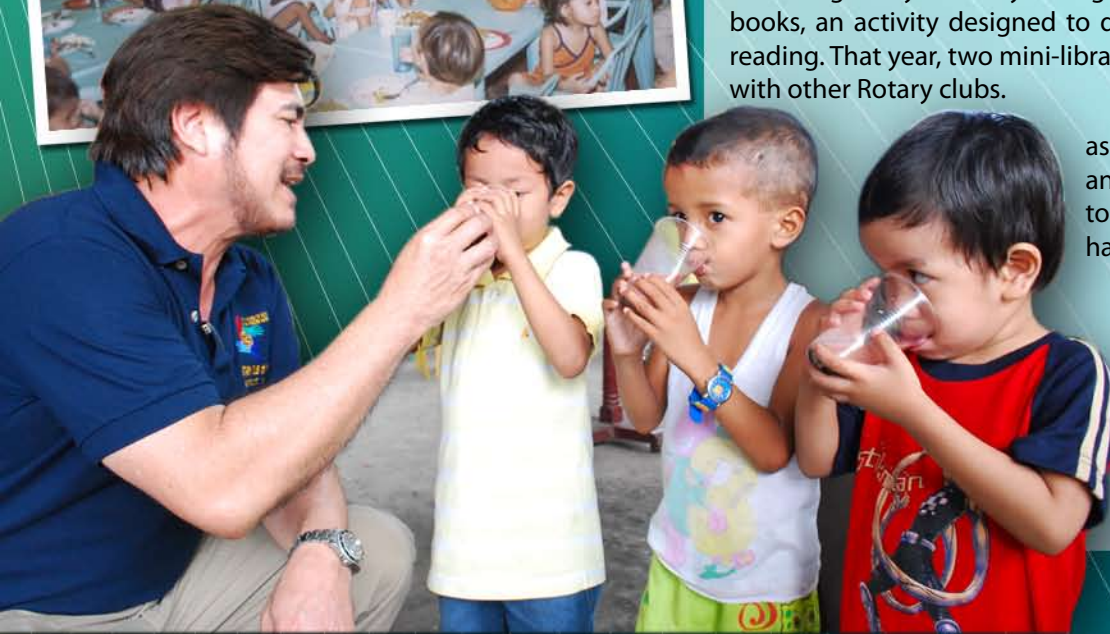


# Supplemental Feeding Program

*-Nourishing Children's Bodies for Nourished Minds*



Providing good nutrition for young children, especially those belonging to financially challenged families, has been a concern of the Rotary Club of Makati since RY 1972-1973 when, as Club president, PRID Paing Hechanova led in setting up feeding centers in all the "barrios" (now called "barangays") in Makati. The program was carried on, through RY 1978-1979, during the term of PP Bill Beck, when the project was given the name, "Mothercraft Project," because it was expanded to include the education of mothers on nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, health, family planning, and related issues. It was continued until RY 1992-1993 during the term of PP Jun Braun and discontinued thereafter. Twenty years after its birth, it was revived and has become one of the pillars of the Club's community development initiative.

In RY 2003-2004, all Rotary Clubs throughout the world were enjoined to initiate a special project to celebrate Rotary International's centenary the following year. The Club chose Gawad Kalinga as its centennial project, incorporating into it a component on nutrition—the supplemental feeding program for malnourished children. The feeding program was also in response to RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe's challenge to Rotary Clubs to contribute to the global effort to end, or at least alleviate, poverty.

The revived feeding program began with 30 pre-school children in Kaingin, Paranaque City, on the other side of the perimeter fence of NAIA 1, where a community of informal settlers had taken up residence. This was the Club's first Gawad Kalinga site, and the first feeding class was among the projects visited by Pres Jonathan Majiyagbe during his stop in Manila in January 2004; he was accompanied by PRID Paing Hechanova and then Pres. Rene Benitez.

In 2006-2007, the project, under chairman Ai-Ai Galvez, was expanded to include mental feeding. It partnered with Bagong Kulturang Pinoy for story-telling sessions that introduced children to books, an activity designed to develop in them an abiding love for reading. That year, two mini-libraries were inaugurated in partnership with other Rotary clubs.

PP Freddie Borromeo took over as project chairman in RY 2007-2008 and has since advocated for it enough to push it through, year after year. He has, in fact, served as chairman of the project since, and has expanded and enriched it beyond its original mission.

His objective goes beyond feeding malnourished children; he wants to help the families and communities to which the children belong, to improve



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not only their nutritional situation but also their lives. That is why the nutrition program encompasses a mothers' class where the children's mothers undergo seminars on the basics of personal hygiene, community sanitation, nutrition, family planning and responsible parenting, as well as meal planning, budgeting, food preparation, food handling and related topics.

PP Freddie, always with Ann Jojo by his side, has seen it fit to give selected students second-hand bicycles from the Bicycles for Life Project chaired by Hiro Oba, to save them transportation money to and from school; books from the Books Across the Seas Project chaired by Jay Savage; and Christmas presents through the Rotary Anns' Last Angel gift-giving program. The project also conducted relief operations in project sites affected by Typhoon Ondoy and built a water tank for a new community in Tanay, Rizal, where families displaced by Ondoy were resettled.

To date, the project has fed 2,100 children in 69 modules, including an on-going one of 30 children at the Marcela Agoncillo Elementary School in Binondo, Manila.

The supplemental feeding program provides each child with one hot meal and a glass of milk every day, usually at lunchtime, Mondays through Fridays, for 156 days. The meal provides around 30 percent of the recommended energy and nutrient intake for young children. For smoother management, each module is limited to 30 children. The mothers plan the menus in advance, take turns in buying ingredients and preparing the food, making sure that the meal is nutritious. The milk is provided, free, by long-time corporate sponsor, Mead Johnson Nutritionals.

The feeding program is implemented in either of two ways—one, independently, by itself; or two, in tandem with the Anti-TB project, the latter an acknowledgment of the fact that TB treatment needs a nutrition component to make it tick. PP Freddie shares that at one point, it was noted that despite all the effort and expense put into the TB eradication program (which was revived in RY 2001-2002), the Club was not getting the expected results. It soon became clear that, as PP Freddie put it, "TB is the sister of malnutrition" and medication alone, without proper nutrition, cannot arrest the disease. With this valuable learning, the Club has made supplemental feeding a companion activity to TB treatment.

The project is jointly undertaken with Kabisig ng Kalahi, a non-government organization dedicated to improving the nutritional status of children; Department of Social Welfare; Department of Education; the concerned local government unit; and sometimes, Rotary Clubs and private organizations like the Zobel Foundation.