "Community of Learners Foundation", in partnership with 50 high school students of Pag-asa, have jointly conducted a Peace Camp aiming to undertake activities as a way to bridge cultures and socio-economic gaps. Together, they produced art work, games, read stories, and carried out activities promoting peace and camaraderie among teenagers across all economic classes. It was concluded by an exhibit of their written reflections, particularly on the concept of responsibility.

SPORTS PROGRAMS 🌿

A team of our high school students and their coach Vic Yayen play basketball not only to win games, but most importantly to win friends. He has been conducting training and work-outs every Saturday earlier this year. Last October, his team called "One Team, One Family" visited the St. Gregory Academy (a school with which we are also working together) to observe and plan a day of games with them.

VISITATIONS 🌿

Among the many visitors at our center during the last 5 months a very special one was Marco Tecilla, the very first focolarino! At the end of his visit to Pag-asa last July 19, 2010 he wrote:



Marco in our library

"Visiting Pag-asa and contemplating the marvelous work for the "favorite" of Jesus, I was moved!! It's a real and authentic "Work of God". I hope and wish that all the poor from this zone can find their home here, the hope in a world which is more just, according to the heart of Jesus! – Marco"

Also in July, Frank was invited to visit the foster parents group of Drs. Diether and Agnes Schenkel and the Rotary Club of Papenburg in Northern Germany. The Schenkel Family prepared a big "Pag-asa summer party" in their garden. They showcased a photo presentation of the Philippines and the children whom they



Pag-asa summer party in Papenburg, Germany

are supporting. The successful event was attended by more than 40 sponsors, friends and interested guests. Frank then updated them about the children and their families and was able to answer many concrete questions. A very big "Thank you" to them for this successful and beautiful evening!

Dearest friends, Inspired by Blessed Chiara "Luce" Badano, we would like to end this letter with this luminous Christmas message:

From Jesus' words "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness", we know that Christmas is a wonderful occasion where we can cancel all the mistakes of the year and everything is set right again when we forgive others and adopt as ours the culture of giving.. Christmas can also be better when we celebrate it by giving the LIGHT of love to those who need it the most.

Our real joy on this festive season is the opportunity to say thanks to you and to offer you and your family our best wishes for the coming Year!

May you have the real happiness of Christmas which is hope; the spirit of Christmas which is peace; and the heart of Christmas which is love.



and the staff of Pag-asa Social Center Foundation Inc.

LAYOUT BY HENRY ANGELES