

UPDATE LETTER

June 2021, Philippines



(From top to bottom) One of the families that received pandemic essentials inside the Pagasa building.

This boy beneficiary's smile upon receiving food and pandemic essentials is priceless.

Staff during the distribution of pandemic essentials.

Dear Friends,

As we begin to see what might be the beginning of the end of this pandemic, here we are again bringing you good news.

Before we go on, let us tell you again a little about our Center. Many of you already know where our Center is located but for a refresher, we are situated in the city of Tagaytay, in the province of Cavite, Philippines with a population of 71,181 people according to the 2015 census. Tagaytay's scenery is one of the many reasons why it is one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. Its altitude, compared to the cities surrounding it, gives the city a cooler climate. It provides views of the Taal Volcano Island in the middle of the lake through various vantage points and viewing decks in the city. It is the same volcano that remains in its unrest state until now at alert level 2 (50% chance of eruption).

Our Center's edifice, with two daycare classrooms, is helping 333 children. Our location is also relatively close to the vastly populated capital city of Manila, only 59 kilometres away.

OUR PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

The Nursery and Pre-School: Pre-pandemic we have 40 children, aged 2.5-4, in the Pre-School. During the morning break we offer them a nutritious snack. We have only one teacher. During this pandemic, we took a modular approach of education for only 18 kids.

Educational assistance: We assist the children with their education-related necessities so that they can regularly go to school.

Medical assistance: Our small "Chiara Luce Badano" Medical Clinic has a stock of medicine for simple illnesses. Through our contacts, we help our beneficiaries reach the hospital while we contact the doctors and contribute to their expenses. We have been providing regular dental care through our very own dental clinic.

Feeding program: We are currently refurbishing our kitchen to make our feeding program more effective for our children once the pandemic is over.

Provisions to the families: Since we started our Center, we have always bought wholesale rice directly from the poor farmers of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija which we resell at 25% the original cost.

College scholarship: This program supports boys and girls whom we believe have the necessary qualities to continue their studies. Giving them the opportunity to have a university degree, they would be able to get better jobs and help their families in a more concrete way, and as a consequence, also their country.

From December of last year up to the month of April (the time this letter is written) let us share to you what we did and what we plan to do.

December: The Philippines celebrates Christmas way longer than any other country in the world but last year's was not even anticipated with excitement because of the pandemic. Traditional gatherings with family, friends, and neighbours are unsafe and risky as they may facilitate the spread of the coronavirus so they have been discouraged. On top of that, the economic impact of the coronavirus, including the impact of successive natural calamities/disasters like the volcanic eruption and typhoons that befell the country, has left many Filipinos without work, financially challenged, or broke.

Pag-asa, to a greater extent, did not allow them to ruin the most important season of the year. Despite quarantine restrictions and financial difficulties, Pag-asa found a way to bring hope and still make our beneficiaries enjoy the holiday season even if it's done online. This very first virtual party we did still meant giving, loving, and renewed hope that the future will be brighter and better. It still meant charity and goodwill towards all humankind especially those who are less fortunate like them especially now in this time of the pandemic.

January: With respect to the four-ways approach to prevent COVID-19, steps suggested by the Philippine government, which are: have yourself injected with anti-covid vaccine; wash your hands often; cover your mouth and nose using face mask when going out or when in a room or place with other people; avoid crowded places and practice social distancing, we distributed hand/body soaps that we received from our sister social center, Bukas Palad Foundation – Manila. We also bought for our Center a couple of Disinfecting machines to purify the air inside our building.

February: We distributed pandemic essentials (to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19) as well as school supplies and snacks donated by a kind donor, Sarah Jane Casin-Roderno during her birth month as part of her advocacy to give instead of receiving during her birthday.



Some of our youth beneficiaries who received pandemic essentials

During this month we also finished the renovation of our kitchen to prepare it for our feeding program post pandemic.

March: The volcanic eruption and the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic have prevented us from our feeding program but, this month, we were able to conduct one once again in partnership with Sweet Knot Haven restaurant.

April: We distributed 1,000 pieces of Happy Meal toys from the Happy Meal Buy 1 Donate 1 Project pfof the Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Philippines, Inc.

May: We plan to distribute another set of pandemic essentials to our beneficiaries which fund was generously donated by the Rotary Club of Papenburg and the Action for a United World Association.

June: From the hills of Tagaytay to the shores of Noveleta Cavite, we will begin to extend the SAD program there as part of our new project for Pag-asa's 25th anniversary.

Dear Friends, let us end this newsletter with an experience shared by a former beneficiary but whose sponsors continues to support us to this day:

"After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting Technology, I was able to find a good job in a hospital and later on work in real estate where I used my knowledge and skills with accounting and finances. When the pandemic started, I almost lost my job but I found ways to earn money to support my family. I sold household products online and became the top seller for months. Then last week, we opened a food business near our house here in Tagaytay and by the grace of God, it is booming."

"My sponsors are one of the main reasons why I am where I am now. I just have one dream left which is to go to Italy to meet, thank, and hug them for being our greatest blessing." (Cristine Marie Abela)

Dear Friends, others may have given up but we assure you that even in the sorest storms, hope (Pag-asa) is available for your beneficiaries.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Your Pag-asa Family

IMPORTANT NOTES:

If you wish to write to us or your child, please use the following address:

Pag-asa Social Center Foundation, Inc.
Focolare Compound, Calamba Road,
Iruhin Central, PO Box 78,
4120 Tagaytay City, Philippines

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

- When sending a letter, put your address as the sender on the envelope and do not write it anywhere in the text. From experience and respect for everyone's privacy, we know that the exchange of supporter / child addresses is inappropriate.
- If you do not have the opportunity to continue helping the child, it is essential to communicate it before the renewal of your commitment occurs. The report must arrive promptly to our office with an e-mail (pagasacenter@yahoo.com). This gesture will allow us to continue helping the child by entrusting him to another supporter. We thank you in advance for your collaboration.



(From top to bottom) Our newly renovated kitchen.
Feeding program activity in partnership with Sweet Knot Haven.
One of our beneficiaries in Noveleta with his makeshift vessel to fetch drinking water.

Visit our website
pagasasocialcenter.org

