

KC: RP's ambassador against hunger visits WFP in New York

by MOMAR G. VISAYA
AJPress

NEW YORK – Maria Kristina Cassandra Cuneta Concepcion was born with a silver spoon. She entered this world famous, no question about that, and the public watched her grow before their very eyes.

With Sharon Cuneta and Gabby Concepcion's blood running through her veins, show-business was an inevitable path. KC, as she is more famously known, took a sidetrip and finished a business communications course at the American University in Paris.

Nothing like her contemporaries in the business today, KC decided to take the road less traveled and leverage her star power in pushing for a cause that has become near and dear to her heart.

Last year, the young actress was appointed by the UN- World Food Programme as a National Ambassador Against Hunger in the Philippines, with a special mission to highlight the need for effective solutions to hunger and to address humanitarian needs in Mindanao.

"I have been working with them since 2007 and I was told that I was nominated and I had to



KC Concepcion AJPress Photos by Momar Visaya

quarters in Manhattan.

WFP in the Philippines has been using food assistance and hot meals to boost school enrollment and attendance especially in Mindanao. As a national ambassador, KC has been traveling within and outside the Philippines to raise awareness about WFP programs and operations.

"We are doing better than a lot of more high-profile countries in some aspects," KC shared. That does not mean though that they are not working double time to make things even better. The most recent issue that affected the situation in the Philippines have something to do with families and children displaced by the conflict in Mindanao.

"We have more internally displaced families than Sri Lanka and other more high-profile countries but in terms of malnutrition, we have much less than Africa and some of our Southeast Asian neighbors," she adds.

There is a particular focus on Mindanao because of the conflict going on there, and based on their data, there are about one million women and children displaced by the war there, according to Bettina Luescher, WFP Chief Spokesperson for North America.

"One of the biggest things we do worldwide is our school feeding. It is important that children in school get a meal; that their little bodies can grow up strong. It only costs about 25 cents a day to feed one child," Luescher added.



wait for six months. I went through a trial period with my Pikit, Cotabato mission and a few meetings before and after that and got word after a few weeks if I wanted to accept the nomination. It was such an honor," KC told the *Asian Journal* in an exclusive interview across the UN head-

WFP's Food for Education programme in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and adjacent areas uses food support as an incentive to promote school attendance and reduce dropouts in conflict-affected areas.

In addition to its school feeding programme, WFP supports nearly one million people in Mindanao, including internally displaced, pregnant and nursing mothers and others affected by the conflict.

All praises

"We are so delighted to have KC as our partner and our friend. She helps shine a light on this problem. When somebody who is known by the public talks about the problem, people will listen. She helps us raise awareness; she tells the world that this is an important problem and she also helps us tell the world

that we can solve that problem if we only put our mind to it," Luescher said.

KC's own country director, who joined her when she visited Pikit early this year, has nothing but kind words for the actress.

"We are thrilled to have KC on board to help get the word out that, together, we can make real progress in helping to end hunger in our lifetime through small steps, such as this one, that make sure no child goes to school hungry," announced Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Country Director and Representative in the Philippines last February.

"Funding has been our main obstacle in expanding our successes throughout the conflict-affected areas. We hope that, with KC's help, we will be able to increase support to the programme, including from the private sector," Guarnieri added. ■

What Money Can't Buy

Non-material yet meaningful gifts for dad on this special day

by JHERLYN MENESES
AJPress

ONCE A YEAR, we get to celebrate and commemorate Father's Day every third Sunday of the month of June. We pay tribute to the lives of each and every father, we validate their contribution to society, their achievements in their career and most importantly, the love and protection they give to every home.

Fathers are our unsung heroes for they are seldom appreciated. Very rare do they get the limelight and the credit they deserve. Being the provider, their absence at home should not discredit them for their fair share of love and importance. This Father's Day, let them know how special they truly are and give them the message of love.

How do we make them feel special without the need for material gifts? Have you ever thought of giving something to your dad that would not cost you a dime but would still show your generous love to him? Think of ways you could make him feel special even without spending.

Know what makes him happy and be creative.

Know your strengths and turn it into something productive. If you're a good cook, perhaps you could prepare him his favorite meal and relieve your mom with that chore for once. If you are good in arts and crafts, you can make your own card with a personal message, a personalized mug or shirt, an artwork that you could frame or anything that your creative genius could think of making. Any type of homemade gift would be very much appreciated especially if it comes from the heart and is well thought of. You may also help him clean his car for a change, help him

with the trash, massage his back or simply spend time with him doing stuff he is interested in. What's important is to let him know that you are going the extra mile for him.

Open the lines of communication.

Let's face it, not all are open to their dads as much as they are open to their mothers. I'm sure fathers are more than willing to open the lines of communication if we will allow them to. They would also want to know about the things that are happening in the lives of their children. Take this opportunity to talk to them. Share your thoughts and update them on what's happening with your life. You may be harboring resentment, ill feelings or things that bother you that need to be discussed. Now is the time to talk to them. Be enlightened. Receive and give the forgiveness that is due. Time is short. We have to make the most of our lives and it is liberating to know that we are at peace especially with the one that we owe our life to--our father.

We may not be able to choose who our father will be, but we are only given one and we should feel truly blessed. Cherish them and make them feel special no matter what.

Don't lose this opportunity. Give them the best gift -- let them know that they are loved and wish them a very happy father's day! ■

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