

Downton Abbey Movie Night on 13th September at Roseville Cinema is to raise funds for the building of a boarding house for Year 12 high school students who attend Our Lady of Mt Carmel Senior High School in Letefoho, Timor Leste.

Letefoho is a remote town and subdistrict of the mountainous Ermera District of Timor Leste. Its population is about 25,000 people and it is one of the very poor regions of this small, developing country. Travel time from the Dili, the capital of Timor Leste, is about 3 hours, despite being only 72 km from Dili, due to the road conditions.

Timor Leste has a population of around 1,300,000 with 34% of the population being under the age of 15 years. How does a country that was brutally occupied and torn apart between 1975 and 1999, regenerate and develop into a viable nation? Education and the rebuilding of infrastructure are paramount to progress and sustainability.

In 2013 LETS, Letefoho East Timor Support was formed by a small group of volunteers, within the Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore (LNS), to support the people of Letefoho. This leads to the Twinning of the Parish of LNS to the Parish of Letefoho.

Our key projects have included the renovation of the Senior High School, contribution to water projects, the purchase of an industrial truck, the sponsorship of high school students and the building of a boarding house for girls.

Most students live in homes that may be lucky to have 1 light globe. Many have not electricity. Some students walk up to 3 hours each to and from school. Many parents fall into the 38% of the population who are illiterate due to the disruption to their own education, while the country was occupied, so they can offer little very support to their children. Children usually collect firewood (for cooking) and water before and after school.

The school boarding houses will provide the children with warmth, light, study support and a close proximity to school. Good results in the final exams determines the progress to tertiary education and employment. Education is the key to progress and self-sustainability, as these achieving students will then help support their younger siblings in their education.

Please join us at Roseville Cinema on 13th September! We would love to “pack the house” to raise much needed funds to support of the students of Letefoho.