

UPDATE LETTER

DECEMBER 2018, PHILIPPINES

Dear friends,

How are you? I cannot remember a time when I haven't heard "How are you?" from almost anyone I know. When I started working in Pag-asa, I have always encountered "How are you?" as a conversant opening phrase in each letter of each child two times in a year every year. It has become like a habit. But this is the way children are brought up. Even adults say this sentence who knows how many times during the day?

In our cultural context, "How are you?" is a sign of interest or concern for the one you are addressing to. Eventually it becomes one of the most common expressions in our daily life. The Filipino equivalent is "Kumusta ka?", adding "po" when addressed to seniors or persons of regard to show respect. We need not say how we really are as a reply, we just give the simple response of "I'm fine" or a simple gesture of acknowledgement. For us reciprocity is important.

Let me, therefore, use this greeting "How are you?" on behalf of the entire Pag-asa family to all of you our dear benefactors and friends with its real meaning of concern and care. Obviously you need not answer. This greeting is also a wish that you are fine.

Here in our local situation nowadays, it is indeed comforting to hear someone asks you this question from time to time specially during our troubled times. The current economic situation of the Philippines is going from bad to worse, like most other countries worldwide, more so in our Country. This affects of course everyone else including Pag-asa.



Boxes of biscuits donation from Biscuits, Intern

There is no denying that our Country is in the brink of economic disaster because of the overall international situation as well as internal factors. The Philippines' inflation rate, which measures how fast prices are rising, reached a whopping 6.4% in August, then 6.7% in September - the highest in 9.5 years. It is also the highest among all of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) today.

Our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, once said, **THE YOUTH IS THE HOPE OF OUR COUNTRY.** If we look at how Pag-asa children perform in the first semester of the school year, then I guess yes, there is hope. They have once again shown exemplary performance in specific areas of their school life.

Aside from the awards they get from schools, we in Pag-asa, acknowledge and promote student excellence in various

areas, and to provide formal recognition of student achievements that can motivate them to strive for excellence in academic, leadership, and social responsibility. We do that by organizing every end of the quarter a **COLLECTIVE CELEBRATION** also to cheer them up in these difficult times, besides promoting solidarity, fellowship and sense of belonging to the Pag-asa family, the literally meaning of which is precisely **HOPE: Never give up hope!**

We believe that when recognized, they are more encouraged to remarkably and skillfully perform specific kinds of tasks critical to their success in school and at work. It encourages them to be proactive members of their school and community. This way, their confidence, self-awareness, and enthusiasm for learning is boosted.

A motivating environment like Pag-asa promotes respect for student diversity and



Some of the achiever beneficiaries



German student interns and volunteers during home visitation



or family will receive a big gift consisting of many things including basic necessities like rice... thanks to your generosity that makes this possible!

Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year to all of you!

Heero Cayasa and
your entire Pag-asa family

PS: If you want to write to your child, please use the following address:

Pag-asa Social Center
c/o Arlyn Laroya
P.O. Box #78
4120 Tagaytay City
Philippines

Or email us at:
pagasacenter@yahoo.com
info@pagasasocialcenter.org

dedication to learning. In Pag-asa, we support the well-being and achievement of all students. In return, they bring pride to their parents, our province, Pag-asa, and of course to you our dear "parents", benefactor friends.

This year we are also challenged in another front, an urgent vital issue: shortage of water! Without blaming anyone, the fact is the water of Tagaytay is not sufficient to meet the needs of its increasing populace, particularly during weekends and holidays when tourists almost outnumber its regular residents. The supply of water is strictly rationed. But even during the scheduled time of supply, at times not even a single drop of water... We spent extra money to buy water at a high price!

Thanks to the Rotary Club of Papenburg (Germany) which promptly responded to our appeal by donating the necessary financial support to alleviate this serious problem. With their help we were able to implement the first phase of the project, that is, to increase the capacity of our water cistern in order to contain more water during the rationed hour. Now we are trying to explore the possibility to reactivate our old deep well that was dried up years ago. Let's hope...

This year we hosted two young German students of social work for their internship. It is a mutually enriching experience. They wrote to us at the end of their stay. We just quote their concluding sentence: "To put it in a nutshell, we are very satisfied and thankful for the opportunity that was given to us from Pag-asa to participate as volunteers for our required Internship in the field of social work." Presently, we have two other German boys (17 and 18 years old) who are helping us as volunteers. The presence of these foreign friends is truly an eye-opener for the kids of our day care center as well as those of the different villages where we extend our help. This enhances not only the vision that Pag-asa as a family, but the whole world as a family, an effective way, small as it may be,

of promoting global citizenship in a more united world.

It is never enough to mention all the fruits of your generous help, material as well as moral. Dear friends of Pag-asa, once again, we want to thank you with all our heart. As Christmas is fast approaching, we want to give each one of you a tangible THANK YOU gift for all that you do for our children. But what gift? I guess "your" children's achievements are more than enough to make your hearts go big with pride! From our staff, our gift is a renewed commitment to serve Pag-asa with greater dedication, care and concern (remember "How are you" at the outset?) to fulfil its vision and mission.

There will be the big Christmas Party that gathers all our children, students and their families under one roof, literally, in the big multi-purpose hall "Sala Leo", a very useful structure made possible by our benefactors. It will be a celebration of life, of hope and a moment to give and receive: each child

If you do not have the possibility to continue to help the child, it is essential to communicate it. The notification must arrive promptly at our office in Tagaytay. This gesture will allow us to continue to help the child looking for another supporter. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.



Boxes of shoes and toys from Mr. Wan Hua Hoi of Singapore



First phase of our Water Project