

“ The will of one man,  
the future of many ”



Fondazione  
Valter Baldaccini

# FROM THE ROOTS 08

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#DONAFUTURO



>> THE EDUCATORS OF "MY HOME, OUR HOME"

## A MESSAGE FOR YOU



Dear friends,

It was the end of June when we went to Tor Bella Monaca, a rather problematic neighborhood in the Roman suburbs. We went there to get to know the "My home, our home" project that this year the Valter Baldaccini Foundation began to support by taking on the important work that educators carry out with the children and young people of the neighborhood.

Going to Tor Bella Monaca, looking into the eyes of people who have lived incredible lives, listening to their stories and the difficulties they face every day is something that inevitably makes us reflect, it is one of those experiences that "put your own values in order".

For me that day was also a blast from the past because today in Tor Bella Monaca there are Sister Adele and the Salesian sisters who were in Cannara when I was a child. Together with my father Valter they have contributed a lot to our community and, for many young Cannarese like me, they have been an important point of reference.

My father said: "The world has become a big village, we cannot think only of ourselves, but we must work so that everyone can live in a dignified way with mutual respect".

His is the commitment we have made for Tor Bella Monaca: to offer these children and young people the concrete possibility of a better future. Living there is difficult, if you were born in delinquency leading an honest life is difficult, but not impossible. And each of them deserves the chance to live with dignity.

Therefore, we have written this issue of "From the Roots" reflecting on the future, a better future in which so many children and young people deserve to live. It is our responsibility to help create it.

I wish you and your family a joyous Christmas and a happy 2022.

Beatrice Baldaccini  
President of the Valter Baldaccini  
Foundation

## "MY HOME, OUR HOME"

In Tor Bella Monaca, on the outskirts of Rome, since 2003 the Vides Mic Mag TBM association, the Salesian Sisters Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Parish of Saint Mary Mother of the Redeemer have given life to "My home, our home", a day center dedicated to neighborhood minors living with serious social hardships.

**It is a real house where, according to Don Bosco's educational style, children and young people go after school and stay until after dinner supervised by specialized educators and passionate volunteers.**

These children are often left on their own and live in a condition that dramatically affects their growth. The Foundation has landed in Tor Bella Monaca because Salesian nuns who, years ago were in Cannara, Valter Baldaccini's birthplace, are here today. Together with him they made an impact and today this project continues to give voice to this bond. Thanks to the help of our donors this year the educators were able to continue to do their precious work. And we hope they can continue to do so next year too!



### An interview with Gianluca Antonini

To reveal even more of "My home, Our home" we had a chat with Gianluca Antonini who has been attending the Center for over ten years and who has been the President of Vides Mic Mag TBM since April 2017.

**Welcome back Gianluca and thank you for your availability. Among the friends of the Foundation there are people who do not know Tor Bella Monaca: where is it and what is the situation in this neighborhood?**

Tor Bella Monaca is in the VI Municipality of Rome, and is a district located between the Grande Raccordo Anulare and Via Casilina, close to the Tor Vergata University and the exclusive Torre Gaia. It stands in a hilly area and it is said that on top of this hill, during the Jubilee of 1450, Santa Rita da

Cascia stood. Today around the church dedicated to the Saint stands the oldest part of the neighborhood made up of small family houses. The new part, more complex, has developed from this area to the junction. Initially built for the military, after the 1980 Irpinia earthquake it was intended to house displaced families and was then converted into public housing: 15-storey towers and serpentine identified with the letters R or M and a number. In Rome, if you want to be "forced" say you come from R5, R4 etc. A strong identification has been created, a clear cultural contrast, a characterization even in clothing, between those who live an honest life and the criminals who come from this area.



>> GIANLUCA AND THE SISTER OF TOR BELLA MONACA

### **What are the problems you face every day?**

We mainly deal with family and youth problems. These are families who live in poverty because their parents do not work, because one or both are in prison or are drug addicts. Those who pay the heaviest consequences are the little ones. At the beginning of our project, the children were hanging out on the street: they were children completely left on their own, with inadequate care and attention. Today we must face school dropouts and the difficulty for these children to think about a future emancipated from the context in which they live. Some think that the only way to save themselves is to leave, but then they face the real difficulty of leaving.

### **You have become an important reference for these people.**

Yes, we want to be there for those who want to stay and for those who are forced to do so and want to live their life in a peaceful way. We called the project "My home, our home" because we want to be a family within a family for them. We never exclude the families of the children from the educational process, the parents are always informed about the children's path. We assist them in their relations with the school and we support them in case there is a need for visits or special care. Our commitment is to create a harmonious environment where the child experiences a more beautiful, more peaceful life. Fortunately, for a few weeks we have also managed to restore dinner all together; for children it is an important moment of sharing, empowerment and education about proper nutrition. For them, eating meat is a luxury item, it is something that they cannot normally afford, and we can provide this for them.

### **What changes have you noticed at the Center in recent years?**

There are mothers who spontaneously come to give us a hand and we have also hired a mother who cleans. For us it is important to ask for their help when we need it, to educate them about reciprocity by making them participate, so they don't depend on assistance. Each of them has a dignity and knows how to put it into action. Doing good is not easy, you need to access the reality and the awareness of what we have around us has grown a lot: today we are much more structured to act incisively on the problems that children have and the results have been excellent. The Center is truly a reference for the entire territory.

### **Can you tell us something that struck you in a positive way?**

Surely the volunteers who made themselves freely and spontaneously available during the pandemic and above all with courage to help families in difficulty by bringing food home, organizing an extraordinary collection of blood for the Bambino Gesù Pediatric Hospital which was lacking it. The generosity of these people, their acting with humility and passion is truly extraordinary.

### **There must be problems: is there something difficult, negative that you have experienced?**

Despair and a strong fear that sometimes blocks us when confronting a problem that seems insurmountable. For example, in the most difficult weeks of the pandemic, I wanted to completely close the Center, I was very scared and felt a great responsibility. This was a difficult moment for me in which I ran the risk of locking myself in a shell so as not to have problems. Then I decided to strengthen myself with those who work with me and we faced and overcame the challenge by opening and giving the children the opportunity to come to the Center.

### **We thought about this issue of "From the roots" reflecting on the opportunity to create a better future for those in difficulty. What do you wish the boys and girls of Tor Bella Monaca?**

Tor Bella Monaca is a complex reality, living here is difficult. I am privileged, and I do not allow myself to judge the choices of those who live in this reality. If the State doesn't arrive, crime offers answers and solutions. If I need the money to eat and if I'm offered € 200 a day to stake out and make a phone call if I see suspicious movements, why shouldn't I? What I hope is to be a more forceful agent of hope and to continue to transmit the message that living honestly is a "more beautiful life", even if it's more difficult. For the children of the Center I hope to be ever more incisive, not only in material goods, but in building a future perspective. We have the example of some boys who have emancipated themselves: a boy who has become the manager of a supermarket and a girl who is working on a master's degree in personnel management. These beautiful stories are our strength.

### **With what thought would you like to leave us with?**

When I came to the final of the "A Goal for Valter" tournament I was very impressed by the figure of Valter Baldaccini. Don Bosco said, "rather than having the mind of a leader, one must have the heart of a father". I have reviewed this in Valter and it is something that I also feel as President of Vides. There are problems to face, you must make ends meet, but you know you do everything for the good of the kids.





Fondazione  
ValterBaldaccini



*The Valter Baldaccini Foundation was born in 2015, a year after Valter Baldaccini passed away.*

*The Foundation was established to preserve his life testimony, his values and his actions as a Christian man and enlightened entrepreneur.*

*The Foundation supports those who need help most, in our territory and in the world, by creating projects designed for families in difficulty, initiatives that create job opportunities and educational paths that are opportunities for redemption.*

*To realize that we need your support!  
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## VALTER AND THE VALUE OF SPORT

The inspiration came from a text by Valter Baldaccini: "Dear friend, the Ass. sport Cannara needs you. Cannara's sport and football really needs you. **STOP** insulting players and referees. **TAKE PART** in matches by cheering your team with applause. **ENJOY** the beautiful game of the opposing team. **THE REFEREE CONSIDERS** a player like any other and therefore he too is subject to making mistakes. Give your contribution so that every game becomes real and healthy fun for everyone. So, you will also honor the name of your country". It was the 91/92 Championship and Valter, a passionate football player, in these few lines declared the values of sport founded for him: friendship and respect.



So ASD Cannara, in collaboration with the Foundation and UMBRAGROUP and with the patronage of the Municipality of Cannara, proposed two initiatives to recognize Valter and acknowledge how important and relevant his message continues to be.

From 10th to 12th September

six teams under 15 competed in the "A goal for Valter" tournament, won by Ternana. There was also entertainment with dances organized by the Scarpette Rosa di Cannara and reflection, with the banner "We will never forget" to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the attack on the Twin Towers and the testimony of the boys of Tor Bella Monaca.

That "Dear friend", beginning of Valter's writing, gave way to comparisons made between Father Francesco Pio Russi of Assisi's Prison Hermitage Olympic fencer Andrea Santarelli who, moderated by Paola Pompei, engaged in a dialogue "Between sport and spirituality" on 27th September at the E. Thesorieri Theater in Cannara.

According to Father Francesco Pio, the values of friendship are essential for those who put themselves on the line. The other must be placed in the center; even if he is my opponent he must be cheered and encouraged while he is fighting, just like me, for the victory. Sport is a way to express our love and it must be done with respect, because we are part of a whole where



everyone is equal, in diversity. And this is precisely the feeling that Andrea Santarelli felt when he was twice at the Olympics and that he often finds himself on the platform against his teammate, one of his greatest friends.

These were important days that, once again, told how much Valter Baldaccini was an extraordinary man, the bearer of a simple but powerful message..