

Highway to heaven

by DONNA CUNA-PITA
Phlstar.com

WE see them every day — tapping on our windows, curled up on sidewalks, and living in makeshift wooden carts. Sometimes, we hand out a few pesos and food, hoping to at least make a difference for their hungry stomachs that day. Sometimes, we ignore them because somehow they make us feel fear and disgust. But you wake up the next day in your bed with breakfast on the table, and they wake up on the same street with no food, and seeing disgusted faces stare back at them from car windows.

Urban poverty is a major issue so prevalent in our country that we see its existence as a natural part of our urban landscape. They've always been there, and will be there for as long as we have streets. But one innovative solution to this problem is taking the homeless from the streets and putting them in clean clothes and making them businessmen and women. Take a ride with *Jeepney*

magazine and start making a real difference in people's lives.

Ticket to ride

Jeepney magazine is the first street magazine in the Philippines produced by the Urban Opportunities for Change Foundation Inc., and is a member of the INSP (International Network of Street Papers) based in Glasgow, Scotland. Street papers are independent newspapers and magazines sold by homeless and severely disadvantaged people on street corners around the globe. *Jeepney* magazine has two main goals: presentation of stories reflecting the hearts of the Filipino poor and communicating their needs, struggles and, more importantly, their victories in the midst of those struggles, to an audience that can make change happen. Second, to create and provide jobs that meet or exceed the Philippine minimum wage. *Jeepney* magazine sells for a street price of P100. The self-employed vendor receives P50 per issue sold. If a vendor sells a minimum of 10 magazines a day, he will be able to earn an income exceeding by 40 percent

the Philippine minimum wage. The money you spend every day on that frothy cup of coffee can change the life of someone who needs your help.

Drive for change

Initiated by William and Debbi Shaw from the US, *Jeepney* magazine is a product of their desire to make real and long-term change in the lives of the Filipino poor. From his travels, William was exposed to different street newspapers and magazines and discovered that it would be the perfect option for the Filipino poor who really want to work but cannot find opportunities for employment. *Jeepney* magazine provides them with the products and training to sell the magazine in private establishments and street corners. They earn a living and a decent income, building their sense of self-reliance and hope. Vendors are also provided counseling, a savings fund to teach them how to manage their money, seminars, and health care.

Hitch a ride

The first issue of *Jeepney* mag-

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Filipino scholar conquers South Korean airwaves

by ELIZER PEÑARANDA
Inquirer.net

SEOUL, South Korea — "Ang programang ito ay para sa ating lahat!" (This program is for all of us) DJ Regina greets her listeners to inspire and brighten up the Filipino community on her daily radio program for the multicultural family broadcast in South Korea.

Sponsored by Woongjin foundation in partnership with Digital Radio Kiss and Digital Skynet, this radio program is the first to showcase Filipino OPM songs with current news and information related to labor, tourism and the daily lives of Filipino expatriates in the Korean peninsula.

DJ Regina or Maria Regina Panol Arquiza said that it was the Philippine Embassy that informed her organization, Pinoy Iskolar in Korea (PIKO), about the urgent need for a radio broadcaster to address Filipino women married to Koreans.

Before she started to start conquering the Korean airwaves, it took a few months of advertisements in different Filipino communities in metropolitan Seoul and nearby provinces and even an announcement by Philippine Ambassador Luis Cruz in Catholic churches for the long search to finally discover Regina, a scholar of Media Studies, Advertising and Public Relations in Ewha Womans University.

St. Scholastica's College graduate

Regina earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications, minor in Print Journalism in 2005.

"There is one very important quote that my favorite professor in St. Scho was always telling us," she says, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate a community" and I won't forget it," said DJ Regina.

The radio program is a way for her to entertain and educate her fellow women. "It isn't just about knowing the issues, it's more on understanding the heart of the issues," she added.

Born in Camarines Norte

The 24 year-old Bicolana, now the first Filipino radio broadcaster in South Korea, was born on Feb. 1, 1984 in Daet, Camarines Norte where her parents Reynaldo and Julieta Arquiza ran an agriculture business.

As the youngest in the family, she has fond memories of sharing dreams about working for the Filipino community outside the Philippines with her sister Maria Soledad and brother Rey Franco. Regina shared the early achievements of her siblings but added that she's proud to be the most diligent and hardworking.



"I really feel so blessed for having such a supportive and loving family — they inspired me the most to conquer my dreams through God-given talents and share the passion in this kind of endeavor," she added.

Work and studies in South Korea

Regina needed to make adjustments in her daily routine because she now needs to prepare her scripts for the program as she keeps her scholarship in one of the

top universities in Seoul.

She has also become an instant public figure among the various Filipino communities, featured in leading national broadsheets like *The Chosun Ilbo* and *JoongAng Daily*, and TV programs like *MBC, SBS* and *KBS* of South Korea.

"Before the program started, I read a lot of articles about migrant women in Korea and other parts of the world for I've learned that there are so many issues and problems that make me value my worth as a woman and take the opportunity to become an instrument in touching the lives of other migrants, especially women," Regina said.

There are two difficult things that challenge her. "The first is understanding deeply the issues related to Filipina migrants with Korean spouses in Korea. It has been said that there will always be two sides in a coin. In this case I have to understand both sides of the issues, and that requires patience and deep analysis of the problems at hand."

"The second thing I consider difficult in this is the Korean language. Proficiency in it is very important to fully understand the existing issues written or even broadcast in this country," she continued.

Regina's program, aired at 3 am, 9am, 3 pm and 9 pm, is broadcast in four languages, with Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai also part of the multicultural Family Broadcast on SkyLife Channel 855, Cable TV thru C&M Channel 312 and websites thru Woongjin Foundation: www.wjfoundation.or.kr and Digital Radio KISS.

"I am expecting that this multilingual radio broadcasting program is going to serve as a bridge to the gap between Koreans and Filipinos. It's about time for both sides to understand each other's cultures and thoughts more deeply. And then, I do have great hope that this program will help Filipino migrants enhance their cultural identity and it will serve as a channel to disseminate relevant information in empowering the people with information," said DJ Regina. ■

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