



From the Editor

Many of you responded generously to our last issue's appeal for help. On behalf of the Little Angels Kindergarten in Hebei Province, we thank you for your loving kindness. As usual, in this issue, we will share stories about several completed projects and explain the needs of a newly built elderly home in Shanxi Province. We look forward to your continued support.

New School Bus Puts Parents' Worries to Rest

In June last year, we reported about Yihua Kindergarten's urgent need for a school bus. It didn't take long to raise sufficient funds to purchase the vehicle. The children of this kindergarten in Shaanxi Province can now ride in their own school bus. Below is an excerpt of a letter from the sisters who run the kindergarten:

Parents are happy with the new school bus, and so are the children! The bus service helps many parents – they now have more time to attend to their businesses. For those parents who went to work in the cities and left elderly grandparents with the chore of taking the young ones to and from school, it is a big relief knowing that both the old and young are much safer now.

Parents also told us the children are now much better behaved when it comes time to go to school. Whereas they used to be reluctant to get up early for school, now they are eager – bright eyed and bushy tailed. With their little backpacks strapped on their shoulders, they eagerly await the arrival of the school bus. The pressure is off for both the parents and the children.

56 children now take the school bus, and we are trying to enroll more. Thanks to the benefactors, the school bus makes us well known in the community, and more parents are willing to enroll their children in our school. We want to assure you we will continue to do our best to take care of the children.



The new school bus



Children on the way to school



Getting Adolescents out of a Psychological Abyss



Attendant of Annual Meeting

"I attended the annual 'thanks giving' meeting 2 years in a row. The sharing of life stories gave me my first ever feeling of happiness and excitement. Hurt feelings can be healed. Baring the wounds helped cleanse the poison accumulated in the mind. It is all right to embrace our imperfect selves."



Of one big family

"I was at a loss when I first got into middle school. I was sad all the time, and the future looked bleak. All that changed after I attended 6 consultation sessions at the centre. I learned to look at the positive side of life; I am hopeful about my education; I feel confident of myself; and I feel much less pressure."

People Who Received Psychological Consultation

"Between dosages of psychiatric drugs and reading spiritual nourishment books, I have been searching in the last 7 years for self-confidence and hope in life. Then in April 2014, I started my psychotherapy treatment at the Centre. That's when I got rid of the drugs and started on a journey of healing, a journey of liberation and salvation."



Tools for psychological therapy

Ningjin county in Hebei province has a population of 750,000, with one fourth being between 14 to 30 years old. A study found that a third of these young people suffer from varying degrees of psychological imbalances due to family and relationship problems.



The Theresa Sisters, who have been working with youth and women in this community for 15 years, were deeply concerned about this phenomenon and wanted to do something to help. So, in 2012, with help from Caritas-HK, they founded Ningjin county's first psychological treatment centre. The three sisters who serve in the centre are all certified psychological consultants.

A key objective of the centre is to help the young people come to terms with the reality they face; to be able to step out of the shadows created in their own minds and to live a normal life. Various activities were designed to help them build a platform from which they can have a proper view of the values in life, and to support each other. Below is a list of goals and services the centre aims to provide each year:

- one-on-one weekly consultation for 20 young people
- 5 group therapy sessions for 50 young people
- 4 Sunshine and Adolescence sessions for 160 young people
- 2 workshops on Adolescent Psychology for 30 youth social workers
- 2 lectures on Physical and Mental Health for 400 young people and their families
- 2 workshops for social service providers



Neighbours

"This centre you sisters run is playing an important role. You pointed the way to many helpless parents. Normal schools don't know how to handle these kids - all they do is to ask for them to quit. You have to keep doing what you have been doing - continue to help these young people face different challenges so they can stand up on their own."



Reading Club Members

"8 months in a reading club on 'Life and Growth' every Friday evening - we studied together; we shared the sorrow and joy in our lives; we listened to and supported one another. Along the way we strengthened one another and we paddled hard together towards the depth of life where we encountered our better selves."



Psychology Teachers from Schools

"We've only been given a little bit of psychology training and were not well prepared for our jobs. The schools concerned mostly about how well the students performed in public exams. We need to pay attention to the students' character building, and to help reduce the pressure they face. Hope you'll do more in these areas, and help raise our abilities to do our job."



Workshop for social workers

Inspirational Classes for Adolescents

- "I learned to express myself with confidence. I can now look people in their eyes when I talk to them."
- "I am now clear about the need to attend school. I learned to be thankful, and to treasure what I have."
- "I learned to control my emotion. You don't need to get mad in order to solve problems."

"I have benefited much ever since I joined the programme. My mental health has improved significantly. I now have a much better understanding of my inner self. I have found the key to solve many of the problems I face in life; I have a much better understanding of my changing moods; I have a clearer picture of the road ahead; I am no longer at a loss; I stopped complaining about everything; I no longer procrastinate."

Views of Service Users

Call from Afar ...



Item no : 5301

Responsible person of Caritas Hong Kong, greetings!

Andao Home for the Aged is situated in Duanjiajuang, Xinjiang county of Shanxi province. Xinjiang has a population of 320,000 (96,735 families). 70% of the people from around here are migrant workers in big cities, leaving behind the young and the very old.

There are two homes for old people in Duanjiajuang, one of which accepts only retired civil servants and is government funded. The other is privately run and provides very poor services. In fact old folks from the latter are some times seen picking up leftover food on the roadside. What a very sad situation.

Our bishop decided we should build and run a home for the helpless old folks in our community to help alleviate the problem, and we started the construction of the Andao Home for the Aged in 2014. Although there have been delays due to insufficient funding, now the building is completed, as well as interior works and the installation of the sprinkler system for fire hazards. It is four-stories high, and is designed to accommodate up to 100 old folks. About 20% of this capacity is reserved for those who can't afford to pay. Our home is near an ophthalmology hospital and a hospital of traditional medicine.

We are also wrapping up with the government registration procedures. A Sister who studied in the Philippines and who has experience working in an old folks home abroad manages the home. We have not started providing services yet, but 10 staff were trained in March, and we have many volunteers from the parish ready to help.

In order to fully utilize the top floors of the building - from the 2nd to the 4th floor - we desperately need an elevator. The cost for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of this elevator is RMB 210,000 (approximately HK\$238,636). The construction of the building has already exhausted the diocese's resources, and there is no more funds left for the elevator. We now appeal to you for help, and your kind consideration is deeply appreciated!

Father Han
Yuncheng Diocese, Shanxi
April 2017

The newly built elderly home



Looking forward to
your response

For enquiry, please call on 35892259 or 35892500, or leave your message at mainland@caritas.org.hk. To show your care, you may write a crossed cheque payable to "Caritas-Hong Kong" and send it to: **Mainland Service Desk**, Room 505, Caritas House, 2, Caine Road, Central, Hong Kong. Please write down the item no. / purpose of the cheque and your contact information on the back.