

# UPDATE LETTER

December 2024, Tagaytay City, Philippines



Since its establishment in 1997, the Pag-asa Social Center has dedicated itself to demonstrating love for our neighbors. Situated in the lush hills of Tagaytay, the center has been providing essential support to families in need by offering health, educational and livelihood assistance, as well as human and values formation for children and their families. However, we still aspire to do more and to do better. We envision a future where we can extend our reach to more communities and provide even more comprehensive support to those in need. With the help of generous donors and dedicated volunteers, this vision can become a reality.

As of now, our center, which has a staff of only seven people, is making a significant impact on the lives of 229 children and young people (4-22 years old) from 151 low-income families in different barangays or local districts in Tagaytay and along the coastal area of Noveleta in the province of Cavite. Our educational, medical and nutritional assistance along with other services are helping these young individuals to build a brighter future. Tagaytay, the city where our center is located, overlooks Manila Bay to the north, Laguna de Bay to the east, and Taal Volcano and Taal Lake to the south. As of the 2020 census, this city, with a population of 85,330, covers a total land area of 65 square kilometers, which makes up 4.37% of the entire land area of the Cavite Province.



*Our beneficiaries during one of our regular feeding programs*



*Mr. Arlyn Laroya (in orange), during his oath-taking as one of the board members of Association of Foundations. Our beneficiaries who won in their respective communities during the Nutrition Month poster making contest.*

## *Dear friends,*

It is Christmas again, and what better way to celebrate this joyous season than by counting our blessings? Every time we send you updates, we always try to balance unpleasant news with wonderful ones. We would like to send you the message that even though we may not be able to solve all the world's problems, good things are still happening thanks to the support you are sending us.

Christmas came early for Pag-asa this year with several achievements. Now, let us start counting our blessings...

**Blessing Number 1.** The president of Pag-asa, Arlyn Laroya, was elected as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Association of Foundations, a national organization of more than 200 non-government organizations (NGOs) nationwide. He was further elected as the Board of Trustees Vice-President for Luzon, the Philippines' largest and most significant island. Since being appointed to chair ABSNET (Area-Based Standards Network of the Department of Social Welfare and Development-DSWD) in 2022, he has been invited to attend several meetings with other foundations and non-government organizations, which gave him opportunities to learn new ways and ideas which could help continue and improve our work.

**Blessing Number 2.** Pag-asa was awarded Level 3 accreditation by the DSWD Standards Bureau for satisfactorily complying with the Third Level Standards in implementing Community-Based Programs and Services for Children and Youth. This is the highest level of recognition that DSWD can award to

accredited non-government organizations, which is valid for the next seven years.

**Blessing Number 3.** Pag-asa was nominated as the best NGO in our region and consequently nominated for the Outstanding Social Welfare and Development Agency (SWDA) award in the Philippines. This nomination alone places Pag-asa as a model to draw inspiration and imitate, so we expect other SWDAs to visit us to learn from our best practices. If chosen, this national award would be the highest recognition that Pag-asa would ever receive, reaffirming the importance and impact of our work. We dedicate this honor to you and to all the children, youth, families, and communities we serve, and it would further inspire us to continue bringing HOPE to our beneficiaries.

**Blessing Number 4.** Our social worker, Vince Totanes, who graduated Magna Cum Laude from Cavite State University, recently passed the National Licensure Examination for Social Workers on his first attempt.

**Blessing Number 5.** Two successful medical missions were conducted in just 12 months. The latest mission was in partnership with eight doctors specializing in optometry, pediatrics, internal medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology, along with the assistance of medical and nursing students from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Medical Mission Incorporated. The mission aimed to provide quality medical treatment to children and families in need, especially to the recipients of the Support-at-a-Distance Program, their families, and other members of

the community who cannot afford to go to the hospital. The medical mission lasted six hours, during which 253 patients were served. The UST Medical Mission Incorporated provided prompt check-ups and assessments, and the patients received the necessary medicine based on their needs.

**Blessing Number 6.** Two of our former beneficiaries passed the national licensure examinations for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) and Professional Teachers. In our encounters with them, they shared their difficulties, struggles, and realizations and offered advice for fellow graduates facing similar challenges. Here is an excerpt of what they shared.

Arnel Lacambra, CPA, now works as a Financial Services Organization Audit Associate at SGV & Co., the leading professional services firm in the Philippines:

*"This is what I tried to put into practice. Give it your best effort and pray. Always acknowledge that you cannot do everything on your own. Recognize God's power to help you when you doubt your capability. Remember that you are not taking the examination alone but with the Lord God by your side. So when you do not know the answer or are doubtful, trust Him. For those who failed, do not wait until you are old to try again and worry about the "what ifs" of your life. The courage to do what you should have done regardless of failures is better than fearing failure, leaving you with regrets for not attempting again..."*

*And to my dear sponsors, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in my journey, and I would not have been able to complete my college education without you. I wish you all a long, happy, blessed life filled with the same kindness and generosity you have shown me."*

Teacher Sharlene De Villa now temporarily works at Alta D' Tagaytay Hotel as a supervisor but is hoping to land a job in an educational institution:

*"Growing up in a low-income family, I faced personal challenges while preparing for my board examination while working simultaneously. Despite these obstacles, I remained determined. Every night, I shed tears while praying for success. I pleaded with God to help me pass the exam, even though I could not review as much as I wanted to. I had a revelation during this time – praying alone would not be enough. I needed to pair my prayers with dedicated action and hard work..."*

*To my beloved sponsors, I continue to root for you. If not for you, studying would have remained a burden to me. Because of your support, my family felt the weight of the financial demands of my college studies less heavy. I hope you will continue supporting the mission to provide education and opportunities to those in need."*

This is not the last of a long list. We are not yet done counting our blessings before the year ends. With you, let us keep counting our



*(From top, clockwise) Arnel Lacambra, Teacher Sharlene, and Vince Totanes during their oath taking. Medical mission with University of Sto. Tomas. Children who benefited from donated slippers from Italy.*



blessings by visiting our website. There is so much to be grateful for; it is all waiting for you online!

Dear friends, we are filled with gratitude for the blessings the Lord has bestowed upon us, especially for the gift of your support. Your past contributions have played a crucial role in all our achievements, and we deeply appreciate them. As the number of sponsors decreased due to various unavoidable circumstances, we are reminded of the early times when we had nothing at all, and any small support that arrived was considered an enormous blessing. In moments of worry and restlessness, remember to count your blessings. We are confident that doing so will lift your spirits and lead you to recognize the abundance of blessings in your life and that we can always hope for a better tomorrow.

Blessed Christmas and an Exciting New Year to you, your family, and your community!

*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](mailto:info@pagasasocialcenter.org)  
or [pagasacenter@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.