

Santarina Pushing for Mayor of Carson

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Dear spending most of his first full term as Mayor facing a bitter recall fight, Dear has many political and business allies supporting his race.

In this campaign, Dear has managed to raise more than \$45,000 in political contributions, almost three times the amount Santarina has raised. Santarina has only raised about \$13,000, mostly from community and small businesses, according to the Daily Breeze.

However, Santarina is upbeat despite the large gap in political contributions.

Santarina, a former teacher, said that he believes his leadership style is better suited to run Carson.

"My style of leadership is that I am committed to create relationships with colleagues and businesses. I envision changing the existing leadership style of 'I and me' to 'Us and We.' It's the community team that must prevail and I'm a consensus builder... My heart really is only in the best interest of the people."

Humble beginnings

Santarina was born and raised in the Philippines.

He received a Bachelor's and Post Baccalaureate degrees in Education. He began teaching in 1967 and became a school principal from 1969 to 1973, before migrating to the United States in the mid-70s.

He continued his education in the US, receiving a Master of Arts Degree in Special Education from the California State University Dominguez Hills.

He worked in the Los Angeles Unified School District, teaching middle and high school English, Bilingual Math and multicultural studies, and coordinating ESL program in adult education.

It was also during the 1980's when Santarina began to give back to the community.

Over the last 10 years, he has served on the City of Carson's Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Citywide Advisory commissions, served as co-chair of the City of Carson's 30th anniversary celebrations, and assisted in the City's summer youth jobs selection process. He has either held leadership positions or has been actively involved in many local organizations such as the Carson-Gardena YMCA, Carson Sister Cities Association, Kiwanis International and Martin Luther King, Jr. Democratic Club.

He was elected into the Carson City Council in 2003 to serve a four-year term. He was then re-elected to serve on the city council in 2007.

Santarina said that his qualifications speak for themselves.

"In other words, I believe I am a person of integrity," said Santarina about his qualifications of being a Mayor. "I have proven myself to many people. I practice integrity and believe I have the right plan and economic strategy to help our business community."

Santarina said that despite being the underdog, he's proud to represent the city of Carson and all the Filipino-American residents.

"I want to say this that no matter what happens it is the will of god that will prevail," said Santarina. "If and when he gives me the opportunity to serve the people, I want the people to know I am only an instrument, a tool of what is a good public servant and because I am a Filipino-American and there are so many here in Carson, I want my other Filipino-Americans to keep supporting the ideals of a good leader."

"Bottom line, I love working with people and to be in a city in what I consider the most diversity city in the USA is great." ■

Geology students prepare for trip to the Philippines

by ROCELYN BASTIAN
Houston Community Newspapers

Lone Star College-Kingwood is giving community colleges a good reputation as its environmental geology honors students prepare for a trip to the Philippines.

The students are not going on vacation, but rather to help residents in that country build and develop a more sustainable community for themselves.

"This project started two years ago in 2007 with Dr. Brian Shmaefsky and by obtaining a grant from the Lone Star College System. We went to the Philippines to develop partnerships with the University of the Philippines and the Gawad Kalinga Organization," said Dr. Cherith Letargo, the lead instructor and professor of geology at Lone Star College-Kingwood.

The six students and two professors will be in the Philippines during spring break from March 7-14 helping to meet the needs of Gawad Kalinga villages as well as presenting their integrated waste and water management model.

"This project is important because people in those villages spend their money on bottled water. Hopefully this system will allow them to have potable water and they can spend their money on other important things," Ryan Woods, a resident in Summerwood and student at Lone Star College-Kingwood, said.

Once their designs are complete, they will take them to the Philippines and present them to the Gawad Kalinga Organization and the University of the Philippines faculty to determine if they can be implemented in the GK villages.

"They are looking at ways by which developing nations can preserve water, use wastewater and sewage," Letargo said. "This model will involve greywater use, biodigesters and rainwater catchment systems."

This project is funded in part by the Environmental Protection Agency-sponsored P3 Award, which is People, Prosperity and the Planet Student Design Competition for Sustainability. Prior to the model, the students held a book drive for supplies for the Gawad Kalinga schools.

"This program is a service learning component for the students to use what they have learned in the classroom and apply it in the community. We (Lone Star College-Kingwood) are the first community college to do this," Shmaefsky said. "In addition to the water catchment model, we were also asked to look into a design for mosquito control."

The Faculty International Exploration Grant Letargo and Shmaefsky applied for and received in 2007 was used to develop science-teaching strategies that integrated studying abroad and service learning to engage the students in global development projects.

"I think this is a wonderful opportunity to work with an organization like Gawad Kalinga, that builds complete villages," said Kingwood resident Lesa Montague, who is also an environmental geology honors student. "We will present a water catchment system that will help clean greywater for people who once lived in slums to give them an opportunity to live in a self-sustainable community."



Environmental geology honor students at Lone Star College-Kingwood Ashley Henderson and Loi Hilarides work on a model that the group will present to the Gawad Kalinga and the University of the Philippines next month.

Photo courtesy of Houston Community Newspapers

In 2008, four environmental geology honors students visited the Gawad Kalinga villages and saw a holistic approach in rebuilding a community that was impacted by a natural disaster or other issues.

"When the communities are devastated by a disaster or something else, many try to move out to other cities. There, they are not able to find jobs and that kind of poverty turns into generational poverty," Letargo said. "GK's goal is to try and get people out of the slum communities and get them into sustainable communities."

To aid in the building of villages in Batangas, Philippines, a local nonprofit organization, Humble Kingwood Filan Foundation, raised money to build 30 homes. When the students visited the villages in 2008, they also helped to paint the homes that were under construction as well as assist in meeting other needs.

"This is a great project because it will help people who live in the villages to live in a new eco-community. I hope that our project will help them accomplish that and if not, we will be there to find out how we can help them," said student Loi Hilarides, a Kingwood resident.

While helping, the students saw that the local school needed supplies and that future villages needed money to help them become energy efficient.

"Being able to combine the essence of study abroad with service learning in a science curriculum is a dream that has come true for me. Students love the challenge of being able to do research and at the same time provide solutions to real world problems," Letargo said.

"As they volunteer their time to help and interact with other cultures, they learn a lot, not just about other people but about themselves as well."

In order to help the students travel to the Philippines, the group will be selling T-shirts for \$13 apiece. Any business or organization that would like to be a sponsor can donate \$100 by Feb. 15 and have the name of the business or organization put on the back of the shirts. The shirts will be printed on Feb. 18 and will go on sale. The group has raised \$8,000 but still needs \$4,000 more for the rest of the students.

To purchase a T-shirt, be a sponsor or for more information on the trip, call Dr. Cherith Letargo at (281) 312-1405. ■



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