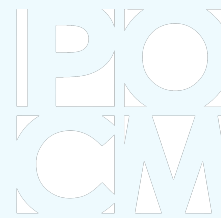


Monthly Newsletter

first issue of 2024



SAD LOSS

It has been a bit of a whirlwind for us all at POCM this past 2 months. In a call to my mother early in December I realised that her mental health had taken a sudden decline and it gave me great concern. After prayer and discussion with my family here, I felt it was necessary, being the only daughter, to return to the UK to care for mum over the Christmas period. I hadn't been home for Christmas since 1998 and I knew it was a dream of mum's for us to have another Christmas together (although she never asked). By the time I booked the flight, the on-line check in was already open. That's how sudden the decision was. We had completed all our Christmas activities in the prisons, so the rest of the family and ministry team assured me that they could manage the remaining Christmas activities without me. Whilst it was hard leaving children and grandchildren over the Christmas period, it was a wonderful opportunity to be with my parents and to serve them as best I could. I did have a wonderful time with them. Mum seemed to vastly improve while I was home too, which was an added blessing. I needed to return to the Philippines by January 22 as our dear friend (and long time supporter of POCM) Wendy Holmes was coming with friends Michelle (chairman of the charity shop YKATW) and sister-in-law Kate, to visit POCM.

Of course I also had to be back in good time to prepare for our son **Aaron and Paula's wedding on February 9.**

So I literally hit the road running.

But only days after my return, I got the news that **Peter Cain** (POCM Chairman) had taken seriously ill. He had been scheduled to arrive in the Philippines one week after myself to take an important role in Aaron and Paula's wedding. Needless to say it was a great shock and with



overwhelming sadness that we learned that he was not able to recover after surgery.

Peter served POCM with great passion over many years, and he and wife Meg had built a home here to be close to his POCM family. He will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts and prayers go out for Meg as she faces this great trial and adjustment.

- Chrissy

POCCA

After a long and fun filled Christmas vacation, it's back to school for POC Christian Academy! With just a few days to refresh the students on their lessons, we then had our 2nd quarter exams.

We are currently working hard for our High School to be approved for the school's recognition certificate.

We have been able to do some required improvements to the school facility. With the help of Nathanael and Tito (head of POC building maintenance) we were able to open a new cooking laboratory, using a room that was originally designed for storage. The kids are really excited to get started. We were also able to do some renovations on our toilet facilities through the help of the ERP Family Fund sponsors in Denmark. We have also updated the health and safety measures by having fire prevention seminars

and drills, along with instalments of new fire extinguishers, emergency lights and fire alarms. We did all this in order to qualify for recognition. Please pray that the Lord will grant us His favour & recognition granted.



We recently had Mama Wendy and her friends visit the school. They spent time reading with our pre-school children and they kindly gave ice cream treats to all our students.

- Aaron

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PRAYER REQUEST

We would value prayer for continued financial provision for the **daily needs** of the children in the Homes.

Healing for Mama Veronica

We would value your prayers for all our additional Christmas Expenses, especially the Christmas Bonuses for the POCM Workers as they desperately need it for their family needs.

Sparrows at Christmas

Thank you so much for all your support and prayers for POCM this past Christmas. Though it was not the same without my mum here to celebrate with us, still we were all very blessed and enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

We would like to offer great thanks to Claire Goudy Henderson and our friends at **Helping Hands Healing Hearts Ministries**. They brought donations for all the children in the homes. They each received gift backpacks filled with goodies.

All the staff at POCCH were also surprised and blessed to receive a gift box (Noche Buena Box) filled with food for their Christmas Eve Celebration with their families and we each received a cash gift too.

We would also like to thank the POCM Trustees who all donated towards the Free Christmas Raffle that we have yearly for the POCM staff. As per usual we had a Christmas party for all the workers of POCM, there was food, games, exchange gifts, raffle gifts and the most anticipated of all, the inter-department competition.

This year's competition was to create a Christmas theme centre piece for their tables. We really do have some very talented staff, so it made it hard to judge! But all had a wonderful time and left the party thoroughly blessed. Thanks to your support we were able to celebrate Christmas Day at Whiterock Beach Resort and Waterpark. There was a total of 200

of us, including the POCCH kids and the POCM staff (and their families), for Christmas Dinner!!! For some of our new Sparrows this was their first time to experience Christmas Day at Whiterock. Carl, (one of our new Sparrows) had not been able to swim for more than two years, since he had a massive infection in his leg. He was told that it would not be possible for him to swim unless his wound was sufficiently healed as he would be seriously at risk of re-infection. However, two weeks before Christmas, nurse Val informed me that his wound was healing



well and there was a good chance that he could swim. The change in him has been miraculous. He even joined with the Sunday School children in their dance performance, on Christmas Eve. What a joy to see his smiling face on Christmas Day when he was finally able to join the other children and swim for the first time. It was the icing on the cake.

- Monique

Shopping Spree

On Boxing Day (Dec 26) we have made it a bit of a POC Christmas tradition to treat the children to a day out shopping. It is the one time of year that they have the opportunity to have their own money to go and choose for themselves whatever clothes, shoes or toys they like. And whilst it is a tradition, we plan this completely by faith that the Lord will provide the means to bless them. Praise God and thanks to our FCM partners in Germany, the need was met and each of the children had their own cash gift to go shopping, even the toddlers had a fun day making their choices. Amid all the excitement of Christmas, it wasn't without its problems. We also struggled with our toddlers as they all got sick. A simple cough and cold quickly progressed to pneumonia and primary infection. Some of the children had to be isolated and we had to get all the houseparents, volunteers and staff checked also. Some of the staff were not able to celebrate the New Year with their families because they were urgently

needed for extra shifts to care for the children. Thankfully none of the staff became infected. We rejoice too that currently all is well and the children have all recovered. We praise God for another completed year that He has faithfully provided all the immediate needs of the ministry. As we entered 2024, we have already faced many challenges in the children's homes. So we would greatly value your prayers. Raising more than 50 children is certainly not easy, it is especially challenging raising so many teenagers. We are currently understaffed and in search of applicants. They are not exactly queuing up, as it is really a demanding job, being responsible for so many children. So we would value your prayers for our staff, that the Lord will bring in the right people who love the Lord and will love the children. Though it is difficult sometimes, we continue to press on towards the goal, and keep working to "make a difference" in the lives of these children. Thank you so much for partnering with us. God bless.

- Monique

We would like to thank my niece Jo for her years of service on the POCM board of Trustees, for which we are most grateful. She has now resigned in order to care for her two small children while working a very demanding full time job. She has been a great blessing to us. **Please note the change of English Address.** Whilst we have faced many challenges in 2024 already, we see why the enemy is angry. The church is really growing and many are becoming actively involved in outreach. We regularly have around 80 young people and adults attending our Battlecry prayer meetings and worship nights, and we feel the wonderful presence of the Lord. Thank you all once again for your faithful support and prayers. We truly value you as partners in our labour of love. **Together Let's Make a Difference!**

*Love in Christ,
Chrissy, Dondie & your POCM Family*