

## UPDATE LETTER

*Dear sponsors and friends,*

We start this update letter with the warmest welcome to our new supporters and friends! The entire Pag-asa family opens its arms wide, and embrace you! (Look at our logo with "embracing arms"!) **Welcome to the family!**

And to those who have long been exchanging stories and news with us, thanks so much for staying and for your continuous support to our **SAD** (Support-At-a-Distance) program.

We greet in a special way our own Christian Meghini – from the group of Natalina Pellizzari – for his wedding with Martina Altinier last August! Our heartfelt best wishes!

and this year's theme "*Tamang Rehistro, Pananagutan ng Bawat Pilipino*," (Correct registration is every Filipino's responsibility) served as a reminder to all citizens to register vital events immediately, correctly and accurately, to avoid committing clerical errors. Erroneous, or ignorance of civil registration of documents, will further delay the availing of primary social services and privileges, like education, health and insurance benefits.

*(The Philippines records births of at least 1.5 million a year, and it has achieved registration rates of about 90%. Aside from the unregistered births accumulated in earlier years, the effects of incorrect or inaccurate birth registration equates to not being registered at all.)*



Pag-asa's 17th Medical Mission in cooperation with Generika Pharmacy

To those who sent extra help, to those who are regularly sending help, and to our new friends who are organizing fund raising activities for Pag-asa: What you are doing, is unquestionably a legacy we will always repeat to our beneficiaries. You are all making a difference in this world!

Now, on to our news...

### EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO A NAME AND NATIONALITY

The right to a name and nationality is one of the most fundamental of human rights. But millions of children spend much of their lives without any legal identity, and the benefits and protections it affords. Children who are not registered do not officially exist. On an individual level, this can complicate enrolment in school, and expose them to illegal adoption, exploitation as cheap labour, or involvement in criminal activities.

**Civil Registration Month** is observed in the Philippines in the month of February,

Pag-asa participated in this celebration by giving lectures to our families. The lecture yielded good results: Our families moved to remedy the problems. Some with vast changes to make postponed it, because it would take a huge amount.



Children and their teachers enjoy their visit to the city's Dinosaur museum

### LET 'EM PASS TO SURPASS

This year we had a number of students on grade retention. (**\*Grade retention or grade repetition** is the process of having a student repeat a course, usually one previously failed.) This may lower the self esteem of the students and make them feel they are mentally inferior, and cause them to give up on their academics. It may also cause them to be the subject of ridicule and bullying by other students. We believe that underperformance must be addressed with intensive remedial help, such as summer school programs, because we believe that it is important that students stay with their same-age peers. For our part, we help them with our tutorial lessons program.

To address the situation of students who get retention more than once on the same grade level, we asked the **St. John of God brothers, of the Saint Raphael School for Children with Special Needs**, to give a lecture to parents on the handling, not only of children with special needs, but also children with physical disabilities. The lecture was attended by 98% of our parents.

On our last update we mentioned about our volunteer Therapists (Lourdes Sales and Daniele De Patre) whose approach to therapy sessions is based on an atmosphere of love creating a Kuya-Bunso (Big brother-Younger sibling). Lourdes casually mentioned this approach to her PT (physical therapist) friends, and just out of curiosity they visited Pag-asa to see for themselves how our PTs do it. They immediately adopted what they have witnessed and after two weeks, they sent us testimonies that the approach has indeed helped them and their patients a lot.

Grade retention is one of the problems our children are facing in this age of electronic gadgets and the Internet. The ways kids spend their school day afternoons have drastically changed. Many choose to stay indoors and play computer games. Gone are the days when they would rather head out and play traditional games with their friends. There are also children (specially the teens) who feel worthless – or that there is nothing they are good at. They struggle with self esteem. But while there's a time and place for technology-based entertainment, we, at Pag-asa, are also encouraging our children to take up interests that are relaxing and fun at the same time. Our Saturday programs are filled with different extra-curricular activities, where they can be involved – and find something





## SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS:

€ 1300 from ASSOCIAZIONE VERDESPORT. This weekly volleyball game decided to donate this year's proceeds to us after their president Letizia Bagagli learned about PAG-ASA through Daniele de Patre

€ 500 from friends and relatives of Mr. & Mrs. Aurelio & Gabriella De Patre, parents of Daniele.

€ 50 from Giuseppe e Graziella Fragale

A BIG box of very valuable books for college students  
from Robert Swindells, UK

3 BIG boxes of stuffed toys, shoes, clothes, bags etc.  
from Frederic Marr, USA

that they are really good at – raising their self-esteem!

Physical activities bring children many benefits. A few of our children used to spend most of their times just watching basketball and other sports on TV (and literally glued to it for a long time). We encouraged them to go out and enjoy them more, by joining their school team. One basketball team of our students joined and **won the tournament championship**.

Some of our students participated in the DAMATH (math club) competition. Our **Pelex Parina** got the third place on first try, and became the **champion** the second time.

**Maria Ellaine Yayen**, another student of ours, was hailed **champion** in an inter-school Spelling Bee last September.

Many of our children are science enthusiasts and they participated in the Science Camp held in September, as part of the month-long celebration of the National Science Club Month.

## HARD WORK PAYS OFF

We participated in the **National Children's Month**, by honouring our student achievers, to show them our appreciation for their first successes as students. Emphasizing **the importance of the role of the child in nation building**, we shared to them that in order to be a builder of the nation, **an achiever attitude** should be carried on.

Since the National Children's Month falls on October, we also organized for the children a **Halloween party**. Halloween is a festival not native to the Philippines, but is a recent adaptation from the West. Filipinos usually prefer to observe the more traditional All Saints Day or **Undas** on the first two days of November.

## VEGGY GOOD!

We recently included **Blood Chemistry, Chest x-ray, and ECG** on our 17<sup>th</sup> Medical Mission accommodating almost a hundred patients. Those additions had been a great

help to patients because it provided them information to their health conditions.

Celebrating this year's **Nutrition Month**, we encouraged every Pag-asa member to eat more vegetables, so as to add more vitamins and minerals in the diet, as well as prevent non-communicable diseases such as various forms of cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

## TO SEE IS TO BELIEVE

Our teachers organized a field trip for our day-care students to places that are familiar to young children. Together they toured around the immediate community: the hospital, the fire department station, the post office, and the museum. **Children learn best through their first hand experiences** because they are naturally curious.

## HEROES OF PAG-ASA

Pag-asa, to acknowledge the tremendous sacrifice of our teachers, made the whole month of September special for them, by giving them a hand, and some small gift tokens (preparing them coffee, or even boiled bananas for a snack). Later in the month, we organized a **Teacher's Day**



Jhoemer enjoys the 3D book at the city's Dinosaur museum

celebration, exhibiting informative photos and texts, sharing of experiences, and a comedic presentation of our Theater group, on teachers and classroom humour. In the end we sang a special song for them. They are our heroes!!!

**Pope Benedict XVI** celebrated a special mass at St. Peter's Square in Rome, to mark the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In that very special occasion, our own **Ivan Luna** – a **Pag-asa scholar** – personally received from the Holy Father, a copy of the council's messages that **Pope Paul VI** wrote in 1965. Ivan was among those chosen, to represent Asia and to receive this special gift from the Pope. The Holy



Pope Benedict XVI with our Ivan Luna

Father told Ivan: "God bless Asia!" The Mass also opened the Year of Faith.

Also in October, our **former Pag-asa volunteers, Emanuele Roggio and Matteo Chiericoni**, of Viareggio, Italy, organized a fund raising activity for the Pag-asa Social Center in their parish, Sta. Rita. They were helped by members of the **New Family Movement**, who presented the **SAD-program**, as well as Ivan and 33 other youth of the Focolare Movement from around the world, who are right now in Loppiano (the little city of the Focolare Movement near Florence, Italy) to experience a life of love and unity. Together, they shared their personal experiences: as volunteer workers, and as beneficiary, along with the presentations of photos of the activities they did while in Pag-asa. Everyone who attended was amazed by the dedication we give every day in helping the poor and marginalized children. They ended the evening offering our **Favola Shirts**, and a burning desire to continue this work together with us. Thanks to all of you for this beautiful testimony of love for our children!



Emanuele & Matteo

Our former Pag-asa volunteers, **Matteo Chiericoni & Emanuele Roggio**, came to the Youth Formation Center of the Mariapolis Peace in Tagaytay City last January, to experience a life of unity together with other youth of the Focolare Movement from different parts of the world.

Dear sponsors and friends, we hope that this update has been a gift to you and your loved ones! We hope and pray that this **Christmas be beautiful, meaningful, and bring you and your family, happiness & joy this holiday season - and throughout the coming year!!! Merry Christmas!**

*Frank*

& YOUR BIG PAG-ASA FAMILY