

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Nike commemorates Pacquiao

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

LOS ANGELES—Just as they did last year, Nike has created exclusive commemorative Manny Pacquiao merchandise as the pound-4-pound boxer prepares for his battle against Ricky Hatton on May 2.

The limited custom Pacquiao products will be available at The Montalbán Theatre in Los Angeles and Fatlace in San Francisco starting this weekend. Nike made a similar exclusive Pacquiao t-shirt when he faced The Golden Boy Oscar De La Hoya last December.

Both locations will feature a Pacquiao photo gallery with auto-graphed prints by photographer Ray Potes, free giveaways, music, Pacquiao's gear on display and video highlights of the legendary Filipino boxer, according to Nike representatives.

In addition, The Montalbán Theatre and Fatlace will feature exclusive Manny Pacquiao t-shirts for sale.

A portion of the shirt proceeds will benefit SIPA's (Search to involve Filipino Americans) Temple Gateway Youth Sports League in Los Angeles and the Filipino Community Center's sports program in San Francisco.

The T-shirts are available at The Montalbán Theatre as of Saturday, April 25 and at Fatlace on Monday, April 27.

The Montalbán Theatre will be the official Manny Pacquiao "Fan Headquarters" as fight night approaches.

The Montalbán is located at 1615 Vine Street in Hollywood. ■

WHO chief raises flu pandemic alert level to 5

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flu outbreak that has been deadly in Mexico and the United States and which has caused milder symptoms elsewhere.

"The world is better prepared for an influenza pandemic than at any time in history," Chan said. "For the first time in history we can track the pandemic in real time."

In Mexico up to 159 people have died and about 1,300 more are being tested. In the United States a 22-month-old boy has died in Texas while on a visit from Mexico.

According to the WHO's pandemic flu response guidelines, a Phase 5 alert is called when there is sustained human-to-human spread of the virus in at least two countries in one region.

"While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalise the organization, communication and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short," the document reads.

Chan's move followed intensive consultations with experts and analysis of the spreading virus within and from Mexico.

The change in level puts governments on alert about the need to stockpile antiviral drugs such as Roche Holding, Tamiflu and GlaxoSmithKline's Relenza, and accelerates pharmaceutical industry efforts to create a vaccine to fight the swine flu strain.

The higher alert also signals the virus is unlikely to fade away, and could pose a prolonged public health threat.

"It is something here to stay. Now the question is at what level it will be circulating and how easily it is transmitted," one public health expert said before the official announcement.

Keiji Fukuda, WHO acting assistant director-general, said swine flu was spreading in a "convincing" way in both Mexico and the United States and would likely permeate other countries and regions in a similar way.

"By definition a pandemic is when we get to Phase 6 but we think we are in the process of moving towards there," he told the late evening press conference at the WHO headquarters.

Chan said because all flu viruses were unpredictable, the current swine flu strain needs to be closely watched in case it mutates into a more dangerous strain—or a milder one.

"The important point for us now to continue to maintain our vigilance and track its movement," she said.

The WHO is not recommending travel restrictions, border closures, or any limitation on the movement of people, goods or services as a result of the outbreak.

Chan also stressed there was no related danger from eating properly-cooked pork. She recommended good hygiene measures such as hand-washing to prevent infection from flu and said it was important "to maintain a level of calm." ■

Manny dedicates fight to mom

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"Masayang-masaya ako at maligaya ang puso ko sa pag suport kay Manny (I am very happy and my heart is filled with joy in my support for Manny)," said Dionisia to the *Asian Journal*. "Nagikot-ikot ako at sigaw na sigaw sa mga Filipino (I was turning around and shouting

with the Filipinos, even to non-Filipinos)."

During the final press conference where her son Manny met with his opponent Ricky Hatton for the final time before their much-anticipated match on Saturday, May 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on Wednesday, April 29, Top Rank

President Bob Arum introduced Dionisia to the world's media.

For Dionisia, she has come a long way from her home in General Santos City, Philippines. The 60-year-old Dionisia was impressed with the bright lights of Las Vegas.

And according to an ABS-CBN report, she's already gone shopping and took a quick tour of the town.

Manny is also making sure that his mother's trip to the US will be memorable.

Pacquiao said this is a fight that he's going to dedicate to his mom. He said because this is her first time here and first time ever watching him fight, he's extra motivated.

"She's my inspiration," said Pacquiao. "Of course, I'm going to try harder and do my best to beat Hatton."

Although Dionisia will have

ringside tickets, she won't be in the MGM Grand Garden Arena when her son walks in.

Saturday night, Dionisia will be in a separate room inside the Mandalay Bay where she will pray for her son's well being.

War

Manny Pacquiao and Ricky Hatton expect a war to erupt the moment they both step inside the ring.

"I'll make it into a war," said Hatton during the press conference. "Once I get in the ring I'm a nasty (expletive). I have to fight in a smart, and clever way."

Hatton said that he's not im-

pressed with Pacquiao's physique.

"I'm even more confident now that I've got a chance to look a him again, weighed him out in my head. I can't wait to get inside that ring," he said.

Pacquiao also said that a war would break out.

"This fight is going to have a lot of action in the ring," said Pacquiao. "Everybody knows the style of Ricky Hatton. He wants to fight inside and always comes forward and throws a lot of punches. That's what I want."

"It's going to be a war," added Pacquiao. "And I'm really excited." (Joseph Pimentel)

NYC celebrates Immigrant Heritage Week

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United States annually and most of them are increasingly educated, ready and capable to work," Nikki Cicerani, managing director of Upwardly Global said. She added that in New York City alone, there was a 24 percent growth in immigrant arrivals between 2000 to 2006.

One of the panelists, Tara Colton, deputy director of the Center for an Urban Future, agreed.

"Philosophically, this country is a nation of immigrants," Colton said. "Unfortunately, brain under-utilization is a reality because immigrants are often relegated to do menial jobs. A lot of immigrants are skilled and educated but are under-utilized."

This is where organizations such as Upwardly Global come in. They equip immigrant professionals with necessary skills and resources to rebuild their careers in the United States. By doing this, they are also helping US employers benefit from the hidden talent pool of immigrant professionals.

"We call it "economic downgrading," remarked Cicerani, "because talented immigrant job seekers face obstacles such as a lack of networking resources and they end up getting jobs as nannies, security guards or cab drivers just to get by, even if back in their home countries, they were professionals like engineers, teachers or accountants."

According to Upwardly Global, there are over one million skilled immigrant workers in the US today who have earned a Bachelor's or even Masters degree in their home country, possess an average of seven years of work experience and have the legal right to work and live permanently in the US.

There is an estimated 36 million immigrants all over the United States, representing 12.4% of the population. In New York State, there are four million immigrants, or 21.6% of the entire state's population. In New York City, 37% of the population is composed of immigrants.

"Immigrants fit right into the racial and ethnic mix of New York City, and they represent a significant portion of workers in virtually every occupation in the city, up and down the spectrum," David Kallick, senior fellow at the Fiscal Policy Institute said.

New York City is third among cities with the highest concentration of immigrants, after Los Angeles (40%) and San Jose (38%) and ahead of San Francisco (36%) and Houston (29%).

"Despite, or maybe because of these numbers, the country in general has not been good in integrating immigrants completely to the society," lamented Dr. Suma Kurien, director of LaGuardia Community College's Immigrant Education and Training.

"There is a need for a clearly articulated pathway for the immigrants either through re-training or re-credentialing. They should be given the opportunity to transition to a comparable career," Dr. Kurien said.

Celebrating diversity

"Immigrant Heritage Week started with a handful of community events and now with 180 events citywide, its success is a testament to the incredible strength of our diverse immigrant population," said Mayor Bloomberg in a statement. "We are going to make sure that we continue to serve all immigrant communities in our city. Our Language Access Executive Order is just one more way to make New York even more accessible to the communities that contribute to our wonderful diversity."

"Immigrant Heritage Week celebrates our shared immigrant histories, diverse cultures and religions, and the role these play in enriching our City," said Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Robles-Román.

"It is my great honor to be a part of the 6th Annual Immigrant Heritage Week celebration," said Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Linares. "I am grateful for the numerous event partners from across New York City whose contributions make this community-building celebration possible. Working with our numerous City agencies on Executive Order 120, we are making it easier for all immigrant communities to receive City services."

In July 2008, Mayor Bloomberg signed Executive Order 120 creating a centralized language access policy for New York City. Executive Order 120 mandates that all City agencies that provide direct public services create a language access implementation plan to provide language assistance to limited-English proficient New Yorkers.

Each agency has now designated a Language Access Coordinator who has developed a Language Access policy and implementation plan, which are now posted on www.nyc.gov. Plans include strategies and implementation timelines for interpretation, translation and multi-lingual signage, as well as training of front-line staff and quality assurance measurements.

Immigrant Heritage Week explores that diversity through a rich collection of community events and cultural activities created to highlight the immigrant experience in New York. Established by Mayor Bloomberg in 2004 as a citywide celebration, Immigrant Heritage Week is celebrated around April 17th, the day in 1907 when more immigrants entered through Ellis Island than any other date in the City's history. ■

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