

# Chalice Christmas Fund

Impact Report 2021



Throughout the world, children eagerly anticipated Christmas 2021, when they could reunite with friends and community after months of long lockdowns. Through your generosity, their Christmas dreams were not disappointed.

We are delighted to share a few of our favourite stories from this Christmas, which radiate with the charity, solidarity and hopeful spirits of the children and families we serve.

## Robin's gift is spreading Christmas joy

Children worldwide count down to Christmas each year, excited for gatherings at school and in the church. Meanwhile, sponsored children look forward to Chalice site celebrations, too. The pandemic has cancelled so many gatherings and festivities in the past two years, the prospect of a Christmas with fewer restrictions was especially exciting for the children in our Goa sponsor site in India.

Robin was among these eager children. Like many other families in his region, Robin's father lost his job due to the COVID shutdown measures. But that wasn't going to stop them from sharing their Christmas joy with Robin's best friends. They sang Christmas carols together, ate his mother's homemade treats, and drank tea. The gift of the celebration he gave his friends was

far more valuable than anything they could have bought!

Robin gathered with other Catholics in his community in a park to sing carols outside and admire a beautiful creche.

The Goa sponsor site staff had exciting news for the families of sponsored children like Robin. Thanks to the generosity of everyone who gave to Chalice's Christmas fund, each family was going to get a special gift of money in their sponsorship accounts.

*"Robin and his family were overwhelmed with joy when they received the Christmas fund," writes the Goa site staff.*

"With that Christmas money, his parents were able to buy new shoes for him and a dress for his sister."

"His mother made homemade sweets and distributed them among their neighbors. She also packed festive food for the vulnerable families as they wanted to spread the Christmas joy with others."

*"I was able to share a little joy with them."*

Robin, sponsored child



Robin expressed gratitude towards the Chalice sponsorship program saying, "I am so lucky to have this sponsorship and get special Christmas gifts from my sponsor parents, just because of them I could celebrate this Christmas season with other children who are less fortunate than me and I was able to share a little joy with them."

## Elves wear yellow in Tondo

Instead of the more traditional green and red, the colour of Christmas at our Tondo site this year is yellow! The “Yellow Team” is a group of parents of sponsored children, each of whom represent one of eleven Chalice family circles. Since June of 2019, the Yellow Team has done outreach to families in need in their neighbourhoods of urban Manila.

Every quarter, when they received their sponsorship funds, the families went for their groceries – and always set aside a few items. They then pooled these extra items into food hampers or hygiene kits to distribute them to their neighbours. In some quarters they also included cooked food.

*“Hundreds of families had already benefited from the outreach projects of the Yellow Team,” recall the site staff.*

As early as August 2021, the Yellow Team met to plan for the forthcoming Christmas celebration. They thought of holding a Christmas party and gift-giving celebration for non-sponsored children. The eleven family circles supported their idea. Thanks to everyone who gave to Chalice’s Christmas fund, they had a small budget to carry out their generous plans.

Everybody got to work. They prepared gift packs containing powdered milk, hot chocolate powder, biscuits, noodles, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry bars, detergent powder, bath soap, face masks, sugar, and some candies.

They invited 50 non-sponsored children to the party.

“The youth serenaded the guests with Christmas Carols,” describes the site staff. “There were games and everyone received toys for themselves and a grocery pack for the family...”

*The smile on each child’s face was priceless and worth all the sacrifices that the Yellow Team has done for the success of the project.”*

Their Christmastime success has revitalized the Yellow Team and their activities since the easing of pandemic restrictions.

“[They] realized that they should continue sharing happiness,” says the site staff, “and rendering support to others because doing such a thing inspires them and continuously ignite their passion to empathize and be compassionate to their fellows especially those who need support.”

“ They realized that they should continue sharing happiness.”

Tondo sponsor site staff



## The Christmas magic of Navilandia lives on

Every year, our Yapacani sponsor site in rural Bolivia creates *Navilandia*, the magical land of Christmas that every sponsored child and their siblings get to discover. This year, Navilandia went on the road to a community outside of the city, as a coronavirus precaution.

The children needed Navilandia as a healing balm for their hearts this year. While thankfully few children were affected by the virus, many had seen their parents, grandparents and teachers fall ill or pass away. The parents in the Chalice family circles and the sponsor site staff knew that Navilandia had to be a place where the children could feel safe, relax, and renew their hope.



On December 16, 65 sponsored children, 90 non-sponsored children and 55 parents, teachers and site staff gathered in the land of Christmas. They played games planned by the site staff and sang songs, with actions of course!

The date was also special because it marked the beginning of the Novena to Christmas day, which they prayed together. They also read together from the Gospel of John and shared reflections on its hopeful message.

*“The purpose of [the reading was] transforming the hearts of all those present through the gospel and awaiting with joy the coming of the Child Jesus,” writes the site staff.*

“We raised our prayers to the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph.”

The celebration finished with hot chocolate and fritters made with love by one of the family circles. Noemi, a Chalice field worker, describes the power of Christmas joy:

*“We saw that happiness on their faces and for us as a team there is no greater joy than being able to bring about a smile from a child, since their smiles reflect the purity of God.”*



*“The children were very excited and happy to receive a long-awaited little Christmas gift.”*

Noemi, Chalice field worker

## Jubilations fill the air

Starehe Girls' Centre is a beacon of hope to bright female students who hail from vulnerable family backgrounds. There are students from each of Kenya's 47 counties! At Starehe, the young women not only receive a high-quality education on its campus, but they also find a home.

“It is always a blessing to receive Christmas funds donation,” writes Sr. Jane, Director of Starehe Girls' Centre. “Due to the humble backgrounds of our students, some... do not get an opportunity to celebrate Christmas with their families.”

*“They always look forward to having the Chalice Christmas party every year.”*



*“The Centre prepared delicious meals with fruits and a soft drinks for all the students to celebrate the day.”*

Sr. Jane, director of Starehe Girls' Centre

The celebration kicked off in prayer and a message about the beauty of Christ's Nativity. Groups of students performed skits and Bible stories and got the crowd into a festive mood.

*“Jubilations filled the air as guests got entertained,” Sr. Jane says with a smile.*

“Your kind contributions put smiles to the faces of many students and families during the festive season and we are indeed blessed for the continuous support we continue to receive.”

# Christmas spreads thanksgiving, hope and solidarity

In the first year of pandemic restrictions, Christmas in Chiclayo, Peru, went online, while 'elves' from the sponsor site delivered 404 hampers to the families of sponsored children.

The following year, 2021, while still mindful of all public health protocols, the families were able to come together in-person "to strengthen their faith and solidarity," writes the site staff. These festivities were made possible by all those who gave to Chalice's Christmas fund.

They held a thanksgiving Mass for the sponsors and families of the whole Chiclayo sponsor site, which the families could attend in-person or on a livestream.

The site coordinated 23 smaller gatherings for prayer, Scriptural reflection, thanksgiving, and carol-singing – 19 gatherings for children and four for mothers only.

*"The families were part of it and they celebrated the Nativity of Jesus," describes the staff, "giving thanks for the life and health of the sponsors and their families, for the families of Chalice and the families of the Chiclayo Project."*

The staff and family circle leaders distributed food packages to the 422 sponsored children, containing both nutrition-minded items and special holiday treats.

They also gave Panettone (sweet Christmas bread) to 46 children who are on the waiting list for Chalice sponsorship, as a way of thanking them for joining the project. The volunteers, interns and people close to the Centro Esperanza also received a tasty Panettone in gratitude for their generous self-giving through the year.

*Each of the 19 family circles also organized an outreach activity, to spread hope and solidarity in their neighborhoods.*

14 of the groups decided to make "solidarity baskets" for vulnerable families who are not part of the sponsorship program. Two family circles hit the streets of Chiclayo to deliver fruits in reusable bags to children and elderly Venezuelan migrants. One circle made sandwiches and desserts for 50 Venezuelan families living in their neighbourhood.

*"It is our first experience of being able to help other women," writes Esmilda, a mother in a family circle. "It is nice to receive but also to give, we have never done that before."*

Esmilda's circle helped a grandmother, and it enabled her to feed her three grandchildren.

*"We will never forget this experience, it has helped us to be more united."*



*"We thank the Lord who gives us the opportunity to receive the help of the sponsors, and we to be able to help other children, even once a year, but we do it with love."*

Shally, family circle leader