

# Pinoys in NY celebrate...

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American Association of The Bronx Inc., Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental Association of New York Inc., Pilipino Americans in the Construction Industry, Filforce, Bayan USA, Couples for Christ (New York & New Jersey), the Filipino American Human Services Inc., Gawad Kalinga, State Farm and Western Union.

Star power was not missing in the parade as Aljur Abrenica and Mylene Dizon rode in one of the floats, while the *GMA Pinoy TV* float featured Dingdong Dantes and singer Jay-R.

For the Fil-Ams watching the parade, this has become tradition with them... an event that makes them proud to be Filipino Americans and an event that they mark on their calendars every year.

"Being a part of the celebration makes us proud of being Filipinos," said Grace & Del who lined the parade route with their kids. "We watch the parade and then we go to the street fair where we buy food and Filipino products... it's just so much fun

and we stay until the end of the fair and the program. We look forward to this event... we plan for this. Actually, we have a birthday party to attend to later, but I guess we will be late."

For Gene & Feliz Ilagan, the event gave them a chance to meet the Vice President, who stopped by to greet them and their baby, David. "Although the parade two to three years ago had more floats, *ngayon maganda rin siya kasi dumating si Vice President kasi makikita mo 'yung support ng Pilipino kahit nasa ibang bansa,*" Feliz said, adding that they were planning to visit the booths at the parade's end.


"I think this is the best one," said Christian, who has attended the parade for the last three years. He added that they will be visiting the booths, talking to people and hopefully make new friends and meet girls as the afternoon progresses.

Atoy Villa, meanwhile, was amazed at the number of people who attended the event. He said there were definitely more people in the parade route this year than last year's. He added

that the parade and festival were great as it gives Fil-Ams a chance to reconnect with townmates, friends or relatives. Asked what he felt about the event, "Very proud, kasi mga Pilipino *tayo 'di ba?*"

Merci Co, who has gone to the independence day festivities the last four years, said the festivities gives her great joy. "*Masayang-masaya (Very happy)!*" she exclaimed. "*Kasi nami-miss nating ang mga tao sa Pilipinas, nakikita mo 'yung mga kababayan mo... maligaya... parang kaming may totoong pamilya kami rito sa Amerika (Because we miss our fellow Filipinos in the Philippines and you get to see them here... it's as if we have our own family here in America)!*"

Neinita Lingad, formerly of Bataan, Philippines, said she and her family and friends all look forward to the Philippine Independence Day festivities every year. "Every year *pinupuntahan talaga naming ito... every year inaatay namin ito (We go here every year. We look forward to this event every year).*" ■



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About the Speaker:  
 Gali Koren, Esq. received her Juris Doctor degree, Magna cum laude from Western State University. She holds a Masters in Intl. Law, Major in Immigration Law from the University of San Diego. She is a member of the State Bar of California and is authorized to represent clients on immigration matters in all 50 states of the U.S. She practices exclusively immigration law and has helped thousands of clients, particularly healthcare professionals pursue and achieve their goals in the U.S.

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