



Dear Friends,

Like many of you, we breathed a collective sigh of relief that 2020 is finally over!

2021 could be welcomed with some anxiety and feelings of uncertainty. But, the people of Pag-asa try to see the silver lining in the current crisis. We just tell ourselves that there is no other way but up, so up we did... until unknowingly we have become a host of "virus of hope" that gives birth to "strains of positivity viruses" to the communities around us.

We would like to recall briefly that Pag-asa Social Center Foundation Inc. is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, one of the social expressions of the Focolare Movement, founded in 1997 in response to the widespread poverty experienced by many people in Tagaytay. «Pag-asa» is a Filipino term that means «hope». With a staff of just 7 people, the center provides school, medical and nutritional assistance and other services to 300 children and young people (2-21 years old) from 200 poor families from different barangays in Tagaytay.

### THE "VIRUS OF SELF-RELIANCE" THAT INSPIRES

The families that are helped by Pag-asa through your contributions see that the social center consistently lives up to its name as a hope bringer, as a hope carrier, and that it never rests even in the wake of a volcanic eruption, in the aftermath of a series of destructive typhoons, or during the period of the (in)famous lockdowns. These families feel that they have to do their part as well: to survive, to find new ways to earn a living, and to live as normal as possible in the midst of an abnormal situation. While waiting to get back to their previous jobs, people engage in small livelihood activities and in online selling of food and household products.



(From left to right) Our youth in Noveleta enjoy distributing The Noche Buena Project Christmas bags. Our children sporting LineCense shirts and 3D facemasks.

One of our mother beneficiaries started to sell baked goods made from a simple oven toaster. Her good profit and example inspired other mothers to look at their own skill sets and interests and find ways to create small businesses. We asked several of them to supply Pag-asa with gift items for the Christmas package that is customarily given to each child and family beneficiary during the holidays. It was a significant step in helping these families regain their dignity and financial independence. For them, it was proof that they can take charge of their future, pandemic or not.

### THE "VIRUS OF BEING FAMILY" THAT UNITES

Government-imposed lockdowns forced family members to stay home and stay safe. It was really a good opportunity for the whole family to do things together, were it not for a constant distraction: the excessive use of gadgets! Schools were closed and "distance learning" meant that our students stayed at home most of the time and used mobiles phones or personal computers to study. While the problem of excessive use of such gadgets existed even before, the current situation further aggravated it. Break time between study sessions was spent playing online games or engaging with social media. Family members were physically together but each one was glued to the screens of their cell phones or laptops.

Pag-asa saw the need to take action and "activated its own virus": that of promoting the value of family bonding moments. We distributed board games to each child and voila!, the outcome was overwhelming. This "unplugged" form of entertainment gathered the entire family together, to play and to bond. What a joy it was to receive photos of our families enjoying this healthier type of game. We did not only promote these family bonding moments. We also helped



them avoid the side effects of spending too much time in front of gadgets: carpal tunnel syndrome, back and eye problems, etc.

### THE CHARITY VIRUS

The Philippines' geographical location places it along the path of typhoons that develop in the Pacific on the second half of the year. An average of 20 typhoons pass through the country in this period causing floods, landslides and damage to crops and properties. While a recent series of typhoons caused heavy damage in areas around Tagaytay, the city was largely spared. One of our family beneficiaries, even if they did not have much to give, looked into their cabinets to see if they could donate some clothes to those who have lost everything in the floods. They started a clothes donation drive which involved seven (7) other families.



#TeamPagasa Ms. Hoi, Mr. Kel, and kids Gwyneth and Gareth.

### THE #TEAMPAGASA VIRUS

Because of restrictions in the movement of people in Singapore, our dear friend Ms. Hoi was not able to carry out #TeamPagasa, her annual donation drive of toys and school supplies for our social center. Even then, our beneficiaries will still receive something from them: Ms. Hoi and husband Mr. Kel are sending us about a thousand LineCense shirts while their kids Gwyneth and Gareth joined in as well, sending their pre-loved toys. A friend of Ms. Hoi offered to pay for the shipment cost of the items.

The #TeamPagasa initiative grew because of another project started by Ms. Hoi, a donation drive of reusable facemasks. While these masks cost a little bit more than the single-use ones, they are more cost-effective in the long run and do not end up as easily in the landfill. Upon hearing about this initiative, friends of Ms. Hoi in Thailand who own the LineCense brand offered their facemasks at a discount. Another friend donated some more facemasks which were sourced from Tulip Child Handmade, another social project.

"Whenever I make a donation drive, I don't tell people how much I am raising because I don't want to stress them with numbers. I want them to give what they can. It is not the amount anyway that counts but their sincerity and thoughts in giving that really matters."

(Ms. Hoi)



(From left to right) Siblings enjoying "unplugged" form of entertainment. Our dentist, Dr. Vanessa, her assistant, and her patient

## PANDEMIC-PROOF PROGRAMS

### Oral Health

Our dental clinic finally resumed operation after a long 11 months hiatus. Thanks to the generosity of some donors, we were able to purchase new auxiliary equipment, whose use was made mandatory by the Philippine government during this pandemic period.

### Education

Home-based or distance learning arrangement means our students do not need to wear school uniforms and shoes. This year, we gave away flip flops instead of the usual pair of shoes. The typical rubber footwear of Filipino children is far more useful at home.

The distance learning arrangement also comes with a lot of challenges. Most Filipino families have several children studying at the same time but sharing only one gadget among them with which to access online classes. With limited resources, we were able to purchase and give a few laptops and wifi boxes to those who are most in need.

Dear friends, we invite you to check our newly updated website designed by Henry Angeles.

[pagasasocialcenter.org](http://pagasasocialcenter.org)

Browsing of pages in the website is made easier and more engaging with the use of colorful and animated photos. Please invite your friends to visit the site and be part of #teampagasa. Getting involved in charity work is a good way to start the New Year!

### PANDEMIC ESSENTIALS

To avoid contagion, our first line of defense is a healthy body with a robust immune system. Our beneficiaries are just too happy to receive from Pag-asa hygiene kits with washable facemasks, disinfectant alcohol, vitamin C supplements, and probiotic health drinks.



### VIRTUAL HOME VISITATION

The Philippine government has relaxed community quarantine rules and people aged 15-64 years old have freedom of movement. Even then we continue to be very careful by not conducting physical home visitations. Instead, our Community Development Workers make video calls to families to see them and to find out how they are.

### EXTRA HELP EXTENDED TO BENEFICIARIES FROM JULY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2020

Neoprene facemask (washable)	1185
3D Linecense facemask (washable)	500
Tulip Child Handmade facemask (washable)	20
Tee shirts by Linecense	800
Isopropyl alcohol (liter pumps)	237
Vitamin C chewables	11000
Probiotic health drink	3300
Additional house roofing	25 households
Flip flops	555 pairs
Laptops	6
Wifi box	2
Christmas package for families	237
Christmas package for children	330
The Noche Buena Project Christmas package	150

## Your Pag-asa Family

### Contact us:

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Visit the new  
[pagasasocialcenter.org](http://pagasasocialcenter.org)



Two of our mother beneficiaries carrying a sack of rice as part of our Christmas package for families