

# UPDATE LETTER

June 2023, Tagaytay City, Philippines



SOCIAL CENTER FOUNDATION INC.



**Pag-asa Social Center** was born in 1997 almost spontaneously, as an expression of the Focolare Movement's commitment to love the neighbor. Through regular district visits in the surrounding communities of the verdant hills of Tagaytay, its members came face to face with the harsh realities that afflict the lives of the many families that live there. The Focolare Movement started supporting children of families in need in the area by providing them health, educational, and livelihood assistance, along with human and spiritual formation not only for the children but for their families as well.

As of this writing our Center, with a staff of just 7 people, provides school, medical and nutritional assistance and other services to 266 children and young people (2-23 years old) from 160 poor families from different barangays (or districts) in Tagaytay and along the coastal area of Noveleta in the province of Cavite.

Tagaytay, the upland hilly and mountainous city where our Center is situated, overlooks Manila Bay to its north, Laguna de Bay to its east, and Taal Volcano and Taal Lake to its south. Based on the 2020 census, this city with a population of 85,330, has a total land area of 65 square kilometers which constitutes 4.37% of the total area of Cavite province.

## A Drop in the Ocean

Dear friends,

The global pandemic status of Covid-19 has been lifted and has most likely been reduced to endemic status now. It looks like a sign of the progress the world has made, but we are still not dropping our guard.

Thankful that a global natural hazard has ended, we are however now faced with a natural phenomenon, the effects of which seem to be widespread too. El Niño may aggravate things on a global level as drought may threaten food production and the extremely hot weather it will cause can lead to animal disease outbreaks and food-borne diseases, among many other consequences. This early we are already affected by it. As of this writing, a temperature of 50 degrees Celsius was recorded. It is a heat index that is categorized as dangerous and likely to cause heat cramps and heat exhaustion, even leading to a heat stroke with continued activity. Imagine that we are just in the beginning of the summer period. It is frightening to think that we may reach the heat index threshold above 54 degrees Celsius, which is ranked as extremely dangerous. For this reason, many schools called off in-person classes and switched back to alternative delivery modes to safeguard the health of their learners and personnel as a temporary solution.

In this regard, Pagasa has always advocated care for the environment to combat climate change and its impact even before the formulation of the Global Goals. We want to say that this advocacy is not just a drop in the ocean. Instead, this is the entire ocean, in a drop. Allow us to say that it was clever of Pag-asa to think

of combatting the world's climate change, but today Pag-asa is wiser by changing the way we consume electrical energy to combat climate change. Our latest action and contribution in partnership with the Rotary Club of Papenburg, Germany is our solar power system designed to reduce reliance on fossil fuel generated power. Our 11.04kWp Grid Tie System produces a monthly solar harvest of 1324.80kWh and a yearly CO2 Reduction of 12%. This yearly potential peso savings for the two systems can be translated to 51,252 liters of gasoline saved, 120 metric tons of carbon emissions eliminated, and this is equivalent to 3,062 trees being planted each year.

Dear friends, it has been over three years now since the pandemic started. Through it all, Pag-asa has remained very active and continues with its advocacies as if nothing dreadful happened. In fact, with such a big number of activities we didn't realize that five months have already passed. The highlight of these months was the visit of our friends from the Rotary Club of Papenburg, Germany as well as the group of our dear Natalina Pellizzari from Treviso, Italy.

The Rotary Club of Papenburg conducted a two-day Medical Mission alongside two days of dental services. Two hundred eighty-six patients benefitted from it. They also went home with free medicines and vitamins and set packs of vegetables from Focolare Eco Farm.

As in their previous visits, both groups dedicated a "meet and greet" day with the beneficiary kids under their respective group of sponsors. Home visitation followed. One evening was dedicated to a one-year delayed (because of the pandemic restrictions) celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The story of Pag-asa



*Fire Drill in March (with firemen from the Bureau of Fire Protection). Dentists of the Rotary Club of Papenburg during their 2-day medical mission in February*



was depicted in an hour-long musical presentation of Teatro Pag-asa. During the program the visitors also had a chance to write their anniversary wish for Pag-asa on the wall of wishes. One particular wish stood out from the rest: I WISH THAT PAG-ASA DOES NOT ONLY BECOME A SOURCE OF HOPE BUT THAT ITS MEMBERS BECOME HOPE THEMSELVES, WHOM PEOPLE AROUND THEM CAN DRAW HOPE FROM.

We also recalled that through our programs, services, workshops, and other activities, we are able to develop, nurture, and nourish young people who have become professionals and successful in their career. Let's read some experiences of hope from some of them:

"Pag-asa literally gave me hope. A big part of who I am today is because Pag-asa opened its door through its Support at a Distance program and, of course, through the formation given by its staff. It has always been true to its mission of creating an atmosphere of a family. Its program ensured a holistic development of its beneficiaries. With my sponsors, Pag-asa supported my studies and helped me discover my passion for teaching. Now I am passionately fulfilling the responsibilities of a teacher at a public school educating the hope of the nation." – Gemma Villanueva Atienza, Teacher

"I am a graduate of Bachelor in Secondary Education Major in English and I am a proud product, a proud scholar of Pag-asa Social Center Foundation. I am now a licensed teacher and have been teaching in a private school here in Tagaytay for 7 years now. I will not be where I am right now if not because of Pag-asa. They didn't just help me fit financially in my studies but they also molded me to become a better person, to become a better version of myself. Pag-asa helped me so much and now it is my turn to help my family. I help my youngest sibling in his studies. It is the responsibility that Pag-asa instilled in us that once you received help, you have to return the help to your family or other people" – Mary Anthonette Colandog, Teacher

Dear friends, thank you for staying with us. With or without the pandemic you have remained very supportive and trusting. The world may never run out of problems, of needs, of people in need, but with your presence, you help maintain the balance of the earth. One would say your help is just a drop in the ocean, but we say your help is not a drop in the ocean. It is the entire ocean, in a drop. The pandemic is definitely not a drop in the ocean, but neither is your help.

We wish you all a safe and fun-filled summer!



(Left to right) Teatro Pag-asa during their musical presentation at the University of Santo Tomas in March. Free vegetable pack sets during the Rotary Club of Papanburg's 2-day medical mission in February. Our beneficiaries during their summer outing in May. During the "meet and greet" of our group of sponsors in February and March.

**Thanks for the extra donation from:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Host Jam</b>   | "Canta La Vita" group                                  |
| The Noche Buena Project   | Ad Elly Van Haandel                                    |
| <b>Loida Magtalas</b>   | Mark Mireille Peters                                   |
| Ficarra Gaetano   | Winfried Kuipers                                       |
| Riccardo  | Taddei Carlo   |
| <b>Centro Igino Giordani</b>  | Maschio Flavia   |
| Savino & Rosa   | Sartori Teresina                                       |
| Sorrenti  | Campo Eugenio  |
| <b>Giuseppe &amp; Graziella Fragale</b>   | Moras Vittoria   |
| Vaiano Giovanni   | Ziliotto Valeria                                       |
| <b>Rief Johannes</b>  | Tomasella Sergio                                       |
| Zehnder Heinrich  | Armellini Danilo                                       |
| <b>Suter Josef</b>  | Checchin Fernando                                      |
| Nicolis Carlo   | Pitton Stefano   |
| <b>Bo Margherita</b>  | Meghini Flavio   |
| Moro Lino   | Carniel Lia  |
| <b>Mary Frances Colayco</b>   | Monika and Andreas Langer                              |
| Juneil Manaba (Former Beneficiary)  | Rotary Club of Papanburg                               |
| <b>Maria Socorro Ramirez (For the 2nd birthday of her grandson Jaxon Lucan)</b> | Dr. Dr. Johannes-Georg Hoppe and Christin-Margit Hoppe |
|   | Frank Osteresch  |

**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.

Your Pag-asa family