

UPDATE LETTER

December 2023, Tagaytay City, Philippines



SOCIAL CENTER FOUNDATION INC.



In 1997 as a demonstration of its founders' commitment to love their neighbors, the Pag-asa Social Centre was founded almost spontaneously. Through regular district visits in the surrounding communities located in 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. We started supporting children of families in need in the area by providing them health, educational and livelihood assistance, along with human 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 scholastic, medical and nutritional assistance and other services to 267 children and young people (3-22 years old) from 163 poor families who reside in the different barangays (or districts) in Tagaytay and along the coastal area of Noveleta in the province of Cavite. Tagaytay, the city on a hill 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 land area of the entire Cavite province.

Dear friends,

It has been a year since we wrote to you about the global economic effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. As of this writing, it has not ended yet but another conflict between Israel and Palestine has created new risks to the global economic outlook. This would result in a prolonged negative effect on energy and food markets as well as continued massive price increases at the global level. Is it still possible to achieve peace and prosperity? It might take some time, but we believe that there is hope in the midst of all these conflicts. We are never going to give up hope.

Apart from the negative economic impact caused by this gloomy situation, we are still faced with uncertainties brought about by the unpredictable volcanic activities of the nearby active Taal Volcano. The frequent volcanic smog it emits has forced the suspension of classes several times in Tagaytay and in many towns and cities of the surrounding provinces. In spite of this, the perseverance of our children and youth is unshakeable. They continue to hope and dream, no matter what. In fact, one of our beneficiaries named Hannahmarie Tenorio graduated at the top of her class Magna Cum Laude (with great distinction) while two brothers – Andrei Jade and Denzel Jade Domamay – advanced to compete at the Taekwondo national level competition. This year six students graduated from college and nine completed their high school studies. It is definitely a remarkable achievement for these students but, most of all, we would like to congratulate you because whatever they have accomplished is your success too. Without your unwavering support, it would not have been possible. We are reminded that when we leave this world of ours, whatever

we do for ourselves will die with us but whatever we do for others will always live. Teacher Judy Ann, who was a recipient of your help through Pag-asa, witnessed this generosity of yours and shared her experience in a nutshell:

"I was not a very good student in the intellectual sense. I had a hard time with academics. I had my fair share of failures, but Pag-asa did not give up on me even if I was ready to throw in the towel. A decade has already passed since I graduated, but I will always remember how they stood up for me. They taught me the champion mentality of never quitting. Pag-asa not only helped me to finish school, but most importantly it was able to help me grow as a person. If it were not for them, I would not have reached where I am now. After graduation I worked at Pag-asa as a daycare teacher. Years later I became a manager of one of the most successful fast food chains in the country because of the leadership I learned from that experience. I am now working at a BPO company as a team leader armed with this experience that has allowed me to deal better with people of all ages, characters and status in life. To pay it forward, I am teaching my team the lessons that I learned from Pag-asa."

Dear friends, despite the ominous conflicts and their adverse effects, the damages caused by the eruption of the volcano, the havoc caused by typhoons, and the uncertain economic and political development and outlook of our country, with you by our side, we will never stop hoping, praying, working and rooting for the likes of Hannahmarie, Judy Ann, Andrei Jade, and Denzel Jade.



The brothers Andrei Jade and Denzel Jade Domamay, with coach Butch Morrison, world championship taekwondo gold medalist. Hannahmarie Tenorio, the second Magna Cum Laude of Pag-asa

Over the last six months, our children have filled their free time with extra-curricular activities, which were aimed at discovering or honing their skills and talents under the guidance of experts and professionals who conducted short courses. We organized a photography workshop for our millennial beneficiaries so that they would make better use of their smartphones however simple they are. Workshops specifically for Teatro Pagasa with 50 members were held on theatre acting, voice lessons, and script writing. Playing basketball has also become a favorite among the various activities and a basketball team was formed to compete outside the confines of Pag-asa. A friendly match against students from another school was held between our new team of basketball players consisting of 24 members. We pride ourselves on being PLAYMATES rather than opponents as has been instilled in the minds of our players by Pag-asa. Our youth and adults attended both First Aid Training and Psychological First Aid workshops while our beneficiaries and staff of Pagasa took part in a seminar on stress awareness. These were all undertaken in order to equip everyone with the ability to face certain situations or any eventualities that may arise. Instead, the parents of our beneficiaries kept the Bayanihan spirit alive by helping a neighbor to repair their kitchen and toilet so that they would not need to spend the money on labor. They also continue to render their services in Pag-asa in order to give back to the Pag-asa and community, understand that they are an integral part of the social center and keep their dignity as they are not only recipients of help but more importantly they are COLLABORATORS in our efforts to give hope to children, families and communities. The mobilization and empowerment of the community as well as a number of other activities have been undertaken by our community staff and area leaders while our social center staff immersed themselves in seminars and workshops deepening their knowledge about children and women's protection against trafficking and violence one after the other.

Here are some of them in photos, which we believe you will enjoy more.

Once again we thank you for your love and generosity. We wish you all the best in this life. Have a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

Your Pag-asa family



(From top, left to right) At the seminar for our teenagers on stress awareness with their lecturer, Joseph Siason, and a Pag-asa staff, Randy Debarbo at Pag-asa AVR. Teatro Pag-asa with their musical instructor, Joseph Siason, during their voice lesson at Pag-asa AVR. Some of our teenagers, with a Pag-asa staff, Vince Totanes, at a First Aid workshop with the Red Cross. Some kids after a painting session with their Teaching Artist, Riah at Pag-asa's classroom. Our basketball team after their friendly match.

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.