



SOCIAL CENTER FOUNDATION INC.

## UPDATE LETTER



Pag-asa new Board of Directors and members

June 2013

*Dear Everyone,*

We sincerely feel that there is no other way starting this update letter than to thank Azione per Famiglie Nuove, Natalina Pellizzari, Suor Bartolomea, Agnes and Diether Schenkel, the parishes of Bellante and Teramo, various donors and even our new group Daniele De Patre, for particularly sending bigger donations in these past 4 months despite the continuous global economic crisis. Because of your continuous support, we have also extended the help you are giving to our 20 new college students. Thanks so much for that!

We just ended the summer season while you were just about to enjoy it. We hope that climate change is not preventing you from enjoying the sun, which we have just enjoyed here. Rain has been pouring hard unpredictably during our entire, supposedly, "dry" period. Speaking of rain, let us now shower you, this time with newsbits instead, of what's happening lately, in your Pag-asa Social Center.

### HOPING the day will come

The Philippine general election has just finished and although Tagayteños in general still don't know what their new mayor has in store for them. The realization of their dreams of a better Tagaytay is still elusive. Many old time residents as well as those who have taken roots in the city by locating their businesses or simply taken residence, have hoped to have an administration with a vision, talent and energy to transform Tagaytay into a world-class tourism, arts and cultural mecca.

The consuming desire for change prompted a growing number of concerned residents to bring in fresh blood into the local administration long before the

election. The reelectionists have won and will remain, and the challenge continues—to continue proposing change and working for the betterment of the city.

Tagayteños would love to see this lovely city overlooking the world-famous Taal Volcano move forward. Because, blessed with an inviting and cool weather all year round and being just an hour's drive from Metro Manila, Tagaytay can really be transformed into a prime tourist destination.

Before the election we held forums on responsible voting for the parents and concerned communities surrounding Pag-asa. As a policy, we had to be non-partisan. While people-empowerment and public resolve still leaves much to be desired in the recent elections, the Pag-asa community will continue to hope and dream for Tagaytay and to work until our common aspirations come true.

### NEW HOPE...

Tagaytay in general may be sleeping but Pag-asa continues to go forward with our new president-elect Arlyn Laroya. Along with the election of the new board of directors we targeted new projects that would make Pag-asa stronger and more progressive, and less dependent on the local government.

### ...AS BRIGHT AS THE SUMMER'S SUN

This year's summer outing of our high school and college students has been one of the most memorable and enjoyable they have ever had. They had the resort's amenities, aside from the swimming pools, all for themselves: billiard tables, karaoke, et cetera. Villa Jon- She, as the resort is called, has plenty of space to lounge. The entire property is spotlessly clean.

### THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR EXTRA DONATIONS!

- Zehnder Heinrich
- Peirotti Mario
- Bolis Gianni e Parrocchia S. Croce Malpensata
- Huber Renate und Claus
- Ruppert, Dr. Karl u. Gabrielle
- Buechel Hubert on his 70th birthday
- Dr. Thomas Südbek
- Frank Hildebrandt
- Markus Maas
- the members of the Rotary Club of Papenburg
- the Erlös Nikolaimarkt (benefit dinner) organized by the Rotary Club of Papenburg
- Margarethe Schweers-Stricker
- Drs. Diether und Agnes Schenkel
- Veronika Rieken
- Familie Lind
- Frau von Engeln & Herr Lotz
- Herr W. Hillebrand
- Familie Leferink
- Maria und Martin Cordes
- Mario Cao
- Giuseppe e Giulia Costa
- Katia Gnes
- Maset Enrico
- Giancarlo e Maura Poser
- Zaira Trentin
- a box of party and costume clowns from Dr. Gary Minkowitz from New York, USA
- 2 big boxes of apparels, shoes, and accessories from Fred Marr from the USA, who also paid us a visit in May
- 2 big boxes of assorted books from Robert Swindells

The team there is simply superb, genuinely friendly, gracious and courteous without being over-the-top. Excellent service was just one of the many good things that can be said of the place!

### ...AND ONE MILLION LIGHTS

Raffy Tanpho, a student leader of One Million Lights Philippines Chapter connected with us. Together, we distributed free solar powered lights and panel through volunteer students of the British School Manila to beneficiary families of Pag-asa.

The One Million Lights' mission seeks to improve the daily lives of children and adults by providing clean and healthy lighting.



Schenkel family and friends visitation 2013





Empowering Brilliant Minds Foundation, Inc. (EBM), through The British School Manila's Creativity Action Service (CAS Program) came for the second consecutive time, and in partnership with Pag-asa Social Center, built a beautiful playground in Tagaytay City Central School (TCCS).

For privileged students of the British School Manila to carry hollow blocks, lay concrete foundation and lift heavy cement bags, literally doing the grueling task of hard labor themselves for less fortunate children is a sight really rare.

Aside from doing hard labor, the British School Manila students also dedicated time and effort to teach dance choreography and to simply play with Pag-asa children. They work hand in hand with us in imparting holistic learning to Pag-asa and selected TCCS students. Sharing of time and knowledge with the children through play is a sure-fire way to bond with them and makes them feel important, which in turn builds their self-esteem.



year class of Bicol University College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, came from across the southmost province of Luzon to Pag-asa. Their trip was part of their field exposure and educational tour. They came to Pag-asa to see for themselves aside from theories how a social center is run. They were amazed that with a very small number of community workers and staff, we are able to operate Pag-asa in a most progressive way. They left Pag-asa bringing home smiles and the hope of being able to bring more students to our place this year and onwards.

### COLLEGE GRADUATES

Three of our students have successfully graduated in college: Romielyn Mendoza (Business Administration), Myla Miano (BS Education), and Roberto Oliveros (Electronics Technology).

*Walter and Margarida, responsables for the harmony and environment as well as the social expressions in the main center of Focolare in Italy, paid us a visit for the first time.*

*Diether and Agnes Schenkel, her children, and some friends who are mostly medical doctors, came together for the fourth time. Together with them we prepared a beautiful program consisting of dance and song presentations and activities involving them. Their last day here with us was dedicated to Medical Mission. This has been their "tradition" whenever they visit us. Each time, they leave us not only smiles, but also big donations from the members of the Rotary Club of Papenburg.*



Teatro Pag-asa wearing clown costumes from Dr. Gary Minkowitz

### THAT HISTORICAL MEETING

After the very first social center of the Focolare Movement in the Philippines had been established in 1983, other centers have followed, initiating in their own localities similar social centers. To date, there are already ten of them. After thirty long years, we have finally hit on the idea of meeting all together as one including our Focolare Carpentry Shop & Training Center of Cainta which was established in 1968, and so it happened, on March 2013.

All ten social centers started knowing each other, shared ideas, and learned from the strength of each other. While others shared the same strengths, some shared the same areas of weaknesses but all resolved to help each other to improve.

The livelihood program of one, unknown to another, was shared and all promised to support each other's livelihood. We have the same goals and we run the

centers in the spirit of love and unity of the Focolare Movement. Therefore we should collaborate more with each other as one body like what Chiara Lubich has envisioned for these social expressions of the movement that she had founded.

As the meeting progressed, we were once again reminded of the difference between our social centers and those outside the movement. Through experience, we have learned that we run the centers not by focusing first and foremost, on solving the problems of the society, filling the gaps, or doing what the government has not been able to do. We run the centers only to LOVE, without limits and without judgment, and only then, can we start to effectively transform the communities we are helping.

Our affiliate organization based in Germany, the Starkmacher e. V., shares with us the same goal. (Starkmacher means literally "to strengthen or empower someone".) It aims to discover the talents and skills of people, especially the young ones and to help them become useful in society. Mathias Kaps, its chairman, was one of the main resource speakers in the meeting. He expressed his hopes to work with us in the field of social and youth work through Education and Social Protection.

It has been a historical meeting, and therefore, the start of the many more meetings to come for all of us.

Immediately after that said meeting, together with Bukas Palad Tagaytay, we acquired Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS). CWTS is a program component or set of activities focusing on rappelling for the general welfare and the betterment of life of community members. This training was undertaken in the hope that the new skills may be helpful in rescue operations come natural calamities.

### GENPACT & BICOL UNIVERSITY

Wanting to add some activity that would make their teambuilding more fruitful, Genpact, a global leader in business process and technology management, reached out to our children by participating in our feeding program. As an addition to their heaping donation in goods, Rupesh Raut, Arnab Ray, and their teams left a promise to visit us after every three months. Traveling 140 miles to Tagaytay, a third

### DEAN'S LIST

Marvin Eliazar, one of our college students taking Accountancy, made it to the Dean's List and received a 60% rebate on his tuition as a reward.

### MY NEIGHBOUR... ANOTHER ME

Our teens were among the 250 teens that participated in the National Summer Youth Camp organized by the Young Ones for Unity of the Focolare Movement in the Philippines. They spent four days together discovering every neighbor as another brother to love, and learning to work together in helping society.

After that, 55 of our young boys gathered for their annual "Gen 4 Congress", a values-formation half-day event for children. It was a fun-filled learning experience held in an atmosphere of brotherhood and friendship.

Your *Pag-asa* Family