



BETHLEHEM COMMUNITIES AUSTRALIA (BCA)

- changing the world one community at a time

Newsletter 2 - March 2006

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BCA's vision is for every child to have a decent education; for every family, a decent place to live; and for every community, a better way of life. www.bethlehemcommunities.org

S. Pio Village Ground Breaking Ceremony – Jan 2006

On Sunday, 8 January 2006, following a special Mass, a Ground Breaking Ceremony took place at San Pio Village site symbolizing the official start to the program. Among those taking part were BCA's Board Members: Patron Fr John Iacono, Ron Natoli, Ros Bradley with Maria Natoli, Mayor Socrates Fernandez, Congressman Eddie Gullas, Habitat CEO Bert Jugo, local priest Fr Joe Tajanlangit and local Baringay Captain Charles Basiliote.

The traditional ceremony concluded with the burial of a time capsule launching the official start to the building program. Approximately 360 family homes will be built on 3.3 hectares of land named after the inspirational Padre Pio. At the mass, all partners were thanked by BCA Chairman, Ron Natoli; it was acknowledged by many present that many hurdles had been crossed to reach this stage. BCA Patron, John Iacono added that the 'the majority of the home beneficiaries (HOB) will be those who are currently living a hand-to-mouth existence on rubbish tips or in basic shanty areas'. House building is due to commence in March/April with a pilot batch of 10 families.

Whilst in Cebu, BCA held other successful meetings with their partners including the Overall Program Manager, Marge Matheu, who has made a significant contribution since starting work in September. Other meetings were held with:

- Newscoop (NC) staff and the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) with Marissa Fernan, head of NC
- The Mayor of Talisay: Socrates Fernandez who once again publicly endorsed the program.
- Community Development Staff to clarify important issues on orientation with the Home Beneficiaries.
- Habitat to decide house construction materials and the house designs.
- the Board of the Bethlehem Day Care Centre Foundation Inc (BDCCFI) to clarify overseas funding arrangements. BCA Board Members Ron Natoli and Ros Bradley were nominated to become BDCCFI Board members.
- The ever patient Jimmy Go who is coordinating the essential Site Development work including the surveying.



Lowering the time capsule at the Ground Breaking Ceremony



Marissa Fernan, CEO of Newscoop, Ron Natoli and Fr John Iacono signing the joint MOU.



Meeting with BCA's partners at the Mayor of Talisay's office

STOP PRESS!

Our thoughts, hearts and prayers are with the villagers of Guinsaugon, South Leyte as they come to terms with the terrible landslide tragedy and cope with the aftermath. BCA is looking into the best way to respond.

**Marge Matheu –
Her special message:**



Marge Matheu (r), S. Pio Program Manager and Meredith Heruela, Marge's assistant at the Ground Breaking Ceremony (note the mango trees behind!)

'The Ceremony was a great success...As well as the many dignitaries, many prospective house beneficiaries also witnessed this special occasion. Now 10 prospective Home Owner Partners (pHOP) have been identified and briefed; they will choose their house models guided by their affordability and willingness to pay; a model house is to be built in late Feb for the pHOP to better understand the housing unit.

As well pHOPs are undergoing training in building their houses) and will soon join the seminar on cooperativism; while Project development workers are busy preparing for their appropriate livelihood.

With the scheduled construction of the first batch of housing units set at the end of April, it hopes to be at full speed by the second quarter of the year....So, dear readers, fasten your seat belts and enjoy your flight to the Philippines....to San Pio Village...' Marge is also visiting Dulangan in Mindanao on behalf of BCA and we will feature this village and their developments soon.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- **TRIVIA NIGHT (Run by Communities for Communities in aid of S. Pio)**
Friday April 8th,
Details: Lance Brooks 9743 1069
- **BOWLING FOR BETHLEHEM!**
Sat 6th May 2006 at 6.30pm, TOP RYDE
Details: Ghia 0409 998 162

**News from Lance Brooks, President
Communities for Communities (C4C)**

'A great start to the year- a wonderful golf day in Jan raised \$50,000 for the S. Pio Village. Thank you to all 'Bethlehem' supporters. C4C has now raised \$148,000 of the \$200,000 required for the 320 S. Pio houses. We are aiming to reach the final target by Dec 2006. In June , a group will go to Cebu to help build houses with our partners Habitat so if you are interested in a wonderful, life- changing week PLEASE join us'.*
Enq: Lance 9743 1069

* Newscoop members are using their Coop funds to build their 40 houses, bringing the total houses to be built at S. Pio to 360.

Bethlehem Communities Australia News

Invitation to become a BCA Member – We need YOU!

To accelerate the process of becoming a tax deductible organization we need to demonstrate to the Australian Government that we have community support. We would love you to become a member – please read the enclosed invitation from our CEO, Ron Natoli with more details. It costs only \$2 and You Can Make A Difference Today! Call us for any queries.

NEW BCA Board member.

Joe El-Khoury is our new Board Member. Joe has wide experience in the Philippines and is an award winning teacher at St Aloysius School in Sydney.

BCA's new website –www.bethlehemcommunities.org

BCA's website is now up and running! You can find full details of our projects, our ethos plus make a donation! Visit it now!

HERE IS MY GIFT TO HELP BCA AND ITS WORK:

\$_____

I wish to donate to:

- S.Pio Village and the Dulangan goat rearing project
 All donations will be receipted. Please tick if you require a **tax deductibility** receipt – issued through The Salesians.

Payment method:

- Cheque/Money order made out to
Bethlehem Communities Australia
 Debit my credit card: (please circle):
Bankcard, Visa/Master Card/ Visa

Card Number: _____

Expiry date: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Please send me:

- Details on making a monthly pledge to BCA
 More details on the fundraising events

My details:

First name: _____

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb/ Town: _____ State: _____ PC _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

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