

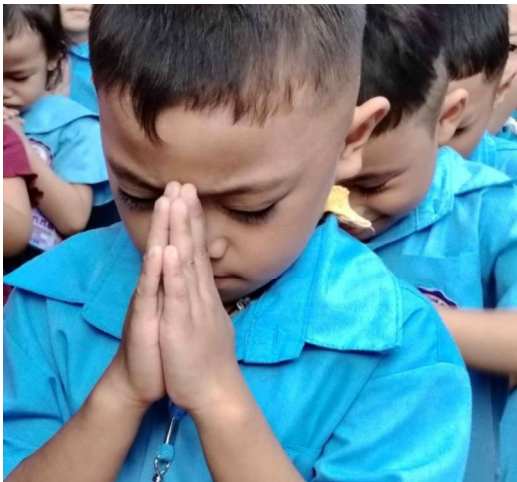
# NEWSLETTER

**Spring Edition 2026**

**Issue 76**

***50th Anniversary***

## **HOPE, EDUCATION AND CARE FOR CHILDREN IN MANILA**



For over 50 years, Children of the Dump has been helping children and families living in some of the most difficult communities in Manila.

Through education, practical support and care, children are being given the chance to learn, grow and look towards a brighter future.

From the youngest children at Cashew Tree School, to students supported through Grapevine and young people cared for at Mango Tree House, the heart of the work remains the same: helping every child feel valued, supported and full of possibility.

Life for many families remains extremely hard, with insecure work, rising costs and limited opportunities placing real pressure on parents and children. Yet, through the dedication of the ASCF team in Manila and the kindness of supporters in the UK, lives continue to be changed.

Inside this edition, you'll find updates from Kay Mackay, stories from Manila, an ASCF staff profile, news about the Children's Celebration and Wellbeing Fund, our 50/50 Lottery update, upcoming events and ways you can continue to support the work.

Thank you for standing with us and helping bring hope, education and care to children in Manila.

## A MESSAGE FROM CHARITY CHAIR KAY MACKAY

Our **50th anniversary** year has now come to a close, and what a special year it has been. I hope many of you were able to join us for some of the celebrations along the way.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks once again to St Paul's and High Cross Churches in Camberley, and to Ascension Church in Peacehaven, for so generously hosting our Thanksgiving services. These were wonderful occasions of gratitude and reflection; with the children and families we support in Manila very much at the heart of everything.

One of the new initiatives launched to mark our 50th year was the 50:50 Lottery, and it has been a real success. There have been many winners throughout the year — including, rather wonderfully, my own mum, who turns 95 this month and won the April draw!



Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far. Your support, whether through the lottery, donations, sponsorship, prayer or encouragement, continues to make a real and lasting difference to the children in Manila.

***You can find details of how to join the 50:50 Lottery on page 12.***

Later in this newsletter, you will have the opportunity to read biographies of some of our dedicated team in Manila. They are the people who walk alongside the children and families every day, and we are deeply grateful for all they do.



I would also like to pay special tribute to **Maryane Escarcha**, who has served ASCF faithfully as a Senior Social Worker for more than 12 years. During that time, she has shown extraordinary dedication to the children and families in our care. Fred and I also remember with great gratitude the many hours Maryane spent looking after us during our visits to families supported by the charity.

Maryane has given so much of herself to this work, and she leaves with our heartfelt thanks and very best wishes as she begins a new chapter in her career.

## ***WE ARE NOT GETTING BIGGER OR SMALLER — WE ARE GETTING STRONGER***

The UK Board of Trustees has agreed a three-year financial plan with our colleagues in Manila. This plan will use designated reserves carefully to provide a safety net, while giving ASCF time to strengthen its own fundraising and build a more sustainable future.

For many years, support from the UK has played a vital role in funding the work in Manila. However, relying on the UK as the main source of funding is not sustainable in the long term, especially at a time when costs are rising and charities everywhere are finding it harder to maintain income. This has been an important part of ASCF's strategic planning.

Over the past year, the ASCF Board in Manila has grown into a stronger and more united team. They are now leading the organisation with professionalism, purpose and a clear commitment to the children and families they serve.

As part of this, the Board has completed a 45-day strategic planning process, resulting in ASCF's first formal Three-Year Strategic Plan for 2026–2029. This was not simply a desk-based exercise. It was an evidence-based process, shaped by community research, staff and stakeholder input, and careful reflection on the needs of children and families.

The planning included a Community Situational Analysis, internal consultations and strategic workshops. Evidence was gathered through focus group discussions with parents and young people, interviews with community stakeholders, and household surveys involving both families already supported by ASCF and families outside the programmes. This gave valuable insight into current community conditions, emerging risks for children, and priorities for strengthening the work in the years ahead.

The process reaffirmed ASCF's mission, rooted in faith and community partnership, and highlighted several important findings:

- Poverty remains a daily challenge for many families in the communities ASCF serves.
- Education continues to be seen as one of the most important routes out of poverty.
- Young people are facing growing risks, including exposure to drugs, bullying and teenage pregnancy.

## ***CURRENT CHALLENGES AND HOPE***

- Trust in ASCF's programmes remains high, with strong satisfaction from the community.
- Organisational systems need to be strengthened to support accountability, good decision-making and the measuring of impact.
- ASCF needs to reduce the risk of relying too heavily on one main source of funding.

In response, ASCF's priorities for the next three years will focus on long-term sustainability, stronger programmes and deeper impact. These priorities include:

- Strengthening programme quality, child protection and high-impact services.
- Developing a broader and more sustainable fundraising base.
- Improving Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, so decisions are based on clear evidence.
- Strengthening governance, leadership accountability and Board oversight. Improving operational systems, staff capacity and organisational efficiency.

This is an important and encouraging step forward. It means both partners — ASCF in Manila and Children of the Dump in the UK — are better placed to serve children and families well. It also allows us in the UK to focus clearly on our core role: raising funds, building support and standing alongside the work in Manila.

Most importantly, donors can be confident that their generous gifts are being used carefully, wisely and effectively for the benefit of every child.

### **Did you know?**

Many children supported by ASCF come from families living on very limited and uncertain incomes. Education, food support, school materials and social work support all help give them a safer, more stable future.



## **NO CHILD LEFT OUT.**



For many years, some of our sponsors have kindly given an extra birthday or Christmas gift for their sponsored child. These gifts have always been given with great love and generosity, and we are truly grateful.

After talking with our team in Manila, we are making a small but important change.

Instead of individual cash gifts for birthdays and Christmas, we are introducing a shared **Children's Celebration and Wellbeing Fund**.

Rather than sending individual birthday and Christmas gift reminders throughout the year, we plan to invite supporters to give to this fund twice a year. This will usually be once ahead of Christmas, and once during the year to help with birthdays, school-related needs, wellbeing items and other practical support identified by ASCF.

Giving will always be optional. The aim is not to place extra pressure on supporters, but to provide a simple and fair way for those who wish to give a little extra.

The fund will help ASCF make sure that all Mango and Grapevine children can be included in birthdays, Christmas and other special moments - whether or not they have a sponsor, and whether or not their sponsor is able to give extra.

It may be used for simple celebrations, shared food, school supplies, hygiene items, educational materials, wellbeing support, or other practical help that the team in Manila know is needed.

We know this is a change, and we understand that some sponsors may feel sad not to give directly to their sponsored child in the same way. This new approach helps us make sure that no child is left out, and that gifts are used fairly, carefully and in ways that truly support the children.

*Please do continue to mark special occasions for your sponsored child with a video message, card or letter. We know how much these personal messages are treasured by the children, and they remain a very meaningful part of sponsorship.*

**Thank you for helping us make sure every child is included.**

## **MEET THE TEAM: ROCHELLE FROM ASCF**

My name is Rochelle, and I am a Kindergarten Teacher who is passionate about nurturing young hearts and minds. Teaching at this level is both a joy and a responsibility, as I have the privilege of guiding children during the very beginning of their learning journey.

### **What my Role Involves**

My role involves creating a caring and engaging classroom where children feel safe, valued, and excited to learn. I teach basic academic skills such as letters, numbers, and early reading, while also helping children develop important values, good manners, and positive social skills. I prepare fun and meaningful classroom activities that encourage curiosity, creativity, and cooperation. Working closely with parents is also an important part of my role, as I believe that supporting a child's growth is a partnership between home and school.

### **What I enjoy most**

What I enjoy most about teaching kindergarten is watching my students grow in confidence and independence each day. Seeing their smiles, hearing their laughter, and witnessing their excitement when they learn something new truly warms my heart. Even the smallest achievements, writing their name, sharing with a friend, or speaking up in class, feel like big victories. I believe every child is special in their own way, and I love helping them discover their strengths through patience, encouragement, and gentle guidance.

### **One Thing I Would Like UK Supporters to Know**

I would like UK supporters to know that their kindness and generosity make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families. Their support helps create better learning opportunities and brings hope to the community. As a teacher, I am deeply grateful for every effort made to support children's education and well-being.



**“Every child deserves love, guidance, and the opportunity to shine.”**

## ***A STORY OF HOPE: MA. YSOBELLE***



Ma. Ysobelle M, aged 22, from Las Piñas City, is one of the inspiring young people supported through the Grapevine Program under ASCF. She joined the program when she was still in Grade 2, beginning a journey that would make a lasting difference to her life and future.

Ysobelle grew up in a family facing financial difficulties, which made continuing her education a real challenge. Despite this, she remained hopeful, determined and committed to her studies. Being accepted into the ASCF scholarship program, after passing a careful screening process, was a great blessing for both Ysobelle and her family.

With the continued support of ASCF, Ysobelle was able to progress through school and college. On 4 May 2025, she proudly graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management. She described her college years as a roller coaster, with many challenges along the way, particularly during her on-the-job training and academic requirements. Through it all, she remained focused, resilient and determined to succeed.

Ysobelle is a faith-filled young woman with a positive outlook on life. Her guiding principle, “Let go and let God,” helped her stay grounded, manage her worries and keep moving forward, even during difficult times.

Today, Ysobelle is building her future with confidence. After two months of job searching, she was hired as a Kitchen Specialist at Coco Ichibanya, Alabang Branch. She hopes to continue developing her skills, growing in her chosen field and helping create a better future for herself and her family.

Ysobelle is deeply grateful for the support she received from ASCF, not only financially but also emotionally and morally. She is especially thankful to Aunty Fiona, Kuya Tom and Ate Charlotte for their letters, visits and encouragement over the years. Their kindness helped her grow from a young girl uncertain about the future into a responsible, determined and hopeful young woman ready to pursue her dreams.



## ***SMALL CHILDREN, BIG BEGINNINGS***

Cashew currently supports a total of **120 children** across its program areas.

### **Program Sites**

The children are supported across three community sites:

- ◆ **Payatas:** 20 children
- ◆ **Sitio Pintor:** 40 children
- ◆ **Kasiglahan:** 60 children

Each site reflects Cashew’s commitment to reaching children in different communities who benefit from early education and care.

### **Why Early Education Matters**

The early years of a child’s life are incredibly important. This is when they begin to develop confidence, communication skills, creativity, and positive behaviour.

Through storytelling, songs, art, and play, children are encouraged to explore, express themselves, and enjoy learning. These simple experiences help prepare them for school and for life.

### **Teacher Comment:**

“As a Kindergarten Teacher, “It’s truly rewarding to see children grow more confident and independent each day. At first, some are shy, but over time they open up, make friends, and express themselves more freely. Seeing even the smallest progress brings so much joy and keeps me motivated to continue teaching.”



## ***HELPING CHILDREN STAY IN EDUCATION***



### **How Grapevine Support Works**

The Grapevine Program helps children stay in school while living with their families. It supports everyday needs like school fees, uniforms, supplies, and transportation.

Each child is also supported by a social worker who monitors their progress and helps address any challenges that may affect their education or well-being. This way, financial struggles don't stop children from learning.

### **Saturday School and Development Activities**

Learning continues beyond the weekday classroom. Grapevine offers Saturday sessions filled with activities like reading, math support, creative projects, and values formation.

These sessions give children a safe, encouraging environment where they can grow in confidence, build friendships, and stay motivated in school.

### **Why Family-Based Support Is Important**

Keeping children with their families helps them feel secure, connected, and supported. It preserves relationships, culture, and a sense of normal life.

By strengthening families instead of separating them, Grapevine helps create long-term stability and better outcomes for children, both in school and at home.

## Mango Tree House: Care, Safety and New Beginnings



The Mango Program was created to be more than just a shelter. It's a safe and caring home for children and young people who can't stay with their families for now.

Here, children find stability, routine, and a real sense of belonging. Our caregivers live closely with them, building trusting relationships so that each young person feels respected, protected, and emotionally safe, sometimes for the very first time.

### **Education and Emotional Support**

Education is an important part of life in Mango. Children attend school, receive extra support through tutorials, and learn practical life skills to help them prepare for the future.

But learning isn't only about academics. We also place strong emphasis on emotional care. Through counselling, mentorship, and daily support, children are gently guided to process their experiences, rebuild confidence, and develop healthy ways of coping.

### **Family Reintegration Where Appropriate**

Whenever it is safe and possible, we work towards reuniting children with their families. This process is done carefully and with support, never rushed.

Families are prepared, challenges are addressed, and follow-up support is provided. Our goal is to make sure that when a child returns home, it is in a safe and stable environment that supports their long-term well-being.

### **Changes in the Philippines Around Residential Care**

Across the Philippines, there has been a growing shift toward family- and community-based care. This is based on the understanding that children grow best in family environments.

Because of this, efforts now focus on preventing unnecessary separation, supporting families, and reintegrating children wherever possible.

### **Why Mango Still Matters**

Even with these changes, Mango continues to play an important role. Some children still need temporary care due to difficult situations such as abuse or crisis.

Mango provides that safe space, while still supporting the bigger goal of strengthening families and communities.

# Thank You for the Difference You Are Making

**To all our supporters, thank you.**

Your kindness, generosity and faithfulness continue to make a real difference to children and families in Manila. Whether you sponsor a child, give regularly, support an appeal, join the 50/50 Lottery, volunteer your time, organise an event, pray for the work, or simply share our news with others, you are helping to change lives.



Because of your support, children are able to go to school, receive care and encouragement, and grow up knowing that people believe in them. Families facing hardship are not left to struggle alone. The ASCF team in Manila can continue walking alongside children with patience, love and practical help.

Your support helps provide education, school materials, social work support, food, celebrations, care and opportunities that many children would otherwise miss. It helps children feel seen, valued and remembered.

Every gift matters. A regular donation helps us plan with confidence. A one-off gift can meet a practical need. Sponsorship gives a child stability and encouragement. A coffee morning, church collection or shared newsletter can open the door to new support.

Behind every donation is a child who is given hope, a family who feels supported, and a dedicated team able to keep going.

We know that many of you have stood with Children of the Dump for years, while others have joined us more recently. However you are involved, please know that your support is deeply valued and never taken for granted.



Thank you for believing that every child deserves the chance to learn, grow and be cared for. You are part of their story, and we are truly grateful.

## COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT 50/50 LOTTERY WINNER?



**Congratulations to Betty, one of our recent 50/50 Lottery winners.**

Our 50/50 Charity Lottery has now been running for several months, and we are very grateful to everyone who has joined so far.

We currently have **33 players**, and together they have already raised **£1,710** for Children of the Dump. This is a wonderful help towards our work with children and families in Manila.

The lottery is simple. Entry costs **£5 per ticket per month**, and players may have more than one ticket. Each month, the total pot is split equally: **50% goes to one lucky winner, and 50% supports the charity's work.**

We were delighted that one of our recent winners was **Betty**, who won **£77.50**. Congratulations Betty, and thank you to everyone who takes part each month.

The draw takes place on the **last Thursday of each month**. To be included in that month's draw, payment must be received before the **15th of the month**.

This is an easy and enjoyable way to support Cashew Tree School, Grapevine and Mango Tree House, while also having the chance to win a cash prize.

The lottery is open to **GB residents aged 18 and over**.

The more people who take part, the bigger the monthly prize pot becomes — and the more support we can give to children in Manila.

To join, please email:

[50-50lottery@childrenofthedump.org.uk](mailto:50-50lottery@childrenofthedump.org.uk)

## Could You Help Shape the Future of Children of the Dump?

**TRUSTEES  
WANTED!**

Children of the Dump has been supporting children and families in Manila for over 50 years. As we look ahead, we want to make sure the charity remains strong, well-governed and able to respond wisely to the needs of the communities we serve.

To help us do this, we are looking to welcome new trustees to join our UK Board.

Trustees play an important role in guiding the charity, making key decisions, supporting good governance and helping plan for the future. You do not need to be an expert in everything, and you do not need to have been a trustee before. What matters most is a commitment to the charity's purpose, a willingness to work as part of a team, and a desire to help children access education, care and opportunity.

We would particularly welcome people with experience or interest in finance, fundraising, safeguarding, legal matters, human resources, IT, communications, marketing, church links, community engagement or charity governance.

Small charities need people with different skills, backgrounds and life experience. You may have professional knowledge, practical experience, church or community connections, or simply a heart for helping vulnerable children and families.

**We are looking for people with wisdom, compassion and practical skills to help guide the charity into its next chapter.**

Becoming a trustee is a meaningful way to support the work from the UK and help shape decisions that directly affect children and families in Manila.

For an informal chat, please contact John at the Children of the Dump office:

**Email:** [office@childrenofthedump.org.uk](mailto:office@childrenofthedump.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0300 102 4509

## FUNDRAISING FORUM



**“Join our friendly monthly Fundraising Forum and help us find new ways to support children and families in Manila.”**

We hold a Charity Fundraising Forum on the last Thursday of every month. The forum is held on Zoom and lasts for one hour. It is a friendly and informal space where supporters can come together to share ideas, discuss possible fundraising activities, and think creatively about how we can raise much-needed funds for Children of the Dump.

We are always looking for new ways to involve people and would warmly welcome ideas and participation from any supporters who would like to get involved. You do not need to have any fundraising experience — just a willingness to share your thoughts, listen to others, and be part of the conversation.

Every idea is valued, whether it is a large event, a small local activity, a personal challenge, a workplace fundraiser, or a new way of encouraging others to support the charity. Sometimes the simplest ideas can make a real difference.

If you would like to join the Fundraising Forum, please email John at [office@childrenofthedump.org.uk](mailto:office@childrenofthedump.org.uk)

You will be made to feel very welcome, and we would be delighted to have you with us.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every gift, every prayer, every event and every shared newsletter helps Children of the Dump continue supporting children and families in Manila.

There are many simple ways to get involved, and each one makes a real difference.



You could **sponsor a child** and help provide regular support for their education, care and development. Sponsorship gives children encouragement, stability and the chance to keep learning.

You could also **make a regular donation**, helping us plan ahead and respond to the needs of the children across Cashew, Grapevine and Mango.

Our **50/50 Charity Lottery** is another easy way to support the work. Entry is £5 per ticket per month, with 50% of the monthly pot going to one winner and 50% supporting the charity's work.

You may also wish to give to the **Children's Celebration and Wellbeing Fund**, which helps children feel remembered and included through shared celebrations, food, school items, hygiene support and other practical care.

There are also many ways to help without giving monthly. You could invite us to speak at your church, group or workplace, organise a coffee morning, hold a small fundraiser, leave a gift in your will, or simply pass this newsletter on to someone who may be interested.

**£5 per month** — enter the 50/50 lottery

**£20 per month** — helps support Cashew early years education

**£30 per month** — helps sponsor a Grapevine student

**One-off gifts** — help with food, school needs and family support

However you choose to help, thank you. Your support helps children access education, care and hope for the future.

To find out more, please contact the Children of the Dump office:

**Email:** [office@childrenofthedump.org.uk](mailto:office@childrenofthedump.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0300 102 4509

## ***THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH US***

As we close this newsletter, we want to say a heartfelt thank you to every supporter of Children of the Dump.

Whether you sponsor a child, give regularly, support our appeals, take part in the 50/50 Lottery, volunteer your time, pray for the work, organise events, share our news, or simply encourage others to find out more — you are part of this story.

Your kindness helps children and families in Manila access education, care, practical support and hope for the future. It also gives great encouragement to the ASCF team, who work so faithfully alongside the communities they serve.

We know that many of you have stood with the charity for many years. Others have joined more recently. Every gift and every act of support matters, and we are deeply grateful.

Thank you for believing that every child deserves the chance to learn, grow and be cared for.

**With our warmest thanks,**

**UK and ASCF Trustees, Staff and Children.**

**“Let the little children come to me.” — Mark 10:14**

## ***CONTACT US AT CHILDREN OF THE DUMP***

High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3SY

Tel: 0300 102 4509

*'Calling an 0300 number is charged at the same rate as calling a standard landline'*

Website: [www.childrenofthedump.org.uk](http://www.childrenofthedump.org.uk)

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