

People and Events

Pinoy talents shine at UN program

by MOMAR VISAYA
AJPress

UNITED NATIONS – “There is an abundance, an overflowing of talent in the Filipino American community,” exclaimed Emma Dumalag, president of the UN Staff Recreation Council-Philippine Cultural Society, at the conclusion of the Pinoy Talent Festival held Friday, April 17.

The Labouisse Hall of the UNICEF Building was overflowing with people eager to watch Filipino talents take center stage.

Ambassador Hilario Davide, permanent representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, lauded the “more than 800 Filipinos in the UN” for embarking on this activity that showcases the great cultural heritage of the Philippines.

“I wish the UNSRC-PCS success in this new endeavor and pray that it will take advantage of every opportunity to enrich its passion to do something to enhance the visibility and prestige of the Philippines in the international stage,” Amb. Davide said in his message.

Indeed, the diversity of Filipino talent was showcased in the one-hour program: from singing to dancing to martial arts. The PCS choral got the ball rolling by performing *Isang Lahi, Isang Dugo, Isang Musika* and was followed by a lively ballroom dance by Nena Villena and Jian Guang Zhou.

Michelle Avendano sang an Alicia Keys song; Samantha Enriquez played the flute and the Jaleo Filipino Dancers performed the *tinikling*. Jay Legaspi sang his original composition, the Bayani Warrior Group showcased self-defense moves using the *baisong* and the E. Ro Contemporary Dance Company performed Aguanile.

Soprano Katrina Saporsantos performed two very well-applauded kundimans and the brother-sister tandem of Craig and Samantha Campos showcased their ballroom dancing moves that gave them the Junior Champions title on ABC’s Season 7. ■



NAFA-NJ lauds achievers at Anniversary Ball

by ROBERT P. DE TAGLE

BERGENFIELD - At its 21st Anniversary Celebration and Coronation Ball in Bergenfield, NJ on April 18, 2009, the National Association of Filipino Americans- NJ (NAFA-NJ) announced recipients of its scholarship grants, presented Mabuhay Awards, and crowned pageant winners, including the 2009 Mr. and Mrs. NAFA-NJ.

The event featured Ambassador Hilario Davide, Jr. and Mrs. Virginia Davide. In his remarks, Amb. Davide noted that the Mabuhay Awardees were being recognized “for what you have done,... but I have also given a model for others to emulate.”

The Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations added, “...at this Easter time, at a time of crises that lead to oppression, in injustice,... people can be instruments of change.”

Coronation and Scholars

NAFA-NJ also presented its circle of pageant honorees in 2009. These include Miss Faith Nikki Marcelo, Miss Little NAFA, USA Christine Panshi, Miss NAFA, NJ Felicia Trinidad, Miss NAFA, USA Amanda Ocampo, and Mr. & Mrs. NAFA, USA Ricardo and Elena Lasala Caliboso, escorted by their families and friends and last year’s winners.

In addition, the organization announced the winners of its 2009-12 NAFA-NJ Philippine Scholarship Fund, namely, Beverly Manuel, Ferdinand Alop, Susan Alop, Jennifer Segana, Andrea Brizo, Renz Lalap and Christian Martinez.

Mabuhay Awards

Jersey City’s Tax Assessor Ed Toloza conducted the ceremonies conferring the Mabuhay Awards for



Amb. Hilario Davide, Jr. addresses the Mabuhay Awardees and other attendees at the 21st anniversary celebration of the National Assn. of Filipino Americans-NJ in Bergenfield. Photo by R.P. DeTagle

exceptional contributions to the community.

This year’s awardees include:

- Jun Florentino - Community Leadership
- Dr. Filomena Guevarra - Community Leadership
- Sir Rodrigo Mariano - Community Leadership
- Cora Rivera - Community Leadership
- Rosalinda Rupel - Community Leadership
- Leiz Zabala - Community Leadership
- Val Ariola - Humanitarian
- Manny Agbanlog - Mass Media
- Bishop Arnold Cabalquinto - Religious Ministry
- Golda dela Merced - Performing Arts
- Vitaliano Rafael - Sports

The Knights of Rizal-NJ organization, led by Sir Francis Sison, was also recognized for Community Leadership.

NAFA-NJ Organizers

NAFA-NJ is led by Rev. Gaudencio Soriano, founder and president, VPs Butch Gata and Rev. Arnold Santelices, and for the Mabuhay Awards, chair and co-chair, respectively, were Paul Verzosa and Jenny Vi Niguidula.

Robert P. De Tagle, a previous Mabuhay Awardee, organizes and writes on cultural, business and art events in the tri-state area, and can be reached at robnewyork2@gmail.com.



The New Jersey-based National Association of Filipino Americans (NAFA) celebrated its 21st Anniversary last April 18 at Step-By-Step in Bergenfield, NJ. Shown are the evening’s beauty queens. Front row, R-L, Felicia Trinidad, Miss NAFA-NJ-2009 and escort Cris Ignacio, Christine Panshi, Miss Little NAFA-USA, Nikki Marcelo, Miss Faith and escort Ian Armand Payette, Amanda Ocampo, Miss NAFA USA-2009 and escort Christian Martin and Kimberly Ancheta, Miss NAFA USA-2008. Standing at rear are Jasmine Revadavia and escort JC Salvador, Pete & Virgie Lacno, Mr. & Mrs. NAFA 2008 and Ricardo & Elena Lasala Caliboso, Mr & Mrs. NAFA 2009. AJPress Photo by Ziggy Martinez

PIDCI Grand Marshal event a huge success!

MORE than 300 guests turned out to honor this year’s PIDCI Grand Marshal Dr. Teofila Malanum-Santos at the Astoria World Manor last April 4, 2009. Dr. Malanum Santos is well known in the community as a humanitarian. She has been organizing and conducting free medical clinics in different churches as part of her volunteer commitments. This year, they launched the free medical clinics that are held every last Sunday of the month at St. Lucy’s Church in Manhattan.

Community leaders, friends, family members and medical colleagues turned out en masse for this memorable event. Special messages were delivered by the Consul General Cecilia B. Rebong and the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Ambassador Hilario Davide, Jr. Five past PIDCI Grand Marshals (Dr. Vivi Malantich, Fe Martinez, Dan De Guzman, Dr. Emmanuel “Boy” Pangan, Monsignor Oscar Aquino) escorted Dr. Malanum-Santos during the presentation. PIDCI President Gerry Austria delivered an important message about the independence celebration and exhorted the guests to participate in the coming celebratory events. Past Grand Marshal Monsignor

Oscar Aquino gave a solemn invocation for the evening. Dr. Bernie De La Merced and the band provided the music which the guests energetically danced to.

PIDCI Directors and officers in attendance included Vice President Joji Jalandoni, Treasurer Belen Castillo, Directors Lumen Castaneda, Dr. Bernie De La Merced, Linda Limcaco, Rudy Mariano, Ner Martinez, Gani Puertollano, Francis Sison, Vivian Velasco.

Event chairperson Nida Cortez (and PIDCI Board Secretary, co-chairs Sofia Abad (PIDCI Internal Auditor) and Dr. Alice N. Francisco and the Grand Marshal Committee worked tirelessly to mount this memorable event.

Upcoming PIDCI events include the Diwa ng Kalayaan Pageant and Gala – April 26, 2009 Sunday 5:30-11:00pm - Grand Ballroom at the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel, 128 Frontage Road, Newark, NJ and the Philippine Independence Day Parade on June 7 Sunday. Opening Ceremonies, Independence Thanksgiving Mass - 8am-8:30am - Philippine Center, 556 Fifth Avenue, between 45th and 46th Street; Parade - 12 noon - Madison Avenue from 41st Street headed south (downtown) Street Fair - 10am-6pm - From 24th Street to 26th Street, Madison Avenue and Cultural Festival 2:30pm-6pm - On the open stage, Madison Avenue, North of 23rd Street

The Philippine Independence Day Council, Inc (PIDCI) is a 501(c)(3) not for profit corporation based in New York and is responsible for the management and operation of the annual Philippine Independence Day Celebration in New York City.

For details please contact Gerry Austria – 2009 PIDCI President (201)238-1785; Joji Jalandoni Vice President (201)401-7559; Nida Cortez Secretary (646)644-4101 and Belen Castillo Treasurer (973)393-8018. Visit the website www.pidci.org. ■



The PIDCI Board of Directors (L-R) Atty. Manuel Quintal, Gani Puertollano, Nida M.Cortez, Gerry Austria, Consul General Cecilia Rebong, Grand Marshal Teofila Malanum Santos, MD, His Excellency Hilario Davide Jr., Joji Jalandoni, Sofia Abad, Vivian Velasco, Dr. Bernie dela Merced, Sir Francis Sison, and Ner Martinez. Not in the photo are Belen Castillo, Linda Limcaco, Rudy Mariano, Tambi Wycoco, Engr. Mario Garcia.

Why a homecare agency...

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their clients a caregiver trained in assisting elderly or injured individuals in all aspects of personal care and hygiene. These caregivers are skilled in giving proper support with day-to-day activities such as eating or walking around and can also assist in personal and hygienic routines such as bathing, dressing and the like. It’s probably the most intimate form of care that a homecare agency can give, and you, as a client, can request specific skills that you would want your caregiver to possess. Specialty care, on the other hand, is a form of personal care for specific cases only. This includes hospice and geriatric care for the elderly, as well as programs for children with illnesses or special needs.

Another aspect of homecare is homemaking, where the care provider does light housekeeping, dishwashing and other daily chores in your house that does not involve intense cleaning. Usually, a lot of people obtain this service through an informal channel (referral from a friend, colleague, etc.) which does not allow you to verify or background check the person you’ll be working with. If you do it yourself, you need to spend the time and money to perform these recruitment screenings on your own. But when an agency does this for you, they do the recruitment, training and background checks necessary to make sure that the person who will be doing your tasks at home is the right one.

A service that applies for both the elderly and infants is companionship and sitting. Agencies have a roster of applicants who can provide assistance to those needing someone to simply be a companion or look after an aging parent, a young child or an injured

family member. Depending on your need, these companies can provide you with a companion or sitter for a morning, mid-day or evening shift. Rates for these services can vary especially when the shifts are in the evening. You would also want to be specific in your inquiry when hiring a companion or baby sitter and request for character references. If you need multiple personnel to complete a 24 hour schedule, you can have it staffed by a single care agency to make your selection and hiring process easier.

Aside from personal and special care, homemaking and companionship/sitting, some homecare agencies also provide concierge services, while other agencies provide domestic helpers, chauffeurs, chefs and other types of domestic assistants. These are virtual or on-site assistants who would be at your beck and call when you need them. Concierge personnel tend to be like personal assistants who can perform a variety of administrative tasks. These tasks include such things as reserving tickets, coordinating appointments and handling purchases on your behalf. Having a concierge is like having your own secretary without the burden of maintaining a payroll, paying insurances and other matters necessary to directly employ someone. All you need to do is contact the agency and have them connect you to their personal concierge who can accommodate your requests. They will take care of your needs from there.

The four major services above are offered by some of the best agencies around. They’re meant to help you live a life with more freedom and personal time to yourself or with your loved one.

Home care also adds another level of security and assurance for you since you know that the person watching over your child, aging parent or disabled relative has been thoroughly screened and deemed reliable and highly qualified.

You may have some doubts when considering homecare service, especially if you like to be in charge and prefer to do everything on your own. It may take some time for you to be able to fully entrust a personal task to someone you don’t know, or when you’re not used to having someone help you at home. But the demand of the times and the busy world of today may require you to be more focused on things that only you can do, and learn to delegate tasks that other people can fulfill for you.

This is what a homecare agency is for. You don’t need to be aging or injured to take advantage of services that a homecare agency can provide. All you need to be is someone who needs a helping hand.

Charmaine Teodoro is the Senior Vice President of JUNO Healthcare Staffing, a group of companies that recruit RNs, LPNs, CNAs and allied healthcare professionals and deploys them to healthcare facilities on a full-time, part-time, per diem or travel assignment. It also sponsors foreign-trained RNs for immigration to the U.S. JUNO has offices in New York, and in New Jersey where it offers homecare services.
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7 vying for ‘Diwa ng Kalayaan’

NEW YORK – Seven young Filipina beauties have been busy over the past several weeks rehearsing for the coming spectacular Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence) Selection and Coronation Pageant and Gala, a major celebratory component of this year’s commemoration of the 111th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence.

The winning beauty will be selected and crowned during the Diwa ng Kalayaan Pageant and Gala at the Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel at 128 Frontage Road in Newark, New Jersey 07114-3721, phone 973-690-5500 on Sunday, April 26, 2009 from 5:30pm to 11:00pm

Planned, organized, produced, executed, directed, and presented by the Philippine Independence Day Council, Inc. (PIDCI), the annual commemoration is now regarded as the largest celebration of Philippine Independence outside of the Philippines, where it is officially observed as a national holiday.

The title, Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence), after all, has led all other beauty contests in the New York region since it was introduced in 1991 as one of the celebratory events of the area’s annual independence anniversary commemoration.

Since its inception, the Diwa ng Kalayaan contest has steadily risen to the number one beauty, brains and talent contest in the Filipino and Filipino-American community in the U.S. The winning candidate reigns during the months-long commemoration of Philippine Independence.

Three of the candidates come from New Jersey while three others are from New Jersey. The lone candidate coming from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is Monica Castillo Meares. The New Yorkers are Demellen Faith Cuerdo, Janette Gomez and Loriella Reyes, while those from New Jersey are Natasha Abella, Renee Nicole Lago and Alexandra Uy.

The glittering pageant and gala is when the year’s candidates for the title are presented to the community and selected by a board of judges. Last year, emerging from a bevy of eight candidates, Erika May Pineda, who hails from New Jersey, walked away with the most coveted title in the U.S. Filipino and Filipino-American community of Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence) and the top prize of the contest – a round trip airline ticket to the Philippines.

In collecting the prize, she joined the Ambassadors/Consuls General and Tourism Directors Tour to the Philippines organized

annually by the Philippine Department of Tourism. She represented the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDCI) and the northeast USA’s Filipino community as “Ambassador of Goodwill.”

One of the crowning glories of her reign as the year’s Diwa ng Kalayaan is when she graces her own float at the annual Philippine Independence Day Parade, this year being mounted on Sunday, June 7. The other is when she is presented at the Philippine Independence Ball, scheduled Saturday evening, June 14 at the Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel.

As in past years, this year’s Diwa ng Kalayaan will receive a round trip airline ticket to the Philippines, and possibly take her prize as part of the 2009 Ambassadors/Consuls General and Tourism Directors Tour to the Philippines.

Young ladies (ages 16 to 21) of Filipino descent are invited to enter the contest. Candidates must be single (never have been married), of good moral character, at least 5’2” tall, charming, witty, talented and personable.

For information or tickets to the “Diwa ng Kalayaan” Pageant and Gala, please call the PIDCI Diwa ng Kalayaan Committee Chairperson Joji Jalandoni at (201) 401-7559. ■

Call for action on May Day 2009

WOODSIDE - Latino, Filipino, Korean, South Asian, and Indigenous South American immigrant rights groups marched together last Sunday in a 150+ strong march along Roosevelt Avenue to demand an end to random police raids, arrests, ticketing against immigrants, and scam employment agencies. The march, beginning at 69th Street and ending up at 83rd Street, ran up Filipino immigrant businesses as well as South Asian and Latino immigrant-owned businesses in a show of stunning multi-ethnic solidarity for a common cause-- dignity for all immigrants. Amongst the key organizers and sponsors of the march were the Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside (United Day Laborers of Woodside), Philippine Forum, NAFCON (National Alliance for Filipino Concerns), Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment (FiRE), New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (NYCHRP), Anakbayan NY/NJ, Nodutdol for Korean Community Development, Sisa Pikari Labor Center, No Raids Committee in Queens, BAYAN USA and the May 1st Coalition for Workers and Immigrant Rights.

The Queens rally and march come at a critical time as Capitol Hill turns its attention to US immigration policy next month. Two weeks ago, President Barack Obama announced that US immigration reform would be a subject on the table of lawmakers this May. The following week, two major national labor federations, AFL-CIO and Change to Win, announced their united endorsement for comprehensive immigration reform.

For the grassroots immigrant rights groups marching last Sunday, however, the developments call for more urgent pressure coming from the most oppressed and victimized from the broken immigration system-- immigrants themselves-- and the immigrants of Queens are especially ready to speak out.

Latino day laborers stand along Roosevelt Avenue generally looking for work and have founded a protective community for themselves. Despite this, growing anti-immigrant attacks by the NYPD, such as random ticketing for standing on the sidewalk, culminated in an arrest and detention of 10 day laborers for no apparent reason other than standing this past October 2008.

“Yesterday, we wanted to show

the local community that it’s not just the day laborers that are fighting but the rest of the community. We also wanted to show the real problems that are going on in the community especially the police harassment,” stated Felix Ortiz, a day laborer with the Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside and victim of the said harassment by the police.

“Together we are fighting for our human and constitutional rights,” said Attorney Felix Viluan from National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON). “And we will not stop until we have equality amongst all people of all races.

The Roosevelt Avenue march comes weeks before the upcoming May 1st rally and march for immigrant rights in Union Square at 4pm. Every May 1st since 2006, thousands of New Yorkers have rallied and marched for comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to legalization for all, end to ICE raids and deportations, and swift family re-unification for separated families. This is also a beginning for groups to come together and plan for neighborhood clean-ups and other community-based activities in the local Woodside and Jackson Heights area. ■