

CATHOLIC AIDS RESPONSE EFFORT
Annual Report
(1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016)
Adopted at the Annual General Meeting 2017

1. MANAGEMENT

1.1 Members of the Governing Board

1.1.1 In the course of the year under review, an Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 27 July 2016.

1.1.2 The following members were elected to the Management Committee at the AGM:

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| President | - | Anthony Soo |
| Vice President | - | Ambrose Tan |
| Secretary | - | Jacob Chew |
| Treasurer | - | Susanna Goh |
| Asst Treasurer | - | Antony Ng |
| Committee Members | - | Jacinta Rajoo Nicholas Chee |

1.1.3 Fr Kenson Koh continued as Spiritual Director.

1.1.4 Jacob Chew resigned from the post of Secretary on 31 December 2016 as he was posted on an overseas job assignment.

1.1.5 Nicholas Chee was appointed to the post of Secretary with effect from 15 February 2017.

2. MANPOWER

2.1 Employees

2.1.1 The following were employees of the Charity as at 31 December 2016:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Designation</u> | <u>Date Joined</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Michael Charles Loh | Executive Director | 1 May 2011 |
| Florence Seah | Programme Manager | 1 July 2011 |
| Ignatius Fong | Night Supervisor | 1 Oct 2013 |
| Joseph Ang | Programme Executive | 14 May 2014 |

At the time of writing this report, the position for an Admin/Accounts Executive was vacant.

2.2 Salaries

None of the Charity's employees was paid in excess of S\$100,000 per annum.

2.3 General Membership

2.3.1 During the year under review, one membership application was accepted, making up a total of 28 members as at 31 December 2016. Of these, 7 served on the Management Committee.

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2.4 Volunteers

- 2.4.1 As at 31 December 2016, there were 23 active volunteers on the CARE Register of Volunteers. 1 newly-recruited volunteer resigned in the same year.
- 2.4.2 Two new volunteers were recruited in the year under review.
- 2.4.3 Our volunteers helped out in many different ways such assisting at advocacy events at the different parishes, spending time with residents (being there for them), leading in meditation, cooking with and for residents, conducting singing sessions, praying with and for residents (including attending the monthly Intercessory Prayer Sessions) and helping with transportation of heavy items. A small group of volunteers also visit ex-residents who have left the CARE shelter, some of whom are staying in nursing homes.
- 2.4.5 Besides individual volunteers who helped out on a regular basis, CARE also had external groups visiting its residents. These included:
- (a) The Catholic Nurses Guild whose members visited the residents to share home-cooked meals and have fellowship with the residents.
 - (b) MAC Cosmetics whose staff spent an entire day with CARE residents in the month of December (in conjunction with World AIDS Day which fell on 1 December). They organized social activities, lunch and helped out with area cleaning.
 - (c) Kampong Kapur Methodist Church whose pastor and members organized meals and social gatherings for our residents. Church members who are musicians and magicians entertained our residents during these visits.

2.5 Training & Development of Employees & Volunteers

- 2.5.1 CARE staff and volunteers are encouraged to attend training in order to improve their work proficiency. Those who have attended these training programmes generally felt more confident of carrying out their duties within the boundaries of acceptable standards and good governance.

As far as possible, CARE sent their employees and volunteers for training with organisations such as Caritas Singapore or the Social Service Institute that extend subsidised rates. CARE also sends its staff to training that are supported or recommended by the Singapore Archdiocese for example, the one on “Essential Features of Employment Contracts” conducted by the Singapore National Employers Federation in November 2016.

- 2 Besides skills training and development, CARE’s Executive Director also emphasised the importance of spiritual and emotional growth of his staff. Weekly bible sharing and pastoral care sessions were held with full participation by all staff. These sessions were also useful as a platform for staff to air their emotions about issues and problems they face in their work and with residents and reflect on these from a faith perspective. It also provides a form of support among staff. This approach to staff development is

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very much in line with the HR guiding principles set out by the Catholic Archdiocese which places emphasis on the spiritual growth of staff.

2.5.3 The staff support group sharing helped them to remain focused on their calling to discipleship. Besides providing continual renewal of their commitment to serve, it also provided staff with a sense of ‘oneness’.

2.5.4 As part of the faith formation for Catholic employees, CARE staff were encouraged to attend spiritual retreats at approved Catholic centres. In the year under review, two staff members were given time off to attend personal retreats.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 Institution of a Public Character

CARE continued to enjoy IPC Status for a period of 2 years and 6 months, commencing 1 August 2015. The IPC status will expire on 31 January 2018.

3.2 Governance Evaluation

As reported to the Commissioner of Charities, CARE is 100% compliant with the Code of Governance for Charities and Institution of Public Character. This evaluation is for the period 1 January to 31 December 2015. The evaluation for year 2016 will be submitted after the 2017 AGM. Members may log on to the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg) for more details.

4. PROGRAMMES & SERVICES

4.1 Residential CARE Shelter

4.1.1 During the year under review, the CARE Shelter continued to be our major activity.

4.1.2 Admissions:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Total residents as at 1 Jan 2016 | 20 |
| Total admissions during the year | 5 |
| Total discharges during the year | 8 |
| Total as at 31 Dec 2016 | 17 |

4.1.3 Distribution by Religion:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Buddhism/Taoism | 8 |
| Catholicism | 3 |
| Christianity | 4 |
| Hinduism | 0 |
| Islam | 2 |
| Others | 0 |
| Total | 17 |

4.1.4 Distribution by Ethnic Groups:

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| | |
|---------|----|
| Chinese | 13 |
| Malay | 2 |
| Indian | 2 |
| Others | 0 |
| Total | 17 |

4.1.5 CARE continued to receive referrals mainly from the Communicable Disease Centre (CDC) and the Prisons Department. However, the year under review saw a considerable decrease in the number of referrals coming from CDC which was a major concern to CARE management. We had dialogues with the Ag Principal Medical Social Worker for updates on needs of PLWHA. While the infection rate is trending towards younger men and there are emerging needs to assist PLWHA living on their own, CDC gave the assurance that CARE was still relevant and that CDC will continue to refer suitable candidates to the shelter home. CARE also took the opportunity to keep them informed of its new approach to care and discussed new collaborative efforts.

4.2 Pastoral Care for Residents

4.2.1 CARE adopts the Caritas' Principles of Service for the delivery of care to its beneficiaries. In line with these principles, CARE taps on the strengths and talents of our beneficiaries and let them take responsibility for the outcome of their participation in our programmes.

4.2.2 Residents are encouraged to participate in CARE's in-house programmes according to their interest, talents and ability. Our menu of activities includes CARE's cottage industry where residents get to choose what they like to do. They have a choice of candle-making, crucifix making or rosary making. Candles and crucifixes are made from recycled material. CARE's cottage industry, started in 2012, gives non-working residents something to do and not remain idle. Participation in active and meaningful work help residents to regain their sense of self-worth thereby an increased self-esteem. They also feel a sense of accomplishment especially when they see that the works of their hands are bought by church members. They also feel supported by the community. Proceeds from the cottage industry go back to them.

4.2.3 CARE's approach to pastoral care has always been holistic in nature. Besides seeing to their physical needs, we also attend to their psychological, emotional and spiritual needs which are our real focus. Our holistic approach to giving care has resulted in positive attitudinal changes in many of our residents.

4.2.4 To cater to the emotional and spiritual needs of our residents, we conduct sharing sessions. The residents enjoy these sessions where they get to talk about their life stories and their feelings. They also share, very candidly, various issues affecting themselves. This has helped them to get in touch with their own emotion which is the first step in the healing process.

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- 4.2.5 Residents who require counseling and personal coaching are given personal attention by staff and a team of specially selected and trained volunteers. Our Spiritual Director, Fr Kenson Koh, is also available to any resident seeking spiritual guidance or reconciliation.
- 4.2.6 While CARE provides service to all races and religions, it also provides opportunities for spiritual growth of residents who show interest in finding out more about the Catholic faith. Over the years (since 2011), 8 residents have voluntarily followed staff to attend church services and/or sought counseling and spiritual healing at the Catholic Spirituality Centre to help them come to terms with their personal issues. A total of 8 residents have attended the Conversion Experience Retreat and the Prayer Experience Retreat conducted by the Catholic Spirituality Centre. 5 residents have accepted the Catholic faith since 2011.
- 4.2.7 Shelter residents are given the option to participate in any of these pastoral activities/programmes that are organized with their needs in mind:
- (a) daily meditation in the morning.
 - (b) daily morning prayers
 - (b) monthly faith sharing in Mandarin by volunteers from Mandarin East Curia
 - (c) weekly Community Living Session led by CARE Staff
 - (d) monthly Intercessory Prayer Session led by CARE Staff together with volunteers
 - (e) weekly singing session with staff and volunteers

Besides these pastoral activities, social activities were also held throughout the year. Birthdays and other significant occasions like baptism are also celebrated. We also make it a point to have festive meals for all major public holidays like Hari Raya Puasa, Deepavali and Chinese New Year. Christmas is always celebrated on a grand scale with our year-end party with food, games and entertainment.

4.3 Employment for Residents

- 4.3.1 Residents who are able and are willing, generally would seek employment so that they can be financially self-supporting. This is one of the steps towards integration to society. On average about 4-5 residents (20%) are either fully or partially employed.
- 4.3.3 Residents who are gainfully employed made contributions towards their own living expenses. This is in line with the Caritas Principles of Care of empowering rather than creating dependency. In the process, residents regain their dignity and ownership, becoming more responsible for themselves.
- 4.3.3 For the majority of CARE's residents who are not employed, the most commonly cited reasons was poor health and side effects of their medication which result in their inability to cope with the physical stress of work.
- 4.3.4 Residents who do not go out to work are required to participate in our pastoral care programmes. For more details, please refer to the Pastoral Care Report above.

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4.4 Non-Residential Programme

4.4.1 In the year under review, the Non-Residential Programme benefitted 22 persons, all of whom are living with HIV/AIDS who are staying on their own. This figure is made up of mainly women PLWHAs and their dependent children. Majority of these women are foreigners who are married to Singaporean men. In 2016, the programme also had 2 male PLWHAs.

4.4.2 In alignment with our 3-year Plan, CARE increased its efforts at providing support to residents who have moved out to stay on their own. This became an extension of the Non-Residential Programme. By the end of the year, a total of 9 ex-residents benefitted from the programme. Our staff provided them with a listening ear and counselling whenever needed. They are also invited to visit the shelter home and join in our activities.

4.4.2 The profile of our non-residential beneficiaries is as follows:

| Non-Resident Description | S'pore Chinese | S'pore Malay | S'pore Indian | Thais | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| PLWHA Women/Men | 2 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 14 |
| Children | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| Ex-residents | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | 10 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 31 |

4.4.3 The support continued in the form of monthly food rations, monthly transport pocket money for school-going children and the annual school text-book allowance.

4.4.4 During the year under review, we did a review and revised the amount of financial support in keeping with practice within the social service sector. For example, the monthly transport pocket money for school-going children was increased to \$50 per month.

4.5 Advocacy

4.5.1 As in previous years, CARE's approach to advocacy continued to be 2-prong:
 (a) To debunk the common myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS thereby reducing fear of the disease, and
 (b) To change people's mindset and attitude so that they can be more accepting of PLWHA instead of discriminating against them.

4.5.2 2016 Calendar of Advocacy Events

| Date | Name of Event |
|-----------|--|
| Jan 30/31 | Advocacy Programme @ St Ignatius Church |
| Mar-Apr | Lenten Project and Public Awareness with St Joseph Institution |

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| | |
|-----------|--|
| May 23 | Catholic Junior College Ignition Programme |
| Jul 30 | Experiential Workshop as part of Caritas Pre-Social Mission Conference programme |
| Aug13 | Caritas Social Mission Conference |
| Oct 29/30 | Advocacy Programme @ St Francis Xavier Church |
| Nov 19 | Agape Village's 1 st Anniversary Celebrations |
| Nov 26/27 | World AIDS Day Mass and Advocacy Exhibition @ Holy Family Church |

4.5.3 New Approach

Instead of the usual talk at seminars and forums using slide presentation, a new medium - the experiential workshop was devised. The workshop allows participants the opportunity to walk through the different phases of a real-life event through the use of audio-recordings and simulated situation. Through this workshop, participants get to experience what a person with HIV/AIDS actually goes through on hearing his diagnosis. At the end of the blind-folded simulated experience, participants are given time to be alone to reflect on their experience. A thorough debrief of what happened during the workshop is part of its design. Participants come together to share their experience talking out their emotions, and learn from one another.

4.5.4 Student Outreach

As in previous years, our Student Outreach programme consisted mainly of outreach to Catholic schools. In the year under review, CARE collaborated with 2 Catholic schools - Catholic Junior College and St Joseph's Institution.

4.5.5 Outreach to Parishes

Throughout the year, advocacy exhibitions were organized at different parishes across Singapore. The objective of these exhibitions is to educate Catholics about the disease in order to allay their fears and also to highlight the plight of PLWHAs with an invitation to them to embrace PLWHA in friendship instead of discrimination. At these events, the cottage industry items (candles, crucifixes and rosaries) produced by our residents were put on display for sale. This allows parishioners to understand that PLWHAs can be productive and create things of beauty.

4.5.6 World AIDS Day (WAD)

The WAD Mass continued to be a major advocacy event for CARE. In 2016, the annual Mass was held on Sunday 27 November 2016 at Holy Family Church.

“Catholics have a responsibility to respect and reach out to those living with HIV/AIDS,” said Fr Kenson Koh, CARE’s Spiritual Director. In his Homily, he mentioned that more often than not, we discriminate against them. As a result of this discrimination, they often feel lonely and excluded. It is our duty as practicing Catholics to extend a merciful hand to them. We have to accept them as fellow brothers and sisters and as children of God. Although the Jubilee Year of Mercy officially closed on 20 November, Fr Kenson encourage Catholics to continue to do works of mercy as a form of outreach to people living with HIV/AIDS. He said simple gestures like praying for them and giving materially can go a long way in supporting them.

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In conjunction with the event, members, staff and volunteers were on hand after each Mass to share with parishioners about CARE's mission and the programmes it runs for its beneficiaries. Items made by CARE's residents such as rosaries, candles and crucifixes were also on sale.

4.5.6 News Media

Three CARE residents and 2 volunteers (Diana Lee and Sylvester Sim) were interviewed for the Channel 8 programme "Morning Express" on 20 December 2016. This was a follow-up of World AIDS Day and the programme discussed the social needs of people living with HIV/AIDS in Singapore.

The programme host highlighted that patients receiving HIV treatment and rehabilitation often need more than just medical care as psychological and other forms of support are equally important. In the face of discrimination, they look for social acceptance and emotional support.

The programme described CARE's volunteers as 'brave people who did not bother about public's views and discrimination but decided to journey with CARE's residents to bring hope to them'. In the interview, one resident said of Diana, "she is just like a family member taking care of us." Another resident said, "I treat them (the volunteers) like friends, among friends I can say they are the best."

5. MISCELLANEOUS

5.1 Caritas Singapore

5.1.1 During the year, Caritas Singapore continued to be CARE main sponsor. CARE is grateful for the support received from Caritas Singapore over the years. Their financial support allow us to focus our attention on real work that is, running activities and programmes that can benefit our residents instead of fund raising activities.

5.1.2 CARE as part of the broader Caritas family supported the activities, events and programmes organized by Caritas Singapore, attending leaders' council meetings, retreats and training courses. CARE's ED also served on the Caritas Volunteer Resource Committee.

5.2 Award

5.2.1 CARE was one of two organisations who were recipients of the Red Ribbon Award given out by the Singapore AIDS Conference 2016. CARE received the Award in recognition of our dedication to patient care and support in Singapore.

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6. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016

- 6.1 The audited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2016 is attached.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 7.1 On behalf of the Management Committee, I wish to record our thanks to the following people and organizations:
- 7.1.1 Our Spiritual Director, Rev Fr Kenson Koh for his spiritual guidance and other invaluable contributions.
- 7.1.2 Caritas Singapore for funding the operations of CARE Shelter and our programmes.
- 7.1.3 The hardworking members of the CARE Management Committee, the capable staff and dedicated volunteers.
- 7.2 Without their support, time and effort, we would not have been able to operate the Shelter and offer our services to the people we serve at CARE and in the community. We are where we are today mainly because of their generous support, collaboration and contributions.

Anthony Soo
President