

*The Year 2008
Presidential Awards
for Filipino Individuals
and Organizations Overseas*

The cover page design is an ancient Philippine script which means *Gawad ng Pangulo*.
(Reference: National Museum)

The facts and accounts of circumstances that are contained in the profiles of the Year 2008 Presidential Awards were taken from the materials submitted to the Awards Secretariat for consideration of the nominations.

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

Message

I am honored to extend my congratulations to the recipients of the 2008 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas for their accomplishments, which continue to bring pride and honor to our country. Our *kababayans* have shown the best in being a Filipino, committed in the pursuit of excellence in their chosen fields and dedicated in their service to the cause of Filipinos worldwide, their host countries and the motherland.

Nowhere is our foreign policy more important than protecting and advancing the interests of our overseas Filipinos. Our government and our people honor them for their sacrifice and dedication to their work, their family and the nation. We have always acknowledged and valued their contribution in the nexus between migration and development.

This is one reason we exert every effort to understand their evolving needs, and design timely and appropriate programs for them. In October of this year, I suggested that we call our overseas Filipinos expatriates or expats because it befits their vast contribution and significant role to the economy as well as their rising status in the global labor community.

Since the inception of the Presidential Awards in 1991, our government has endeavored to promote and protect the interests of overseas Filipinos and to highlight their achievements and contributions in their host countries. This year's honorees exemplify a microcosm of the best of overseas Filipinos with a pool of diverse and multi-talented individuals engaged in a wide range of business, professional and public interests. The depth and breadth of their undertakings clearly demonstrate that overseas Filipinos are an integral part of the global economy and community.

We also honor foreign individuals and organizations to which we are grateful, for having voluntarily and continuously shared their resources, time, and efforts for the benefit of our less privileged areas here at home.

I also wish to commend the dedicated and dynamic civil servants of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas whose work continues to be the epitome of public service.

Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Manila, 10 December 2008



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS



Message

The movement of natural persons has become a global phenomenon. It can be a bane or boon depending on how it is managed. The advantages, however, outweigh the disadvantages. It becomes all the more significant given its contribution to progress and prosperity.

The Philippines, in particular, has managed its migration program remarkably well. It has made a positive impression in the global market and has become the world's model in migration management. We should credit Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her policies and programs for that.

The more than eight million Filipino expatriates in some 120 countries have demonstrated their fidelity and commitment to excellence. Small wonder then that the Filipino expats are the top choice of foreign employers.

From North America, to Europe, to Southeast Asia, to Middle East and North Africa and elsewhere, they dutifully discharge their duties, manning the ramparts of commerce and industry and in caring for the old and the sick, earning the respect and admiration of their employers.

And so as we celebrate the month of overseas Filipinos this December, we pay tribute to this year's recipients of the 2008 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas.

We honor them today for their fidelity to their motherland, and for their demonstration of concern for their families and loved ones and for our country's less privileged.

You make us all proud. *Mabuhay!*

Very truly yours,

DR. DANTE A. ANG
Secretary

Manila, 10 December 2008

Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

Message



We are very delighted to extend our good wishes and earnest felicitations to the 2008 recipients of the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas. The passion and achievements of this year's awardees have not gone unnoticed by people around the world, and their excellence has earned them the admiration and respect of the citizens of other countries.

For almost two decades now, we continue to recognize Filipinos as spirited and productive world-class citizens in the countries where they live and work. This year, we honor 31 individuals and organizations who untiringly commit themselves toward uplifting the image of the Philippines, empowering underprivileged Filipinos, pioneering entrepreneurship which opened doors for Filipino products abroad, bringing opportunities to differently-abled children, and keeping the spirit of *bayanihan* wherever they may be.

Even as 31 have been selected for the Presidential Awards, we also pay tribute to the more than eight million Filipinos abroad for living up to the expectations and demands of the global market and giving a sense of pride to the Philippines. We lament every skill and talent lost by our country every time a Filipino migrates abroad, but we are deeply grateful for what they unselfishly share to the country out of their good fortune and kindness. We are very happy that they remain to be one nation with us.

It is the Filipino's commitment to work, professional excellence, love for family and love for country that the world is familiar with. This is the firm ground on which our country stands in the international arena.

In conferring the 2008 Presidential Awards, we herald to the world our national pride; we put a brand to the best of our values, and claim the honor of being Filipino.

Again, congratulations and best wishes for the holidays!

Mabuhay!

JENNIFER O. GONZALES
Executive Director

Manila, 10 December 2008

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Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino

The Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for their exceptional or significant contribution to reconstruction, progress and development in the Philippines.

Awardees

Association of Philippine Physicians in America
United States of America

Tobias Combalicer Enverga, Jr.
Canada

Filipino Women's Association United Kingdom
United Kingdom

Stichting Kapatiran
The Netherlands

Association of Philippine Physicians in America New York, United States of America

Longevity in an organization proves the resiliency of its members in keeping its traditions and will to continue pursuing its goals. In this day where groups of all sorts proliferate on a regular basis, only few remain true to their word of helping their members and others.

In the 1950s, medical practitioners started coming in to the United States of America for training in their specialties under the Exchange of Foreign Medical Graduates Program. As the number of foreign doctors participating in the program increased, many felt that there was a need to form an organization. Initially these physicians belonged to different groups, and most were established for certain socio-humanitarian projects.

Although there were informal organizations among medical alumni as well as among specialists, there was no national organization until Dr. Lucito Gamboa, together with 20 other leaders, decided to organize a national group in Illinois in 1972. The group's main purpose was to unite Filipino physician migrants and create a national voice to promote their needs and interests and at the same time maintain vibrant linkages with their motherland. Thus, the Association of Philippine Physicians in America was born. The first six formative years were spent refining policies and procedures in the Association. They allowed membership even for graduates who were not licensed to practice, as well as future retirees.

The core of APPA's service is the conduct of annual medical – surgical mission to the Philippines. Professional service and medicines given to beneficiaries are estimated to be at P15 million annually. Almost a thousand patients benefit from the missions, the most recent of whom were indigent patients from Davao del Sur, Baguio, Benguet, Bulacan, Ilocos and Cebu. In the same areas, medical equipment, such as dialysis and x-ray machines, medical instruments and medicines were also



provided to the local health centers and provincial hospitals amounting to P20 million annually. Other missions were conducted in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Quezon City, Baguio City and Davao del Sur.

The organization has also donated medical and nursing books to several medical and nursing schools and hospital libraries. Underprivileged but academically deserving Filipino students have also been provided with scholarships, which APPA grants annually.

In 1994, P2 million was granted to the International Kiwanis Foundation to help eradicate iodine deficiency in the Philippines. This resulted to significant reduction of thyroid diseases in the Philippines.

Other significant contributions made by the association include monetary donations to the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan for the education of Filipinos with physical disabilities, and donation for local charities in Digos City, including the Center for the Elderly, for basic necessities, such as food and medicine. APPA also donates clothes for indigent beneficiaries every year.

For its members, it conducts an annual dialogue with the Philippine Medical Association for sharing of information on recent developments in the medical field, and for networking. Likewise, the APPA Annual Convention for the advancement of the medical profession and also for networking is being held. It publishes medical textbooks and scientific articles to disseminate recent scientific theory and practice in medicine. Because of its academic-related services, it has been accredited as a provider of continuing medical education for physicians by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.

In conferring the Linkapil Award to the Association of Philippine Physicians in America, the President commends its efforts in maintaining the quality of the medical profession, especially of Filipino medical practitioners in the United States, and extending continuous assistance to the motherland.

Tobias Combalicer Enverga, Jr.

Canada

Oftentimes, the call to serve one's roots and its people is too great for anyone to resist. After one has struggled for personal achievement and found success in his own right, he thinks of his humble beginnings and devises ways on how he can give back.

Over the years, Mr. Tobias Enverga, Jr. has continuously strived to ensure that his home province of Quezon is amply provided with support and assistance. His involvement in various community endeavors and organizations has paved the way for this to happen. Under his able leadership, many projects have benefited individuals, families and communities in the Philippines.

Over CDN\$500,000 worth of medical equipment and supplies were donated through the efforts of Mr. Enverga to various hospitals and health institutions in the Philippines. These included hospital beds, emergency equipment, diagnostic tools, wheelchairs and walkers. These benefited thousands of indigent patients in hospitals such as the Quezon National Hospital, Mt. Carmel Diocesan Hospital, Infanta Hospital and Fr. Reuter Hospital.

Mr. Enverga was also instrumental in the conduct of dental missions in Lucena City and Infanta, Quezon. Dental professionals from both North America and the Philippines were gathered to assist in this project, which includes tooth extraction. Medicines were also supplied and given free to the patients.

Infrastructure projects ranks high among his priority projects. As President of the Philippine Independent Day Council (PIDC), he spearheaded the fund drive to build 30 houses in the town of Jose Panganiban, Camarines Sur through the Gawad Kalinga. To date, 15 houses have already been funded. As manager of the Mary Mother of the Poor Foundation, two classroom buildings in Infanta were built in 2005, which cost P450,000. Likewise, 30 scholarship grants and school supplies were given to needy students. The school building was a welcome relief to the Infanta residents after the devastation wrecked by typhoon *Winnie* in late 2004. Mr. Enverga also helped



build the San Rafael Church and Sariaya Church in Quezon. Convents were also built through his efforts. Nineteen seminarians were also assisted through scholarship grants, four of whom have already graduated and are serving different dioceses in the Philippines.

Furthermore, as PIDC President, he organized the *Mabuhay Philippines!* Toronto Summer Festival in Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the biggest celebration of Philippine Arts, Culture and Heritage in Canada for the past two years. With an average attendance of 8,000, this annual celebration raises cultural visibility and promotes unity among Filipinos. This included the *Mabuhay Parada* participated in by 600 individuals, nine floats and two bands.

As President of the Lucena City Association, he helped install artesian wells in Infanta, still in the aftermath of the typhoon. Grocery bags worth P1,000 each were given to poor families. The organization, through Mr. Enverga's efforts, also sent 40 boxes of relief goods to different towns in the Philippines. He also gave CDN\$3,000 worth of shoes for distribution by the Carmelites in Lucena City.

Mr. Enverga was instrumental in raising the amount of CN\$30,000 to provide financial assistance to the family of Jocelyn Dulnuan. Ms. Dulnuan was a live-in caregiver who was murdered in Canada.

An active community leader, he served as the Marketing and Promotions Chairman of the Spirit of Kalayaan Organization, which brought together 35,000 people in Toronto, most of whom were Filipinos. The event commemorated the 100th anniversary of Philippine Independence, and was the biggest gathering of Filipino Canadians in Canada. The success of the event resulted in the establishment of the Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre, the first facility of its kind in Metro Toronto.

Mr. Enverga raised CDN\$11,000 to help the Bantay Bata Foundation in the Philippines in 2006, which provided shelter, food and education to indigent children.

In conferring the Linkapil Award to Tobias C. Enverga, Jr., the President recognizes his patriotism and love for fellow Filipinos through continued delivery of assistance and support by spearheading fundraising campaigns for projects that will benefit his kababayans.

Filipino Women's Association UK

United Kingdom

Years after its members banded together for mutual protection and strength, the Filipino Women's Association UK has surpassed itself in attaining more than its original goals of self-preservation. Its aims of strengthening the rights and uplifting the morale of the Filipino women that extends beyond the boundaries of our beloved country is indeed a truly magnificent endeavor that ought to be lauded.

The FWA UK is a non-political and non-sectarian organization established to protect and bring together a balanced view of Filipino women, their diverse occupations, as well as to emphasize their importance and contribution to society by promoting friendship and understanding between the UK and the Philippines. It was founded in 1988 in response to an invitation from the Philippine Embassy in London. The Filipino women gathered to exchange ideas on what they can do to project a positive image in the UK. A core group was formed to pursue their objectives, and the FWA UK was thus born. To date, it continues to work together with the Philippine Embassy to achieve its goals.

Its aims are to promote the well-being of women of Philippine origin and descent in the UK by providing support services such as counseling, guidance and legal aid, thereby relieving them of their distress and enabling them to participate fully as individuals and enlightened members of society; to provide educational, cultural and social services to enhance the fuller development of Filipinas and their families thereby assuring them a happier and adequate integration in society; and to deepen the understanding and mutual sympathies for women through affiliation with international women's organizations.

One of the main activities of FWA UK is its scholarship program. Since its establishment, the organization has been able to fund scholarship grants for 32 underprivileged students in Quezon City, Camarines Sur, Cavite, Batangas, Cagayan de Oro City, Manila, Laguna and Tarlac. Many of the beneficiaries have graduated, and some are already



employed, making them productive members of their respective communities.

The FWA UK has provided financial assistance in support of various projects all over the Philippines. From 1998-2003, it provided support to abused infants and mothers through the CRIBS Foundation. Its other projects include the construction of a health center in Sta. Rosa, Mulanay, Quezon where the organization also provided the initial batch of medicines; cash donation to the Sta. Ana San Joaquin Bahay Ampunan, a home for the aged in Batangas; funding for a milk feeding program in

Montalban, Rizal that benefits 300 children every year since 2007; donation to the Bukidnon Tribe Education Project; financial assistance for the renovation and refurbishment of the Pediatric Orthopedic Room of the Philippine General Hospital; and sending of books, canned goods, used clothes and school supplies to slum areas in Luzon.

To uplift the morale and encourage productivity among Filipino inmates in the UK, the organization donated sewing machines to the prison.

It has organized various fora to promote Filipino culture in the UK and a positive image of Filipino women overseas. Among other topics, the fora discussed the Filipino women's contribution to the local and global community and a seminar on town planning. Likewise, it coordinated and participated in the Personal Development Programme for and by FWA members. The sessions included topics on flower arranging, fashion beading, line dancing and current immigration issues and legislation. These activities enhanced the leadership and entrepreneurship potentials of the Filipino women.

Every year, the FWA UK organizes the celebration of Philippine National Day through a benefit dinner-dance during the first Saturday closest to Philippine Independence Day. It promotes patriotism and Filipino culture through the wearing of native costumes and conduct of dances. The celebration serves as the fundraising event for the organization's scholarship program.

In conferring the Linkapil Award to the Filipino Women's Association UK, the President commends the organization in uplifting the image of Filipino women in the United Kingdom, at the same time advancing the cause of underprivileged sectors in the Philippines.

Stichting Kapatiran The Netherlands

The proliferation of various Filipino organizations overseas where there are large Filipino communities may not always prove to be blessings to their target clients. But in The Netherlands, one stands out as it continues to serve the people in its adoptive community and its family across the seas.

Stichting Kapatiran is a registered organization in The Netherlands composed of Filipino and Dutch volunteers. Its primary objective is to extend solidarity with overseas Filipinos and with local communities in the Philippines. It welcomes members and volunteers regardless of nationalities who are interested in assisting development work in the Philippines. It is supported by many volunteers residing in different places in The Netherlands.

Kapatiran's main activities after its founding were based on solidarity and small scale income-generating projects for poor communities in the Philippines. These undertakings became the basis of educational projects that are synchronized with the United Nations' eight millennium development goals for 2015, as agreed upon by government leaders of 189 countries. One of these is universal access to primary education for children, which motivated Kapatiran to start the Basic Literacy Programme in 2000. The programme aims to provide financial assistance to children of poor families for them to acquire basic education. Since its inception, almost P1.5 million has been provided to 511 elementary pupils in the provinces of Agusan del Sur, Cagayan, Davao del Sur, Ilocos Norte, Negros Occidental, Oriental Mindoro and Zambales.

From 2003-2005, the organization has provided P6.5 million for microfinance and capacity building projects in cooperation with Novib Oxfam Netherlands, a Dutch organization. This has benefited poor and jobless families in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. Among the livelihood projects implemented include:



livestock (goat and swine) production, nursery development and environmental projects.

Its other causes include streetchildren, abused children, poor and unemployed women,

disaster victims and children refugees affected by armed conflicts in Southern Philippines. With the help of international organizations and through fundraising endeavors, income-generating activities were developed and implemented. Some of these activities include: provision of sewing machines for unemployed women in Bansalan, Davao del Sur; construction of multi-purpose building for farmers in the same province; cash donation for a bakery project in Zamboanga del Sur; funding for goat dispersal and fruit tree seedlings in North Cotabato; donation of rice thresher in Pampanga and a small irrigation system in Zambales; and marketing of greeting cards, which benefited victims of the 1991 earthquake in Nueva Ecija.

Kapatiran has sponsored various workshops and awareness campaigns for different causes, for which it has also collaborated with other organizations for the conduct of various other socio-civic activities and fora to tackle and advocate for migrants' rights in the Philippines and in Europe.

Unlike many Filipino community associations or organizations overseas whose projects are concentrated in certain hometowns in the Philippines, their beneficiaries come from just about every province in the Philippines. Their compassion extends beyond the boundaries of places which are familiar to them, knowing that help is needed just about anywhere in the country. Likewise, their assistance does not merely provide temporary relief to the beneficiaries. Rather, it is important that the values of self-reliance and hard work are instilled in them so that they may continue to make a life for their families even without the assistance of benefactors.

In conferring the Linkapil Award to Stichting Kapatiran, the President recognizes the people behind the organization in making more Filipinos self-sufficient through worthwhile income-generating projects.

Kaanib ng Bayan

The Kaanib ng Bayan Award is conferred on foreign individuals or organizations for their exceptional or significant contribution to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development, or have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities.

Awardees

Catholic Medical Mission Board
United States of America

Children's Chance CT
United States of America

Heetens Helpgood Center Philippines
The Netherlands

Laurence C. Ligier
France

Catholic Medical Mission Board

New York, United States of America

Founded in 1928 and rooted in the healing ministry of Jesus, Catholic Medical Mission Board works collaboratively to provide quality healthcare programs and services, without discrimination, to people in need around the world.

In 1966, under Fr. Joseph Walter, SJ, CMMB began providing funds to worthy healthcare programs in developing countries. Today, CMMB continues to send medicines and volunteers to serve the most needy people in the most underserved regions of the world. CMMB's medical shipments surpassed \$630 million in value from 2002-2007.

In the Philippines, CMMB donated primary healthcare medicines to Home-Reach Foundation or HRF, a 2004 *Banaag* Awardee, to support mission clinics, Adopt-a-Hospital Program and the Gift of Life corrective heart surgery program. Over 200,000 patients have been treated at public hospitals and mission clinics with year-round donations of medicine since 1995.

The two organizations also teamed up to implement a 3-year maternal health initiative called "Mama Make Me Healthy". The program was undertaken in partnership with the Provincial Government of Bohol, through the Provincial Health Office, the City Government of Tagbilaran City and 10 district hospitals. Vitamins and micronutrients were provided to approximately 300,000 pregnant and lactating women in Bohol. The implementation was conducted by barangay health workers trained through a grant from CMMB. Long term results showed increased birth weight, fewer birth anomalies, reduced mortality and improved child development.

CMMB has also assisted numerous organizations working in the Philippines with donations of life-saving medicines valued at more than \$50 million since 1999. Among those notable projects implemented in 2007 are typhoon relief (part of \$3.4 million relief shipments for four countries hit by natural disasters), and a shipment of medicines and medical supplies at the request of Bukas – Loob Diyos Foundation for its medical mission to the Philippines, specifically in Lingayen, Pangasinan which were provided with antibiotics, analgesics, antacids, topical creams and anti-diarrheals. Universal Heart International Relief Services was provided with one box of Zocor to be shipped to their program in the Philippines, Missionaries of the Poor Sisters, which serves the poor in Naga City and Manila.



According to HRF, the organization has also provided assistance to other areas in the Philippines, such as Bulacan, Cebu, Iloilo, Nueva Ecija, Southern Leyte and Tawi-Tawi, which have been hit by calamities. Their residents were given free medicines for various ailments.

In 2007, 535 shipments of Healing Help supplies and medicines valued at more than US\$185 million were given to 205 consignees in 47 countries. A large percentage of the donations to Asia went to the Philippines. Two examples stand out from all donations, Tamoxifen (for breast cancer) and 5.3 million doses of pre-natal vitamins. Since its founding,

CMMB has distributed nearly US\$1 billion worth of medicine and medical supplies to over 100 countries.

Through the Medical Volunteer Program, it has placed licensed healthcare professionals at faith-based health facilities throughout the developing world.

The organization also implements various health programs throughout the world pursuant to its aims of providing medical care to those in countries with limited resources. First, it undertakes the Born to Live Program to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The program provides counseling and testing for HIV to pregnant women and treatment to prevent transmission of the virus to newborns during childbirth. CMMB is a member of the AIDS Relief Consortium working to expand the delivery of anti-retroviral therapies to people living with AIDS in Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean. It has also provided physical examination and treatment to more than 230,000 children in Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic in relation to its program for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness aimed at saving the lives of children under five years of age by providing primary healthcare, family education and healthcare worker training for preventable diseases. Moreover, the organization has worked in conjunction with other agencies to provide humanitarian relief to refugees affected by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East with over \$19 million in pharmaceutical and emergency relief supplies provided. Donations were made to relieve those affected by civil unrest and political instability through maintenance of critical health services.

Notable among its achievements in 2004 is the support given to those affected by the Asian tsunami. Shipment of medicines and medical supplies valued at \$4.7 million were sent to healthcare facilities in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, which helped treat thousands who were injured as a result of calamities. Other disaster relief efforts include assistance to those affected by May 2006 earthquake around Bantul, Indonesia and Hurricane Stan in Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico.

In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to the Catholic Medical Mission Board, the President recognizes its humanitarian efforts for the poorest of the poor citizens of developing countries around the world, especially in the Philippines.

Children's Chance CT Connecticut, United States of America

Acts of kindness are returned a hundredfold. The simple act of mercy and generosity shown by one person has sown such deep gratitude in the heart of an American citizen who was raised in the Philippines during the Japanese occupation, that she made it her mission in life to help others.

Ms. Dorita Urrata, founder of Children's Chance CT, spent her childhood in the Philippines with her family where they were imprisoned at the University of Santo Tomas concentration camp. She said that they were able to survive then because of her "Yaya Ana" who brought them food while risking her own life. After Ms. Urrata's retirement, she put up the foundation and took up children as her cause as a tribute to her Yaya Ana who inspired her to do good to others. Because of such act of kindness, many underserved and unfortunate children are reaping the rewards and benevolence of the foundation.

Children's Chance CT is a small, proactive, non-profit organization whose mission is to accept indigent children worldwide who are in need of medical treatment and surgery. Regardless of race, color and religion, they help children who are born with physical defects. The foundation strives to provide the very best care available in the US. To achieve this, the foundation partners with highly skilled physicians who donate their services on a regular basis. They bring children with deformities or those who suffer injuries because of atrocities within their countries to the United States, obtain free specialized medical care and surgery, and place children with host families for care and recovery.

Every year, Children's Chance brings an average of 50 children with various abnormalities to the US for medical treatment. These children come from Albania, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ghana, Iraq, Korea, Kosovo, Libya, Palestine, Pakistan, and of course, the Philippines.

Among those treated in the past few years include the much publicized separation of conjoined twins, Carl and Clarence Aguirre of Negros Occidental, who were brought to Montefiore Children's Hospital in New

CHILDREN'S CHANCE CONNECTICUT

CHILDREN'S CHANCE IS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION WHICH MATCHES MEDICAL CARE WITH NEEDY CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

York to be separated through a series of surgeries. An estimated \$3 million was spent

for their separation. In March 2008, Jingle Luis of Aparri, Cagayan was brought to New York to undergo surgery that will correct her severely clubbed feet. She was also born with *spina bifida*, a defect that involves the incomplete development of the spinal cord or its coverings, which further complicated her clubfoot. She has begun treatment for anatomic correction, with external fixators placed on her feet and ankles. Other patients from the Philippines who were provided with similar treatments, and placed in families in the US through the help of Children's Chance are the following:

- 1) Jeric Salazar, who was flown to Yale New Haven Children's Hospital in Connecticut for facial reconstruction.
- 2) Chenee Sator of Zamboanga was brought to the US for heart and eye surgeries, which were done in different hospitals – Yale New Haven Children's Hospital and Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- 3) Neil Jon Alpuerto was treated for osteosarcoma (bone cancer) at the Westchester Children's Medical Center. His older sister is taking up a degree in nursing, whose tuition is being paid for by Children's Chance.
- 4) Roberto Tenio Mal-ang of Cagayan de Oro City had multiple physiological abnormalities, including urine exiting through his navel. He also had stunted growth brought about by malnourishment and abuse. He had major reconstruction of his urinary tract, physical therapy and rehabilitation.
- 5) Cherry Mae Espedilla of Cebu was flown to the US for nasal reconstruction surgery at New York Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan.

In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to Children's Chance CT, the President recognizes the insight and generosity of the organization and its founder in providing the best medical assistance to children with deformities in the Philippines.

Heetens Helpgood Center Philippines The Netherlands

It is always awe-inspiring to hear of publicity-shy foreign nationals or small organization providing significant development assistance in the Philippines. Millions of miles away, a simple Dutch organization works quietly to aid the less fortunate in a country where they have no roots and no ties, except compassion in their hearts, and a desire to help improve the lives of others.

The Heetens Helpgood Center Philippines started doing charity work in the Philippines in 2000. It is made up of Dutch nationals who organized themselves to assist community development initiatives in the country. It also aims to stimulate and inculcate volunteerism among its members.

A major project of the organization is sending containers of medical and hospital equipment, including hospital beds, and medical supplies every year. They personally collect these materials, pack and sort them, and send the shipment to the Philippines. Some beneficiaries of this donation are public hospitals, including the Doña Marta Memorial Hospital in Atimonan, Quezon, Gumaca District Hospital in Quezon, Philippine General Hospital in Manila, Magsaysay Memorial District Hospital in Lopez, Quezon, Camiguin General Hospital in Camiguin, Catarman District Hospital in Catarman, Northern Samar, and the Naga City Hospital in Camarines Sur

During an incidental visit to Buhi, Camarines Sur on the way to Naga City in 2000, officers of the organization, Jo and Truus Schoorlemmer, noted that the then third-class municipality needed a lot of improvement in their rural health units and community hospitals. They took photos and also requested the local government to make a "wish list" which were then presented to the organization back home. After that fateful visit, Buhi has been receiving noteworthy donations, not only for the hospitals but for the other needs of the populace. Aside from the medical equipment, the organization also provided school



desks and chairs, school supplies and audio-visual equipment which benefited pupils in several schools. Funds were raised after typhoon *Reming* devastated the town, which were used to provide rice for families affected by the disaster.

In 2007, funds in the amount of 35,000 Euros were provided by HHCP for the construction of a two-storey operating and delivery room building at the Camiguin General Hospital. This is intended to augment the medical services currently being given in the province to achieve zero mortality among pregnant women in the next five years.

During the same year, the organization donated 11,500 Euros for the construction of the "De Horizon Building" at the Buhi Central School. The new facility serves as a laboratory for Special Education students and other related functions. HHCP also donated sewing machines to the SPED school so that in 2006, the students themselves sewed their own *togas* for graduation. In the aftermath of Typhoon *Reming*, HHCP sent financial assistance to repair three school classrooms and donated a fully furnished typhoon-proof school building which also serves as an evacuation center.

Eight years after its establishment, HHCP continues to provide annual scholarship grants for students from Buhi, Camarines Sur, Camiguin, Argao, Cebu and Manila. At present, there are 75 scholars in the community, 12 of whom are already in high school. Aside from the scholarship grants and gifts, HHCP also conducts home visits to check on the conditions of the scholars and their families.

In order to empower the women residents of Bicol and Camiguin and enable them to support the needs of their families, HHCP donated 300 sewing machines and materials to various women centers based in the two provinces as a form of livelihood assistance.

In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to the Heetens Helpgood Center Philippines, the President recognizes the altruism and dedication of its members in extending assistance to rural communities in the country.

Laurence C. Ligier

France

For the world of disadvantaged children in the province of Iloilo, Ms. Laurence Ligier has proved to be a light in a dark world marred by violence and misfortunes in their young lives. Though foreign in the land of Filipinos, she has made her mark in the lives and hearts of the people in the province because of her genuine love and concern for the people who welcomed her into their fold.

Ms. Ligier spent 15 years in the Philippines conceptualizing and eventually establishing the Chameleon Association, Inc., a humanitarian association providing protection and rehabilitation services for young Filipino girls who have suffered physical and sexual abuse. Recognizing the plight of children, especially girls, wandering aimlessly in the streets of Iloilo City, she came up with the vision and concrete plan of action to uplift the situation of these children, beginning with development research to the practical design of programs and services. She herself looked for necessary donors and assistance to make this a reality through the Belgian government and various organizations. Ms. Ligier also worked with local entities in the Philippines, thus securing a 3,000 sq. ft. of land in Brgy. Sablogon, Passi City, Iloilo where the center housing Chameleon was built. To date, the center is fully functional, having two focal programs: center-based rehabilitation catering to survivors of sexual abuse, and community-based sponsorship program for children from marginalized communities in nearby towns. A team of social workers, house mothers and child psychologists provide the children with medical care, counseling, legal assistance and help with schooling.

The center now caters to 50 girls undergoing rehabilitation, 61 reintegrated girls under the after-care program and 127 sponsored children in the community. A unique intervention employed by Chameleon to reintegrate and rehabilitate child victims is through its Zanzibar Circus Arts therapy program to help children develop trust, express themselves physically, release fears and develop creativity. In 2007, Chameleon girls from the Philippines traveled to France to attend a circus arts training course with the world-renowned Zanzibar Circus.

Chameleon is also at the forefront of community development through income generating projects for rural communities surrounding the centers. Currently, it operates a butterfly sanctuary and a farm which provides the center with fresh farm and poultry products.

For her efforts in establishing Chameleon, Ms. Ligier was awarded "Woman of the Year" by Clarins, a well-known cosmetic brand in Paris. With the money she received from the award, she funded the construction of a second building / rehabilitation center for the institution to accommodate an increased number of girls needing treatment and rehabilitation. At present, Chameleon has three offices in Europe (Andorra, France and Belgium) and had mobilized at



least 35 volunteers completing missions with Chameleon Philippines every year. For the past 10 years, Ms. Ligier continues to source out funds / financial contributions amounting to P15 million a year for Chameleon.

Ms. Ligier also advocated the establishment of the Iloilo Juvenile Welfare Association, Inc. (IJWA). In coordination with the City Government of Iloilo and the Women and Children Protection Center of the Iloilo City Police, she came up with a project that will specifically care for young boys who come into trouble with the law and are placed in the hostile environment of jails and locked up cells. She also lobbied for the allocation of facilities from the City Government of Iloilo, which now houses Dalayunan, the home for boys. It now serves as a reformation center for children in conflict with the law, and young boys who

have gone astray due to poverty, neglect and dysfunctional families. With high hopes of transforming their lives to become responsible and resilient individuals, they are provided with holistic programs and services. Upon the reintegration of these boys into mainstream society, continuous monitoring and follow-up activities are likewise undertaken. Since 2003, it has catered to nearly a thousand beneficiaries in Iloilo City.

Appointed as the Regional Coordinator of the Belgian non-government organization, Vlaams International Centrum, Ms. Ligier took charge of the preparation and monitoring of a five-year development plan in aid of street children. She coordinated nine humanitarian projects of local non-government organizations to enable them to acquire knowledge and competencies in handling children in difficult circumstances. Likewise, Ms. Ligier coordinated with local authorities and other groups to increase public awareness and efficiency in responding to the needs of these children.

Ms. Ligier was the first foreign volunteer to serve under the Associate Missionary of the Assumption. From 1993-1994, she was assigned in Aklan where she worked with mothers in "piña-building", supervising the production of weaved fibers for clothes (Barong), and production of handmade paper and herbal soap. She was in-charge of marketing the products in the city of Iloilo and exporting these to Japan. About 70 individuals benefited from this project where they could earn a living.

From 1992-1993, she also volunteered with the Comite Soutien Enfrance Philippines, a French non-government agency, to raise funds and help build two classrooms in the public elementary school of Aranas in Balete, Aklan.

For her years of professional activity as directress of a humanitarian association, she was awarded the Ordre National du Merite or the French National Order of Merit in October 2008. This is an order of chivalry awarded by the President of the French Republic to French nationals for distinguished civil and military achievements.

In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to Laurence C. Ligier, the President recognizes her dedication in uplifting the lives of neglected and abused children in the Visayas region in the Philippines.

Banaag

The Banaag Award is conferred on Filipino individuals or associations for their contributions which have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities.

Awardees

Alexander E. Asuncion
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Patricia A. Berberabe
United States of America

Angeles R. Carandang
United States of America

Sr. Mary Aida C. Casambre
Hong Kong SAR

Esperanza R. Derpo
Nigeria

Filipino Korean Spouses Association
South Korea

Lamberto S. Garcia
United States of America

Eleanor B. Ho
Taiwan

Awardees

Joseph I. Magdalena
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Santiago L. Muzones Jr.
United States of America

Antonio Noblejas, M.D.
United States of America

Lilian Y. Overs
Canada

Philippine Community Council of New South Wales
Australia

Philippine Nurses Association of America
United States of America

Adelina R. Philipsen
The Netherlands

United Filipino Council of Hawaii
United States of America

Alexander E. Asuncion

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Heroes need not be brave revolutionaries. They can be ordinary men armed with sheer determination to commit themselves to public service without expecting anything in return. "You don't have to die for your country to become a hero as long as you offer your heart to the needy, weak, oppressed, and be a model Filipino", says Mr. Alexander Asuncion, more popularly called *KaBayani* by his friends and the community in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Asuncion was born in San Quintin, Pangasinan in 1950. When he migrated to the Middle East in 1979, it never crossed his mind that he would become instrumental in assisting his fellow Filipino migrant workers and be a role model to them as well.

With his over 21 years of experience and extensive exposure to restrictive working conditions in the Kingdom as part of his professional work in personnel administration and training, Mr. Asuncion acquired a comprehensive understanding of Saudi labor laws. His knowledge coupled with his deep concern for Filipinos who encounter labor disputes, motivated him to write and explain in simple terms the essential elements of Saudi Labor and Workmen Law. His translation has been converted into an information material given out to departing OFWs bound for Saudi Arabia who go through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Mr. Asuncion has never been satisfied with a routine eight-hour workday. Armed with professional experience in administrative ethos, he carries the burden and responsibility of sharing his profound knowledge. He coordinated with the proper authorities the protest of more than 100 Filipinos against their employer for suffering work overload without overtime pay and holiday compensation. He also assisted in the repatriation of hundreds of overstaying Filipinos in the eastern region who were given amnesty by the King of Saudi.

Although not a lawyer, Mr. Asuncion's familiarity with Saudi labor law enabled him to dispense sound



legal advice to his fellow OFWs. Mr. Asuncion helped a fellow OFW to be acquitted of murder without the direct assistance of lawyers. He guided him through legal formalities and obtained the necessary documents to prove his innocence. He also assisted four mechanics in claiming their overtime pay by forwarding their grievance to the Labor Courts, which resulted in the payment of an estimated P1,000,000.00 per worker for indemnities.

Mr. Asuncion also creatively uses the media to support his advocacy in advancing the welfare of his fellow OFWs. He has a regular column in the *Arab News*, *Pinoy Xtra*, which serves as an extension of his commitment to give advice and opinion on Saudi Labor, Workmen Law, and Shari'a lawbook. He was also an outstanding leader of (*Sangkapbuhay*) *Sanggunian ng mga Kapatid sa Hanapbuhay* which aims at assisting OFWs in their work-related problems by conducting seminars which discuss the essential elements of the host country's local laws.

Going beyond labor assistance, Mr. Asuncion was one of the pivotal figures who expedited the privatization of an international Philippine school in Al-Khobar and the establishment of a satellite office of the Philippine Embassy in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia.

In recognition of his selfless and untiring service to his fellow migrant workers and worthy contributions to the Philippine government, he was appointed by then Philippine Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Romulo Espaldon to be an Honorary Assistant Labor Attaché, giving him the authority to perform labor assistance to his fellow OFWs in the eastern region. Cognizant of his community service, he was conferred the *Bagong Bayani* by the Bagong Bayani Foundation in 1994. In 2001, he was confirmed to the Hall of Fame of OFW Achievers of the last decade by ABS-CBN and Ugat Foundation for his extraordinary accomplishments as a migrant Filipino.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Alexander E. Asuncion, the President recognizes his exemplary efforts to defend the rights and uphold the dignity of overseas Filipino workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and for his extraordinary advocacy for the just and fair treatment of Filipinos worldwide.

Patricia A. Berberabe

New Jersey, United States of America

The first rule in business is to find a need and fill it. When Patricia Aguila Berberabe migrated to the US in 1967, there was already a growing population of Filipinos in Jersey City, New Jersey where she settled. Despite the number of Filipinos in the area, Ms. Berberabe observed that there was not a single store selling Filipino stuffs. She soon realized that there was an unserved market that needed to be tapped. Thus, in 1973, together with her two sisters, they established the Phil-Am Food Mart grocery that sells Filipino merchandise to home-sick Filipinos living in the city.



The store proved to be a hit. Mrs. Berberabe and her sisters decided to expand their business to cater to the evolving needs of the Filipino community by setting up a Filipino restaurant and bakery to complement their existing grocery.

Eventually, to better manage the bustling business, it was agreed within the family to split up the business into three companies: the original Phil-Am Trading which serves as the importer and wholesaler of Filipino products remained with Mrs. Berberabe, the grocery Phil-Am Merchandising went to a sister and her family, while the restaurant-bakery Casa Victoria is managed by another sister.

What began as a small grocery is now a sprawling empire that includes groceries, restaurants, and bakery stores.

Mrs. Berberabe's Phil-Am Trading remains to be the largest importer/wholesaler/distributor of Philippine food products to Oriental groceries throughout the East Coast. The company brings fresh Goldilocks pastries and the famous sukang Paombong, among other tastes of home, to food-homesick Filipinos in the area. Mrs. Berberabe's company distributes to more than 200 retail stores and restaurants up and down the East Coast, with gross annual sales of about \$5 million.

But it is not an all-business affair for the chemical engineering graduate of the University of Santo

Tomas. Mrs. Berberabe actively participates in and supports community activities. She served as president for two years of the Pan American Concerned Citizens League, Inc. or PACCAL, adviser of the Seniors Club, Inc., treasurer of the Garden State Filipino American Association, and officer of the Jersey Toastmasters Club. She also set up a college scholarship program to assist deserving but less fortunate high school students of Batangas for them to be able to continue their college studies. Currently, she has three scholars, each receiving \$2,500 annually to cover their college

expenses.

True to her Thomasian education, Mrs. Berberabe authored and published three books on religion. Her first book, "An Easy Way to Understand the Holy Bible," published in 1995, is a spiritual interpretation of the Old and New Testament. Her second book is titled "On the Creation of the Soul and the Ten Commandments." She just completed her third one entitled "Discover the True Meaning of the Holy Bible: A Path to a Joyful Life and a Peaceful World."

As an entrepreneur who pioneered in the importation of Philippine food products to the Tri State Area (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), Mrs. Berberabe has received numerous awards. The most recent being one of the *50 Outstanding Asian Americans in Business* given by the prestigious Asian American Business Development Center in New York to honor Asian American entrepreneurs and to highlight their contributions to the US economy. The awardees are chosen from the best of Asian American entrepreneurs who are engaged in a wide range of business interests forming an integral part of the US economy. She was a recipient of the *2005 Volunteer Award* from the State of New Jersey, the *2005 Entrepreneur Award* from the Knights of Rizal, the *2005 Entrepreneur Award* from Mayor Jeremiah Healey of New Jersey, *Mabuhay Leadership Award* from the National Association of Filipino Americans, and Certificate of Honor and Recognition from the Association of Filipino Teachers of America, among other awards.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Patricia A. Berberabe, the President recognizes her pioneering entrepreneurship which paved the way for the establishment of her successful chain of stores and importation of Filipino food products from the Philippines to the US, thereby actively promoting Filipino goods in the region.

Angeles R. Carandang

Illinois, United States of America

A strong will, determination and sense of purpose can take you places, especially if it is love for your country and your fellowmen.

Diverse though the activities she undertakes may be, Ms. Angeles "Jelly" Carandang does everything for a good cause, and more often than not, it is for the country of her birth. For one, she has spearheaded various fundraising activities that benefited her *kababayans*. As chair of the 2005 Philippine Week Committee (PWC), Ms. Carandang was responsible for creating a committee in charge of the walkathon project, with the proceeds treated as additional funds for the Philippine American Cultural Foundation (PACF), a non-profit organization whose objective is to acquire a suburban community center, which will house the *Paaralang Pilipino*. The \$2,500 raised was added to the Unity Tree Fund for the planned community center. She also spearheaded the recruitment of candidates for the PWC Beauty Pageant, a popularity, beauty and talent contest whose proceeds were used to fund medical and dental missions, provide food and entertainment to the seniors and veterans in the community, as well as other charitable organizations.



As president of Tuy Club USA from 2004-2005, she organized a fundraising event to benefit needy but deserving students from Tuy, Batangas. The organization sponsors four high school students each year from barangay schools in Tuy.

As secretary of the Philippine Reef Committee, she helped raise funds for the establishment and maintenance of the Philippine Coral Reef Exhibit at the Shedd Aquarium and the preservation of the coral reefs in APO Island. The over \$60,000 funds raised during the gala dinner were allocated to three projects that benefits Filipino residents of APO Islands, and the Filipinos in the US. A portion was used to microfinance small business ventures in APO Island in the Philippines.

Ms. Carandang is also very active in community service in the Philippines. Through collaboration with other organizations, Ms. Carandang co-sponsored a dental and medical mission to the towns of Nasugbu and Tuy, in Batangas, Philippines on February 7-11, 2006. With the help of several local medical volunteers, the activity provided services to about 2,000 needy patients from a total of 75

barangays. She also donated the supplies, medicines, medical equipment and clothing to the two municipalities in Batangas.

She donated clothing and medicine to the Quezonian Foundation to help typhoon victims in the province of Quezon in 2004. She also initiated fundraising activities to help victims of tsunami in Indonesia and Thailand (through the Asian American Coalition of Chicago), victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (through the American Red Cross), and victims of the Leyte mudslide in the Philippines (through the National Disaster Coordinating Council).

She represented the Filipino American Community during the Skokie Festival of Cultures for the last six years. She invited Filipino – American cultural groups to perform during the two-day annual festival. She also distributed flyers and other materials to promote tourism in the Philippines and encouraged Filipino – American entrepreneurs to sell native products at the Filipino – American Exhibit/Vendor Booths. Through cultural performances, Filipino – Americans were able to share their cultural heritage and traditions to other cultural minorities participating in the festival.

Ms. Carandang is the only Filipina among the six appointed Fil-Am Commissioners in the Village of Skokie. She also became the first female Asian appointed as director of the Caucus Party, the ruling political party in Skokie.

As one of the founders of the Circle of Empowered Women, she supported various causes to protect the welfare of victims of domestic abuse and violence, workplace sex discrimination and harassment, and other issues affecting women.

As the Secretary of the Filipino Civil Rights Advocates of Chicago (FilCRA Chicago), she initiated fundraising activities to provide financial support for the Filipino veterans of WWII. Funds were used to lobby in support for the passage of the bill which will grant full equity benefits for WWII veterans.

Her advocacy efforts on immigration concerns made her prepare flyers and picket signs used during the marches and rallies against the criminalization of undocumented immigrants and those who help them. She also gave monetary donations in support of these causes.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Angeles R. Carandang, the President recognizes her efforts in advancing the political and social welfare of her kababayans through representations in various Filipino and American organizations, as well as in assisting needy Filipinos in the motherland through fundraising and cultural activities.

Sr. Mary Aida C. Casambre Hong Kong SAR

Our picture of the religious is usually that of a piously praying individual, meek and subservient. In the modern world, however, serving the God one has pledged his or her life to, entails being outside the four walls of a convent or a mission house and helping the true people of the Lord, those in most need of assistance and aid.

One such person is Sister Mary Aida Casambre of Hong Kong. Sister Aida was the moving force behind SIMBAYANAN-KAMMPI, a network of overseas Filipino workers' groups in Hongkong under the Diocesan Pastoral Center for Filipinos. Organized in 2000, it became a venue to advance the rights of OFWs and pursue and meet the needs of OFWs in difficult situations in Hongkong. It is aimed at providing programs that would meet the spiritual, social, cultural and educational needs of Filipino migrant workers.

Sister Aida is no stranger to peaceful demonstrations, her quiet and calming presence in various prayer rallies to further the rights of migrants has advanced the cause of OFWs in the region, particularly in relation to changes in contract regulations, fair and fast resolution of cases involving OFWs, and the fight against illegal recruitment and charging of excessive placement fees.

Through her initiative, enhancement programs for household workers, which seek to strengthen their self-confidence for efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace, were conducted in order to equip them with necessary skills and values on the job. These paved the way for OFWs to form a support network among themselves with a broader knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, as well as adequate coping skills for the changes brought about by migration. These activities resulted in a decrease in the incidence of premature termination among domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

She shows her maternal care and support to OFWs by personally attending to police cases and hearings. In the recent case of OFW Vicky Flores, whose body was found at the Tung Chung pier on April 11, 2008, Sister Aida aided the victim's sister, by providing her with food and accommodation at the Diocese, while



she was following up the status of her sister's case with Hong Kong authorities.

The Diocesan provides aid to victims of human trafficking, rape and attempted rape cases, and has also become a safe haven for OFWs seeking temporary shelter after running away or escaping from their abusive employers. In January 2008, Sister Aida was cited by the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) for her extraordinary selflessness, patience and professionalism when her organization attended to six Filipino trafficked victims by providing them with shelter while they remained in

Hong Kong and testified against their human traffickers. The conviction of the traffickers was welcomed by human rights groups and was widely publicized in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The Philippine Consulate General has also come to rely on Sister Aida's organization in providing accommodation to Filipinos who have become victims of illegal recruitment, as well as in giving basic necessities and spiritual guidance to OFWs in jails or hospitals.

Sister Aida's help has not only been limited to Hong Kong but extends to the Philippines as well. When Maasin, Southern Leyte was devastated by a landslide in March 2006, the Diocese, under Sister Aida's leadership, raised funds in the amount of HK\$11,549.46 to help in the relief efforts for the residents. She likewise gathered funds from various individuals and groups for the liver transplant expenses of Mark Jairus Mendoza on 26 March 2006 and Sultan MJ in the amount of HK\$17,156. Both underwent successful surgical operations at the Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong.

By utilizing culture and the arts to assist OFWs, Sister Aida led the training of the Kadasig children and youth choir in a songwriting workshop. The group came out with an album recorded by a company based in Cebu. They have since toured Cebu and Negros island singing their original compositions and eventually bagged the first place award in the Central Visayas Choir contest. To date, Sr. Aida continues to demonstrate her musical inclination by coaching the Filipino choir of the Diocesan Pastoral Center for Filipinos.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Sister Mary Aida C. Casambre, the President commends her in going beyond her vocation by advancing the rights and protection of Filipinos in Hong Kong, and serving Filipino nationals in distress overseas.

Esperanza R. Derpo

Nigeria

In a country with a small Filipino population, Ms. Esperanza Derpo stands out as she lives selflessly for others. She has been known to assist Filipinos in distress in Nigeria and has personally contributed her time, effort and finances. It is through her leadership that the Filipino community in Nigeria started and continues to raise funds for projects in the Philippines, as well as charitable undertakings for the Filipino community in the African state.



Her genuine concern for her *kababayans* is known to the Filipino community in Nigeria. She has continuously advocated the need to maintain proper documentation among Filipinos in the country and has served as adviser and facilitator for the required paperwork in legalizing the employment of OFWs in Lagos. She ensured the safe and humane repatriation to the Philippines of three overseas Filipino workers, and shipment of remains of two Filipinos who died in Nigeria.

The Philippine Barangay Society of Nigeria (PBSN) through the initiative of Ms. Derpo, has extended soft loans to members in times of financial difficulties. PBSN has likewise extended financial assistance to members in times of accidents, illness and bereavement totaling \$5,000 to date. As Chairman of the PBSN, Ms. Derpo mobilized, motivated and got the whole Filipino community in Nigeria involved in a fund raising event held in 2005 in aid of the Classroom Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad (CGMA) project. The donation from Nigeria totaled \$12,000. The following year, a further \$2,000 was raised in aid of the landslide victims in Leyte.

Ms. Derpo also initiated the construction of a multi-purpose Filipino Community Clubhouse in Lagos, which is used as a venue for *Barangay Day* – a gathering among Filipino expatriates in Lagos for the purpose of building camaraderie among members of the Filipino community. The plan is for the clubhouse to become a trade center to promote Philippine goods and products that would facilitate trade between Nigeria and the Philippines.

Other than marshalling financial assistance, Ms. Derpo has also been at the helm of showcasing Philippine music, dance, food and tourist destinations among African audiences, and in the process has raised funds to cover costs for free primary education among poor African children. As part of the organizing committee for SMALL WORLD – an event gathering various international women's groups within Lagos that support various charities in Nigeria, the Philippine team has consistently wowed African audiences with the Philippines' cultural treasures. In

2007, the Philippines showcased Philippine music and in 2008, the Banaue Rice Terraces and various Philippine dances.

In cooperation with the Philippine Embassy, Ms. Derpo has led various committees involved in the celebration of the Philippine Independence Day showcasing Philippine cultural presentations and providing a venue for Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike to gather for a day of fun, and share in the joys of Philippine traditions through food bazaars and *Barrio Fiestas*.

Her relentless energy and dedication extended not only to the Filipino community but also among vulnerable groups in Africa. Among her causes is the provision of primary education to underprivileged children in Kirikiri town, Apapa, Lagos. In the past three years, PBSN has provided regular funding of \$5,000 a year covering costs for building schools and buying school materials for poor children under the Kirikiri Initiative project.

Charity projects supported by PBSN and chaired by Mrs. Derpo have also extended to Benue State. A donation of \$5,000 in 2006 completed the roofing of the RCM Primary School, a Catholic Mission School in Benue.

Her generous nature has extended to giving personal donations to the Sisters of Mother Theresa of Charity, an orphanage and a home to children and adults living with HIV/AIDS, as well as to the Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Esperanza R. Derpo, the President commends her efforts in keeping the spirit of bayanihan alive within the Filipino community in Nigeria.

Filipino Korean Spouses Association

South Korea

Inter-marriage has become a way of life for some Filipinos who try their luck outside the country. While many have found true love with their foreign partners, sadly a significant number find themselves victimized or traumatized by cohabiting with other nationals.

In June 2001, five Filipina women, all married to Korean nationals agreed to form the Filipino Korean Spouses Association (FKSA) mainly to share and learn from their experiences as wives married to Korean men. Recognizing their shared experiences in adjusting to the Korean way of life, from food to weather to language and differences in culture and traditions, the FKSA was borne out of a need to establish a venue where these differences can be reconciled; and adjustments to the challenges brought about by inter-cultural marriage be better achieved.

FKSA also recognizes that Filipinas who were unlucky and never got past the adjustment period will most likely become victims of domestic violence.

Since it was founded in 2001, the FKSA has provided unfailing assistance to Filipino nationals in distress, as well as support for socio-cultural programs that preserve the identity of Filipino compatriots abroad. The association has effectively provided an indispensable support system for Filipino-Korean couples challenged by the hurdles of inter-cultural marriages, cultural adaptation and effective societal integration.

With the increase in the number of foreign women married to Korean men, particularly in the past five years, FKSA also noted the increase in cases of domestic abuse especially among Filipinas who were recruited as wives. Among the common complaints from the Filipina wives are domestic violence, forced sex, threats of deportation and lack of financial support.

These prompted FKSA to actively pursue reforms that are aimed to give more protection to foreign spouses of Koreans in 2004 through a petition forwarded to the Philippine Embassy in Seoul. These include the right to Korean citizenship after two years of residency in Korea, whether they are still married or already divorced; and the right to equal economic opportunity. FKSA's petition signed by 116 women, also requested that all divorce applications filed by Korean spouses be first investigated before the petition is granted, since there are instances where foreign wives



are unaware that divorce proceedings have been initiated by their husbands without their knowledge.

The petition further proposed that the Korean government create a special court to hear cases of foreign wives who complain of domestic violence or marital rape against their husbands. Alimony and security of abode for wives and their children should also be ensured.

Lastly, the petition proposed that a course on the Korean language and culture be given to foreign women before getting married to Korean men in the same way that Korean men should also learn about their wives' cultures and languages before marriage.

In August 2005, noting that 1 out of 10 marriages in Korea are between Koreans and foreigners, the country's culture and welfare ministers gathered to draw up a master plan for supporting foreign female immigrants married to Koreans. FKSA's petition was used as a blueprint for this purpose.

In coordination with the Incheon Women's Hotline Office (IWHO), FKSA has organized pre- and post-marriage counseling seminars among Korean men and their Filipino partners in order to cultivate a culture of respect between the partners. From September 2003, language and Korean cultural classes have been conducted free of charge to Filipino partners of Korean nationals. Lecturers include volunteers from the Incheon Women's Hotline Office. In exchange, FKSA designates members who also teach English language classes to members of the IWH who are the first point of contact for foreign partners in distress.

At that time, the idea was considered a breakthrough. Today, Korean language and culture classes are being conducted not only among Filipino spouses but also for other foreigners who would like to learn the Korean language and way of life.

FKSA also provides funding to certain charitable causes in the Philippines, such as financial assistance to leprosy patients at the Tala Leprosarium, wall repair of the Lunas II Elementary School in Cebu, and donation for the plane fare of a Filipina in distress who ran away from her Korean husband.

In conferring the Banaag Award to the Filipino Korean Spouses Association, the President recognizes the efforts of Filipinas married to Korean nationals in ensuring the safety of their fellowmen and upholding their rights in their foreign adoptive country.

Lamberto S. Garcia

New York, United States of America

If one would ask overseas Filipinos what project they would most likely support in the Philippines given the chance, something related to education would probably be among the top choices, alongside microfinancing and livelihood opportunities. Many consider education as vital to national development, and a right, not a privilege of all.

This was what Mr. Lamberto Garcia had in mind when he opened and established the Santiago Garcia Education Foundation, Inc. or SGEFI. Born in Sta. Ana, Pampanga, he experienced the hardship and difficulties in finishing his education, his father having died when he was only 14 years old. He then worked during the day, supporting himself so that he could attend night classes, eventually finishing his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degrees at the Lyceum University. In 1971, he left the Philippines for the US in order to provide a better education and future for his children.

All his life, he has put a premium on education, and more importantly to the struggles of hardworking students who have the determination and commitment to excel. This made him put up the SGEFI, a vocational school and training center for young adults, out-of-school youth, single mothers and those unemployed in his province of Pampanga. The main purpose of the training center is to give a chance to the underprivileged to acquire new skills in trade that can help them find jobs in the Philippines and abroad. As of December 2007, more than 1,000 individuals had been assisted in acquiring free vocational courses and training on computer literacy, hair science and cosmetology, reflexology, dressmaking and basic electronics. This has been fondly called "Libreng Eskwela" since classes and training sessions, as well as materials of the students during the course, are free. He works with the local government of Sta. Ana, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in implementing the program.

Funding for the SGEFI's program is derived from Mr. Garcia's pension benefits and assistance from members of his family. By encouraging volunteerism, no fundraising activity to date has been conducted to support the activities of the Foundation.



In order to sustain the ability of young people to learn, he collected books from individuals and New York public libraries in Staten Island, and shipped these to the Philippines for the foundation's library, using again his own personal funds. Today, for the first time, his community in Sta. Ana has its own library.

Mr. Garcia started a pilot project called "Sipag at Tiyaga Loan", to help qualified graduates of his livelihood training program to start their own small businesses. A modest interest-free loan to be paid in two years, may be availed of by qualified graduates of the foundation under the supervision of the local social welfare officer.

Mr. Garcia also gives cash awards as incentives to outstanding students every graduation day in two schools in his hometown of Santa Ana, the San Isidro Elementary School and San Isidro High School. He gives importance to the struggles of hardworking honor students with strong determination and commitment to excel.

Aside from education, he also values health care. To serve the community, Mr. Garcia co-sponsored the opening of *Botika sa Barangay* in September 2005, where he provided the initial capital of P100,000. The project is being implemented in cooperation with the Department of Health, San Isidro Barangay Council and the Garcia Foundation. The drugstore buys its medicines directly from the DOH and its authorized agencies, and sells them to the public at a discounted price.

By any standard, Mr. Garcia is not rich. His contributions to his community are modest but its effects are far-reaching considering he spends his own humble resources to make a difference. He is guided by the Chinese proverb: *Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime*. This is why his foundation is geared towards teaching the people to learn new skills to use in search of jobs. The expected long term results will be the improvement of their families, and their immeasurable contribution to society and their communities.

In recognition of his unselfish innovative contributions to the community, Mr. Garcia has been given due recognition in 2005 as the *Most Outstanding Kampangan*, and *Most Outstanding Citizen* for 2005.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Lamberto S. Garcia, the President recognizes him as a partner in national development efforts, and for his community work in advancing free education for all.

Eleanor B. Ho

Taiwan

'Nurturing and loving', these are the traits that every Filipina possesses. These attributes also attract foreigners to them. But these characteristics do not promise Filipinas a good future at all times. An international report, *Violence Against Filipino Women*, revealed that Filipina migrants are six times more likely to be victims of domestic violence. Thanks to Ms. Eleanor 'Nene' Ho, Filipina spouses in Taiwan need not worry of the risk of being beaten, tortured, molested, or worse, returning home in a box.



Philippines, a parish-based program that assists distressed OFWs and Filipina spouses by providing them with return tickets to Manila. The project also accepts donations in support of cultural activities of St. Christopher's Parish. She was also the former secretary of the Federation of Filipino Communities in Taiwan, an umbrella organization of Filipino NGOs which promotes solidarity among Filipinos in various causes and programs, and helps out Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) in the conduct of some of its activities.

Ms. Ho was born in Cavite City in 1944. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree with a Major in Business Administration at the Philippine Women's University. She held management level positions in the Philippines until she migrated to Taiwan to work as an English teacher.

Ms. Ho, being a migrant married to a Taiwanese, has been exposed to physical and emotional harassments experienced by Filipinas in Taiwan. Taiwan is one of the top destination countries of foreign spouses and fiancées, and hosts more than 7,000 Filipinas. Armed with the strong will to preserve the dignity of Filipinas and the determination to uphold their rights, she founded Filipinos Married to Taiwanese Association (FMTA) which aimed at reaching out and providing shelter to distressed Filipinas married to Taiwanese, and fostering support among its members. Having recognized communication as an effective tool to bridge cultural barriers, she organized free English lessons for Taiwanese children, an opportunity to appreciate their mother's tradition and way of life. To date, with Ms. Ho's untiring efforts, welfare cases involving Filipinas married to Taiwanese maintains a zero-level rate based on the assistance-to-nationals case report of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

With her recognized credibility and good reputation in Taiwan, Ms. Ho has been entrusted to hold high level positions in various socio-civic organizations. She is the former president of the Filipino Bowlers Club that seeks to promote camaraderie among Filipinos in Taiwan through sports tournaments and other activities. Since 1996, the Club has conducted periodic bowling competitions. She is also one of the five pioneer members of the Project Reaching Out

Having observed the homesickness experienced by OFWs in Taiwan, Ms. Ho is the founding publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Migrant News*, a free publication for Filipino nationals in Taiwan. *The Migrant News* provides the OFWs with news from Manila, new policies affecting their status as migrants, and essential information on labor, health and entertainment. The publication also serves as an outlet where members of Samahang Makata International (SMI) can express their views as migrants through their essays and poems. Ms. Ho is an editor and adviser of SMI.

As an advocate of human rights, Ms. Ho represented the Filipino Community in Taiwan in the 2nd Global Filipino Networking Convention held in Manila and in the Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives conducted in Laguna. The latter served as an avenue where the community expressed its concerns with regard to the status and welfare of Filipino spouses married to Taiwanese nationals. Ms. Ho also helped formulate a resolution to address existing problems and issues related to migration through intermarriages.

On top of her contributions to Filipino communities in Taiwan, her assistance is also often sought by distressed Filipinos. At times, her house serves as a shelter to some Filipinos who do not have permits to stay or work in Taiwan during police crackdowns. She also assists and recommends Filipinos to employers looking for workers, conducts visits for Filipinos serving long sentences in the Taiwan National Jail, and assists MECO in bringing food, books, and personal supplies for the inmates.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Eleanor B. Ho, the President recognizes her contribution for the empowerment of Filipinas married to Taiwanese nationals, and for her success in unifying Filipino communities in Taiwan.

Joseph I. Magdalena

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ambitions can just be illusions if not taken seriously, but a great possibility if properly considered. Mr. Joseph I. Magdalena's success story and achievement as a Filipino businessman in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a kind of fairy tale staged into reality.

A native of Rosario, Batangas, Mr. Magdalena bravely met the challenges that life brought him. At a young age of 12, he already labored as vendor in a fish store in Bauan Public Market. At 14, he was employed as leather cutter machine operator at Aries Philippine Factory located in Batangas. With hard work and the aspiration to achieve something in life, he managed to finish his Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Political Science at the University of Manila while at the same time working as a handyman at Caltex Refinery and clerk at Jollimart Food Corporation.

Exposed to varied working experiences and armed with a hope to provide a better living to his family, he migrated to Saudi in 1992. From his humble beginnings as store merchandiser at Al Rajhi Supermarket, Mr. Magdalena rose through the ranks and emerged to become one of the most successful Filipino entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia.

Toward the mid-90s, Mr. Magdalena together with Mr. Omar al Malki, his sponsor, opened a small one-door store that exclusively sells Filipino food products, a source of comfort to fellow OFWs experiencing the realities of working in a culturally different environment. The store went through the usual birth pains and nearly folded up during its first year. But determined to offer Filipino goods to his *kababayans*, Mr. Magdalena was motivated to try out other strategies. He started to deliver local Philippine food and other products right at the doorsteps of Filipinos located in far-flung camps who experience difficulty traveling due to culturally-rooted prohibitions and limitations. With this strategy, Mr. Magdalena has been serving Filipinos and boosting Philippine exports while enhancing the enterprises' profitability. With his innate entrepreneurial foresight and ingenuity, the store grew to a grocery complex called *Pinoy*



Supermarket, a Filipino mall-like place at the heart of Riyadh. Today, the business serves as a cultural hub which promotes Philippine-made products all over the Kingdom. It has since expanded to London and Rome. He also established the ARRHA Company in the Philippines, a trading firm which exports Philippine products to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Magdalena's entrepreneurial acuity enabled him to extend assistance to fellow OFWs and charitable institutions in the Philippines. He donated assorted vitamins and medicines amounting to P200,000.00 in a medical mission conducted by Bantay-Bata 163 in 2006. He also gave food products, assorted school items and uniforms amounting to P280,000.00 to several communities and organizations in support of feeding programs, sports festivals, and special tournaments. He spearheaded fundraising initiatives in support of various causes. He also made financial contributions to the *Asosasyon ng Pilipinong Mang-Aawit* Concert for Cancer Patients, Ariel Gaan Foundation's live concert for a cause and the 2007 ASEAN Women's League Bazaar.

Aside from his community projects, Mr. Magdalena also attends to distressed Filipinos. He sponsored a fund raising project to help a Filipina mother, whose daughter died of burns in Riyadh, bring the remains of her daughter back to the Philippines. On occasion, he donates cash and air tickets for distressed female OFWs housed in government shelters, awaiting repatriation.

Having been an ordinary OFW himself who later became a respected businessman, Mr. Magdalena shares his experience to eventually prepare his fellow OFWs for reintegration. In 2007, he donated 8,000 Saudi Riyals to CALABARZON Reintegration Program, Bagong KKK, and the Colayco Lecture Series as part of efforts to raise awareness about reintegration and encourage fellow OFWs to invest their earnings productively.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Joseph I. Magdalena, the President recognizes his genuine entrepreneurial spirit in opening doors to Filipino products abroad and unconditional commitment in paying back his country through the community projects he sponsors.

Santiago L. Muzones, Jr.
New Jersey, United States of America

He graduated from the school of hard knocks and his life story could easily pass for a movie plot. In these challenging times, his story can serve as an inspiration to others. Born in Iloilo City to a poor family a decade prior to World War II, Mr. Santiago L. Muzones knew how life could be so tough at such an early age. The youngest in a brood of 10, his father passed away when he was a toddler. To make matters complicated, his mother lost her sight when young Santiago was starting his primary schooling. From then on, he had to do odd jobs to make both ends meet and to continue his education. Despite these hardships, he excelled in academics, and finished both his primary and secondary education with honors.



Dreaming of a better life, Mr. Muzones packed his bags and went to Manila to get a college education, despite the fact that his mother or siblings could not afford to send him to college. The year was 1952 and Manila was still reeling from the destruction brought about by the war. He was accepted as an engineering scholar in a local university but as fate would have it, he had to drop out eventually for financial reasons. Mr. Muzones worked for his education by cleaning taxis in San Juan. To save on board and lodging, he converted a junk taxi to be his abode. With his earnings, he enrolled in a vocational school, got involved in extracurricular activities and later became active in the student political movement.

Then things started looking up for him. He was eventually employed in a government corporation where he continued his college aspirations. He worked days and studied nights at the University of the East taking up business administration. Soon after graduation, he took and passed the police entrance examination and worked with the Manila Police for seven years.

With a young wife and four kids to support, he decided to leave for the US in 1969 and found work at the US Postal Service. Soon after, he petitioned

his family and settled in Jersey City. He worked his way up the ladder and became a supervisor for office services of the US Postal Service.

Mr. Muzones then became actively involved in community work. His commitment to serve the underprivileged led him to establish the Iloilo Society of America (ISA) Foundation to grant scholarships to and assist poor but deserving students of Iloilo. To date, the Foundation has extended P11 million worth of scholarships. Twenty three years after it was established, ISA was able to graduate 217 college scholars, with another 258 students currently being supported by the Foundation. He also initiated several community development projects in his home province which include the construction of a chapel and a school in his hometown of Lambuanao, Iloilo.

Aside from his devotion to helping his countrymen, Mr. Muzones has distinguished himself as a civic leader. In 1982, he was appointed honorary mayor of Jersey City where he met with different minority groups of the city. He received the *Distinguished Citizen of Jersey City* when he organized a block watch and called it "Salamat Po Block Watch", a project that regularly patrols the city neighborhood.

A recipient of various national and local awards and citations such as the *Gawad Parangal sa America, Ten Outstanding Fathers of the Year, Distinguished Service and Leadership Recognition awards*, Mr. Muzones is the Commissioner of Human Rights in Jersey City. He was first appointed in 1994 and has been consistently reappointed to the position as a testament to his exemplary performance on the job. Prior to these, he was State Chairman of the National Federation of Filipino American Association, Executive Vice-President of the Philippine Centennial Movement and Director of the Garden State Filipino American Association, President of the Catholic Action of Mary and Vice-President of the Federation of Philippine Societies of New Jersey.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Santiago L. Muzones, Jr., the President recognizes his effective leadership and unselfish dedication to community service specifically through his Iloilo Society of America Foundation, and philanthropic activities in the Philippines, in general.

Antonio N. Noblejas, M.D.

New Zealand

Uniting huge numbers of people is always a daunting challenge. But for Dr. Antonio Noblejas, it is very important that Filipinos stick together once in a foreign land.

In September 1976, Dr. Noblejas together with some Filipinos and New Zealander spouses of Filipinas founded the first Filipino organization in New Zealand, the *Philippine-New Zealand Club* where he was elected as its first chairman. The club served as a support system for Filipino visitors and new settlers in New Zealand until the 1980s. The organization has evolved and eventually changed its name to Philippine Society of New Zealand in the late 1980s then to Philippine Bayanihan Club of New Zealand. The club, through the leadership of Dr. Noblejas, applied for the status of club sponsor from the Ministry of Immigration which was subsequently approved. As a result, the club was able to provide critical "immigration points" for Filipinos seeking permanent residence in New Zealand, a prerequisite to the approval of migration to the country.

Dr. Noblejas initiated the formation of the Federation of Filipino Associations, Societies and Clubs in New Zealand, Inc. (FFASCNZI) which was formally organized in 1994. He served as the chairperson from 2003-2007. As chairperson, he represented the Filipino community in various capacities as an officer of a Filipino association or a representative of the Filipino community in New Zealand's government consultations about migration and settlement concerns of immigrants. The federation served as the umbrella organization of all Filipino organizations in New Zealand, numbering to about 20 as of 2003. During his term as the federation's chairperson, a resolution was passed allowing non-incorporated associations, societies and clubs of Filipinos to be associate members of the federation.

Under his leadership, the FFASCNZI acquired \$100,000.00 scholarship grant from Raffles Design Institute for Filipinos who are members or dependents



of members, of the federation's member organizations for at least one year.

Seeing the proliferation of Filipino associations and clubs in Auckland, Dr. Noblejas encouraged said organizations to unite under a central organization which came to reality in 2002 when 15 organizations formed the Council of Auckland Philippine Organizations (CAPO, Inc.) where Dr. Noblejas is a member and an adviser.

Through his initiative, the Auckland Filipino Senior Citizens Association was formed in September 2004, for which he also serves as adviser.

Dr. Noblejas assisted the then Philippine Honorary Consul General Graeme Dabb for 26 years until the latter retired in 2007. He worked in close liaison with the Honorary Consuls of the Philippines in Auckland during his early years when the Philippine Embassy had yet to set up office in the country.

He had been an active member of the Filipino Catholic Community in Auckland until the Catholic Church took over its functions. It was organized in 1980 to conduct religious activities and preserve Filipino religious tradition.

Through hard work, he and his wife managed to establish a retirement home. Although a small business, this served as a training ground for Filipino nurses to be registered at the New Zealand Nursing Council and eventually become permanent residents. He owns rest homes, as well as a video library business, which provided employment to Filipinos who eventually became permanent residents in New Zealand.

Due to his diligence and good example, Dr. Noblejas' employer at Counties Manukau District Health Board permitted him to allow Filipino doctors to conduct some clinical observations in Psychiatry to enable them to take the New Zealand Council examinations for licensure.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Dr. Antonio Noblejas, the President recognizes his efforts in uniting and advancing the interests and causes of the Filipino community in New Zealand through the formation of various Filipino associations.

Lilian Y. Overs

Canada

All she wanted to do was help improve the lives of others. Perhaps, she never anticipated the magnitude of her assistance which affected so many lives and improved their lot.

In 2000, Lilian Yared Overs and her husband Michael, with Dr. James Yared Gaité established the Lebumfacil-Santa Ana Medical Foundation, Inc. to cater to the needs of the indigent residents of Toledo City, in the province of Cebu. The Foundation is a non-stock, non-profit organization that provides free medical consultation and medicines. From a 3x3 square meter clinic located at the Toledo Public Market, the facility has grown to a 2-storey, 4,000 square meter complex that houses an ambulatory surgical unit, laboratory, ultra-sound center, pharmacy and state-of-the-art radiology department, among others.

The Lebumfacil operates on a daily basis and receives 450 people a week. It is the only organization in Toledo that has an x-ray machine and facilities to do blood analysis. The foundation also conducts a monthly outreach program where three or four of the medical staff visit all 38 barangays of Toledo City where they provide free multivitamins to 8,000 indigent children monthly and medical care to 2,000 members of the Toledo community each month. Lebumfacil spends about C\$6,000 or P270,000.00 a month to buy at least 35 types of medicines for various diseases.

Over the years, the Foundation has evolved in its advocacy and is now engaged in several community development projects. It assists the farmers in growing their own food in the face of the rising cost of living. In support of this goal, it has instituted a pig-sharing program giving out sow piglets from Canada to 20 farmers of Toledo City. On the heels of its successful swine sharing project, the foundation also operates a chicken dispersal program to improve the community's access to food and livelihood opportunities. It also funded construction of several water well projects, roads and bridges to aid farmers and their children.

The Foundation donated funds for the construction of a day care center for the poor in Talavera, Toledo. It established a feeding program for over 1,000



indigent children in barangay Cabitoonan, Toledo, in the spirit of the holiday season where they also provided entertainment and toys. It funded the education of Toledo City's special children to help them realize their full potentials and assist them in their integration to society. It also regularly donates funds to the Franciscan Sister's Cebu Hope Center for the abused children. The Foundation also built an eco-friendly civic park by the beach in Brgy. Cabitoonan complete with barbecue pits, covered areas, play equipment, and public washrooms costing C\$180,000 or P8.1 million. It also

donated all the materials needed to build and improve the women's facilities in the City Jail of Toledo, to separate women from new detainees.

Now based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Lilian Yared Overs continues to extend service to her *kababayans* by raising money in Canada to fund these projects with support from her vast networks.

Despite having achieved a lot through her foundation over the years, Mrs. Overs' ultimate dream is to establish a primary and secondary school in the place where she grew up. Her dream became a reality when she and her Foundation inaugurated in 2007 an elementary and high school for the students of Barangay Anopog, Pinamungajan, Cebu. The school was solely funded by the Foundation and features an American standard 2-storey, 6-classroom elementary and high school building at an estimated cost of P9 million pesos. It has also renovated the old school buildings of the neighboring Doña Irineo Lebumfacil-Sta. Ana Elementary School at a cost of P5 million. In addition to the renovation of the school, the Foundation has also undertaken civil works in the community such as the construction of a basketball court, an auditorium, common toilets, a bailey bridge, and improvement of the water supply.

A teacher by training and profession, this 85-year old alumna of the University of San Carlos (USC) Cebu was recently awarded by her alma mater as the most outstanding alumni in the field of community development in recognition of her exceptional accomplishments. She is also the founding president of the Toronto Carolinians, the alumni association of the USC in Canada.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Lilian Yared-Overs, the President recognizes her immense contributions and utmost dedication to community service through her Lebumfacil Medical Foundation, Inc. and philanthropic activities in the province of Cebu.

Philippine Community Council of New South Wales, Inc.

Australia

A Filipino group is making waves down under.

The Philippine Community Council of New South Wales emerged out of necessity to give voice to the Filipino-Australian community in New South Wales. The idea was nurtured by a group of Filipino-Australians in Sydney when they established the organization in 1990. Since then, the group has evolved with its two-pronged mission, that of advancing the interests of Filipinos in New South Wales and initiating developmental activities in the Philippines.



PCC-NSW has been organizing various community fora to provide an avenue for the discussion of issues and concerns affecting the community or any other topics of relevance such as immigration, dual citizenship, and absentee voting, among other concerns. It co-hosted the 5th Global Filipino Networking Convention which was held in September 2007, the first time that the gathering was held outside the United States and the Philippines. It also organized a conference on Filipino youth and two national conferences attended by community leaders in Australia.

For the past 18 years, the PCC-NSW has undertaken exemplary and noteworthy projects both in Australia and the Philippines. Foremost among these are its developmental projects to assist victims of calamities, provide scholarships and fund for certain infrastructure projects (school building) in the Philippines. It established three trust banks in Quezon City and Nueva Ecija to finance the community's small business enterprises and microfinance operations. It is also active in the promotion of Gawad Kalinga projects by funding GK villages in Quezon, Nueva Ecija and Quezon City, thus creating an awareness of the Gawad Kalinga project in both the State and Federal Parliaments of Australia, and among the Filipino Community State Councils.

In 2004, the group took special interest in the life of five-year Juriel Amora from Bohol, who was born with no legs and just one arm. PCC-NSW sponsored his trip to Sydney to receive prosthetic limbs. PCC-NSW made representations with the Australian government to obtain urgent visa approvals and also provided financial and material donations while Juriel was in Sydney. PCC-NSW also assisted in setting up a trust fund to help Juriel. Every year thereafter, Juriel and his father would return to Sydney for check up and refitting of the prosthetic limbs. The organization shoulders all the expenses such as food, accommodation, air fare and visa for the annual trip of father and son.

To keep the Filipino community of New South Wales informed about topics affecting them as migrants,

Despite being miles away from the homeland, the group realized the need to promote the Filipino language and culture, especially among second generation Filipinos who grew up in Australia. It lobbied with the government of New South Wales to include the teaching of Filipino language in its high school curriculum. The subject is currently offered in three high schools in New South Wales. These lobby efforts have resulted in the holding of Filipino language classes in Metropolitan Sydney and in the county areas. PCC-NSW is also the annual host of *Paskong Pilipino*, A Taste of Philippine Christmas. Initiated by the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney in 2002, the project is being carried on by the PCC-NSW to promote Filipino culture and tradition, food and products in mainstream Australia through cultural shows, bazaars featuring Philippine made *parol* and other decorations, and food exposition at the Parramatta City Council Grounds.

Other assistance extended by the group is the provision of housing services through its affiliate – the Kapitbahayan Cooperative Ltd.; child-care through another affiliate - the Filipino Community Coop; and a 24/7 crisis helpline which was established by the group for victims of domestic violence. From time to time, the organization interacts with Australian and Philippine officials to discuss their concerns. The group has been a pillar of support in the construction of the Filipino Community Center in Sydney because half of the \$100,000 building fund for its construction came from the PCC-NSW.

In conferring the Banaag Award to the Philippine Community Council of New South Wales, Inc., the President recognizes its immeasurable contribution to the promotion of the welfare of Filipinos in Australia and in the Philippines through its various innovative programs and services.

Philippine Nurses Association of America

New York, United States of America

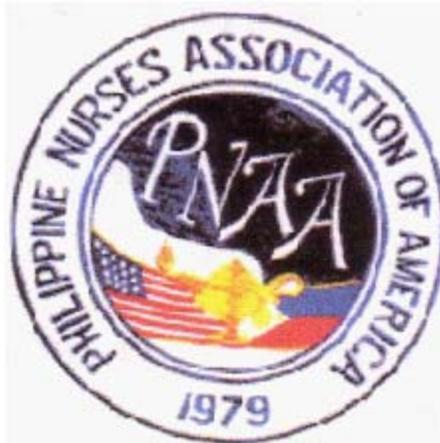
"No man, not even a doctor, ever gives any other definition of what a nurse should be than this — devoted and obedient", a wise saying from Florence Nightingale whose lamp lit and improved the poor and elementary healthcare that British armies received during the Crimean War.

Today, the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNA) keeps Nightingale's lamp lit. PNA is the national association of Filipino nurses working in the United States which seeks to uphold the positive image and welfare of Filipino nurses, promote their professional excellence, and contribute to bring about significant outcomes.

PNA has been conducting biennial international conferences since 1996 which became an avenue for discussions on best nursing practices between Philippine and United States-based nurses. Since then, the initiatives to safeguard the quality and standards of Philippine nursing and integrity of Filipino nurses through constant dialogue and interaction with agencies and organizations have been concretized.

PNA also launched the Nurse *Balik-Turo* Program which aims to encourage nurses in the United States to go back to the Philippines to impart the expertise and knowledge they have acquired at work. The program improves exchange of medical and clinical information, enhances the education of their counterparts in the Philippines, and sustains partnerships with collaborating associations.

PNA was instrumental and successful in its lobby efforts. In 1989, PNA testified before the US Congress for the immediate passage of Immigration Nurse Relief Act which proposes to grant immigrant status to Filipino nurses with H1 Visa after three years of work, thus relieving the nurses of the anxiety of being deported and giving them the opportunity to get their green cards. The proposed legislation was eventually passed. PNA local chapters of New Jersey and Michigan successfully convinced the State Boards of New Jersey and Michigan to eliminate the CGFNS predictor exams as a prerequisite in taking the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in 2006 and 2007, respectively. As a result, Filipino nurses



can take their NCLEX directly, thus saving time and money.

Aside from fulfilling its founding goals, PNA has also been actively extending assistance to their *kababayans* in the Philippines. In 2007, it conducted a medical relief mission in Albay and purchased tents, cavans of rice and bags of milk. The tents were utilized as makeshift clinics and were later distributed to different schools in need of temporary shelter. Educational assistance is also granted to financially-challenged yet deserving nursing students in various universities and colleges in

the Philippines.

Wanting to address the concern regarding the significant amount spent for airfare and accommodation plus the stress attendant to processing the travel papers of the applicants to the NCLEX, a licensure exam for nurses seeking to practice in the United States, the PNA drafted its proposal to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) recommending the Philippines, particularly Manila, to be an international testing site for NCLEX.

From 2005 – 2006, PNA had worked closely with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Philippine Nurses Association in laying down the strategic plan to comply with the 8 selection criteria set forth by NCSBN in determining international testing sites. In February 2007, after almost four years of lobbying, the Board of Directors of NCSBN approved the Philippines as an international testing center for NCLEX, thereby enabling Filipino nurses to save time and money.

In recognition of PNA's initiative and efforts for the Philippines to be declared as an NCLEX testing site, President Gloria Arroyo conferred a Presidential Citation to PNA – Task Force for NCLEX Administration in September 2007.

At present, PNA is a member of the Task Force convened by Academy Health / MacArthur Foundation in the development of ethical guidelines in the recruitment of foreign educated nurses. The PNA is also a charter member of the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Association. Through this coalition, PNA gives voice to thousands of Filipino nurses in addressing issues like wage disparities, racial discrimination and work-related harassment cases.

In conferring the Banaag Award to the Philippine Nurses Association of America, the President recognizes its persistent efforts in unifying Filipino nurses in the United States, and for developing programs in nursing best practices, training and research for the professional growth of its members and healthcare needs of the community.

Adelina R. Philipson

The Netherlands

Adelina Philipson must have been inspired by Mark Twain's adage, "kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see," that she took charity as a bright opportunity to enlighten the lives of the disadvantaged.

Born to a poor family in Pasay City in 1953, Ms. Philipson was exposed to life's trials that she knew by heart the pain and sorrow experienced by the underprivileged. She was only eight years old when her father died. Ten years later, she lost her mother too. Armed with good virtues and determination which her parents imparted to her, Ms. Philipson persevered and worked hard to alter the course of her fate. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Economics at the University of the Philippines in 1977 and took her masters in Statistics in the same university from 1979 to 1983.



With a vast experience in teaching, she came to the Netherlands in the 80s to work as an instructor at the International Secondary School. In 1989, together with her Dutch husband, Ms. Philipson started a small project for the benefit of the children. The couple sponsored the daily expenses and school materials of two children. The small project became a small but burning desire to extend assistance

to children. In 1990, together with her husband, she brought 19 brailers to the Philippine National Association of the Blind in 1990, the couple decided to start the Philipsen Fonds Foundation in 2004 which aims to improve the condition of poor Filipino disabled children through educational support and assistance. Ms. Philipson works as the coordinator of the foundation, and through her efforts, she has successfully gained the support of the Dutch local government. At present, the foundation supports 89 blind/handicapped children who get monthly financial assistance, and more than 1,200 differently-abled children who receive assistance through its various projects. A total of 130 brailers, 250 typewriters, 15 computers, 10 sewing machines and toys have been donated by the foundation.

Because of the Foundation's popularity and unquestioned credibility in The Netherlands through its worthwhile projects and media promotions, the *Nationale Commissie voor Internationale Samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling* or NCDO of the Dutch Government agreed to double every cent collected by Phil Fonds through projects that are approved by the NCDO. As a result, more and more Dutch families have built good relationship with Filipino families. Moreover, Dutch families have visited the Philippines and some handicapped children have been given the chance to visit the

Netherlands. This cross-cultural interaction enabled the Foundation to generate more assistance for the children it supports and helps create stronger ties between the Philippines and The Netherlands.

To assure increased access of blind children to quality education, Ms. Philipson launched the "With the Braille, the Blind is less Blind" program from 1992 to 1994. She also coordinated with various sectors for the total renovation of a dormitory that houses 800 deaf children in Pasig City. In 2003, Ms. Philipson headed the execution of the *Learning and Employment for the Blind and Deaf* in Pasig City which provided extra training and jobs to special children.

Ms. Philipson has been financially supporting students for 12 years. An estimated P5 million are raised annually in The Netherlands and sent to support the education of the less fortunate children in the Philippines. About P1.5 to 6 million per year is remitted to the Philippines to cover the expenses for the construction of additional classrooms, renovation of dormitories and furnishing of educational facilities in the different cities of Metro Manila, Cebu and Antipolo.

In recognition of her worthy efforts towards assisting Filipino deaf and blind children, Ms. Philipson was conferred a royal award from her Excellency Queen Beatrix of the Kingdom of Netherlands in April 2008.

In conferring the Banaag Award to Adelina R. Philipson, the President recognizes her pioneering effort in bringing opportunities to special children to become effective citizens of the community, and for her tireless effort in setting firm relations between the Philippines and The Netherlands.

United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Hawaii, United States of America

As the 50th state of the United States celebrates its 50th year in 2009, so does the United Filipino Council of Hawaii. The UFCH came about as an off-shoot of the first annual convention of Filipino community associations of Hawaii in 1959. The convention was a brainchild of then Consul General Juan C. Dionisio who wanted to bring together Filipino community leaders in Hawaii to form a statewide Filipino council. Since then, it has devoted itself to working towards the common good, advocating community involvement, leadership and outreach programs, including assisting immigrants to transition and better settlement in their new home. Through decades of hard work, the UFCH has grown to become one of the largest organizations of its kind in Hawaii with more than 10,000 members and six island councils. It is now a federation of several Filipino community island councils from the islands of Hawaii, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai and Oahu.

Since its establishment, UFCH has embarked on multi-faceted projects and services for the Filipinos in Hawaii. The UFCH provides scholarship grants for bright young Filipinos in Hawaii. It had so far raised US \$1 million, benefiting 100 scholars. The funds are raised through the annual conduct of the Mrs. Hawaii-Filipina Pageant and the Ms. Teen Hawaii-Filipina Beauty Pageant.

The Council is involved in the electoral process of Hawaii by regularly conducting get-out-to-vote campaigns and voter registration, and monitoring legislation that may affect Filipinos in Hawaii. It also organized a youth task force that works with relevant agencies to help the youth in their problems and seek ways for them to become better citizens. Among its projects include the removal/repainting of graffiti-filled walls, fundraising events to support chosen hospitals, highway and road clean-ups, and night basketball tournaments.

First started in 1990, the UFCH launched the UFCH Progress Awards to honor outstanding Filipino Americans in Hawaii who excel in their chosen field



or contributed actively to their community. The award has become one of the most prestigious awards given to any Hawaii resident of Filipino ancestry.

Every year, the UFCH embarks on a health awareness campaign among Filipinos to better safeguard their health. It partnered with the American

Heart Association of Hawaii for a health workshop dubbed as 'Caring for Hawaii's Filipino.' In partnership with the Organ Donor Center of Hawaii, the UFCH initiated a public awareness campaign for organ and tissue donation with focus on the importance of such donations in order to save lives.

The UFCH actively worked for the establishment of the Filipino Community Center, the largest Filipino center outside of the Philippines, which was inaugurated on June 11, 2002. It donated US\$10,000 during the construction stage and promoted its use among Filipinos in Hawaii.

During the preparation and celebration of the centennial of Filipino migration to Hawaii in 2006, the Council assisted in organizing concerts, trade exhibits, parades and other commemorative activities as part of the state-wide, year-long celebration. The UFCH also participates in several important Philippine occasions such as the Philippine Independence Day celebrations and the *Filipino Fiesta* which consist of parades, trade expo, fun games, seminars, and exhibit of native Filipino dishes. The UFCH also supports the cause of Filipino veterans. It assisted several veterans to get settled in Hawaii by gathering support for their housing, food and clothing, and is continuously lobbying for the passage of the Filipino veterans equity bill in the US Congress.

The organization is also supportive of Filipino caregivers in Hawaii by supporting legislation upholding their well-being, labor rights and equal employee opportunities.

In conferring the Banaag Award to the United Filipino Council of Hawaii, the President recognizes its long distinguished contribution to uniting and promoting the interests and welfare of Filipinos in Hawaii.

Pamana ng Pilipino

The Pamana ng Pilipino Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas who, in exemplifying the talent and industry of the Filipino, have brought the country honor and recognition through excellence and distinction in the pursuit of their work or profession.

Awardees

Amelita C. Besa and Romeo G. Dorotan

United States of America

Bayani M. De Leon

United States of America

Carlos de Leon Esguerra

United States of America

Rico M. Hizon

Singapore

Libertito P. Pelayo

United States of America

Teresita V. Ramos, Ph.D.

United States of America

Engr. Nilo L. Villarin

United States of America

Amelita C. Besa and Romeo G. Dorotan

New York, United States of America

Hardly can one find a restaurant serving Filipino dishes in the posh area of Soho, Manhattan, much less a Filipino restaurant. But over the years, the Filipino's culinary talent has shone in every corner of the globe. Such is the case for this husband-and-wife tandem who paved the way for the graceful entry of Philippine cuisine to Uncle Sam's land of the fast food, to the great joy of Filipinos living in the West Coast. Mr. Romeo G. Dorotan and Amelita C. Besa-Dorotan are the owners of the famed Cendrillon, a 13-year-old Filipino pan-Asian restaurant in Soho, Manhattan. Specializing in Philippine-based dishes, the restaurant has achieved mainstream fame in the New York restaurant scene. It has been featured in US television (e.g. Martha Stewart's ABC TV show), newspaper and food publications (*New York Times*, *New York magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Time Out*, *Gourmet*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsday*, *Vogue*, *Saveur*), and radio (*A Splendid Table*, *Good Food*). So far, Cendrillon is the only fine-dining Philippine restaurant in Manhattan.



The restaurant is a channel by which Filipino cuisine continues to be promoted in the highly competitive restaurant world of New York City. Through the creative and imaginative cooking of Chef Romy Dorotan, Philippine food is showcased in a way that has not been done before in the New York area using fresh local ingredients while preserving traditional Filipino flavors.

The couple has been at the forefront of promoting Philippine products by serving only heirloom rice from the Cordillera Region and Banaue Rice Terraces in their restaurants. It is their way of supporting the indigenous people of Cordillera, at the same time promoting their environment- friendly organic farming.

Despite the success of their business, the couple wanted to do more than just to rake in profits. They wanted to embark on something that is of cultural value, something which is grounded in the Philippines

but at the same time related to their line of work. Thus was born the award-winning book, 'Memories of Philippine Kitchens: Stories and Recipes from Far and Near' which is not just any ordinary cookbook. It is a fascinating book on Philippine cuisine that showcases the essence of Filipino cooking and gives a glimpse of our very rich cultural and culinary heritage. Published in 2006, the book has been launched in New York, San Francisco, Vancouver, the Netherlands and London. In 2007, it won the *Jane Grigson*

Award for Distinguished Scholarship in the Quality of its Research and Presentation given by the International Association of Culinary Professionals. It was also a finalist in the Julia Child First Cookbook Awards. What is notable is that the cookbook was written by the couple who had hitherto neither authored nor co-authored a cookbook nor any book for that matter.

Credit their University of the Philippines education for the couple's constantly organizing events such as educational lectures, panel discussions, special dinners and other fund-raising activities to benefit Filipinos in the US and the Philippines, with the Philippine culinary culture at the fore of presentations and discussions. They cooked for a fundraising dinner for Bayanjuan (Bantay Bata) at the Galleria, New York City and for the UP Centennial fund by the UP Alumni Association of The Netherlands at the Philippine Ambassador's residence in The Hague.

The couple believed that creating innovative and delectable recipes is the most effective way by which Filipinos can impart their common values and tastes with other people from different cultures. Hence, every time they are invited to speak about Philippine food or donate food representing the best of Philippine cuisine, they focus on key dishes and ingredients that create the most positive impact on their audience.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Romeo G. Dorotan and Amelita C. Besa-Dorotan, the President recognizes their exceptional abilities and talent which led to the establishment of Cendrillon, a Filipino restaurant icon in the US, and the publication of a world renowned book on Philippine food.

Bayani Mendoza De Leon

New York, United States of America

Music with an air of youth and the depth of genius... These are some of the critics' words that best describe Bayani Mendoza de Leon's music which is comparable to moonlight in the gloomy night of life.

A versatile and multi-faceted artist being a composer, musician, conductor, music director, arranger, writer, ethnomusicologist, folklorist, cultural scholar and community leader, Mr. de Leon has exerted influence in raising the level of awareness and appreciation of Philippine music and culture within the Filipino-American community and the mainstream.

A musical prodigy, Mr. de Leon grew up in a home filled with music. His grandfather Ladislao Bonus was the first composer of a one-act opera in the Philippines. His father, national artist Felipe de Leon was the first composer who gave the Filipinos the first grand opera. And his mother, Iuminada Mendoza was a concert pianist. The family's reminiscences of the artist's childhood included Mr. de Leon's mischievous playing of the piano using his feet. Even before he could read, he could distinguish and identify many different rhythms like the tango, cha-cha and rumba.

At the age of nine, Mr. de Leon became the youngest member of Banda Peñaranda, a brass band directed by his father. He played the trumpet which he considered his first musical instrument. At 14, he wrote his first *zarzuela* called *Hibik sa Karimlan*, which attracted large audiences from several high schools in Manila. The artist became a distinguished member of the League of Filipino Composers in 1971. In 1979, he came to the US as a Fulbright-Hays scholar in music. He majored in Music Technology at the University of California in San Diego where he obtained his Master of Arts in Composition in 1982.

As a distinguished composer, Mr. de Leon successfully initiated mainstream audiences into works that reflect his Filipino heritage. He was the first Filipino-American composer to write a full-scale symphonic poem, *Batong-Buhay* for rondalla, a native Philippine string ensemble. He won an international prize in 1976 for his work *Bantay-Bata* that combined Philippine indigenous instruments



with the Western harp and clarinet. Among his other major works are *Beyond Forgetting*, a tone poem for vocal soloists, chorus and dancers; *Krokis* for trumpet, clarinet and trombone; *Okir*, an avant-garde chamber work for flute, harp and c o n t r a b a s s ; *Vertigo*, concertstruck for clarinet and orchestras; *Pagkamulat*, symphonic poem for orchestra; and *Atlantis* and *Anting-Anting*, both contemporary ballets. Moreover, he shared with the Philippine-American community

some of his original works, which include among others, *Villa Mariquita*, a zarzuela; *Silay-Parnaso*, a rhapsody for violin and orchestra; and *Mga Sugatang Perlas*, a music-dance play. Also, his original guitar works, incorporating Philippine folk and indigenous motifs, have been widely performed in the US, the Philippines, and other parts of the world.

Mr. de Leon generously shared his expertise in developing the rondallas, the choirs, and the *kulintang* and *gangsa* ensembles of two big dance companies based in San Diego, California - the PASACAT Performing Arts Company and the SAMAHAN Philippine Dance Company. He was the music director of both companies, composing original dances based on Philippine epics and legends. His interest to promote the rondalla extended to the East Coast where he became music director of the University of the Philippines Alumni and Friends Rondalla, the *Paaralang Pilipino* Foundation Rondalla, and the Foundation for Filipino Artists Rondalla. His rondalla arrangements range from Philippine folk songs and dances to Broadway and operatic airs, and standard classics.

As a cultural scholar, Mr. de Leon contributed to a better understanding and appreciation of Philippine culture through his many lectures and workshops in both East and West Coasts of US. He also authored several books and articles that promote Philippine music and culture.

Aside from all his award-winning musical compositions, Mr. de Leon was named one of the "2008 Outstanding Filipino American Achievers of America" and listed in *Grove's International Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Bayani Mendoza de Leon, the President recognizes his genius and artistry for being a distinguished composer, musician, and educator who has tremendous influence in raising awareness and appreciation of traditional and contemporary Philippine music in the US.

Carlos D.L. Esguerra

New York, United States of America

If landscape photography is the photographer's supreme test, Carlos DL. Esguerra has passed it with just the right sharpness and contrast. His works are landscapes that stir the soul, nature photography that depicts the world's natural charms, and plays of shadow and light that reveal the most brilliant colors even in its simplest form. Critics rave that an Esguerra photograph can look like a painting, sketch or drawing.

The silver-haired Mr. Esguerra studied Business and Economics at the University of the Philippines, and obtained his MBA from the George Washington University in Washington, DC. Having worked for more than 30 years as a programmer analyst at IBM Corporation in New York and later as founder and president of his own company, CLE Systems, Inc., he devoted himself to his rediscovered passion - photography - upon his retirement.

A talented landscape and fine arts photographer, Mr. Esguerra loves to capture the beauty of nature with the least number of elements, framed and composed in a simple austere view. His photographic skills was influenced strongly by Japanese Zen principles - simple, clean and uncluttered. He has held solo exhibitions, and his works have been selected in numerous juried exhibitions in many states in the US and in other countries such as Canada, Austria, France, and Germany. He has a growing group of loyal corporate and individual collectors in the US, Germany, Mexico, UK, Singapore and the Philippines. Most likely, collectors and galleries all over the world have an Esguerra in their collections.

Some of Mr. Esguerra's photos have been published in several international magazines and publications such as *Interior Design Magazine*,

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Carlos DL. Esguerra, the President recognizes his excellent photographic skills in advancing Filipino artistry and talent worldwide, and in supporting philanthropic causes in the Philippines and the United States.

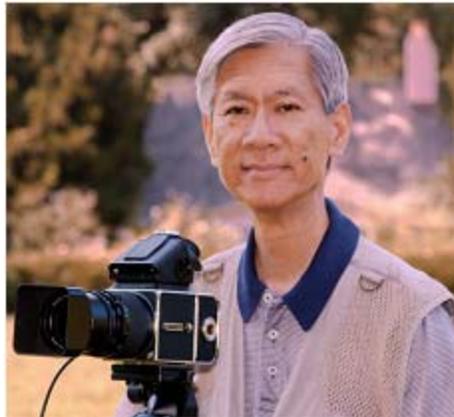


Photo Life Magazine, Best of Photography Annual, Spa Magazine, Popular Photography & Imaging, Photo Life Magazine, Hasselblad's FORUM Magazine, and Shutterbug Magazine.

One of Mr. Esguerra's famous photographs is the peaceful yet breathtaking series of "The Zen of White Sands". It highlights selected images created since 2002 at the quiet stark desert vista, White Sands National Monument in New Mexico. An area of 275 square miles located in the heart of Tularosa Basin, it is the largest pure gypsum dune field in the world. His artistry transformed the harsh desert condition into stunning photographic images that won him numerous international awards. The genius of his photography is apparent and the world has not been blind to it. Known and well-recognized as the modern-day Ansel Adams, he has won more than 40 national and international prizes.

Besides being an extraordinary photographer who has allowed the viewers to see the world more beautifully through his lyrical eye, Mr. Esguerra has been an artist who has selflessly supported several charities, NGOs and institutions in the Philippines and US. He always donates part of the proceeds from his works to Children's Orchestra Society, Norfil Foundation, Waldorf School of Santa Fe, Filipino American Human Services, Ma-Yi Theater, Cendrillon, Rudolf Steiner School, George Segal Gallery, *Bantay Bata 163*, Foundation for God's Glory, Alpha Phi Beta Chancery, Intercontinental Manila Social Services Projects, and UP Alumni Association, among others.

On his secret to great photography, Mr. Esguerra simply says, "you just have to be there at the right time."

Rico M. Hizon

Singapore

While half of the world is sleeping, the other half is waking up to the smiling face of international broadcast journalist Rico Hizon, the first and only Filipino male anchor of the esteemed *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World* in Singapore. For more than a decade now, captains of industries have come to rely on him for accurate information and in-depth analyses on



the true state of the Asian region's business and economy. Serving as a reporter and news anchor of *Asia Business Report*, Mr. Hizon is the acknowledged authority in Asian business news. His distinct style of hosting - relaxed but thorough, delivering the business news with a level of clarity - is appreciated even by those not adept with business jargon.

Beginning his career as a production assistant in a *GMA 7* children's show, Mr. Hizon started to make waves in the Asian region's cable news industry. Initially stationed in Hong Kong, where he worked for *CNBC Asia*, Mr. Hizon moved to Singapore in 1997, when *CNBC* merged with *Asia Business News (ABN)*. His talent and dedication to his profession did not escape the eyes of the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*. He eventually became a part of their family in November 2002 through *BBC World* in Singapore where he is still affiliated.

Mr. Hizon's work in *CNBC* is not purely business. He had the chance to talk to the movers and shakers in the world of entertainments, sports, business and politics such as Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Philippine presidents Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, World

Bank Head James Wolfensohn, Hong Kong Bank CEO David Eldon, San Miguel Corporation Chairman Andres Soriano III, Indonesia Satellite CEO Tjahjono Soerjodibroto, Former US Secretary of State Casper Weinberger, Broadway star Lea Salonga, jazz singer Diana Krall, opera singer Jessie Norman, and NBA superstar Grant Hill, among others.

Despite his hectic professional job, Mr. Hizon, together with his wife, is also actively involved with *Art Sentral Asia*, an art events outfit focusing on the promotion of Philippine visual arts. He was also the President from 2002-2005 of the *Philippine Cultural Society*, an organization that promotes Philippine culture in Singapore. He is also one of the board members of the *Philippine Bayanihan Society* in Singapore, which helps raise funds for charitable institutions and promote skills upgrading among Filipino workers in Singapore. He also developed the *Good News Pilipinas* (www.GoodNewsPilipinas.com), an information website and personal advocacy that spread good news about the Philippines.

Indeed, Mr. Hizon's indefatigable and charitable efforts has won him enormous respect from his compatriots and from the Singaporean community at large, and several awards which include *2006 Ten Outstanding Young Men*, *Outstanding Manilan for International Journalism*, *Most Outstanding Filipino Leader in Singapore*, and *Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awardee in Media*. His *Asia Nightly News* was awarded the *Highly Commended Best News Program* by the *Asian Television Awards* in 2000.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Rico M. Hizon, the President recognizes his achievement for being the first Filipino male anchor of British Broadcasting Corporation World in Singapore.

Libertito P. Pelayo

New York, United States of America

Only a very few newspapers serve a very noble purpose in keeping the home fires burning for Filipino-Americans who are 16,000 miles away from their country. The New York-based *Filipino Reporter*, the most widely-circulated newspaper among the Filipino American community in northeast USA, is one such shining example.

Fearless and passionate journalist Libertito P. Pelayo is the founding publisher and editor of the *Filipino Reporter*, listed as the only Filipino-American weekly newspaper in the *Working Press of the Nation*, and the only ethnic newspaper belonging to the New York Press Club as regular member. He is a member of the New York Press Club, the Asian American Journalists Association, the Filipino American Media Association, and a former member of the United Nations Correspondents Club.

Published since 1972, Mr. Pelayo's newspaper has achieved prestige through the years with its balanced reporting and ability to access relevant and timely news scoops. Now on its third decade of circulation, the newspaper has attained loyal followers in the community as it continues to inform the general public of relevant news from the Philippines and around the world. It was awarded a Presidential Citation by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2002 for "its high standards of journalism and responsible reportage."

Through the *Filipino Reporter*, Mr. Pelayo was able to mobilize the Filipino-American community to assist his poor *kababayans* in the Philippines. Through his efforts, he was able to raise funds for



the World Trade Center Relief Fund, which financially helped surviving families of Filipino victims of the 9/11 US terrorist attacks; and for typhoon victims in Bicol in 2006. He also supported the construction of several artesian wells in select poor barangays in Aklan in 2006.

An active civic leader, Mr. Pelayo serves as advocate for distressed Filipinos by providing legal and financial assistance especially to undocumented Filipino migrants. He also mobilized a donation drive at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey to offer food, shelter and clothing to the Filipino crew of a foreign-registered vessel held for maritime violation.

Mr. Pelayo was the Grand Marshall of the Independence Day Celebration Committee in New York City in 1997. He was bestowed with the following awards for his dedication in his profession: *2007 Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Award, Filipino Achievers in US and Canada, Outstanding Filipino-American Award, Outstanding New York Award, Outstanding Asian American Award, and 1997 Great Achiever Award in Journalism.*

Before migrating to the US and establishing the *Filipino Reporter*, Mr. Pelayo was a reporter for *The Manila Times* and a correspondent in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. He was also the editor-in-chief of the Far Eastern University's student publication during his college days.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Libertito P. Pelayo, the President recognizes his impressive achievements in the field of journalism as publisher and editor-in-chief of the Filipino Reporter, the widely circulated Philippine newspaper in the United States.

Teresita V. Ramos, Ph.D.

Hawaii, United States of America

Only a few places would better qualify as a true melting pot than Hawaii. Nowhere else in the world could so many people of different nationalities from different walks of life live in such harmony. At the University of Hawaii (UH) in Manoa, this diversity is represented through the many language courses offered. And the best-kept secret among these languages is surely the Filipino program.



Professor Emeritus Dr. Teresita V. Ramos, Hawaii's foremost expert on Philippine linguistics, whom students named the "superstar of Tagalog", established Filipino courses at UH and has devoted about 40 years of her life in teaching Filipino and Ilokano languages. UH actually boasts of having the most comprehensive Filipino program outside of the Philippines, being the only university in the United States offering a bachelor's degree in Philippine Language and Literature. Since its inception in the 1960s, the program has taught close to 10,000 students and has served numerous Filipino American organizations and other ethnic communities through its work.

In 1991, Dr. Ramos established the Advanced Filipino Abroad Program (AFAP) to promote the learning of Filipino language among second generation Filipino Americans. The Program which is recognized by the *Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino*, aims to send Filipino-Americans, as well as interested foreigners to the Philippines, for an immersion course in advanced level Filipino.

Dr. Ramos has written and published several instructional books, dictionaries and articles covering topics of Tagalog structure, second language pedagogy, bilingualism and bilingual-

education, second language acquisition, and Philippine literature and culture. Some of her books - *Conversational Tagalog and Intermediate Tagalog*, *Intermediate Tagalog: Developing Cultural Awareness Through Language*, *Makabagong Balarila ng Pilipino*, *Tagalog for Beginners*, *Tagalog Structures*, and *Tagalog Dictionary* - are used as reference materials not only in the UH, but also in different universities in the US such as the University of California in Berkeley, University of San Francisco, and San Francisco State University.

With the aim of maintaining the highest standards in the profession of teaching world language, Dr. Ramos has co-founded the Hawaii Association of Language Teachers, and the Council of Teachers of Southeast Asian Languages. She is fondly called *mother hen* by her peers for uniting Filipino-American language instructors all over the US. Moreover, her strong advocacy for less commonly taught languages particularly from Asia and the Pacific, made her the first president of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages.

For going the extra mile and all her professional accolades which include among others, *Outstanding Tagalog Language Educator Award*, *Second Ronald Walton Award for Service*, *UH Excellence in Teaching Award*, Dr. Ramos has made herself a peerless legend. She is undoubtedly an educator *par excellence* who has achieved the perfect balance between heart and mind in doing the work she loves so much. In fact, her professional life is a story of advocacy for the Filipino language, which she equates with her Filipino identity.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Dr. Teresita V. Ramos, the President recognizes her outstanding contributions in instituting a bachelor's degree program in Philippine Language and Literature in the University of Hawaii in Manoa, and for preserving and propagating the Filipino language and culture in the United States.

Engr. Nilo L. Villarín

Washington D.C., United States of America

Nilo L. Villarín is a person who, through sheer hard work, became one of the very few Filipino-American engineers to realize their dream of a successful independent professional engineering practice. More than being a professional engineer, he is also an inventor, entrepreneur, craftsman, and philanthropist.



In 1986, Mr. Villarín founded the NV Enterprise, Inc. (NVE), a consulting engineering, facilities management and construction firm in Reston, Virginia. NVE designed and integrated high reliability critical power distribution systems using state-of-the-art power monitoring and control systems, the first such innovation for the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The system was implemented in five major US terminal radar approach control facilities in Atlanta, Boston, Honolulu, Southern California and St. Louis, and virtually eliminated system power outages. He was also granted a US patent for a switching device that detects failure in series connected lamps and automatically restores power to the remaining lamps for visual guidance of landing aircrafts. Used for the FAA's precision approach path indicator, the device is essential for ensuring aircraft safety when landing.

Engr. Villarín is also the founder and president of Quality Power Company, a startup company manufacturing devices for critical power systems. He invented and holds a US patent for a transfer switch that is used to provide redundant sources of electrical power to computer-based equipment. Many computer servers offer the option of redundant power supplies so that in the event of power supply failure, one or more other power supplies can power the load. In 2006, 600 transfer switches were installed at the US Census Bureau Computer. Since then, the facility had not experienced any

unscheduled downtime of their computers. He also developed a maintenance bypass switch for uninterruptible power supply (UPS). The device allows complete isolation of UPS that provide continuous electric service to computer loads so that maintenance or replacement can be made without computer service interruption.

Engr. Villarín also invented a glass-cutting machine for mass cutting of glass shapes for the production of stained glass lamps and other similar products. The apparatus which is now being used by some handicraft factories in the Philippines, significantly reduces labor costs in manufacturing stained glass lamps.

Not only was Engr. Villarín hard-working and dedicated to his profession, he also devotes his free time and resources for community work. He provided funding, through Feed the Hungry, Inc., for the building of two classrooms in Hilltop, San Jose, Mindoro in 2006. He also donated computers and laboratory equipment to Venturanza Elementary School in Lemery, Batangas, and currently supports a scholarship program for poor Filipino college students through the Philippine Association of Metropolitan Washington Engineers. Moreover, his companies in the US are largely staffed by Filipino professionals whom he sponsored to immigrate.

Prior to migrating to the US, Engr. Villarín received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Mapua Institute of Technology and worked as a technician and sales engineer in the Philippines. He is now happily married to Myrian Reynolds and is blessed with two children.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Nilo L. Villarín, the President recognizes his noteworthy inventions in the fields of computer and aviation, and his entrepreneurship for establishing a consulting engineering firm and power systems manufacturing company in the US.

*The Year 2008 Presidential Awards for
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

Awarding Ceremony

Wednesday, 10 December 2008, 01:00 p.m., Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace

Programme

Arrival of Guests

Arrival of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

Invocation

Fr. Edwin Corros

Opening Remarks

*Secretary Dante A. Ang
Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

Presentation of Awards

Response on Behalf of the Awardees

Rico M. Hixon

Introduction of the Keynote Speaker

Vice President Noli De Castro

Message of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

The Presidential Awards System

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas is a biennial awards system intended to give recognition to Filipinos and other individuals or organizations that contribute to Philippine development and progress, or promote the interests of overseas Filipino communities. The awards are also given to Filipinos overseas who have distinguished themselves in their profession, and have brought honor to the Filipino people.

The awards system was institutionalized in 1991, with the signing of Executive Order No. 498. The awards have so far been extended to 283 Filipinos and private organizations overseas since its establishment. President Fidel V. Ramos conferred the first and second sets of Presidential Awards to 22 and 45 awardees in 1993 and 1996, respectively. President Joseph E. Estrada conferred the third and fourth sets of Presidential Awards to 30 and 59 awardees in 1998 and 2000, respectively. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo conferred the fifth, sixth and seventh sets of awards to 34 (with one special citation), 45, and 48 awardees, in 2002, 2004 and 2006, respectively.

The Presidential Awards consist of four categories. The *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for their exceptional or significant contribution to reconstruction, progress and development in the Philippines. The *Kaanib ng Bayan* Award is accorded to foreign individuals or organizations for their exceptional or significant contribution to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development, or have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities. The *Banaag* Award is given to Filipino individuals or associations for their contributions which have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities. The *Pamana ng Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas who, in exemplifying the talent and industry of the Filipino, have brought the country honor and recognition through excellence and distinction in the pursuit of their work or profession.

On December 10, 2008, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will honor 31 distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations based in 13 countries, who because of their exceptional achievements or humanitarian efforts, have given form and substance to Filipino excellence and the time-honored values of *pakikipag-kapwa*, *pagtutulungan*, and *pagkakaisa*.

The awardees include exemplars of Filipino excellence, individuals who have dedicated their work in the service of the Filipino people, stewards of community initiatives that promote cooperation for the common good, and advocates for the promotion and protection of the rights of others. Civil society organizations based overseas, whose programs for intervention have helped improve the lives of others, particularly the marginalized, will also be honored in observance of the timeless tradition of *utang na loob* and *bayanihan*.

This year's awardees were selected from a total of 122 nominations from 29 countries through 39 Philippine Embassies and Consulates. Of the 31 awardees, 21 are individuals while 10 are organizations. The awardees came from Australia, Canada, France, Hongkong, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

*The Year 2008 Presidential Awards for
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

Executive Committee

CHAIRMAN

Secretary Dante A. Ang
Chairman
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

VICE CHAIRMAN

Hon. Esteban B. Conejos, Jr.
Undersecretary
Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs

MEMBERS

Hon. Jennifer O. Gonzales
Executive Director
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

Dir. Eduardo C. Paraan
Deputy Chief of Presidential Protocol

Fr. Edwin B. Corros
Executive Secretary
Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines
Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care for Migrant and Itinerant People

Ms. Marichu A. Villanueva
Columnist
Philippine Star

*The Year 2008 Presidential Awards for
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

Technical Committee

CHAIRMAN

Atty. Golda Myra R. Roma
Chief Emigrant Services Officer
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

MEMBERS

Ms. Lucille A. Ronda
Supervising Emigrant Services Officer
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

Hon. Crescente R. Relacion
Executive Director
Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Jose A. Cabrera III
Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Maricel C. Diaz
Officer-in-Charge, International Affairs Office
National Commission for Culture and the Arts

Ms. Maria Luningning E. Samarita
Director
Department of Science and Technology

Mr. Jeremaiah M. Opiniano
Professor
University of Santo Tomas

Gallery of Presidential Awardees

Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award

Ablaza, Sariel G.G., M.D.
Adams, Gloria Y.
ALA EH gem e.V.
Cagas, Cosme R., M.D.
Caoile, Gloria T.
De Venecia, Guillermo B., M.D.
Evangelista, Stella S., M.D.
Feed the Hungry, Inc.
FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes School of Medicine
Alumni Foundation
Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, Inc.
H.O.P.E. Foundation
Ho, Jesus T., M.D.
Ileto, Benjamin A., M.D.
International Network of Filipinos Overseas
Martin, Arsenio R., M.D.
Montero, Juan II M., M.D.
Nacario, Emanuel N.
Navarra, Victoria C., M.D.
Nihei, Mari Bernabe
Philippine American Foundation
Philippine Children's Charity Fund
Philippine Cultural Organization in Saarland, E.V.
Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment
Science and Technology Advisory Council
San Francisco
Society of Philippine Surgeons in America
Tan, Elton See
Tria, Honesto R.
Tesalona, Alfredo T.
Torio, Isabelo S., M.D.
University of the Philippines Medical Alumni
Society in America
Vijungco, Jose G., M.D.
Visayas-Mindanao Cultural Association e.V.
World Bank / IFC-IMF Filipino Association

Kaakabay ng Bayan Award

Aloha Medical Mission
Balikatan sa Kaunlaran – Hong Kong Council
Confederation of Filipinos Overseas Organization
Filipino-American Community of Colorado
Filipino Community in Thailand
Filipino Community in the Commonwealth of
Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
Filipino Community of Guam
Foundation for Aid to the Philippines, Inc.

Volunteer Business Counselors of Doha

Kaanib ng Bayan Award

Anesvad Foundation
Association Alouette
Association Philippines International of
Geneva
Books for the Barrios
California Technological Care, Inc.
Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation
CORA Filipino American Task Force
Advisory Board
Hanazaki, Misao
International Medical Help for Children
Jules and Paul- Émile Léger Foundation
Ma'Ma Children's Center of Norway
Martens, Robert S., Ph.D.
Operation Rainbow Australia Limited
Operation Smile International
PAG-ASA Group – Japan
Philippine Development Assistance
Programme
"Salamat Po Kai"
Social Welfare Corporation Raphael Clinic
Tsakos Shipping and Trading, S.A.

Banaag Award

Acebuche, Nestor A.
Acosta, Rodrigo C.
Al Zedjali, Essa Mohamed
Andes, Phoebe Cabotaje
Angelical, Lilia
Aranilla, Leticia R.
Astillero, Moh'd Ali Carlito, M.D.
Babaylan – Switzerland
Bagong Kulturang Pinoy, Inc.
Balik Bohol Medical Mission
Bautista, Antonio C.
Bayoumi, Mohammad Ahmad
Beatty, Estrella C.
Benzon, Norma R.
Berdos, Imelda Vollenweider
Buchholdt, Thelma G.
Buhain, Wilfrido J., M.D.
Bulos, Alice P.
Casamina, Roland C.
Centre for Filipinos

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Banaag Award

Centre for Philippine Concerns – Australia
Cheng, Sian Chun
Compas, Lolita B.
Concepcion, Zenaida S., M.D.
Covarrubias, Grace F.N. (+)
Cueto, Alex M., M.D.
Cuizon, Virgilio G.
Cunanan, Aguedo Q.
Cunina Organization
Dasodas, Catherine D.
De Guzman – Formoso, Ruby L., M.D.
Dechaves, William D.
Del Rosario, Sonia S.
Dela Paz, James Allan
Docoy, Fr. Eugene
Evangelista, Jose L., M.D.
Farmer, Lolita L., Atty.
Fiesta Filipina Dance Troupe of Canada
Filipino American Human Services, Inc.
Filipino American Medical, Inc.
Filipino Association in Brunei
Filipino Association of Singapore
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, Inc.
Filipino Communities Council of Australia, Inc.
Filipino Community Center, Inc.
Filipino Cultural Club
Filipino Ladies Association of Guam
Florentino, Sr. Magdalena S., FMM (+)
Fojas, Marcos R., M.D.
Ginete, Alex Jose R.
Go, Mildred Aires
Go, Roman Ting, Engr.
Goedicke, Charlotte
Halasz, Fr. Luis, SVD
Helbig, Aurea
Hernandez, Carmencita
Home-Reach Foundation, Inc.
Hong Kong Bayanihan Trust
Hyehwadong Filipino Catholic Community
Ick, Claire R.
Iskwelahang Pilipino, Inc.
Juele, Lilia R.
Kalayaan
Kanagawa Women's Space Ms. La
Kawayan Philippine Language and Cultural School
Kinderhilfe Philippinen
Kinderhilfe Philippinen, E.V.
Lahing Kayumanggi

Banaag Award

Lammawin, Francis L.
Lew, Bridget
Lubang-Looc International
Maharlika – Switzerland
Manglona, Benjamin T.
Manuel, Vladimir James M.
March, Marina Roma, M.D.
Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians
Mataac, Celso Jr. T.
McGuinness, Amor I.
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate
Concepcion
Miyake, Chiyo
National Organization of Professional
Teachers – Hong Kong
Natividad, Alicia, Atty.
Natividad, Cornelio Ruiz
Natividad, Evelyn D.A., Ph.D.
Navarra, Eduardo J.
Nemivant, Emma Balquiedra
Panday Tinig Chorale Ensemble
Paragas, Rodolfo de Leon
Paterno, Ramon A.P.
Penang Support Group for Migrant Filipinos
Philippine American Group of Educators
and Surgeons
Philippine Association of Metropolitan
Washington Engineers
Philippine Australian Sports and Culture,
Inc.
Philippine Cultural Foundation, Inc.
Philippine Cultural Foundation of Hawaii
Philippine Heritage Band
Philippine Institute of Certified Public
Accountants
Philippine School Bahrain
Pilapil, Virgilio D.R., M.D.
Quiblado, Conrada P.
Quinto, Edgardo R.
Racinez, Sr. Olivia, WCW
Ramos, Angel T.
Ravindranathan, N., M.D.
Reed, Loline L.
Rizal-Blumentritt Society Austria
Sabio, Fr. Raymond T.
Salazar, Lourdes A.
Sales, Justina L.
Search to Involve Pilipino Americans
Seguritan, Reuben
Sirmata (Vision) 2004

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Steiner, Mona Lisa L.
Tahanan (Diocesan Center for Filipino Migrants)
Talangbayan, Francis V., M.D.
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Theresa, Ladeli
Tigno, Rosario B., M.D.
Tomelden, Benjamin Jr. S.
Tordjman, Paul Semo
Tuluyang Pinoy (Philippine Centre Zurich)
Uy, Emilio Y.
Vargas, Orlando R.
Verstraeten, Jean Paul
Veterans Equity Center
Victorian Community in Belgium
Zamora, Prospero C.

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Abad, Pacita
Abella, Manolo I.
Abinsay, Felipe Jr. P.
Acosta, Adolovni P.
Aguirre, Bayani S.
Alcantra, Anacleto R.
Antonio, Camilo C.
Aquino, Belinda A., Ph.D.
Aranda, Jacob V., M.D.
Ardiente, Editha M., Engr.
Armit, Amelita Aranas
Asera, Larry L., Engr.
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Banatao, Diosdado P.
Bebars, Evelyn Panganiban, M.D.
Bernardo, Rodolfo S., Ed.S.
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Burns, Emme Tomimbang
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Castrence, Pura Santillan
Castro, Salvador P.

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Sagun, Teresita B.
Salih, Sharifa Zeannat Alih
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Sunico, Raul M.
Tabalba, Camilo M.
Tabuena, Romeo V.
Taguba, Antonio M., Maj. Gen.
Uy, Constanca S., M.D.
Velazco, Gundelina A., Ph.D.
Veloria, Velma R.
Viola, Arturo T.
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The Commission on Filipinos Overseas

The **COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS** (CFO) is an agency under the Office of the President which was established on 16 June 1980 through *Batas Pambansa* (Republic Act) 79, to strengthen ties with Filipinos overseas and promote their interests in the Philippines and abroad.

FUNCTIONS OF CFO

B.P. 79 mandates CFO to:

- Provide advice and assistance to the President and the Congress of the Philippines in the formulation of policies concerning or affecting Filipinos overseas;
- Develop and implement programs to promote the interests and well-being of Filipinos overseas;
- Serve as forum for preserving and enhancing the social, economic, and cultural ties of Filipinos overseas with the Philippine motherland; and
- Provide liaison services to Filipinos overseas with appropriate government and private agencies in the transaction of business and similar ventures in the Philippines.

CLIENTELE

The distinct clientele of CFO includes the following:

- Filipino emigrants and permanent residents abroad;
- Filipinos overseas who have become citizens of other countries;
- Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals leaving the country;
- Descendants of Filipinos overseas as defined in B.P. 79;
- Filipino youth overseas; and
- Exchange Visitor Program participants.

CFO PROGRAMS

The work of CFO is conducted under a program framework of activities to serve Filipino communities overseas. This framework consists of the following four program areas:

I. Migrant Social & Economic Integration

Ensures that all Filipinos migrating to other countries are adequately prepared to meet the practical and psychological challenges attendant to international migration.

Programs include the following:

- Pre-departure registration and orientation seminars
- Post-arrival services and assistance to Filipino nationals in distress
- Public information and community education
- Referrals on overseas inquiries

II. Filipino Education & Heritage

Promotes education programs overseas, and provides younger generations of overseas Filipinos with opportunities to learn Philippine history, culture, language and institutions.

Programs include the following:

- Philippine schools overseas
- *Lakbay-Aral sa Pilipinas*
- Teaching of the Filipino language to children of Filipino migrants
- Internet-based courses on the Filipino language
- Filipiniana libraries and resource centers
- Increasing Filipino cultural visibility overseas

III. Filipino Unity & National Development

Fosters better cohesion and purpose among the various overseas Filipino organizations, for the promotion of their own interests within a broader community of Filipinos.

Programs include the following:

- *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL) or Link for Philippine Development
- Publication and distribution of *Filipino Ties* and other information materials
- Awards and recognition for overseas Filipinos
- Exchange Visitor Program

IV. Policy Development & Data Banking

Provides a continuing study and review of the economic, social, legal and administrative environment that have a bearing on the status of overseas Filipinos.

Programs include the following:

- Policy review and formulation
- Advocacy and lobby efforts for the establishment of NCLEX testing center in the Philippines, full equity rights for Filipino veterans, and portability of U.S. Medicare benefits
- Studies and researches on absentee voting, retention of citizenship, anti-trafficking in persons, recognition of skills and professional competencies, promotion of Filipino culture,

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas

- and business and investment opportunities for overseas Filipinos
- Annual stock estimation of Filipinos overseas
- Conduct of conferences and symposia on migration
- Data banking and computerization program

V. Special Projects

A. Anti-Trafficking

As the lead agency of the Task Force Against Human Trafficking, it performs the following several functions:

- Provide adequate legal, psycho-social and other forms of assistance to trafficked persons;
- Consolidate various sources of data and statistics on trafficking, and establish a comprehensive databank for the effective monitoring, documentation and prosecution of trafficking incidents;
- Conduct a community education and information campaign program against trafficking in persons; and
- Cause or direct the immediate apprehension, investigation and speedy prosecution of persons involved in, or of cases involving the trafficking in persons, and monitor progress of such cases.

B. NCLEX

The CFO is the lead agency of the Presidential Task Force on NCLEX. As such, it undertakes the following functions:

- Prepare an overall program that would consolidate existing government mechanisms to ensure protection of intellectual property rights and security of physical facilities of NCLEX test centers in the Philippines.
- Evaluate current procedures in resolving cases involving Filipino nurses and foreign nursing regulatory entities, and recommend p r o p e r measures to enhance existing grievance mechanisms.
- Coordinate and liaise with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing in matters

concerning the conduct of the NCLEX exams in the Philippines.

- Investigate and take specific action on reports of fraud or any related act that will compromise the integrity of the examinations, as referred by NCSBN.
- Conduct consultations and information campaigns among nursing associations and other stakeholders to assist in preserving the integrity of local as well as foreign nursing licensure examinations conducted in the Philippines.
- Perform other functions that will ensure the smooth and successful conduct of NCLEX in the Philippines.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The CFO is headed by a Chairman with cabinet rank, and representatives of the following departments:

- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Labor and Employment
- Department of Education
- Department of Justice
- Department of Tourism
- Office of the Press Secretary
- CFO Executive Director

The CFO is supported by a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director. It consists of five (5) offices:

- Migrant Integration and Education Division (MIED)
- Projects Management Division (PMD)
- Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD)
- Management Information System Division (MISD)
- Administrative and Finance Division (AFD)



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