



# ANNUAL REPORT



# INTRODUCTION

Dear Young Focus Friends,

Greetings from Tondo, Manila, Bulacan, and Naic, Cavite!

One of the exciting updates in this report is the opening of our new center in Naic, Cavite. Due to the relocation of approximately 60 families (with more to come) from Tondo to Naic, we decided to establish a center in this new resettlement area. Three new staff members have started working there, and in 2024, we hope to expand our activities.

The year 2023 was filled with many highlights and developments. You'll find a summary of these highlights here in our Annual Report 2023, including new testimonies from our beneficiaries, along with facts and figures illustrating the impact of Young Focus with your support.

Additionally, 2023 marked 15 years of Young Focus in the Philippines. The foundation's ability to develop, grow, and reach more children through its educational



## COVER

*In April 2023, more than 250 high school and college students, along with staff, went on a camp to Lipa in Batangas. It was a blast! Needless to say, the participants enjoyed themselves, as it was a special opportunity to escape the city and breathe in the fresh air of the countryside.*

programs has been made possible by the generosity and encouragement of our donors.

Furthermore, 2023 provided us with a more robust foundation to work with. We are so grateful for the hard work and commitment of our staff, as well as the support of volunteers and visitors from the Netherlands and the Philippines.

My heartfelt gratitude to all of you for enabling Young Focus to thrive in Tondo, Bulacan, and Naic. I really hope that the foundation's effective programs will soon expand and multiply, allowing more children to achieve their goals and aspirations, regardless of their background. May more children have then the opportunity to develop their talents and gifts in a country where an educational gap persists between the privileged and the underprivileged.

2023 was a year in which Young Focus made a significant difference in the lives of many children. This report provides an overview of our effort. Happy reading!

- Paul van Wijgerden  
Managing Director

## CONTENTS

2. INTRODUCTION
3. MISSION & VISION;/ 15 YEARS MANUEL
4. PROGRAMS / JAYSON
6. SSP FACTS & FIGURES
7. SSP IMPACT TUTORIALS
8. READING CLASSES
9. 24 GRADUATES
12. CAMP 2023
13. CINDY / VISITORS / OTHER ACTIVITIES
14. HIGHLIGHTS
15. NYTLYF
16. OPENING YOUNG FOCUS CAVITE
18. CATCH-UP FACTS & FIGURES
19. CATCH-UP - MOVING UP
20. GILBERT'S STORY / OPENING 'PUHON'
21. OTHER ACTIVITIES CATCH-UP
22. NEW LOCATION PRESCHOOL
23. PRESCHOOL FACTS
24. PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES
25. JENNYBABE & ALTHEA / SOCIAL SUPPORT
26. FAMILY CARE PROGRAM
27. CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
28. CAREER BOOTHS
29. CHRISTMAS 2023 IMPRESSION
30. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART & TEAM
31. BACKGROUND INFO



# MISSION

Improve the spiritual and social well-being of young people in poor communities by means of education and personal support.

# VISION

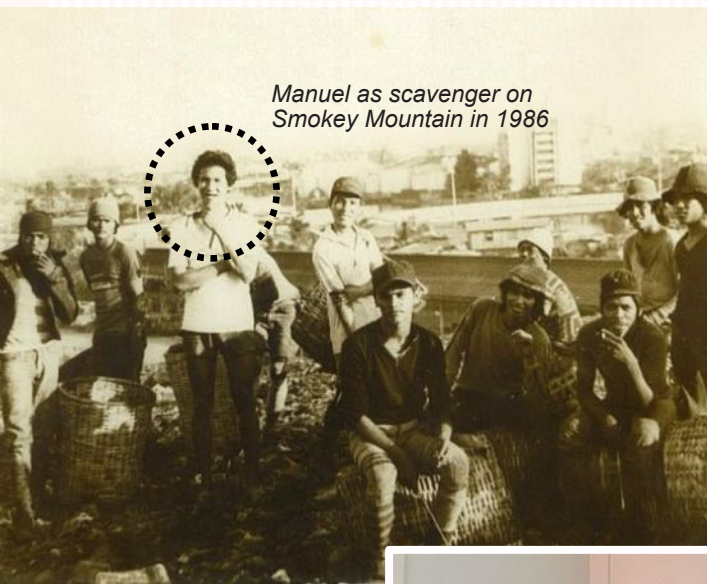
Give underprivileged children and young adults the chance to develop themselves intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually by means of education and personal coaching. The organization wants to see young people developing their (hidden) talents, and, in doing so, escape the vicious cycle of poverty.

# WHERE WE WORK

Young Focus operates in a highly complex environment, holistically addressing a myriad of socio-economic issues for target beneficiaries - children and families who live in the Smokey Mountain area (Manila's former dumpsite). Thousands of families rely directly or indirectly on the garbage 'industry'. Jobs range from scavenging for recyclable materials to driving bike taxis. Financial constraints, as well as a lack of educational and social support, mean that many children are unable to complete their education, and as a result, are unable to break the cycle of poverty. Young Focus works here in three main communities: Permanent Housing, Vitas and Temporary Housing, all located in the Smokey Mountain area, and including smaller pockets of shacks. In total Young Focus estimates that about 40,000 people live in these communities. Young Focus also has a number of beneficiaries in Bulacan and Cavite, who were relocated in recent years.

# WHAT WE DO

1. Enroll children into the government education system and provide extra educational, as well as social and creative support
2. Motivate, stimulate and prepare children and youth who have dropped out of school so that they can finish elementary, high school and college
3. Provide comprehensive Early Childhood Education and Development for 3-4-year-olds, giving them a solid basis for enrolling in elementary school
4. Provide social support for all the students, families and wider communities in which Young Focus works
5. Build the self-confidence of the students, to train and equip them, as well as help them find work and follow their chosen career path.



Manuel as scavenger on Smokey Mountain in 1986

## 15 YEARS IN YOUNG FOCUS!

**“It feels so unreal to say ‘Goodbye!’” and “‘Thank you’ doesn’t seem a big enough word...”** These were just a couple of the thoughts as Young Focus staff expressed their love and respect to ‘Kuya Manuel’ as he began his retirement journey.

With songs and skits, laughter and tears, we recognized together just how key Manuel has been to Young Focus so far. It hasn't only been the last 15 years of Young Focus' presence in the Philippines.

Manuel worked on Smokey Mountain as a scavenger in the 80-ties and his children grew up there. As time went on he became a community leader in different organizations and joined Young Focus in 2008.

*“Kuya Manuel, Young Focus couldn't have existed without you! We love you and are so very thankful for all you've done and for who you are!”*  
-YF staff



# PROGRAMS

**Child Care PLUS** is for children aged 3-4 years old. The main objective is to provide high quality education which helps the children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. It also provides them with life skills, play and basic education.

**Grade 1 - Grade 12 and College Education**

Local students aged 6-20+ are supplied with school fees, uniforms, books and other required materials. In addition, Young Focus runs compulsory tutorials for all of these students at the Student Center, which has a computer room, a library, classrooms and recreational areas for them to use.

**Love2Learn**

This program focuses on children who dropped out of elementary school due to poverty and a lack of educational and social support. This program provides classes for one year before re-enrolling them into government schools, and works with the families to solve any problems that might get in the way of the children completing their education.

**PostCare**

PostCare students have re-enrolled into government schools. During the transition from being a school dropout these students receive extra coaching to prevent them from dropping out again.

**ALS (Alternative Learning System)**

The ALS program is the formal 'study acceleration' program of

the government. It allows us to work with youth who cannot re-enroll into high school as they have been out of school for too long. Students receive an official high school certificate upon successful completion.

**Combat Malnutrition**

The program Combat Malnutrition provides nutritious and healthy meals for children in Love2Learn. Combat Malnutrition also teaches parents on health and nutrition.

**Family & Social Care**

Young Focus works with families and students who are in need of more specialized social support. Besides personal social support the social workers also provide training on child protection, health, hygiene, nutrition, family planning and parenting skills for the parents of all Young Focus beneficiaries.

**Career Development Program**

There can be a social 'chasm' between the student/graduate and the professional labor market. This can make it very difficult to follow the career path of their choice and they need extra help. Through the Career Development Program, Young Focus wants to build the self-confidence of our students, to train and equip them, as well as help them find work and follow their chosen career path. The program works with a network of partners, companies and Young Focus alumni to open doors for the students, so that they are ready to take their place in society as young professionals.

## JAYSON GOT HIS DIPLOMA!

JAYSON in 2008 as charcoal collector



JAYSON in 2023: Bachelor of Science in Criminology

# YOUNG FOCUS





# STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Every year, applications are open for students who are interested in being sponsored by Young Focus. The process entails the submission of documents and requirements, followed by interviews with both parents and students.

This school year, 287 kids were accepted for elementary school, 245 for high school, and 128 for college or university. Before the school year started, a total of 709 bags were distributed to students. These bags were filled with school supplies needed for a year. They were also given school uniforms and shoes.

**709 BAGS**  
**WERE DISTRIBUTED**

## ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

2022/2023

2023/2024

Elementary	218	287
High School	201	245
College/ Uni	109	128

## RETENTION RATE

Elementary	93.5%
High School	92.5%
College/ Uni	86.2%

# THE IMPACT OF TUTORIALS AND LIFE SKILLS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS SHOWED IN THEIR SCHOOL GRADES

**86.27%** of our elementary pupils received a 'Satisfactory' to 'Outstanding' performance. **25** pupils were recognized for being the top students in their class. Their attendance rate was **80.22%**

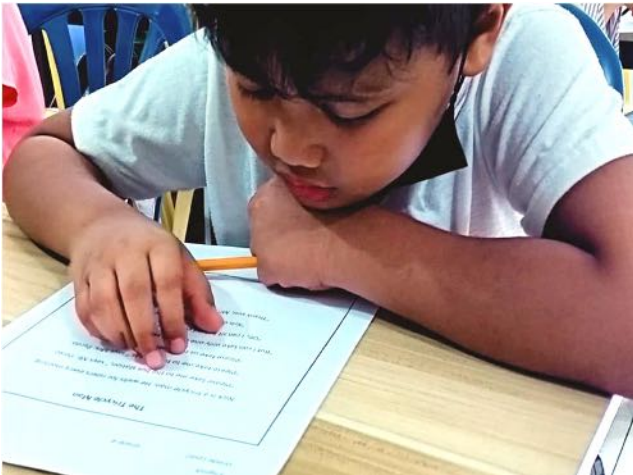
In high school, the result was even higher than the target outcome:

**90.86%** of the students received a 'Satisfactory' to 'Outstanding' performance. **75** students were recognized for being the top students in their class. Attendance rate: **78.49%**

College attendance rate was **86.18%**



# READING CLASSES AFTER THE PANDEMIC



Our educational program began conducting reading assessments after the pandemic. According to a published report from the World Bank, 9 out of 10 Filipino children (10-year-olds) were struggling to read or understand a simple written text. This statistic was one of the highest in the East Asia and Pacific region.

In the communities where Young Focus works (based on the results of the assessment in the S.Y 2022-2023), sadly, 42% of our children fell under the 'Frustration' reading level, which meant they didn't really know how to recognize letter sounds. Some of them did not even attempt to read. 37% fell under the 'Instructional' level, which meant they knew how to read but were a little slow in doing so. Only 21% fell under the 'Independent' level, indicating they had the ability to read properly and at the right speed.

# IMPACT AFTER INTERVENTION

## MOVING UP

Elementary	99%
High School	90%
College/ Uni	90%

These figures show the percentage of students who moved up to their expected grade level.

After the assessment, the different tutorial classes in Young Focus were separated according to the reading level of the children. The program also held meetings with the parents, assigning them the task of following up with their child at home using the reading materials provided after our tutorials.

To determine if there was any improvement, another reading assessment was conducted before the start of the school year 2023-2024:

**The 'Frustration' level dropped from 42% to 18%, the 'Instructional' level rose to 52%, and the 'Independent' level saw an increase to 30%. We will continue these assessments every year to address the reading problems of our children in elementary school.**

## GRADUATES

**56**  
graduated

from Elementary

**31**  
graduated

from High school

**24**  
graduated

from College/ Uni

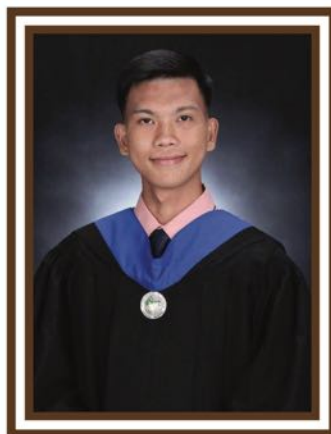


# WE ARE SO PROUD OF OUR **24** COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY GRADUATES! CONGRATULATIONS BATCH 2023!

Imagine... six years of elementary school, six years of high school, and then another four years in college/university. These 24 students have completed all that. They studied hard, endured tribulations and trials. They came from backgrounds that did not offer much hope for a future where they could finish college or university. And yet... these 24 students were given a chance, and they succeeded! We are incredibly proud of them and wish them all the best for the future. With the assistance of our Career Development Program, they will be able to find jobs and embark on their careers!



**DE VERA, JAMES**  
BACHELOR OF CIVIL  
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY



**DUPITAS, JOSHUA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
EDUCATION MAJOR IN  
MATHEMATICS



**FLORENTINO,  
CRISTINA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
HOTEL AND RESTAURANT  
MANAGEMENT



**REMULAR, TERESITA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
MAJOR IN HUMAN  
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT



**RUBI, MERY JINE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
MAJOR IN HUMAN  
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT



**SOMAYAN, ROCELLE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
NURSING



**ABANSADO,  
JUCELLE**  
BACHELOR OF INDUSTRIAL  
EDUCATION MAJOR IN  
INDUSTRIAL ARTS



**AREGLO, JAYSON**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN CRIMINOLOGY



**BARRERA,  
ANNIE ROSE**  
BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGICAL  
VOCATIONAL TEACHER  
EDUCATION MAJOR IN FOOD  
SERVICE MANAGEMENT



**CONSTANTINO,  
DARLYN**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
MAJOR IN OPERATIONAL  
MANAGEMENT



**CRUZ,  
EMMANUEL**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN EDUCATION MAJOR IN  
MATHEMATICS



**DAÑO, JECELLE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN  
BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION IN  
MARKETING MANAGEMENT



**NOYNAY,  
RICHELLE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY



**PONCIANO,  
ROSE ANN**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION



**QUITON,  
MARJORIE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE



**BATAN,  
LANCE HARVEY**  
TECH-VOC AUTOMOTIVE  
TECHNICIAN



**BAUTISTA,  
MA. LALAINÉ**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION



**BIGNAYAN,  
ROWENA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION IN  
MARKETING



**HALLERA, IRA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN ACCOUNTANCY



**LOPEZ,  
DANIELA MAY**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN CRIMINOLOGY



**NAPA, ABEGAIL**  
BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY  
MAJOR IN PRINT MEDIA  
TECHNOLOGY



**UNSON,  
MARY ANN**  
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN  
MASS COMMUNICATION



**VILLANUEVA,  
RONA**  
BACHELOR OF  
INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION  
MAJOR IN INDUSTRIAL  
ARTS



**VILLARINO  
JONALYN**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
MAJOR IN FINANCIAL  
MANAGEMENT

# GOING ON CAMP WITH 250 TEENAGERS



For the first time since 2015, Young Focus was able to organize a summer camp again! It was a fantastic time and an unforgettable experience for all the high school and college students. Three days escaping the city. A chance to forget the stress and trauma of the pandemic, and enjoy fresh air and a swimming pool.



Lea, one of the students, says: "It was so great we could go on summer camp this year. I want to thank Young Focus staff for organizing it and Cornerstone Farm for the beautiful location. We were able to learn a lot. Actually, from the Young Focus coordinators I've learned so much about not giving up during my studies. They are always there to cheer me on and to encourage me not to give up but to keep going during the difficult times.

I also want to thank my camp team, that I had the chance to lead them. Honestly, it makes me emotional just thinking about it. It was my first chance to be a student leader, and our team even won! In those three days I learned so much. A big thank you for these experiences!"



It was not only a very enjoyable time, but it was also a time for learning about working together and our theme 'Mountain Movers' – whatever your background, whatever the seeming impossibilities, there are opportunities to move mountains. Our activities focused on this theme. We had a lot of fun together as well, we sang, we swam, and bonded as teams as we took on mental and physical challenges together.





## CINDY WAS A SCHOOL DROPOUT BUT GOES TO A REGULAR SCHOOL NOW!

Hi! I'm Cindy. I'm 12 years old and am in Grade 2 right now. I started in Young Focus as a Love2Learn student (special program for school dropouts) in 2018. Back then, I was being prepared to go back to a regular school by catching up on basic lessons I need to know. We received meals before starting our classes, so we could focus more on our lessons and not sit in class with an empty tummy. My two sisters, Gwen and Rica, were also enrolled in the school dropout program before moving to the Student Support Program. I was transferred in August 2022. Right now, all of us are continuing to finish our studies in a regular school.

My mother is a single parent who looks after me and my siblings. Our small sari-sari store is the only source for

our daily expenses. My sister Gwen guides and supports us in school while she is studying. I really like English and Mathematics. I do my best even if some lessons are very challenging for me. I received lots of awards for this school year: "Bookworm Award", "Academic Achiever", "Best Pupil", and "Budding Mathematician".

I'm grateful for being a sponsored student - for having the chance to learn more through weekly tutorials and receive support for my educational expenses such as school supplies, shoes, uniforms and lots more.

I'll never forget the joy I felt when I was called on stage to receive my medal for being a top student!

## EXPLORING YOUNG FOCUS & THE PHILIPPINES

The pandemic meant several years without organized trips from abroad. But finally, seven Dutch adventurers arrived for a short but intensive week, experiencing all of our Young Focus programs up close. They were also introduced to the squatter area communities around our centers, and enjoyed a day trip to the Pagsanjan waterfalls.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Child Protection Policy Roll-out

Safeguarding children's rights and outlining the steps they can take in case of violations are essential priorities. Additionally, it aims to emphasize how much Young Focus values their safety from abusive individuals.

### Disaster Risk and Reduction Management (DRRM)

A seminar about DRRM was conducted among high school students. Given that most of the houses in Tondo Communities are constructed from light materials and are prone to various disasters such as fire, earthquakes, and flooding, it is crucial to discuss prevention and the actions that need to be taken if disasters happen.

### Freshies' Night

A night to formally welcome the freshmen in the YF College Department. A warm welcome to our new batch of first-year college students who have courageously embarked on the journey of becoming college students and pursuing their career paths.

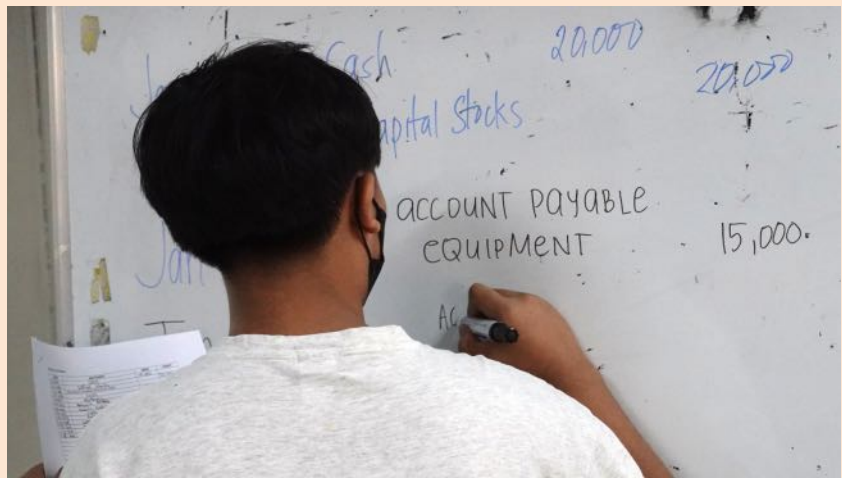
# DENTAL CARE IN OUR CENTER



Typically, children dislike going to the dental clinic and having their teeth checked by the dentist due to their fear of pain. However, here at our center, our brave children overcame their dental anxiety and actively participated in our dental event. Additionally, their parents accompanied them to ensure they felt safe and comfortable.

# FINANCIAL LITERACY

It's so important that our students' education includes financial literacy. This involves gaining knowledge and a set of skills, enabling them to make wise decisions about their financial resources – both now as a student and later in life when they have a job. This is also part of our Saturday life skills sessions, and they've certainly been learning a lot.



## LO VISITS YOUNG FOCUS AND TEACHES US BREAK DANCING!

Surprise visit from Logan Edra aka "Logistx" or "Lo". She is a young artist-athlete from San Diego. She has pursued dance professionally since an early age while building in the areas of social justice advocacy, spiritual awareness, and global dance community work. Lo gave us some impressive break dancing lessons. Within a few minutes some of our students replicated some of the complicated moves! Fun to do and fun to watch and see our students doing their best.

# WORKPLACE TOURS



*"I was amazed at their office and didn't expect it to be like that! I felt motivated to achieve my own dream career and I realized that with the right planning, support from Young Focus, and diligence, I believe I can do it!" - JP*

Workplace exposure, aimed at providing insight into a company and its industry, goes beyond a simple field trip; it's an opportunity for students to observe, ask questions, and expand their career awareness in an inspiring and enjoyable manner. We arranged visits to two workplaces: a software company and a restaurant and event venue, allowing students to experience the environments and explore potential career paths. At the Atlassian office, our group of 25 ALS and college students were warmly welcomed, providing them with the chance to immerse themselves in the company culture, meet professionals, and gain valuable insights into various career opportunities.

NytLYF is a creative program designed for our high school and college students. It offers a variety of activities such as writing, arts, photography, dancing, sports, acting, and music, providing students with an outlet to express their creativity. This program serves as an opportunity for them to take a break from academic pressures and utilize their time more productively than simply hanging out in the neighborhood.

Salve, a fourth-year university student, shared her experience: "NytLYF helped me discover my talents, from drawing and cooking to being a servant leader. I also developed patience in various aspects. These skills and discipline have supported me in my studies, and I know I can apply them when I get a job."

NytLYF not only serves as a platform to discover talents and boost confidence, but also fosters strong friendships and leadership skills.

*In celebration of 'World Environment Day,' high school and college students upcycled throwaway items to create costumes inspired by the summer and rainy seasons.*



# NYTLYF: EXPRESS YOUR CREATIVITY



## CROSS-CULTURAL NYTLYF: 'MORE TO EXPLORE'

The NytLYF participants engaged in six weekly sessions with Dutch students who shared their talents through various clubs. Each session included participation in visual arts, acting workshops, dance workshops, and preparation for the main event. The main event culminated in a shared cultural night, during which both students and their Dutch friends showcased notable performances from different countries, with a special focus on the Netherlands and the Philippines. It was an enjoyable evening, although tinged with a sense of farewell, as it marked the last day of their Dutch friends' visit to the Philippines.

In celebration of Nutrition Month, with the theme 'Fuel for the Future,' high school and college students enthusiastically participated in various contests at NytLYF. They engaged in poster making, aerobics, healthy meal preparation, and a quiz bee, all of which they thoroughly enjoyed while showcasing their skills.

The awarding night brimmed with excitement as everyone eagerly awaited the announcement of winners for each contest. Some students also delivered special performances through spoken poetry and singing, featuring lyrics they composed themselves. As part of the program, Maricel, a community health nurse and one of our Young Professionals (a Young Focus alumni/former sponsored student), spoke about the significance of making appropriate food choices and the importance of avoiding vices, along with their potential effects on individuals.

Celebrating this event served as a reminder for us all that the nutrients in the food we consume act as our bodies' fuel. Therefore, it is crucial to consistently opt for nutritious meals and engage in healthy activities to maintain a healthy body and mind for our future.



# UNVEILING A NEW HAVEN: YOUNG FOCUS NAIC STUDENT CENTER IS NOW OPEN!

In 2019, over 50 of our students, along with their families, were relocated to Naic, Cavite. Since then we have been wanting to provide enhanced support and extend our school dropout programs in this new community, having the dream of constructing a Student Center for these students...

On June 8, 2023, the inauguration of the new Student Center took place under the theme "Excited for Tomorrow!" Sponsored students, parents, and staff from Manila united to warmly welcome the new Young Focus team. The event was filled with uplifting music, dance performances, and delicious treats. Beneficiaries shared their insights, reflecting on their journey since the relocation. Their stories of resilience and growth were met with laughter and tears, representing the spirit of hope ignited by this new learning space.

The center features a large meeting hall, a library, a computer room, and an office area. Following the opening ceremony, the new Young Focus team began settling into the center, with a vision to expand programs in the coming years by reaching out to more beneficiaries.







# OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD



This award is presented to

[Redacted Name]  
[Redacted Name]

For his excellence, effort and achievement in  
POSTCARE - ELEMENTARY for the year 2023.  
Awarded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of June at  
Catch - UP Center, Road 10, Brgy. 106, Tondo Manila.

  
ANGELO ANDREW ELSISURA  
Catch-Up Manager

  
PAUL VAN WIJGERDEN  
Managing Director

  
GEORGENA SARMIENTO  
Teacher/ Coordinator

**9103**  
meals were  
provided.



## CATCH-UP PROGRAMS

The Young Focus Catch-UP programs are designed to provide education for children and teenagers who have dropped out of school. The primary objective of the program is to either re-enroll them in a regular school or advance them to the next level of education.

Children are enrolled in our Love2Learn program, which offers tailored educational support to meet their individual needs. For teenagers, we offer the opportunity to complete junior high school through the ALS (Alternative Learning System). Additionally, through our PostCare program, we provide assistance to students as they transition into regular schools after completing our Catch-UP programs. This support ensures a smoother transition and continued success in their academic journey.

**309**  
uniforms were  
distributed

### ENROLLED IN CATCH-UP PROGRAM

	2022/2023	2023/2024
Love2Learn	108	81
PostCare	42	59
ALS (Junior High School)	78	89

### RETENTION RATE

Love2Learn	86.1%
PostCare	78.5%
ALS (Junior High School)	66.3%



The Catch-UP programs recently held a special event to recognize the efforts of each learner as they progressed to the next level of their education. The theme, 'Moving Forward,' was chosen to inspire learners to overcome past challenges caused by the pandemic and embrace a new chapter in their educational journey. It also encouraged them to continue advancing as they completed the program at the Catch-UP center and moved on to higher levels of formal education. A total of 187 learners from all programs were honored for their participation, with each receiving a certificate of completion and a small token of appreciation. Additionally, learners who demonstrated outstanding performance and behavior were acknowledged during the event. Among them was Rogelio, a former ALS graduate who is currently enrolled in college under the food and beverage strand. He was recognized for his dedication to academic excellence throughout the school year.

## LOVE2LEARN

**18** children moved up to an elementary school. **28** to ALS and **24** retained in the program for another year. **23** graduated from the Love2Learn

## POSTCARE

**19** children entered an elementary school and **14** graduated from the program.

## ALS

**40** students moved up to school and **2** retained in the program and **10** graduated

**210** school bags were distributed

**894** classes held for out-of-school youth

# GELBIRT'S STORY

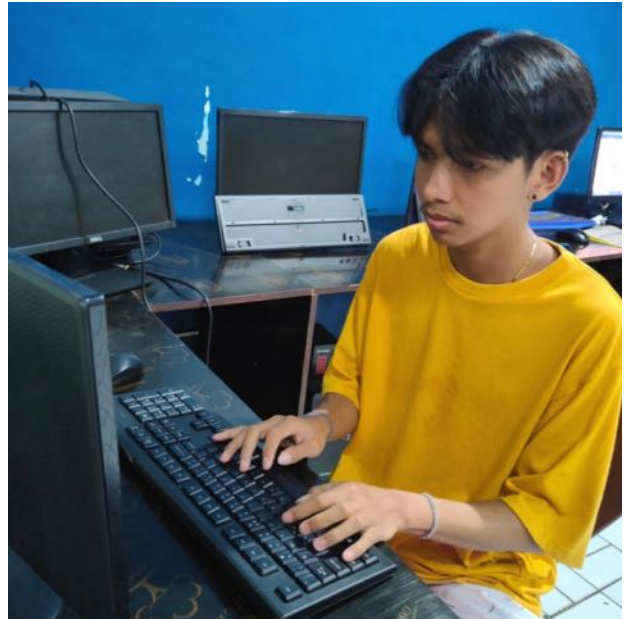
I'm Gelbirt, eighteen years old, and I have 13 siblings. I'm the second-to-last sibling because I have 6 step-siblings on my mother's side and 4 step-siblings on my father's side.

My mother is a housewife, so I assist her with household chores such as cooking and laundry. My father works as a porter at the fish port, and sometimes I accompany him. My role there is a fish keeper, and I earn around 350 pesos a day, depending on our sales.

When I was in Grade 6, we had to return to Quezon Province because my grandmother had an emergency. At first, I thought our stay would be for three weeks, but it extended to three months. Due to this unexpected situation, I couldn't complete Grade 6, and I felt like I'd failed, so I didn't continue my studies.

Through my friend Luigi, I found inspiration to continue my education because he is one of the ALS passers of Young Focus. He introduced me to Young Focus, which encouraged me to enroll. My first online enrollment was at the ALS Elementary level, but I had to stop because of other commitments. I enrolled again with Young Focus because I wanted to go on with my studies. I successfully completed elementary and am now an ALS high school student!

In the beginning, I was nervous about joining ALS high school. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to keep up with my classmates after four years away from school. However, I was pleasantly surprised! ALS encourages unity and treats us all equally. I am grateful to be an ALS student because I have experienced unity, and it has changed



my perspective on life. My experience of being out of school for almost four years has made me stronger. ALS has taught me to "FOCUS on the GOAL" and to never give up in the face of life's challenges, but to keep fighting.

I am thankful to Young Focus for expanding my knowledge, boosting my confidence in my ability to achieve my dream of becoming a chef, welcoming me warmly, and changing my perspective that even in difficult circumstances, we can lift ourselves up with our own determination.

## OPENING OF POSTCARE ROOM PUHON



One of the programs at our Catch-UP Center is called PostCare, which caters to students who have recently completed one of our out-of-school programs and have successfully re-enrolled in a government school. These students receive additional coaching and support to aid them through the transition from school dropout to full-time student.

Despite being established seven years ago, the PostCare program didn't have its own dedicated space. We were then thrilled to announce the official opening of the 'Puhon' room for PostCare. ('Puhon' has three meanings: Soon, Invest, God's time.) We firmly believe that investing in education will bring about positive changes in the lives of individuals in the Smokey Mountain community in due time.

The 'Puhon' room now serves as a multifunctional space for conducting tutorials, school activities, recreational events, discovering individual talents, accessing computers for online learning, and providing life coaching for our students.



## FEARS & PHOBIAS DISCUSSION

PostCare organized a two-part series focused on addressing students' fears. In the first part, we discussed common fears related to education and strategies for overcoming them. The teacher empowered the students by sharing real-life scenarios and stories of overcoming these fears.

In the second part of the series, we delved into various phobias that people experience, ranging from humorous to serious ones. After the discussion, students were encouraged to confront their phobias and not let them hinder their progress. They were inspired to face their fears with courage and determination.

## GOING TO SCHOOL ON AN EMPTY STOMACH?

Earlier in 2023 Young Focus did a survey among the children in our Catch-UP programs and discovered that more than half of them come to their classes on an empty stomach. Of course, it's very difficult to concentrate on learning something when your stomach is aching from hunger...

We started to provide children with a healthy meal before their lessons begin. Providing meals goes hand in hand with teaching parents and children on nutritious and affordable food.

## SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES IN CATCH-UP PROGRAMS

### Parent-Teachers Conference (PTC)

The PTC aimed to gather parents' perspectives on their children's academic improvement and behavior at home. The PTC provides an opportunity for parents to meet and personally discuss matters with the teachers.

### Career Orientation

"Atlassian" conducted a face-to-face workshop on career orientation. The ALS learners were the sole participants in this workshop, which focused on teaching them how to effectively present themselves through their resumes and communication skills.

### Cyber Bullying Seminar

During the seminar, participants felt free to express their thoughts and feelings about their online experiences. They learned that what they post on social media could have a significant impact on others. Therefore, the seminar focused on encouraging mindfulness regarding their online posts.

### Teenage pregnancy awareness

During the seminar, the learners learned about the proper care of their reproductive organs, the common diseases that affect the reproductive organs, and how to avoid early pregnancy. At the start of the seminar, the participants were hesitant to discuss the topic, but as the seminar progressed, they showed their interest by actively listening and participating in the lessons.

### PowerPoint Presentation Seminar

Introduction of the definition, purpose, and function of PowerPoint presentations, knowing the basic concepts. After the teaching students present their designs to the class.

### Medical Mission

Doctors regularly visit the Catch-UP Center to monitor the health condition of the students. They provide health monitoring to identify students who need vitamins and supplements, especially those who are malnourished.

### Child Protection

Our social workers discussed safe and unsafe touch for the children, aiming to help them recognize the types of physical contact others may engage in with them.



We had to transfer the preschool from the Vitas community to our Road 10 center. All the buildings in the Vitas community are being demolished by the government. That doesn't mean we've had to stop running our preschool - it's just in a new classroom in a new location with 60 students starting in 2023!

## NEW LOCATION FOR PRESCHOOL





# CHILD CARE PLUS PROGRAM

**CC (Child Care) Plus records the total number of students who completed the school year and successfully moved up a level. The high retention rate of the program is credited to the proactive approach taken by the teachers. This includes home visitations for students who have missed three consecutive classes, semestral one-on-one parent meetings, and parents' attendance of the Family Strengthening sessions facilitated by Family Care.**

Moreover, the teachers maintained regular communication with parents in cases where students encountered academic difficulties or faced family issues that prevented them from accomplishing tasks. The teachers also tailored activities to suit the unique circumstances of these students, providing personalized support and encouraging a positive learning environment for all their students.

A total of 22 active CC Plus parent volunteers were mobilized during the school year. These parents contributed to classroom activities, lending additional support to the teachers. Their assistance ranged from distributing art materials to guiding children to the restroom, among other tasks. However, the parent volunteers maintained a respectful distance during class activities, including student tasks, to help with independence and ensure minimal disruption.

Through their exposure to class instruction, these parents also gained firsthand experience on how to retain students' attention, teach courtesy, exercise patience, employ positive discipline, and other teaching techniques. These skills will prove helpful in encouraging positive interaction with their own children and within their community.

## ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

2022/2023

2023/2024

Nursery	13	43
Junior Kinder	37	17

## RETENTION RATE

Nursery	98%
Junior Kinder	98%

# MAKING A CHILD'S WORLD A LITTLE LARGER!

Our preschool students, accompanied by teachers and their parents, went on an exciting outing to the Children's Road Safety Park, Manila Zoo, and National Museum of Natural History. During their visit, the children actively engaged in learning about essential traffic signs and signals, for example, in crossing the street safely. They really enjoyed exploring different species at Manila Zoo, encountering animals previously only seen in books and on screen. The play area, equipped with slides and swings, proved to be a favorite among the children, sparking much excitement. They also enjoyed the museum, marveling at huge skeletons, wandering through themed hallways, even experiencing the thrill of riding a glass elevator for the first time.



# UNITED NATIONS DAY AT CHILD CARE PLUS

Our Child Care PLUS preschool celebrated the United Nations Day by painting their faces to represent different nations by their flags. The theme was 'Equality, Freedom and Justice'. It was so much fun to see all their multi-colored faces.





## GRADUATION DAY

At the moving-up ceremony, 48 students celebrated their achievements in June 2023 together with their parents. Each student was honored for their improvements observed inside the classroom. Moreover, all 36 students who completed the Junior Kinder level successfully transitioned to kindergarten, marking a significant milestone in their educational journey.



## MOTHER AND DAUGHTER BOTH IN YOUNG FOCUS PROGRAMS

Jennybabe, 24 years old, enrolled her daughter, Althea Jade, in the nursery level of our preschool to prepare her for elementary school, aiming to provide her with a solid educational foundation. Althea learned a lot in her first year at CC Plus as a nursery student, grasping concepts such as letters, numbers, and colors. She also acquired skills in independence, for example, preparing her own food during snack time, tidying up after herself, and organizing her bag. Jennybabe noticed that her daughter became more respectful and affectionate towards them. She found the Family Strengthening meetings of Young Focus to be both interesting and useful in managing their family dynamics, applying some of what she

was learning from these meetings in managing her own family. Engaging in parent volunteerism, Jennybabe observed the teaching methods used by the teachers and attempted to replicate them at home to support Althea's learning. Althea confidently shared her school experiences with her parents and even attempted to teach them what she had learned. Jennybabe, a high school undergraduate, is currently enrolled as a high school student in our ALS Catch-UP Program this school year. She is motivated to continue her studies and hopes to complete college to improve her job prospects and provide better support for her family.



# SOCIAL SUPPORT SUMMARY

In 2023, the Social Support Team handled **125** special cases. The Student Support Program referred **47** special cases to the social workers, Catch-UP referred **67** and **2** cases referred by CC Plus. The team closed **51%** of the referred cases within the year. Total number of active cases at the end of 2023: **56 (45%)**. Total number of cases closed within 2023: **64 (51%)**. Inactive: **5 (4%)**.

The students undergo certain minimum standards of care managed by the handling social worker under a multi-disciplinary team. Categories are segregated by the immediate response needed to address the issues arising while the student attends Young Focus programs.

The highest number of interventions was for mental well-being and trauma recovery which entails the following activities: counseling sessions, psychological evaluation, trauma specific intervention, psychological first-aid.



The module for Family Care Leadership Workshop reached 100% completion in 2023. The Family and Social Care Program officially ended the leadership workshop of our Family Care Area Leaders (FCALs) and Assistant Leaders with fun and exciting team building activities. These activities focused on developing their potential as leaders, as well as strengthening their camaraderie and solidarity with their co-leaders, and included a very special masquerade ball event.

# FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

# 767

parents and guardians reached

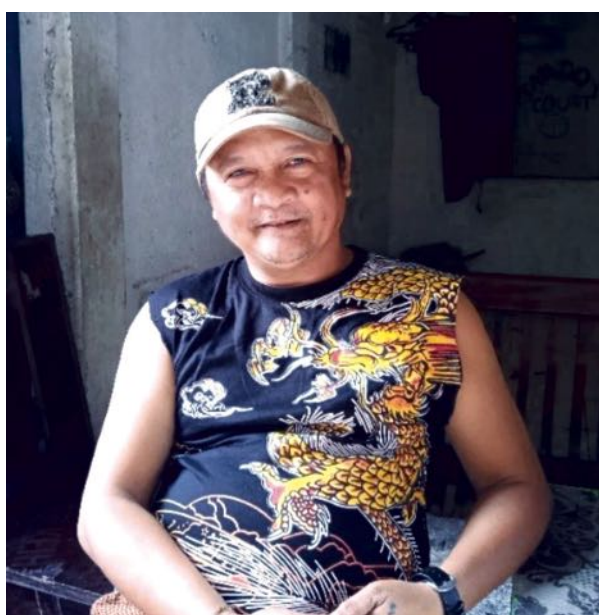
**Out of 767 participants, 9% (72 participants) attended the ERPAT (father's) sessions, while 91% (695 participants) were mothers. These participants are parents or guardians of students from various programs.**

The majority of participants who attended the Family Strengthening sessions, both for mothers and fathers, are parents/guardians from the Students Support Program (SSP), comprising 84% of the total unique reach. This is followed by parents from the Catch-UP Program at 8%, and 8% of the total number of participants are from the CC Plus Program.

To improve parent participation in the Catch-UP Program, several key initiatives were implemented. These include visiting homes and personally inviting parents to the sessions, as well as conducting parent meetings. This personal approach allowed the team to directly connect with families, understand their needs, and invite them to participate in the Family Strengthening sessions. By visiting homes, trust and rapport were built, encouraging more parents to engage with our programs. Additionally, Family Care conducted several small group parent meetings to introduce the Family Care Program to new parents. Through these strategies, Family Care aimed to increase parent participation and create a supportive environment where parents were actively involved in their children's education and well-being.

Reynaldo, a 52-year-old father of two, participated in the father's Family Strengthening sessions. Initially persuaded by his wife to attend, he became intrigued by what the sessions could offer. Reynaldo enjoyed the sessions due to the activities prepared for them, and said that the program was improving his life and family interactions. His wife, Ednalyn, noticed positive changes in Reynaldo as well. She described how his relationship with their children became stronger and closer as a result of his continued participation in the sessions. According to her, Reynaldo had become a better father to their children through his involvement.

Reynaldo himself shared, *"Almost every father's meeting, you learn something. It's enjoyable. I gained a sense of purpose, a direction. Before, I wasn't sure if what I'm doing is right. Now, I have someone guiding me,*



*so I've been following that path and it turned out well for my family. Fatherhood is not just something simple; I learned that there are deeper responsibilities. I know now and fulfill the responsibilities needed for my children. This is one of the new realizations I had because of the sessions."*

He believes it's easy to promote the sessions among other fathers and is convinced that his improved actions will effectively convey the influence of the sessions in his life to the community. Reynaldo expressed, *"It's better when you don't have to speak; they'll just see it in your actions. Others can say,*

*'Oh, that's why his life is like that, that's why his family is doing well because he attends the sessions.' It's better when they see it."*



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Start-Up was a three-week comprehensive job readiness training workshop of the Career Development Program, where participants were taught both hard and soft skills to enhance their job-related knowledge and abilities. The program was carefully designed to meet the needs of the participants so that by the end of the workshop, their career knowledge and awareness had increased, aiding them in planning and achieving their own goals.

Initially, we focused on building students' self-awareness to boost their confidence and enable them to set clear career goals and steps. Then we looked into employability skills such as self-presentation, dressing for interviews, responding to common and uncommon questions, resume writing, email etiquette, and other tools essential for job applications. In the final week, the emphasis shifted towards retention and success in the workplace. Topics covered included advancement, diversity, work reports, stress management, and continued personal and professional growth. Additionally, students created portfolios and submitted progress reports as part of the course requirements.



The workshop had 25 participants, including 7 ALS high school students, 5 senior high school students, and 13 college students. Some participants joined the workshop to increase their career awareness and gain clarity in choosing their career paths, while others were preparing for job hunting or graduation. All 25 students diligently completed the three weeks and demonstrated significant improvement in their confidence and skills.

The impact of the workshop was evident weeks after its conclusion. One ALS participant gained confidence in job searching despite facing discrimination based on his educational background. Other ALS students, previously unsure about their post-ALS plans, decided to pursue the career paths they developed during the workshop and recognized the importance of further education in vocational courses. They have since enrolled in additional educational programs.

The 5 senior high school students, initially lacking confidence and with differing plans, became self-assured and were able to select courses aligned with their career goals. Among the college students, 5 have graduated, and 3 were hired within a week after completing the workshop.



## I got hired!

One of the newly hired individuals was Jine, just within a week after the workshop. She shared, *"I became more confident after the workshop because of all the skills, knowledge, and experience I gained. It was a great opportunity for me to prepare as I transition to the professional world. During the job interview, there were two other applicants with experience who also came from famous universities. This made me a bit nervous, but I stayed calm and did my best, applying all I learned from the workshop. I was so happy when I received the news that I was hired! I am now an HR officer!"*



# STUDENT-TO-STUDENT CAREER BOOTHS

Several workshops from the Career Development Program were held for every grade level in Young Focus, culminating in one big event – "Balangkas: My Future Career Exploration." We had amazing booths courtesy of our very own college students, who shared their knowledge with their younger co-learners. The career fields and courses prepared by over 70 college students included Socio-Political, Psychology, Health and Medicine, Education, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), Hospitality Industry, Business Management, Criminology, and Computer Technology.

Romy, one of the college students, shared, *"As someone who used to be confused about which path to choose, I understand the importance of information and guidance to make better decisions. I'm happy that I was able to impart knowledge to the next generation of Young Focus students, helping them learn more about and explore their chosen course and career."*

About 200 students participated, including our junior high, senior high, and Alternative Learning Systems students. Students from Bulacan and Cavite also joined the event!

Tristan from Cavite shared, *"I truly learned a lot from this event and I am amazed by our 'ate' and 'kuya' [older sister and brother] in college. I took an interest in Criminology and realized the importance of education and integrity to become a good law enforcer."*

The Career Development Program and the whole Student Support Program collaborated for this event, which was indeed a big success for everyone. The students are already excited about next year.

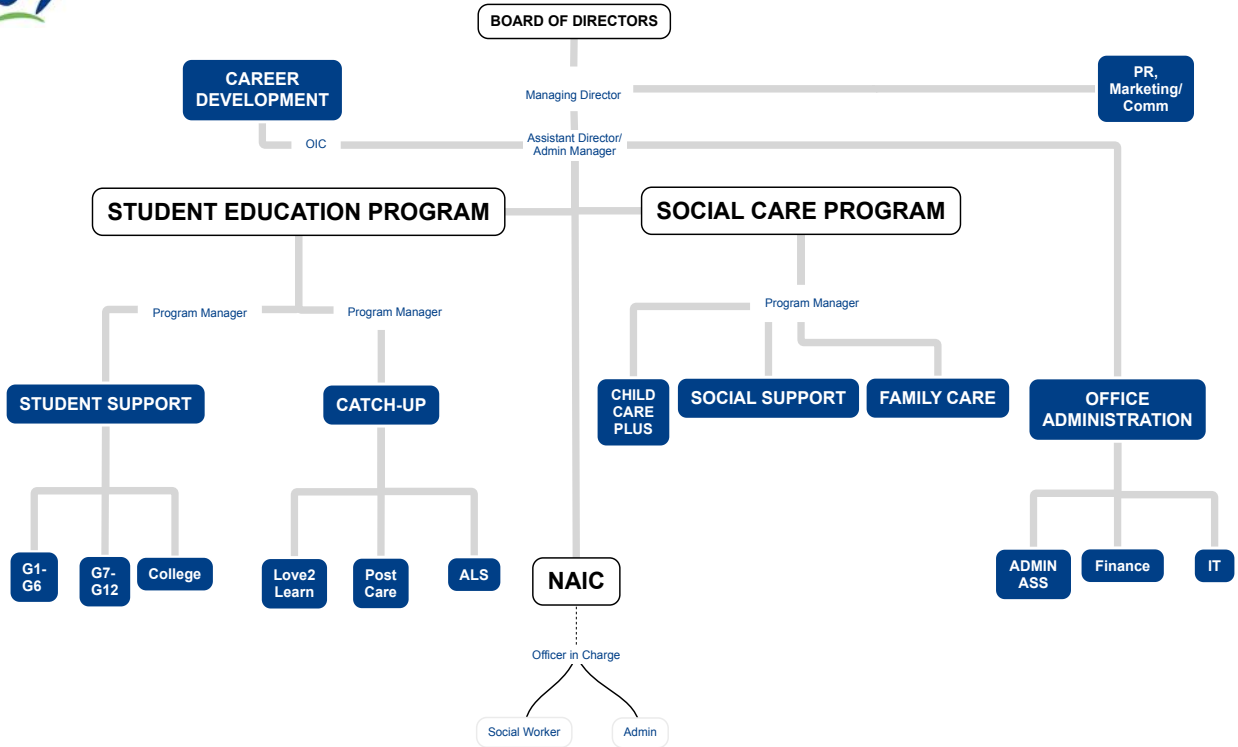




**CHRISTMAS 2023: ANOTHER YEAR OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF 1000 BUCKETS FULL OF GROCERIES!!!**



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2023



## OUR TEAM 2023





# BACKGROUND INFO

<b>Name &amp; address</b>	Young Focus for Education & Development Foundation, Inc. 284 Dayao Street, Balut, Tondo, 1013 Manila, Philippines
<b>Telephone</b>	+63 (2)8252-8848
<b>Email</b>	info@youngfocus.org
<b>Website</b>	www.youngfocus.org
<b>Facebook</b>	www.facebook.com/youngfocus.org
<b>Instagram</b>	https://www.instagram.com/youngfocusph/
<b>Bank account</b>	BPI (Bank of the Philippine Islands), Navotas PHP account no.: 4651-0036-58 USD account no.: 4654-0059-45 BIC/SWIFT code: BOIPHMM  BDO – Account no.: 004398012027 BIC/SWIFT code: BNORPHMM  SECURITY BANK – Account no.: 0000023205632 BIC/SWIFT code: SETCPHMM
<b>Legal Structures</b>	Charitable organization: registered & licensed as social welfare and development agency to implement Community-Based Programs and Services for Disadvantaged Children, their Families and Communities by the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development - Reg. no. SWD-SB-A- 001358-2015 + Accredited by the DSWD & PCNC
<b>Board members</b>	Michael Turvill: Chairman Marianna Yulo: Treasurer Elizabeth Yu: Corporate Secretary Sunil L Bharwani: Board Member Iris Gokeelao : Board Member Martin Fernando: Board Member
<b>Management</b>	Paul van Wijgerden: Managing Director Karen Dechavez: Assistant Director/ Admin Manager Cindy Villeneuve: Student Support Program Manager Angelo Elsisura: Catch-UP Manager Rameses Banzuela: Career Development Development OIC Marian Terredaño: Naic, Cavite satellite OIC



**TACKLE POVERTY  
SUPPORT EDUCATION**