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Justice Peace & Solidarity in Mission

The Congregation of the Sisters of Good Shepherd
Province of Singapore–Malaysia

Strictly for the Congregation of the Good Shepherd Sisters & their Lay Collaborators



**Open
doors to
a better
tomorrow**

— pg 3

**A diary
of events**

— pg 4–7

**Good
Shepherd
Gathering
2014**

— pg 8

**COVER STORY
Congo Care
Circle**

— Inside cover & pg 1

**Building Hope
Justice and Peace
with mining
communities
in Kolwezi**

— pg 2

**Marymount
Convent School
Environmental
Education 2014**

— pg 9

**Youth
Symposium
on Prostitution
and Human
Trafficking**

— Back Cover

Dear Mission Partners,

— It is nearly one year since Restful Waters embarked on a fund raising project, 'Remembering the Forgotten, Giving Hope'— for the people of Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of Congo. You will be able to read of its progress and phase 2 of the project, 'Congo Care Circle.'

Mary Anne K. Baltazar, assistant manager of Alamesra Youth-PREP Centre, Sabah, was selected to the 'Youth Symposium on Prostitution and Human Trafficking, The Greatest the Violence against Women' held at the Vatican. Kudos Anne!

We convey our congratulations to Marymount Convent School for receiving two awards given by the Singapore Environment Council.

These stories and more in this year end issue. Thank you for all your contributions. Keep them coming in as they happen!

Wishing you and your loved ones all the best for 2015! †

GLORIA



Congo Care Circle

The start of 2014, to be exact on 5th January, Restful Waters embarked on a project 'Remembering the Forgotten, Giving Hope' – An Epiphany Journey' to raise funds for the poor and marginalised in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

— This was a joint project by the Mission Development Office, Rome; the Good Shepherd International Justice and Peace Office, New York; and Good Shepherd Convent Restful Waters, Singapore. The project brought new awareness on the plight of the people in Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mission Partners in Singapore and Malaysia quickly rallied together to organise a series of activities that helped raise S\$400,000 over a three-month period! Some of these activities included a school project by the students, parents and teachers of Marymount Convent and "Pineapple Tarts for Funds" by Restful Waters.

The Good Shepherd programmes in Kolwezi have made significant progress, for example, fewer children now work in the mines, all children on the programme have at least one meal a day and parents are putting more value to their children's

> CONTINUE NEXT PAGE

education. In the recent Global Sisters Report, Sr. Clare Nolan, International Justice Training Coordinator for the Good Shepherd Sisters wrote, "The persistence pays a benefit, as small life-blooming changes are obvious. These are best expressed through the contrasts I saw between the mines and the expanding farm. At the mines, the children who accompany the adults are set into a bleak wasteland with toxic water; their faces are blank voids. At the Maisha ("life" in Swahili) farm, begun by the Sisters and functioning as a community co-operative, the children run by a clear stream giving waves and shy smiles to a stranger passing by. At the mines children escape from the baking sun only when they are sent into tunnels that are too small for adults; they carry out loads of rock that often break the calcium-deprived bones of their arms. The children at the farm carry child-size water cans and can rest in the shade of a tree."

Despite the good progress made, there is still much work to be done such as strengthening community cohesion for the protection of children's and women's rights. Funding is still needed to ensure sustainability of the programmes. And so in November this year, Restful Waters initiated the Congo Care Circles. Family and friends are encouraged to form a Congo Care Circle by bringing in 10 friends. If each one contributes \$300, her/his Congo Care Circle will be able to raise \$3,000 per circle to help meet our target amount of \$300,000.



Stories taken from the Christmas letter from Sr. Catherine Mutindi and her community in Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

STORY 1

"We had been a lost and forgotten lot. We had consequently begun to forget ourselves. We have been living aimlessly and hopelessly. Your trust in our potential capacity has brought new life to us. We feel valued and have begun to live. We are learning and have gained skills. Now I can farm on my own. I have fed my family of my hands. I have made savings from my working in the farm. This is the place to be. This is life. The farm is green; the mines are dry and barren. In the farm I feel that I am co-creating the earth with God. I have learnt how to live and work with others. I feel resurrected!" A participant of the Farm Cooperative "Maisha".

STORY 2

"I am Jimb. I am 14 years old. My life was in the mines before I joined the school. I spent my days in the mines from Monday to Monday. I had lost all hope and dream of ever going to school. I had no joy of living. Every day I lived in fear of the dangers in the mines. I thank God I didn't die like some of my friends. I can hardly believe that now I study like other children who can afford education. I have learnt a lot, even more than some of the children who can afford education. I now know my rights and the rights of other children. I am so grateful and ask God to bless the people who pay our teachers and buy us food so that we can have opportunity to experience education." A pupil at the informal school, CPP Project.

STORY 3

"I am so grateful that God brought me to this project. What I was living before was not life and I was just short distance from death. As a girl child with such a complicated background as mine (orphaned, working in the mines, living with abusive relatives...) I am nothing in the society. This project now gives me a reason to refuse early arranged marriage (in tears...). I want to study and give meaning to my life. I want to acquire skills that will help me find a job to support my siblings. I want to be somebody in the society. Please promise me that this project will stay and help me achieve my desire." A teen girl at the EEP project.

Dear friends, join us in this project and form a Congo Care Circle today. Celebrate your Christmas season in a unique and meaningful way. Help care for God's children in Kolwezi, DRC. Contact Restful Waters (email: GSRestfulWaters@yahoo.com.sg) to let us know you have started a Congo Care Circle and if you need further information.

A Blessed Christmas and New Year from the team at Restful Waters!

For more information visit www.gsrwcongo.wordpress.com to read full report by Sr. Clare Nolan, September 2014 progress report by Ms. Cristina Duranti, Director of Mission Development Office, Rome and to view photographs of the progress made in Kolwezi. †



Building Hope Justice and Peace with mining communities in Kolwezi

From mining to farming



1 & 2

Women farming in the vegetable plots. The more they work, the more they can take home!

3 & 4

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kolwezi Nestor Ngoy Katahwa (in white cap) visiting the farm @ the chicken farm.

5 & 6

Most children now prefer to accompany their parents to the farm rather than going to the mines. Some will help around as they are able to; others just watch their parent's working. Some take care of their siblings to allow their mothers to work.

7

The young men working in the fish ponds.

8

Now children have at least one meal a day.

Open doors to a better tomorrow

Article taken from the MALAY MAIL Monday, August 18, 2014

PETALING JAYA — Pusat Kebajikan Good Shepherd (Teenage Centre) is a non-profit organisation, founded by the Good Shepherd Sisters in 1960 in Selangor.

The Teenage Centre provides specialised residential services to teenage girls experiencing conflicting relationships, behavioral issues, abuse and neglect.

Using the Family Centred Approach, the centre works with the teenage girls and their families to help them better manage their crisis.

The objective is to assist the teenage girls and their families realise their full potential as functional family units, with the ability to make choices for a better future. Part of the programme is to build the girls' awareness on social issues.

The residents are between 12 and 17 years old, and the centre can accept 20 full time live-in residents.

They remain at the centre until they finish their Form Five or earlier, if the residents are able to re-integrate back into their families. The centre commemorates four main events each year to emphasise issues on women and children.

They are "One Billion Rising" (February 14), International Women's Day (March 8), International Day of the Girl (October 11), and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25).

Here are two of the events celebrated this year.



One Billion Rising Campaign

PKGS-Teenage Centre joined the world in the One Billion Rising campaign event. There were speeches, songs and dance. The guests were reminded of the theme from the previous year which was "Break the Chain". Breaking the chain of abuse and violence is connected to this year's theme "Rise, Release, Dance and Demand for Justice."

Joan Lopez, the Province Leader of Good Shepherd Sisters in Singapore-Malaysia, said: "Today is very significant because it is a day where together with millions of women and girls around the world and all of us here we rise -- standing together, dancing together to give the message loudly and clearly that violence against women and girls are unacceptable. A lady by the name of Flora Wittamore said this, the doors we open and close each day decides the lives we live. Today's gathering here we are opening a door — a door to get to know the situation of millions of women and girls who suffer due to violence caused against them."

An exciting part was the giving of white ribbons and heart stickers as an expression of love and gratitude. It was

a beautiful gesture appreciating women and girls present.

The joyful atmosphere continued during dinner as each one enjoyed pizzas and cakes decorated by the residents through the help of the volunteers who came in the afternoon to teach the girls before the event.

International Women's Day (IWD)

This year, the centre celebrated with the theme as "Equality for Women is Progress for All." The message from the United Nations under secretary-general and executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka called for the recommitment of ourselves to "working harder for gender equality, together as women, men, youth and leaders of nations, communities, religion and commerce."

The centre's girls reflected on the inspiring message and shared what resonated most with them, as well as what innate quality they recognised in themselves as a way of affirming and empowering themselves.

For more information, call 603 42563941 or visit <http://www.goodshepherd.my> †

A diary of events

**2-4
MAY**

Young Leaders Migration Workshop in Sabah

— 12 young leaders from local and migrant communities came together at PACOS Training Centre in Kg. Lomunu, Penampang for a two day workshop to discuss the issues on migration. †



**5-7
MAY**

Tackling Trafficking: The Human Rights Based Approach

— Dr Alice Nah, of the Centre for Applied Human Rights department from the University of York, facilitated the training session for the staff and volunteers of PKGS. The research and training materials had been comprehensively prepared by Emily Copsey, Ben Chapman and Shaqiera Ladhu, students from the University of York.

The training provided the participants with a comprehensive understanding of the framework of human trafficking in Malaysia and the region. The participants were introduced to the key concepts of human rights, followed by a deeper look



at what a rights-based approach to human trafficking entails. They also looked at the effects of trafficking on the mental health of the trafficked persons to have an empathetic understanding of the trafficked persons' experiences. A session with a self-care assessment of the participants and a reminder on the importance of having self-care for people who are involved in caring for others ended the session. †

**30-31
MAY**

Kaamatan Festival Celebration

— The Kaamatan (Harvest) festival is an annual event in the cultural life of the Kadazan-dusun of Sabah. Thanksgiving is observed as befitting for all creations to express their gratitude and appreciation for the gifts of life and all life supportive system on earth that their Creator lovingly and generously gave them.

On this special occasion the past and present residents, staff of the Teenage Centre and Good Shepherd Sisters in Kuala Lumpur celebrated the Festival with a group of youth from Sabah who are presently studying and working in Peninsular Malaysia.

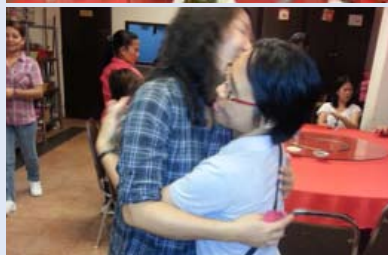
The celebration began on the 30th May with a barbecue dinner. After dinner we gathered in the hall for a para-liturgy to commemorate the harvest festival and to thank God for the abundant blessings we had received. The celebration continued the next day with an open air Eucharistic Celebration celebrated by Father VA Michael. We felt a great sense of peace and gratitude in union with the whole creation. Nasi lemak was served for breakfast. Outdoor games followed. †



5
JUNE

Farewell for Nangbawk

— We rejoiced with her when she learnt that she will be reunited with her mother, brother and family in the US. As soon as Nangbawk, a refugee from Myanmar, arrived in Kuala Lumpur she was employed as a housemother to the 14 Myanmar ladies who were labor trafficked. She later joined Villamaria Kindergarten as a staff. We wish her all the very best in her future endeavors. †



22
JULY

Special Prayers

— Good Shepherd Sisters and mission partners gathered to pray for victims of MH370 and MH17. †



30
JULY

'Blue Heart Campaign Against Human Trafficking'

— The residents of the Teenage Centre (PKGS) held a session on human trafficking. Ms. Willa, Director of the Centre shared about the various approaches in recruiting victims as well as the strategies of traffickers. The objective of this is to create awareness among the residents about human trafficking especially when they are in their teens as they are most vulnerable at this age. Why are they always the target? Definitely because of their



innocence and they are easily lured with attractive promises such as comfortable life, money and new gadgets.

The residents made a collage of hearts with their messages - STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING NOW. They also posted blue heart photos on their Facebook page. Let us all be catalysts for a better and safer world for all, especially our children. †

23
AUGUST

SAY NO TO RAPE

— Good Shepherd Mission Partners joined hundreds of women and men who gathered to rally around the cases of sexual violence that have been reported in the media lately and as well as against the trend of increasing rape and violence against women cases in Malaysia. The objectives were - to raise public awareness and support for an end to rape in Malaysia and to demand for state accountability to effectively address rape and other issues related to violence against women. †



16 SEPTEMBER

Outreach to children from Assunta Children Care Society

— The Teenage Centre (PKGS) held an outreach program to some 33 children ages 4 to 18. The event aims to reach out to the less privileged children of our society.

The program started in the morning with an orientation followed by outdoor games. The group dynamic games were not so much of a competition but rather on how to develop the spirit of teamwork in the children who participated very enthusiastically. Screams and laughter were echoed in the field that morning.

After the outdoor games, Ms. Willa gave a talk on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The younger children were busy with their art work which was based on the theme 'Beautiful Malaysia' since September 16 is Malaysia Day. Simple lunch was shared by all and the children were given a gift each as they made their way home. †



22 SEPTEMBER

Celebration of World Peace Day

— The celebration at Mariaville Good Shepherd Kindergarten, Ipoh, started with the song 'Heal the World' and 'We are the World.' Cikgu Adida explained to the children on the importance of racial unity and the dangers of war.



The peace candle was lit followed by a prayer. A power point presentation on how children can spread peace to others was shown. The nursery class children performed a sketch on what peace means to them.



The celebration ended with the children singing the Peace Day song. †



9 OCTOBER

International Day of the Girl Child

— Rose Virginie Good Shepherd Centre, (RVGSC) Ipoh celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child. The girls in the Centre were told about the basic rights of children - right to education, right to health care, right to information, right to be safe, right to be with people who care about them, right to say 'No' and ask for help and the right to play.



The documentary 'Malala Yousafzai' was screened. The girls shared the importance of education for girls and the inequality between boys and girls.

A simple activity followed. The staff and girls expressed their wishes for girls across the world where there is a lack of equal rights in their lives. The celebration concluded with a tea party. †

16

OCTOBER

Walk for Peace and Freedom 2014

— Hundreds of people, including Good Shepherd mission partners took to the streets in a peaceful rally to call for the repeal of the Sedition Act 1948. This was organised by the Bar Council. Before the start of the walk the president addressed the crowd, “We believe in robust debate, diversity of opinion as well as freedom of speech and expression that will ultimately inculcate and maintain true and enduring peace, harmony, unity and mutual respect among Malaysians. The Act was counter-productive to these values”.

Delegates from the foreign legal fraternity, such as the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, Law Council of Australia, Lawasia, as well as a member of the Japanese Bar, monitored the protest. †



7-11

NOVEMBER

Good Shepherd Beyond Borders

— 18 mission partners from Singapore-Malaysia visited Yangon, Myanmar. We learnt about works of the community in Yangon, visited Magyikwin Village and the day care centre in Dala Township. We shared about lay partnership in our Unit with the Sisters we met. We were happy to meet 10 of the 14 women whom we sheltered in Kuala Lumpur in 2009.

For full report visit <http://www.goodshepherd-asiapacific.org.au> †



25

NOVEMBER

-10

DECEMBER

'16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence' Campaign

— Good Shepherd mission partners were at St. Ignatius Church on 30th November and St. Francis Xavier Church on the 7th December to launch the campaign. There was a three minute presentation about the campaign after Mass. White ribbons and flyers were distributed to the parishioners as they left the Church. †





Good Shepherd Gathering 2014

10 -12 October

— 56 Good Shepherd mission partners of the Province of Singapore-Malaysia gathered to deepen and reaffirm their commitment to justice in mission. Based on Micah 6:8: “To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God” was the theme.

The new Congregational Chapter theme ‘Energized by the Spirit, we risk together for mission’ was introduced and discussed. The final segment focused on shaping Micah 6:8 responses to the new theme. Individual pledges were made and collated in a specially designed board which was then presented to Sr. Brigid Lawlor.

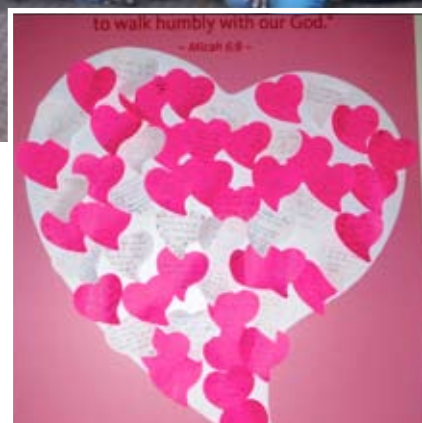
A fun filled dinner celebrating ‘Good Shepherd Beyond Borders’ with the participants of APICA was held on the 11th night. The coming together as one big Good Shepherd Asia Pacific family was an occasion of joy and togetherness as mission partners beyond borders.

A personal reflection of the gathering by Susanna Chan, Marymount Convent School, Singapore

When I was invited to attend this year’s Good Shepherd Gathering from the 10th to the 12th October, I accepted without hesitation. I had attended this gathering held in Kuala Lumpur the previous year for the first time and it opened my eyes to the whole family of Good Shepherd and the wonderful and essential service it was providing.

Before attending these meetings, I saw my role as a teacher and chaplain in the school as something separate from the mission. Now there is a greater understanding of my role as educating young girls from all kinds of background to be women who will have compassion for others and who will be able to carry on the mission as they blossom into accomplished ladies.

This year’s gathering focused on Micah 6:8, “To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God” and how apt this teaching was. We are all called to stand up for what we believe in – to aid those who have experienced injustice, oppression and alienation, especially women and children; awakening in each a sense of uniqueness, worth and inestimable value. As an ice breaker, we went around the room, seeking out like-minded people in terms of our favourite food or past-times and finally grouping with friend who shared the same passion for a particular injustice. I gravitated towards “the trafficking women and children”. I was awakened to this area last year. Before that, I was clueless that this was even happening and perhaps I did know, but was just apathetic about it.



The next day, we were taken through by our very capable facilitators, Poh Choo and Anna through various scenarios. We looked at how we were unconsciously contributing to the exploitation of workers and the destruction of the environment in our mindless accumulation of goods. We worked in different teams to share our thoughts and experiences.

On Saturday night, we attended a dinner where we met with ICA participants and congregational leaders. It was a night of bonding over shared values and experiences, a chance that does not come by often.

It ended on Sunday morning when we reflected on our roles and wrote a personal pledge on how we were going to carry out our mission to walk humbly with our God. It spurred me to reflect on my role from a weaver to a risk taker because this is what it takes to do God’s calling. Our pledges were placed together and presented to Sr. Brigid by our youngest participants from the gathering.

Thank you for the wonderful experience and reminder on what our mission really is as an educator in a Good Shepherd Mission.†

School Green Awards and 3R Awards

— The School Green Awards is an award that recognises all schools in Singapore for their environmental programmes that addresses issues such as waste minimisation, resource conservation and greening of the school grounds.



To recognise our school's environmental efforts, Singapore Environment Council has awarded Marymount Convent School the Lotus Award in the School Green Awards and a Gold Award for the 3R Awards. The 3R Awards (based on the 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) aims to recognise and reinforce the positive environmental effects which pupils and staff and teachers learn about 3Rs.



Our pupils and teachers have not only gained a better understanding on the environmental impact of their actions but also participated in environmental programmes and activities to raise awareness within communities and organisations.†

Green Carpet –Green School Award 2014

— Our school has emerged as one of the top 20 schools for our sustained and consistent efforts in promoting environmental education. †

Environment Champions Programme

— The Environment Champion (EC) Programme is a capacity building programme organised by the National Environment Agency to equip our school's Green Ambassadors with knowledge to enhance their understanding of key environmental issues and take ownership to care for the environment. The two-day workshop held during the September school holidays helped to equip them with presentation skills to deliver 'green messages' to their peers in a fun and engaging manner. †

Marymount Convent School Environmental Education 2014



Youth Symposium on Prostitution and Human Trafficking

The Greatest the Violence
against Women

by Mary Anne K. Baltazar,
Malaysia



— Sixty young people from various faiths around the world, including Sweden, Kenya, Albania, Cambodia and Mexico came together for the Youth Symposium on Prostitution and Human Trafficking on the 14 to 16 November 2014 at Casina Pio IV, Vatican. The event was organised by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the interfaith Global Freedom Network and Vinculos en Red, an anti-trafficking NGO based in Argentina. Good Shepherd was represented by Joseph Loh, a volunteer of the Good Shepherd Foundation in Taiwan and me.

The symposium was a three-day event which started with a welcoming dinner for all the participants on Friday. In his welcome speech Monsignor Marcelo Sorondo, the Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences said that there is a “globalization of Indifference” and encouraged all of us to “teach others and help them to understand that human trafficking exists”. A total of thirty one papers were presented at the symposium. Among the presenters were survivors of human trafficking, enforcers, lawyers, shelter service providers and those who are working in prevention.

The highlight of the programme was the powerful and moving sharing by survivors who were trafficked either for sex or

labour. One of the participants who was sexually exploited for 4 years recalls, “We were not given any rest at all, I got pregnant at the age of 15, and I was forced to work until I was 8 months pregnant with twins”. She is now an activist against human trafficking and reunited with one of her twins. The survivors also emphasized that much of their healing was because of the care and support of the social workers.

My presentation was on the third day and I presented on the situation of human trafficking in Sabah, Malaysia. In my paper, I made three recommendations on how to prevent youth from being victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. My first recommendation is to conduct awareness programmes for youths, especially to those who are vulnerable, including local and migrant youths. My second recommendation is to reduce vulnerability of migrant youths by helping them with their documentation process and to provide education to them. My third and last recommendation is partnership with government and enforcement agencies, embassies, church, faith based organisations, NGOs, corporations and individuals in the fight against human trafficking.

We were very blessed and excited on the third day to be able to meet Pope Francis. He spoke about the human mentality

which considers another human being as “an object that ends up as material goods which is thrown away”. He also added that “Life only has meaning if we are willing to risk it, to use it for the good of others”. He ended by saying how pleased he was at “seeing many young people who want to commit themselves” in the fight “to recover the dignity” of people who are trafficked. After the address – to our delight - we were all given the chance to greet the Pope individually.

In summary, it was a very inspiring and eye-opening programme to hear about the global fight against human trafficking from young people. I was able to have a bigger picture of the situation of human trafficking, learn and network with others. I felt very proud that Good Shepherd is also playing its part in this important issue and even prouder that together with Joseph, we represented the Good Shepherd Mission. Echoing the call of Pope Francis and the new congregational direction of Good Shepherd, “Energised by the Spirit, we risk together for mission”, let us together risk to ensure that human trafficking will soon be history. †

Mary Anne K. Baltazar is the assistant manager of Alamesra Youth-PREP Centre, Sabah, Malaysia