

## UPDATE LETTER



*Dear sponsors and friends,*

it's been 15 years! And together we continue to help more and more children and their families – despite the economic crisis all of us are experiencing for the last years. In fact, 10 new sponsors joined us since February! For this reason we start this update letter with so much gratitude, and our warmest welcome, for them! We assure you: Your help will change the lives of “your” children for the better! In a special way, we want to thank all of you – who remained faithful over all these years – and, through you serving as “connection” for so many of our friends: the untiring staff of the **AFN – Azione per Famiglie Nuove onlus**, with their program of the “**Sostegno a distanza, SAD**”, with 383 donors and sponsors; our many friends and sponsors from **Teramo, Natalina Pellizzari, Bellante, Suor Bartolomea, Agnes and Diether Schenkel**, their friends and the members of the **Rotary Club of Papenburg**; as well as the many, many donors and long term supporters – who are connected directly with Pag-asa. To each and everyone of you, our dearest sponsors and partners, thank you for your unwavering support. You have followed our growth carefully, and are responsible for the successes we have all been celebrating, year after year. Some of our supporters have passed on to heaven, but their families have chosen to continue their legacy: to help needy children across the continents.

As part of an ongoing effort to help you connect your child with your culture, we offered **several cultural familiarization** programs to the children in order to break down barriers (specially of the language). Now, whenever they write you a letter, they can at least tell you what they learned about your country and your traditions and compare it with theirs.

Special thanks to the **Segard Family, the members and friends of the Association NDAO Monde Uni from France**, for the 650 and 3300 Euros collected during their fundraising activities for our Chiara Luce Medical Clinic – which is regularly accommodating patients with permanent disabilities, cerebral palsy, and a child with developmental delay. Two new volunteer Physical Therapists showed us a different approach in treating patients. Daniele De Patre, from the province of Teramo, Italy, and Lourdes Sales from the Philippines – coupled with diligence, compliance, and dedication – are using continued interaction and coordination with their patients, producing incredible results! By setting first and foremost an atmosphere of love, they create a **Kuya-Bunso (Big brother-Younger sibling) relationship**, instead of a Therapist-Patient. Their patients surprisingly show a milestone in the mobility of their joints. They achieve greater flexibility and better balance and coordination.

**Daniele De Patre**, 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. This became the chance for him to realize one of his dreams: to be able to help those in most need. When he came to work as a volunteer in Pag-asa, he was assigned in the translations of the letters of the children – from English to Italian. After reading what the children wrote, he found himself more and more immersed in their world. Though he didn't see the faces of those behind the letters – in their words – he saw the joy, the difficulty, and the hope that they live. In the barrio visits, he experiences for himself the content of the letters. He saw how superficial and indifferent his life is – how much he takes for granted things he

*We share the joy of our dear Suor Bartolomea on the festive celebration of her 60th Religious Consecration anniversary last January.*

*Thanks for the visit of Father Theo Janssen, OFM Cap., responsible for the Men Religious of the Focolare Movement; Wolfgang Schratte, high school classmate of Frank Schmelzer; and Thomas, Christine and Joann Fugel, Bernadette Schmitt and Martin Bombik, all from Germany.*

*Congratulations to our 7 new university graduates and our two new teachers – they passed the State Board Examinations for Teachers!*

*Many thanks for the big boxes of educational and children's books from Robert Swindells of UK and for the big boxes of clothes and toys from Frederic Marr of USA.*

didn't have to sweat for: food, clothes, and almost everything he wants. He adds: “after seeing how the children and families are already content to secure a meal for dinner, I realize I can change my habits – by not wasting resources in trifles, but to make conscientious use of them. I cannot close my eyes and be selfish; I cannot plug my ears and pretend that other people will manage without my help; I cannot clasp my hands and think that the rest do not exist. I think in this way now: I was born in Italy, while my brother was born in Africa, and another in Brazil, and another still in the Philippines. Their condition is bound to be different from mine, they can be poor and suffering. Thus I need to give my contribution to the realization of the hopes of my brothers. I want to put my brick in the construction of a world where my brothers and I can eat, have the opportunity to study, dress, play, and have a roof and a bed for the night, without having to beg.”

**The Modry Bal (Benefit Ball)** was again held for the benefit of Pag-asa. Nine years after Petr Diblik from the **Czech Republic** initiated it, the new responsables, Anicka and Marita, who organized its Jubilee (10<sup>th</sup> year) celebration, sent us the eventual income (1,190 Euro!). This donation will cover the one-year school expenses (college) of one of our handicapped youth. Thank you very, very much!

### Three months ago...

Our children enjoyed their most awaited time of the year: the break from the pressures of school life! To beat the heat of the summer we visited our yearly destinations: Batangas, and Hardin ng Posterna Resort in Cavite, whose owner,



*The graduates of Pag-asa Social Center*



*Daniele with the kids*

**Angel Sesa**, generously gave us free entrance – 6 years in a row now!

Thanks to our collection of '**Piso Ko, Pag-asa Natin**', we could extend our help, through our Medical Assistance Program, in the hospitalization expenses, laboratory procedures and purchases of medicines for the sick, specially in these months of the rainy season. Many get ill due to the unpredictable weather.

### VISITING PAG-ASA GIVES HOPE

**For the parents:** In our "Parents' Education Program", Dr. Elenita Alcantara, as an officer of the Department of Education and District Supervisor of Tagaytay Elementary School, gave an enlightening talk on a current reform issue on Philippine Education.

**For the children:** The students of The British School Manila, in partnership with Mr. Anton Vera of the EBM (Empowering Brilliant Minds) Foundation, came to share their knowledge of Math, Science, and Reading with our pre-school children for three days.

**For the families:** The Rissho Kosei-Kai, a worldwide Japanese Buddhist movement, sent 50 youth members for an immersion

A simple, doable and direct solution, in a flood-prone country like the Philippines, where we use and throw away plastic bags – clogging our sewage systems – is to lessen, if not stop, their use.

In Pagasa, we do our share by changing our own mind-set and lifestyle: from the use of plastic bags, to **investing in long-term reusable and recyclable bags** (which we included in the Family's Christmas gifts). We now distribute rice from our Discount Store using this bag, producing a positive impact on our environment, by ceasing the handing out of plastic bags. The families use these, not only in getting their share of rice from Pagasa, but also whenever they go to the city market to buy things. In Pagasa, we stopped using plastic bags, and help raise the public awareness of this specific habit and that of the bigger issue of our responsibility to care for the earth's ecology.

### PAG-ASA – ONE TEAM, ONE TIME (QUALITY), ONE FAMILY

Nowadays, children (including some of ours) are hooked and glued in front of computers – playing online games for hours – resulting to failing grades, even

to grow and blossom.

Quality time with a child doesn't need to cost a lot of money or of big amounts of time. It's not letting the kids flip through books, while parents are reading their own, doing the dishes, or attending to the things that have to be done around the house. Putting down our own 'to-do' list, and giving our children our undivided attention during play time is a great way to spend quality time with our children. A mother of five might feel torn trying to read stories while everyone clamours for a spot on her lap. It isn't the amount of time you give each child, but that each child gets to be the center of your world – sometimes! A good relationship with our children, based on quality time versus quantity time, helps children reach their potential, and grow into well-adjusted and confident adults. Quality time with our children helps in a variety of ways. One example: When they need it, they'll know who to go to – instead of having to look for it from wrong people, or worst from wrong places like the internet cafes.

On the other hand, a number of our children spent their free time in our **Computer Learning Center**, studying the necessary computer skills. The 7-years old Computer Learning Center has been a big help for the children and even some parents! Recently, we awarded the "diploma" to 4 students who excellently completed the computer modules.

As a complement, we intensified our weekly **basketball games** knowing that playing basketball keep kids off the streets and computer gaming shops. After a series of games, we have come to close our very first "season"! Our players learn how to compete – that hard work, practice and sacrifice are important, in order to win! At the same time they learn to be fair, to be a sport, and have fun in a competition. They learn to accept losing – and chose to keep going! That is why, like for most Filipinos, basketball is an important sport for Pagasa. For children and staff, playing basketball offers a way to engage in fun competition while getting regular and vigorous exercise. It is also a venue for constant social interaction, benefitting staff and children players alike, and the Pagasa family as well.

We end this update letter, with joy and pride! Because of the activities we have mentioned in the latter part, the children and their families say that they feel more and more the "family atmosphere" in Pagasa. Through your constant support, we remain committed to making our vision "TO BE OF ONE FAMILY" always a reality.

**Wishing you the best summer ever  
...time shared with friends & family,  
not a care in the world, no clocks, no  
deadlines, sand in your shoes, and a  
sun-kissed face!**

*Frank, [Signature]*

and your Pagasa team

#### All of these special donations helped us during the past year to:

• finance house improvements and repairs, for the families; • support the children without foster parents – mostly in our Day Care Center; • replacement of the roof of our social center

€600	from Dr. Dr. Johannes-Georg and Christin-Margit Hoppe
€150	from Giorgio Pezzuolo
€1000	from Gruppo Missionario S. Rita, Viareggio
€100	from Bernadette Schmitt
€300	from Dr. med. Ferdinand Mertens
€100	from Graziella and Giuseppe Fragale
€1000	from Emanuele Checchin
€550	from Dr. Karl and Gabriele Ruppert
€305	from Elena and all the co-workers of Emanuele Checchin
€9000	from Christmas Donation of the Rotary Club of Papenburg, including €700 from the "Frauengruppe Barbara" of the Parish St. Antonio, Papenburg from the sales of handmade candles during the Easter season.

#### SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS:

€400	from Enrico Maset to support the operations of our dental clinic
80	pairs of quality rubber shoes from Eduardo Ilano, USA

#### AND ALSO TO THE FOLLOWING FOR DONATING THEIR SAVED MONEY ON TAXES:

€900	from Mario Cao
€800	from Sergio Tomasella
€60	from Francesca Zamperlini
€400	from Katia Gnes
€880	from Giuseppe e Giulia Costa
€380	from Luisa and Mario Ceccarini

in the lives of the children and families we assist. They were overjoyed by the warm welcome given them by a remote barrio we are helping. They witnessed the Filipino's optimism: experiences of resiliency in times of calamity were shared. And yet, we Filipinos still manage to smile! Leaving Pagasa, they said they bring with them a great lesson learned from us: that as long as you live, there is PAG-ASA, there is hope!

### PAG-ASA PRACTICES ENVIRONMENTALISM

The world's ecological problem, of pollution, of environmental degradation and the resulting climate change, demands the cooperation of one and all. It requires a concerted effort on the part of everyone.

though they claim to study religiously every day. And, if not on computers, they often end up playing games on any mobile if they are in the house.

The root of this problem: the little time the parents are spending with their children! We called the parents to share about QUALITY TIME. The parents realized how easy it is to take this notion of quality time for granted, especially for 'stay-at-home-mothers'. "Why do I have to make quality time for each of the kids, when I'm with them every day? They have plenty of my time. What is quality time, anyway?" asked one mother. The fact is, children deserve and require some of their parent's undivided attention on a regular basis, for their own growth, self-esteem development, maturation, and in order for the **parent-child relationship**