

GOYA Foundation AGM
24th April 2008
President's Report 2007- 2008

There appears to me to be a recurring theme throughout the last twelve months of activity at GOYA, that of collaboration. At various times we have worked with or been supported by VISTA, William Angliss Institute, Methodist Ladies' College, The City of Casey and the City of Boroondara and the Jesuits in Hawthorn. It is through these cooperative endeavors and with the assistance of many individuals both within and without GOYA that we have been able to achieve some of our goals. More recently, our projects have been given a substantial boost by the Rotary Clubs of Kew and Richmond.

The enthusiasm shown by many groups and individuals to assist the efforts of the Timorese in rebuilding and developing their country are admirable, but unlike the earlier years, we sometimes find that there is another group attempting to achieve the same outcome. How much more could be gained if people were to pool their intellectual and financial resources and work together cooperatively?

Despite the regular crises that develop in Timor Leste, the country is slowly developing an infrastructure and assistance is still coming from a wide variety of sources. Some sectors however are still appallingly under resourced and it is only through the efforts of such people as Sister Lourdes and Sister Aurora that we are able to provide aid to those who suffer from TB and assist in developing educational resources for the poor who would otherwise remain unassisted and disadvantaged.

Our major goal this year is to complete in cooperation with Rotary, the Kindergarten and Community Garden Project in Comoro, Dili that has been developed by Sister Aurora. While we now have the funds and expertise, our efforts in the past have been set back by the political problems. To this end, Jill Forsyth and new member and Rotarian Barbara Woodberry will be traveling to Timor in June to clarify and hopefully finalise the proposal and move this project closer to completion.

Jill has also been driving the literacy program producing the first Tetum readers for beginner readers and primary students. Several books are about to be published. This has been a huge effort supported by GOYA member Gerry Robinson, Toni Planinsek and Alan Fosby, Jose da Costa the Author and Arte Moris who have done the artwork.

The Youth GOYA members held a marvelous 'Splash of Compassion' at the Aquarium in February 2007 with fabulous food, music by Bomba, Silent Auction and we partied into the wee small hours. We gained many new members and raised valuable funding. Their committee worked for many months gathering auction items and sponsorship goodies for the show bag. They even held a very successful 'speed dating' evening to raise money to cover the costs of the venue. We look forward to seeing what they will come up with for their next event!

Our congratulations to Eloise Borello, a Youth member who traveled with me in 2004 to Timor, who has successfully graduated from nursing and who is keen to return and take others in order to assist Mana Lu with her work at the TB hospice in Tibar. Another Timor veteran, Cathy Rowe is currently studying medicine and she plans to take a small group to Goroka in PNG to assist at a clinic that is part of the work of Jennifer Mondia who established the Office of Status for Women in the Highlands. It makes me very proud to associate with these young women who are prepared to give of themselves so that the lives of others are improved.

Methodist Ladies College held a variety of fundraising activities but the major event was the 'School's Idol' which raised \$7,000. Many schools competed and the atmosphere was electric. The students also prepared a large range of gorgeous hampers that were auctioned at the Fundraising dinner.

In the true spirit of collaboration, VISTA, a group of VET professionals assisted in holding a fundraising dinner at William Angliss in early August. Thank you to Jackie Watts who has a keen interest in assisting Timor and who was the secretary who handled the bookings and assisted with the promotions. This corresponded with the visit of the five Timorese teachers who were able to attend the evening. Steve Blundell's bush band played all evening, the raffle and auction were a great success.

The visit of the Timorese teachers was well documented in articles on the GOYA website and as I mentioned it was a huge collaborative effort requiring much organization and generosity. The planning took many months with the acquisition of passports and visas, the scheduling of schools and kindergartens across Melbourne, the rostering of volunteers for transport, shopping and leisure activities. My sincere thanks to Father Shortall who so generously provided fabulous accommodation for the group for many weeks and Marga Pires whose love, kindness and total dedication to the Timorese people never ceases to amaze. She is an inspiration to us all. The project had begun quite small but grew substantially and GOYA would not have been able to continue without the help of Kate Jeffrey from the Friends of Same (City of Boroondara) and Jan Tresize (City of Casey) The benefits of the experience for the Timorese are many and the project continues with new supporters who also believe that the education of the Timorese children is paramount to the nation's development.

Jennifer Mondia from the Office of Status of Women in PNG visited us shortly after. She was here for personal reasons but managed to catch up with many GOYA members and she attended several functions enabling her to garner support for her project and organize the completion of the office refurbishment with the assistance of GOYA.

We received this outline from Jennifer:

OSW-HR PROGRESS REPORT 2007 (Sept. – Dec. 2008)

By Jennifer Mondia Director – OSWHR

Firstly, Year 2007 started well with Canada Fund in Canberra supporting OSWHR with office renovation. The **renovation of the OSW-HR office has initially completed**. It was not easy but finally OSWHR has a place to launch out from. The actual completion took place in the last quarter of 2007 and into early 2008 as above. A few more finishing touches need to be made but general, the building is complete.

Secondly, after completing the building, the next thing is to **furnish the building**. Since GOYA has been so generous in the life of OSWHR since inception, I decided not to seek GOYA but to look elsewhere for further support in purchasing office furniture and equipment. I contacted a friend and colleague in UNAA who is a Soroptimist member namely (Dr Anne Binkley) whom I knew from my VU student days, and after speaking with her on the subject, she asked if I could provide her with quotations of all furniture & equipment needed by OSWHR. To date, I am still waiting for a response from her group.

Thirdly, the **OSWHR vehicle** is still sitting in my yard and **not road worthy**.

The cost of major engine work costs a lot in PNG therefore I tried to take the risk by engaging cheap labor. After this is fixed, with some advice from Felicity & Jill, I will have to sell the car and get something good to keep me going for the next three years or so. I am still very interested in purchasing a vehicle that is more suited for traveling the Highland mountains. I will try my very best after selling this one.

Another major personal issue is for me to return and complete my PhD in Australia. AusAid scholarship called the **Australian Leadership Award (ALA)** is out now for Asia Pacific Region and therefore I am very interested and would like to try this time. It is open to anybody holding leadership positions either in the government or private sector to apply and I am of the belief that I qualify and would meet the requirement.”

Jennifer will be providing us with a financial report upon request for the vehicle costs and the teams proposed visit..

We continue to support the efforts of Palmira Pires, who is the Director of ETDA (East Timor Development Agency). Palmira runs courses, (some accredited) in Vocational Education to equip people for roles within the work force. We assist particularly in providing her with the equipment and ingredients to operate cake decoration classes so that women who have little or no income can make cakes to sell and raise money to support their family.

Sister Lourdes (Mana Lu) has continued with the establishment of two more 'Open Houses for the Poor and Suffering'. These hospices are a place for the very poor to recuperate from the ravages of Tuberculosis. They travel for many hours to get to these refuges and are often accompanied by their entire family. Manalu provides them with a place to sleep, clean bedding and nutritious food for the whole family. When I visited the largest hospice in Tibar there were over seventy patients and probably triple that number with family. Every one helps with the food gathering and preparation and many of the women assist with the bed changing and washing and cleaning duties. Mana Lu is totally dependant upon the generosity of others to continue this work. She has now opened one in Betano, which is over the other side of the country and very remote and Vique que which is even further from Dili.

"Crackerjack' barefoot bowling fundraiser was held on Sunday 20th April. New GOYA member Barbara Woodberry organized the occasion with help from the GOYA committee and Rotary and she has engaged the Rotary Club of Hawthorn to adopt Sister Aurora's Kindergarten and the development of teaching programs as a major project over the next two years. This will be invaluable assistance for both GOYA and Sister Aurora and her staff and children.

Sail the 7 Seas is yet another cooperative project that will take place on Friday 13th June. The Event management students from William Angliss Institute are organizing a fundraiser aboard the biggest cruise vessel in the harbour! An exciting night of magic, pirates, music, lucky dips, silent auctions and fabulous food and wine. Please see the website for more details and for booking your tickets on line

I would like to personally thank my committee for their assistance and encouragement, Vice President Jill Forsyth; Treasurer Tony Borello; Secretary Terri Oprean; Social Director Sally Steele; PR Sue Henly; Logistics Steve Blundell; HIAM Health representative Lee Ewing; MLC liaison Kristy Keppich and finally our vibrant Youth representatives, Eloise Borello, Ildi Amon and Sophie Steele.

I would also like to thank Terri Oprean who is a founding member of GOYA and who has been our Secretary since the foundation in July 2004 for her constant support and assistance. Terri has stepped down from the position but will remain a valued member of GOYA.

Our thanks and appreciation to Rosa Storelli the Principal of MLC, Anne Wallington the Head of Senior School at MLC, Felicity Donnelly Deputy head and the staff and students who continue to work so tirelessly to ensure the continuing work of our communities in Timor

My thanks to my son Scott, who maintains our website and liaises with the web hosts on our behalf.

Finally my thanks to our Members and Friends, I ask for your support at our functions and introduce others to our work; provide us with feedback, ideas, and constructive advice.

We are all volunteers working with the belief that is our duty to support the work of others in order to improve the lives of all women where ever they should be and provide them with the means to develop and take control their own lives.

Thank you for assisting us to make this possible.

Felicity Fraser
Founder