

CATHOLIC AIDS RESPONSE EFFORT
Annual Report
(1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019)
Adopted at the Annual General Meeting on 27 May 2020

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 22 June 2019.

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

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

1.1.3 Fr Kenson Koh continued as Spiritual Director.

1.1.4 The incoming Management Committee will continue to 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.

1.1.5 Attendance at meetings of the MC in 2019 is as follows:

Name	Attendance	Percentage
Rev Fr Kenson Koh	5/5	100%
Anthony Soo	5/5	100%
Ambrose Tan	4/5	80%
Nicholas Chee	4/5	80%
Antony Ng	4/5	80%
Susanna Goh	3/5	60%
Francois Bretault	4/5	80%
Jacinta Rajoo [See Note 1]	1/2	50%

CARE Constitution requires the MC to meet at ‘least once every 3 months’ whilst the Revised Code of Governance merely states that, for Intermediate Tier IPCs, ‘the Board should meet regularly’. In the year under review, the MC met 5 times aside from its AGM.

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Note 1 - Jacinta Rajoo was elected to the Management Committee on 22 June 2019 and is required to attend only 2 meetings during her tenure.

2. MANPOWER

2.1 Employees

2.1.1 The following were employees of the Charity as at 31 December 2019:

<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
Diana Khoo	Admin/Accounts Executive	1 May 2018

At the time of writing this report, the position of Night Supervisor was vacant. In its place, we had two part-time workers who covered two or three nights each per week.

2.2 Salaries

The Executive Director is the key management personnel for the Charity. His compensation falls under the remuneration band of S\$100,000 to S\$200,000.

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 2019, there were 23 active volunteers on the CARE Register of Volunteers.

2.4.2 Two new volunteers joined in the year under review. One plays the guitar during our weekly singing sessions and the other helps out with administrative work and in our praying ministry.

2.4.3 The different areas where volunteers are involved include administrative work, advocacy and pastoral care work. Pastoral care includes, among others, befriending residents and providing companionship to PLWHAs who are living on their own.

2.4.4 We also have a group of volunteers who are prayer warriors. They pray from home, offering up prayers for the needs of CARE, its residents as well as the staff and volunteers.

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2.4.5 Besides individual volunteers who helped out on a regular basis, CARE also had external groups visiting its residents. These include members of the Catholic Nurses Guild and Kampong Kapor Methodist Church. Staff of Transworld Logistics & Shipping Pte Ltd hosted a lunch for our residents as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility project.

2.5 Training & Development of Employees & Volunteers

2.5.1 Staff and volunteers attended various training programmes organized by the National Council of Social Services, Caritas Singapore and its member-organisations. CARE's Executive Director attended the National Governance Conference on 1 October as well as various briefings on NCSS initiatives aimed at contributing towards capacity building of charities.

2.5.3 Besides skills training, CARE's Executive Director also emphasises the importance of emotional and spiritual growth of his staff. All staff attend the weekly bible sharing and pastoral care sessions as they see it as a useful platform for addressing the issues and problems they face at the workplace and finding workable solutions. It also provides staff the opportunity to share their emotions and reflect them from a faith perspective. This approach to personal 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.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 Institution of a Public Character

CARE continued to operate as an Institution of a Public Character. Our IPC status has been extended to 31 January 2022.

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 2018. The evaluation for year 2019 will be submitted after the 2020 AGM. Members may log on to the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg) for more details.

3.3 Revised Code of Governance

The new requirements for the revised Code of Governance for Charities and IPC came into effect on 1 Jan 2018. The Management Committee reviewed the changes to ensure that our Charity met with the new requirements. We have taken the necessary steps to put in place several changes in order to be in alignment with the Code. Some of the changes in governance reporting are already reflected in this report and its accompanying audited statements of accounts. We are continually looking into updating our policies and processes to ensure that we are fully in compliance with the revised Code.

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- 3.4 As required by the Revised Code of Governance, the MC has formed an Audit Committee with MC member, Francois Bretault as its Chairman. The other members are Tan Aik Na (Vice President of Administration, Nanyang Technological University) and Janice Wu (Head of Corporate Development, Singapore Press Holdings).

This Committee will oversee CARE’s governance, risk management, financial and internal control processes and practices. Its immediate task is to look into setting up the internal audit framework at CARE.

- 3.5 The MC is continually looking into updating its operational policies and practices in order to be in alignment with the Code of Governance. In the year under review, amendments were made to our Constitution specifically in relation to the role and election of the Treasurer post.

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 2019	19
Total admissions during the year	3
Total discharges during the year	10
Total as at 31 Dec 2019	12

4.1.3 Distribution by Religion:

Buddhism/Taoism	5
Christianity - Catholicism	4
Christianity - Others	1
Hinduism	0
Islam	1
Others	1
Total	12

4.1.4 Distribution by Ethnic Groups:

Chinese	10
Malay	1
Indian	1
Others	0
Total	12

- 4.1.5 CARE continued to receive referrals from the National Centre for Infectious Disease (formerly known as Communicable Disease Centre) and the Singapore Prison Service. In the year we also had referrals from acute hospitals and family service centres.

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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 make their own decisions and take responsibility for the outcome.
- 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 Dum Spiro Spero project. With this initiative, all residents of our shelter are encouraged to participate in a series of handicraft works where they produce candles, rosaries, crucifixes and Christmas cribs, by hand. It does not aim to provide a livelihood for our residents. However, its purpose lies in a far more meaningful and poignant reason. It helps them to appreciate the joy of work. The sale of these beautiful handicrafts produced by our residents gives recognition of your acceptance of these often 'forgotten' individuals in our society. Each time someone takes home one of their handicraft, they affirm their belief that they are not forgotten and this gives them hope and a sense of self-worth to carry on living fulfilling lives.
- 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 of doing things for themselves and who require help such as in their activities of daily 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 our efforts to attend 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 such as death of a fellow resident. They also share, openly when they feel ready, 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, we are open to sharing the Catholic faith with residents who show interest.

Between 2012-2019, a total of 9 residents have accepted the Catholic faith and received baptism.

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4.2.8 Besides providing physical, emotional and spiritual support, another important aspect of our work is to embrace our beneficiaries in friendship and give them the assurance that they have friends whom they can lean on for support whenever needed.

We are constantly thinking of other ways of building this bridge of friendship beyond our daily interaction with the beneficiaries. Group outings and social activities outside of the premises were organized for residents, staff and volunteers.

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 2019, five residents held full-time jobs for most parts of the year.

4.3.2 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 were 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 33 persons, all of whom are living with HIV/AIDS who are staying on their own. This figure is made up of women PLWHAs and their dependent children, male PLWHAs who are living on their own who require some form of assistance, and ex-residents who have moved out to stay on their own.

4.4.2 Many of the women PLWHAs are foreigners who are married to Singaporean men. As foreigners they do not receive many of the benefits that female citizens are entitled to.

4.4.3 CARE provides them with monthly food rations, transport pocket money for their school-going children, annual school textbook funding and more. They have monthly consultation with our Programme Manager and are invited to join our social activities.

4.4.4 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

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Children	0	2	2	4	8
PLWHA Men	3	0	0	0	3
Ex-residents	7	1	0	0	8
Total	10	4	3	16	33

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 **Student Outreach**

In the year under review, CARE worked with fifty-two students from Catholic Junior College. Their project involved designing an advocacy and fundraising project with two parishes with all proceeds coming to CARE.

All the students also attended an experiential workshop. In the process, they learnt not only about the disease but more importantly about the difficulties faced by people with AIDS.

4.5.3 **Outreach to Parishes**

During the year, advocacy programmes were held at 4 parishes across Singapore. They were Church of St Alphonsus (Novena), Church of the Transfiguration, St Ignatius Church and Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The central message of the outreach to the parishioners is that PLWHAs deserve to and can lead life with hope if they have the understanding and support of the public, and this can begin with the Catholic community.

4.5.4 In collaboration with Caritas Singapore’s Agape Experience, we reached out to 1,253 confirmands, catechumens and catechists from 25 parishes. During the experience, participants are given information about CARE through the journal which they receive. In the session on human dignity, CARE is used as an example of how people who are sick and who are facing difficulties, are helped to regain their dignity. All participants are also given a CARE bookmark calendar with an advocacy message printed on it.

4.5.6 **World AIDS Day (WAD)**

The WAD Mass, a major advocacy event for CARE, was held on Sunday 8 December 2019 at Church of the Transfiguration with Rev Frs Kenson Koh and Joachim Chang as con-celebrants.

Once a year, Catholics come together as one community to pray for those suffering from the disease and their families. This show of solidarity gives PLWHA the assurance

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that they are not forgotten or alone in their plight and that there are people who still care for them.

An exhibition to promote our message of love, compassion and acceptance of PLWHAs, also gave the parishioners a better understanding of the disease, the difficulties faced by the sufferers as well as the work of CARE in trying to help its beneficiaries integrate with society and reduce the stigma of the disease. Items made by our shelter residents under the Dum Spiro Spero project were put on display. Many of the parishioners showed their support by buying these items.

4.5.6 **Advocacy through Catholic Media**

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

Responding to God's Calling, Hai Sing Pao 24 November 2019 and Catholic News 8 December 2019

CARE volunteer, Peter Heng, shared how God led him to CARE and his fears and struggles before finally making the decision to respond to his call. Through his experience at CARE, he learnt that the disease is not contagious and that his fears of the disease were unfounded. He realized that much of his fears were within himself and these could be overcome with love.

World AIDS Day Mass-Helping Congregation to Understand and Care for the Sick, Hai Sing Pao 22 December 2019

This article reported on the Mass held at the Church of the Transfiguration and the homily delivered by Fr Kenson Koh.

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. With this financial support, we are free from having to carry out active fundraising activities thereby allowing us more time to focus our attention on real work such as running activities and programmes that can benefit our residents.

5.1.2 CARE as part of the broader Caritas family supported the activities, events and programmes organized by Caritas Singapore including attending their leaders' council meetings and training courses organized for staff.

5.2 **Visits**

5.2.1 Minister of State for Social and Family Development, Mr Sam Tan, visited CARE shelter home on 26 April and 19 September 2019. The purpose of his visits was to show his support to our residents. On both occasions, he brought food to share with our residents and staff.

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5.2.2 CARE is one of the organisations operating under the umbrella of Caritas Singapore that Archbishop William Goh chose to visit on 1 October. The goals of Archbishop's pastoral visit included coming into personal contact

with our residents and having the opportunity to interact with them; and to get acquainted with and appreciate the reality of the environment, the socio-economic conditions of our residents, CARE's social mission and its overall operations.

5.2.3 The Board of Trustees of Caritas Singapore visited CARE on 13 May. Representing the Trustees were its Chairperson, Janet Ang and Vice-Chairman, Laurence Lien. The purpose of the visit was to understand the mission and vision of CARE and how the funding received from Caritas Singapore is being utilized to fulfill our goals and objectives.

6. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

6.1 The audited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2019 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 in spite of his extremely busy schedule.

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