



OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A time to reach out and help

THE practice of almsgiving, together with prayer and penance in Lent, goes back to the time of the early Christian communities. Prayer and fasting draw us closer to God. Almsgiving shows concrete love of our neighbour by providing for the needy. For God wills that we are blessed so that we can bring God's compassion to others in need.

Each Lent, through Charities Week, Caritas Singapore collects donations to enable our 23 Catholic charities to help the poor and marginalised they care for, giving hope to some 50,000 people who depend on the generosity of the Catholic community.

Your donations will support the work of these charities, which include Abilities Beyond Limitations and Expectations (ABLE), the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Boys' Town Singapore, Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives, Singapore, Catholic AIDS Response Effort, Catholic Welfare Services, Clarity, Family Life Society, Infant Jesus Homes and Children's Centres, the Roman Catholic Prison Ministry, Montfort Care and Morning Star Community Services as well as Agape Village, Caritas Singapore's upcoming one-stop help centre taking shape in Toa Payoh. The work of some Catholic charities is featured on this page. The names of the people in the stories have been changed.

Please give generously to Charities Week 2015.



“ God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that He Himself 'became poor' (2 Corinthians 8:9). ”

- POPE FRANCIS (EVANGELII GAUDIUM 197)

Help came when they needed it most

Daniel has severe eczema – a chronic condition where the skin is inflamed, making it hypersensitive and prone to flaking, cracking and oozing pus. He was worried that another flare-up would bring not only pain and discomfort, but also the loss of his job as an engineer. Married with a newborn, he was feeling the weight of the responsibility of being the head of a young family.

Sarah, his wife and caregiver is his greatest pillar of strength, but the new mother was also showing signs of burn-out: mood swings, insomnia, tension and stress. For many months, Daniel's skin condition left him bedridden; even taking a shower had become excruciating. He could no longer lead an active lifestyle. Sarah said: "I can cook, clean and take care of his every physical need; but watching him cry in pain and not being able to help – that emotional hurt is indescribable."

The couple managed to find tiny rays of hope shining through this dark cloud. They found faith in Jesus Christ after their Christian neighbours reached out to them, providing support and encouragement. Initially resistant to the offers of help, the couple gradually relented and found relief. "God provides help through His children," Sarah said. "My husband and I have learned to gratefully accept assistance and support from family, friends and good-hearted strangers whom we believe

have been sent by God into our lives."

Sarah came upon Clarity by chance, and the couple accepted counselling to manage the stress of coping with eczema. Daniel and Sarah worked through their problems with the counsellors. They gained a clearer perspective on their options, which helped them face their problems with greater confidence.

"Counselling at Clarity is something Sarah always found relief in," Daniel said. "She is much calmer." Sarah agreed, saying: "My counsellor is not just a listening ear. She has the expertise to help, which friends sometimes do not have. I leave each session feeling enlightened."

Hoping to reduce his use of steroids, a common eczema medication, Daniel also found alternative natural treatments that helped.

Daniel wants to pay it forward. He and Sarah have started a support group for those suffering from similar conditions. "God wants me to go through this so that I can help other people," he said.

Clarity Singapore (www.clarity-singapore.org) is a Catholic mental health charity. Through its therapeutic intervention services, it helps people of all races, religions and nationalities to recover from and manage mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression and other mood disorders. Clarity also works with various community partners to promote mental well-being.

How YouthReach brought John home

When John's school counsellor first suggested his parents go to court to have him declared Beyond Parental Control, his father was against the idea. Mr Tan eventually went to the Juvenile Court with great reluctance. He told his son's social worker, Faith, about the family's numerous failed attempts to help John change his wayward behaviour. Now Mr Tan feared that if he did not take drastic action, his teenage son would continue on a road of no return. At that point, John had not returned home for several days.

Things took a turn that same night: John went home of his own accord.

When John was first referred to

YouthReach under the Streetwise Programme for gang involvement, Faith took a non-judgmental approach. She supported and journeyed with John. She also worked closely with his family and school. This helped to break down barriers and establish trust.

Later, John told Faith that he went home because he was weary – tired of refusing to cut his hair, tired of constantly fighting the school authorities; tired of ignoring his parents' calls. What he did not say was: he was truly touched by his family's unceasing love for him.

Today, John is making up for his lost year. He is in a private school preparing

for his 'N' levels later this year. He wants to thank his loved ones for not giving up on him and helping him to dare to start believing in himself.

YouthReach is a joint youth outreach project by **Catholic Welfare Services and Boys' Town Singapore**. YouthReach offers comprehensive services to reach out to youth at risk and help them utilise their strengths and resources to achieve their desired goals. It provides services such as counselling, home visits and life skills workshops to schools and organisations.

Homeless man regains dignity, hope

Simon, in his late 40's, was homeless and used to go for the free food programmes at the Church of the Sacred Heart, where Catholic Welfare Services (CWS) social workers got to know him. It took a while for the social worker to get to know his situation because he did not find it easy to share information about himself. He was living at the edge of society, day by day.

Since coming to the CWS Hub, where he is now known by name, he feels more accepted. With a social support network, Simon now comes to receive food and participates in festive celebrations and other activities, making friends along the way. He has grown to trust CWS staff and now feels accepted by society.

Having regained some sense of self-dignity, he has taken on some work and started training with a view to getting a better job in future. With a letter from CWS, he is now able to connect with government social service offices for assistance.

Catholic Welfare Services, Singapore (CWS) began in 1959 with a simple programme to provide food for the poor. It has grown to become the action arm of the Catholic Church in Singapore to initiate, assist and organise forms of relief and schemes of social service which alleviate poverty and distress amongst the people of Singapore irrespective of their race and religion.

Charities Week 2015

Caritas Singapore needs your love, prayer and generosity for the work we do.



Pick up a Charities Week 2015 appeal envelope from your parish or download a donation form from www.caritas-singapore.org.

If you require tax deduction on your donation, kindly tick the box and provide us with your NRIC number. Donations without tax deduction allow Caritas Singapore more flexibility in allocating donations to Catholic Charities without tax-exempt status.

Cash contribution: Drop the appeal envelope in your parish offertory box.
Cheque contribution: Write a cheque payable to "Caritas Singapore" and mail it to: 55 Waterloo Street #08-01, Singapore 187954