

CATHOLIC AIDS RESPONSE EFFORT
Annual Report
(1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017)
Adopted at the Annual General Meeting 2018

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 24 July 2017.

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

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

1.1.3 Fr Kenson Koh continued as Spiritual Director.

1.1.4 The incoming Management Committee will steer the Charity towards achieving its goals and objectives as stated in the Vision and Mission:

Vision

“Be a sign of God’s love in restoring dignity of PLWHAS accepted by society without prejudice or discrimination.”

Mission

- To cater to the spiritual, psychological, financial and physical wellbeing of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS) so as to give them hope to live a fulfilling life.
- To help raise the level of public awareness of HIV/AIDS, and to promote greater compassion and understanding towards PLWHAs.

2. **MANPOWER**

2.1 **Employees**

2.1.1 The following were employees of the Charity as at 31 December 2017:

<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
Joseph Ang	Programme Executive	14 May 2014

At the time of writing this report, the positions of Admin/Accounts Executive and Night Supervisor were vacant.

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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 At the time of reporting, there were 24 members on the Membership Register. Of these, 8 served on the Management Committee.

2.4 Volunteers

2.4.1 As at 31 December 2017, there were 21 active volunteers on the CARE Register of Volunteers.

2.4.2 Five new volunteers joined the volunteer pool in the year under review. Seven volunteers who had been inactive for several years were taken off the register.

2.4.3 The different areas where volunteers are involved include, among others, advocacy, pastoral care, cooking and transportation.

2.4.4 A new prayer group comprising Catholic volunteers was formed with 7 active members. They pray, from home, for the needs of the Charity, in particular, for the residents. Once a month, they join the other volunteers in the Intercessory Prayer Session where everyone come together to pray with our residents. As part of the group's faith formation, our Spiritual Director conducts a bi-monthly sharing session modelled on *Lectio Divina*.

2.4.5 During the year, 2 existing volunteers took on home visits to people with HIV/AIDS who are staying on their own and who require assistance in different ways for example, transportation to medical appointments at the hospital. In the course of accompanying these clients, our volunteers also take the opportunity to befriend them, provide a listening ear and attend to their emotional and spiritual needs. These clients are referred to CARE by the Communicable Disease Centre through its medical social workers.

2.4.6 Besides individual volunteers who helped out on a regular basis, CARE also had external groups visiting its residents. These include members from the Catholic Nurses Guild and Kampong Kapor Methodist Church.

2.5 Training & Development of Employees & Volunteers

2.5.1 During the year under review, several CARE staff, volunteers and new members of the Management Committee attended the PCC Volunteer Training Programme organized by the Communicable Disease Centre. They were trained on safe ways of handling HIV patients among others.

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- 2.5.2 Staff also attended various training conducted by the Archdiocese of Singapore and its member organisations such as the Same-Sex-Attraction Conference organized by the Archdiocese Commission for the Family, Same-Sex-Attraction Workshop by the Family Life Society and the Social Media Workshop by Archdiocese Communications Office.
- 2.5.3 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 and helps in fostering better staff relation. This approach to staff development is very much in line with the HR guiding principles set out by the Catholic Archdiocese which places emphasis on the spiritual growth of employees.
- 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 unrecorded time off to attend personal retreats.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 Institution of a Public Character

CARE continued to enjoy IPC Status which was granted on 1 August 2015. This will expire on 31 January 2018. In October, we submitted an application to the Commissioner of Charities for renewal of our IPC status.

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 2016. The evaluation for year 2017 will be submitted after the 2018 AGM. Members may log on to the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg) for more details.

3.3 IPC Tiering

The revised Code of Governance for Charities and Institution of Public Character was released in April 2017. The new recommendations will be implemented from 1 January 2018. Under the provision of the revised Code, CARE will be classified in the ‘Intermediate’ tier (previously known as ‘Basic II’ tier). The Intermediate tier includes IPCs with annual income or expenditure between \$200,000 and \$500,000 for two consecutive fiscal years.

4. PROGRAMMES & SERVICES

4.1 Residential CARE Shelter

- 4.1.1 During the year under review, the CARE Shelter which serves HIV/AIDS sufferers from all races and religious beliefs continued to be our major activity.

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4.1.2 Admissions:	
Total residents as at 1 Jan 2017	17
Total admissions during the year	5
Total discharges during the year	5
Total as at 31 Dec 2016	17

4.1.3 Distribution by Religion:	
Buddhism/Taoism	9
Christianity - Catholicism	2
Christianity - Others	2
Hinduism	0
Islam	2
Others	2
Total	17

4.1.4 Distribution by Ethnic Groups:	
Chinese	14
Malay	2
Indian	1
Others	0
Total	17

4.1.5 CARE continued to receive referrals mainly from the Communicable Disease Centre (CDC) and the Prisons Department.

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 places emphasis on the dignity of the person and allow our beneficiaries to take responsibility for the outcome of their participation in our programmes.

4.2.2 Residents are free to choose to participate in the programmes of their choice 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 in their free time. Participation in active and meaningful work help residents to regain their sense of self-worth thereby higher self-esteem. They also feel a sense of accomplishment especially when they see the works of their hands bought by church members. They also feel supported by the public. Proceeds from the cottage industry go back to the community and is enjoyed by all residents.

4.2.3 Another aspect of CARE's approach to pastoral care is promoting a helping culture among the residents. Residents who are more able are encouraged to assist fellow residents who are less capable and who require help such as in their activities of daily

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living. In this way, the helper feels useful and validates himself while the one being helped feels loved and cared for.

- 4.2.4 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.
- 4.2.5 In tending to the emotional and spiritual needs of our residents, we hold weekly sharing sessions with them. The residents enjoy these sessions where they get to talk about their life stories and express their feelings about events that have happened. 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.
- 4.2.6 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 sacrament of reconciliation.
- 4.2.7 While CARE provides free service to all races and religions and allows them to practise their own faith, it also shares the Catholic faith with residents who show interest. Since 2011, non-Christian residents have voluntarily followed staff to attend church services and/or sought counseling and spiritual healing at Catholic institutions. At the time of writing, a total of 6 residents have accepted the Catholic faith and received baptism. Five residents are attending the RCIA journey towards baptism at Easter in 2018.
- 4.2.8 Besides providing physical, emotional and spiritual support, another important aspect of our work is to embrace our beneficiaries in friendship..

We are constantly thinking of other ways of building this bridge of friendship beyond our daily interaction with the beneficiaries.

This year, a trip to Penang and Ipoh was organized with this aim in mind. Eight residents, 2 staff and 1 volunteer went on this trip. This platform provided many opportunities for them to bond and forge closer relationship.

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. In the year under review, four residents held full-time jobs while one did part-time work.
- 4.3.2 Residents who are gainfully employed made contributions towards their own living expenses. This is in line with the Caritas Principles of Service of empowering rather

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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 resulted 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.

4.4 Non-Residential Programme

4.4.1 In the year under review, the Non-Residential Programme benefitted a total of 34 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.

4.4.2 In alignment with our new direction, CARE increased its efforts at providing support to two new categories of beneficiaries namely, ex-residents and non-residential HIV/AIDS patients referred by CDC.

Ex-residents are residents who have moved out from the shelter to stay on their own. . By the end of the year, a total of 9 ex-residents benefitted from the programme. Our staff provides them with listening ear and counselling whenever needed. They are also welcome to visit the shelter home and join in our activities.

The patients referred by CDC are attended to by CARE volunteers who visit them regularly to ensure their wellbeing or to provide transportation for medical appointments.

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

Non-Resident Description	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Thais	Total
PLWHA Women	0	1	1	12	14
Children	0	2	2	4	8
PLWHA Men	3	0	0	0	3
Ex-residents	8	1	0	0	9
Total	11	4	3	16	34

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

4.5 Advocacy

4.5.1 As in previous years, CARE’s approach to advocacy continued to be 2-prong:

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- (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 Student Outreach

St Joseph Institution's annual Lenten Project was put on hold this year. However, they were unable to confirm whether or not they will continue this project with CARE for 2018.

CARE has been in discussion with Catholic Junior College and working out plans for 2018.

4.5.3 Outreach to Parishes

2018 saw a drop in the number of parishes that opened their doors to CARE's advocacy programme. This was largely due to the transfer of priests resulting in most parishes unable to make any commitment until their new parish priests have settled in the parishes. During the year, advocacy exhibitions were held at two parishes namely, Holy Cross Church and Church of the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary.

The central message of the outreach to the parishioners is that PLWHAs can lead a fruitful life if they receive their understanding and support.

- 4.5.4** In the year under review, CARE collaborated with Caritas Singapore's Agape Experience. Through this programme, we managed to reach out to about 300 confirmands on HIV/AIDS awareness.

4.5.5 World AIDS Day (WAD)

The WAD Mass, a major advocacy event for CARE, was held on Sunday 26 November 2017 at Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Fr Kenson Koh as its celebrant. It provided the wider church community to be more aware of the impact of HIV/AIDS on sufferers and their families and join in prayer for them.

"Following the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, can we be compassionate in how we treat our brothers and sisters," Rev Fr Kenson Koh asked the congregation.

Fr Kenson, who is also the Spiritual Director of CARE, urged the congregation to be more accepting of PLWHAs who are rejected by society and help them lead dignified lives. "Even if we are unable to make time for them through volunteering, we can still show that we care for them by supporting them in various ways. We can pray for them. We can also buy the products handmade by them, not so much to raise funds but more to show them the worth of their work," said Fr Kenson.

These were Fr Kenson's closing remarks, "Take time to follow Jesus. Pray for the grace to do what you can for the least. For what you do for the least of his brothers, you do it to Him."

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After Mass, there was a display of items made by residents of CARE shelter. It was very encouraging to see many of the church members buying rosaries, crucifixes and candles to show their support. A parishioner was touched by the plight of people with AIDS and was happy to learn that within the church, there was an organization providing assistance and support for them. She didn't need any of the items made by the residents but offered a donation to show her care and support for people living with AIDS.

4.5.6 Advocacy through Catholic Media

Three articles relating to CARE were published in Catholic News and Hai Sing Pao as follows:

East Curia Legionaries Visits CARE Shelter, Hai Sing Pao, 24 December 2017

In this article, Steven Chan of the East Curia shares about his volunteering efforts at CARE. He talked about how he and other members of the group had to make psychological adjustments when they were first confronted by the complexity of issues faced by residents of the shelter. The members were motivated by their deep desire to bring God's love to the residents. Another CARE volunteer, Peter Heng, prepares food which they share with residents over dinner which is also a time for interaction and to share personal testimonies and answer any queries about the faith. Steven has visited on 25 occasions and has learned over time to break down his own emotional barriers so as to reach out to the residents with less inhibition.

World AIDS Days Mass Hai Sing Pao and Catholic News, 10 December 2017

Reports of the World AIDS Day Mass and Fr Kenson's homily were published in both the Catholic News and Hai Sing Pao.

Serving People Living with HIV/AIDS, Catholic News 26 November 2017

CARE volunteer, Bernard Sim, talks about how he was called to serve at CARE and what he has gained. He realized that the residents at CARE Shelter are like everyone else - they have aspirations, they want to have friends and they need support from one another. Although there is a limit to how much he can do, he believes that the most valuable thing he can offer them is his time and listening ear. He has also overcome his own fears and got rid of whatever misconception and prejudices he used to have. Now he understands that what the residents really need is emotional support to stay motivated and continue to live life with hope and purpose.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

5.1 Caritas Singapore

5.1.1 During the year, Caritas Singapore continued to be our 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.

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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 Bequest

5.2.1 At the end of 2017, CARE received a bequest of \$1 million from the estate of a deceased whose family wanted his identity to remain anonymous.

After much deliberation as to the usage of the money, the Management Committee designated the money for use as renovation expenses of its new premises upon expiry of its lease at 9 Mandai Road.

Caritas Singapore, being CARE's main sponsor, was informed of this decision and did not take exception..

5.2 Visits

5.2.1 A delegation from Caritas Korea visited CARE Shelter on 13 November 2018. The delegation comprising priests, nuns and social workers was led by its Executive Director, Rev Fr Choo Sunghun.

The purpose of the visit was to understand the work undertaken by CARE as well as the HIV/AIDS situation in Singapore especially in regard to issues and challenges faced by PLWHAs in Singapore.

6. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016**

6.1 The audited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2017 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 his many 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 and dedicated staff and 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.

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We are where we are today mainly because of their generous support, collaboration and contributions.

Anthony Soo
President