

## GOYA President's Report 2009

Dear Friends, Members and Supporters,

Life has been hectic for all the committee at GOYA with many travelling to Timor and others working with Bill Dagg at Rotary, sorting, packing and dispatching goods in the containers.

Life is changing in Timor with the emphasis for many moving from basic humanitarian aid to development. At our first meeting in February this year, the committee decided that although we are involved in some development projects, ones that promote self sufficiency, we are dedicated to grass roots development and the care of the very poor and the Timorese women who give so tirelessly to improve the lives of their countrymen.

As we are all aware, freedom came at a huge cost in both humanitarian and economic losses for the Timorese and it will take many years for them to recover. It is gratifying to think that we have been able to play a small but significant part in assisting them to regain their self-respect and provide them with hope for a brighter future.

Jill Forsyth (Vice President of GOYA) returned from Timor recently and had a very busy time with meetings and visiting various projects. The roofing project for the Comoro Kindergarten under the watchful eye of Sister Aurora Pires is slowly coming together which is a relief as progress has been interrupted several times by the various crises that have arisen over the last three years as well as the shortage of qualified trades people. Inflation is high and the cost of building materials has risen steeply. Jill has been chasing up various builders and helpers who are involved which is never easy in Timor. We have decided on a sun shading rather than a rigid structure and once the shade is completed the children's' garden and play area can be finalised. Richmond and Kew Rotary groups are collaborating with us to complete this project. Many of you were present at the Seed Food Life gala fundraiser when Stephanie Alexander generously contributed to this project.

Jill was accompanied on her trip by Claire Foreman. Claire is a former MLC student who was with a group of MLC students who came with me to Timor in 2005 and she has long expressed an interest to return and do something to help. Amongst other things she spent some time helping the women at the Tibar TB clinic just outside Dili. She assures me she will write an article about her experience for the membership!

My sister Susie White from Sydney has long assisted with the GOYA projects and visited Timor with me at Easter time. We were warmly greeted by all as I have had an absence of two years and they were thrilled to meet another family member. They loved Susie's warmth and friendly personality as well as her 'magic bag' full of goodies the children could play with. The blowing bubbles bottles and snap cards were a hit! As I mentioned, things are changing in Timor, even for Manalu and while there are still huge issues regarding the lack of health care and continued malnutrition in children, many

people are keen to adapt to the changes and introduce new ways to make a living. Hospitality training is going to be a very important part of the rebuilding and development of Timor and hopefully we can facilitate in assisting with these projects.

Manalu (Sister Lourdes da Cruz) has had major building works going on since well before my last visit and was finishing a large building she is going to use as a guest house so that the community can be self sufficient. The view is magnificent but she needs her students to learn basic skills in order to run her little 'Posada' successfully. We visited her TB clinic where the families of those who are sick assist in the daily running of the hospice. Methodist Ladies College have held another sheet drive so that the sick can at least have the comfort of some fresh sheets. Often they take them home with them, which means we constantly need a new supply. As usual, Manalu's constant organising and planning the development of her thirteen establishments is awe-inspiring. She is supporting communities throughout the country and assisting the very poor with agricultural projects, educational opportunities, pastoral care and with her hospice programs, providing them with palliative care.

We went over the mountains to visit Aileu where the Portuguese have generously built a lovely new building which contains a training facility for computers where they visit annually to train the local high school students. They have also built an area for a Kindergarten (photos on the website) which is run by a young woman called Clarissa da Silva who is a volunteer working with Manalu from Portugal. Funds are short for this kindergarten and she has appealed to us to assist with the training of the kinder teachers. We have done so by paying for them to attend workshops in Dili and they have also been the recipients of the kinder box teacher resource kits, a project operated by Richmond Rotary. We continued to Betano, across the mountains where there is another hospice. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds and trained personnel, this beautiful facility is empty until it can be fully staffed.

Manalu realises that she must provide access to a modern education for the young members of her association and to this end has asked us to provide her with some laptop computers which we have agreed to provide. If anyone in the membership can assist with this, we would appreciate hearing from you. Manalu sent her thanks and greetings to all involved in GOYA and warmly invites you to visit her and share time with her beautiful community.

Rosaria Martins da Cruz is Manalu's sister and the passionate founder of the HIAM Health facility. Together with Jill Hillary and the assistance of supporters and sponsors, they have just completed a new clinic which will treat children suffering from malnutrition and provide training for mothers in preparing nutritious meals for their families. The facility provides accommodation for staff and visiting educators and nurses as well as permaculture and monoculture gardens, which will provide food for the centre, with the excess being sold to provide an income for the centre. These women are passionate about their work and GOYA is forging partnerships with other associations such as Home Economics Victoria to provide long-term

assistance. Eloise Borello is a GOYA member and nurse who will be travelling to Timor in October to assist at the centre. Eloise went to Timor with the first group of MLC students in 2004 and has always wanted to return. Cathy Rowe is another MLC student who is returning to Timor with Eloise to spend time at the Dili hospital as part of her study to become a Doctor. We look forward to hearing about their time there.

Finally, I met with Palmira Pires who is the CEO of the East Timor Development Agency. We have been assisting Palmira with her Vocational short courses

On the fundraising front, in April the Senior School students from Methodist Ladies College organised a Moonlight cinema fundraiser, which was enjoyed by many students, their families and friends. The students are also collecting bed sheets to send up to the TB Hospice and open house for the Sick and Dying at Tibar.

The Magic Behind the Mask was an evening of dance, games, great food and fun at the Room venue on Glenferrie road in Hawthorn. Revellers partied into the small hours for a great cause! The function was organised by the Event Management students at William Angliss as part of their final assessment. They did a great job and the proceeds have contributed to the continuing development of the Hospice for the sick and dying at Tibar.

Our last fundraiser for 2010 will be the GOYA 5th Birthday celebration on Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of October at the Balwyn Cinemas. We are having a party and movie night showing the inspirational movie 'Mao's last dancer'. The evening will commence with champagne and canapés and of course there will be birthday cake! We will be sending out a notice shortly so make a date in your diary and organise a group of friends to come and celebrate our first 5 years of achievement.

The committee made a decision to suspend assistance to PNG for the moment as Jennifer Mondia, the Founder of the Office of Status of women (Highlands Region) has taken on full time work for her Government in Maritime Safety. Jennifer is also actively pursuing a career in the PNG Government. Jennifer is dedicated to the women of her country and has been on numerous committees conducting workshops for the prevention of HIV/Aids and workshops for women's development. We will re appraise the situation at a future time when Jennifer is in a position to continue her work.

You may have read the very touching story on the front page of The Age on 22nd (Sat) of August about a Mother in Dili giving birth in the UN Compound 10 years ago. The child later sustained head injuries and now needs an eye operation. At the end of the article they mention to help contact the Bairo Pite clinic. This is the clinic supported by Manalu and over the years we have assisted in maintaining this basic health care facility to the local villagers.

"Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time, and is a major concern of the international community. Ending this scourge will require the combined efforts of all, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, in the context of a stronger and more effective global partnership for development. The Millennium Development Goals set timebound targets, by which progress in reducing income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion — while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability — can be measured. They also embody basic human rights — the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security. The Goals are ambitious but feasible and, together with the comprehensive United Nations development agenda, set the course for the world's efforts to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015. "

*United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon*

I would like to thank you for your kind wishes upon my nomination and consequent awarding of the OAM in the Queens Birthday Honours list. It was very lovely to have our work at GOYA recognised and validated in such a public forum and it was humbling to be a part of the Investiture at Government House on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. It was reassuring to see that in today's busy, competitive world so many individuals making a contribution to society and to the welfare of others.

Your contribution to our efforts is vital for us to our continue our work and to this end we appeal to you to forward your membership dues of \$20-00 or a donation to PO Box 2368 Hawthorn or log onto the website

[www.goyafoundation.org](http://www.goyafoundation.org)

My heartfelt thanks to the committee, members and all our supporters for your time, energy and dedication.

I look forward to hearing from you or catching up at the birthday party,

Felicity Fraser OAM  
Founder – GOYA Foundation Australia Inc.