

Obesity: A growing problem among Fil-Ams

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

LOS ANGELES—Childhood obesity is rising in the Asian-American community and experts say that Filipino-Americans are more inclined to be at-risk than the rest of the demographic.

"If you think about the [Filipino] diet and activity level that would probably explain why this, as a group, has an increase level of being overweight," said Dr. Jyu-Lin Chen, RN, and Associate Professor at UCSF School of Public Nursing during the 5th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference.

According to experts, the percentage of Asian-American children in California who are at risk of obesity has risen faster than the rest of the population over the past two years. Nearly 11 percent of California children who are overweight are Asian or Pacific Islander.

In many Asian countries, however, there is a stereotype that being overweight is a sign of good fortune and health. It is also considered a sign of social class.

But experts said the implications especially for children being overweight are far reaching. "The risks are considerable," said Dr. May Wang, Associate Professor of the UCLA School of Public Health. "We know that childhood obesity is related to diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and we're seeing it at a younger and younger age so it's really important to start developing intervention programs that are culturally appropriate for Asian-Americans."

Wang said there is research that suggests that health conditions such as type 2 diabetes may develop at lower levels of fatness among Asians. One national study found that the prevalence

of type 2 diabetes is 60 percent higher in Asian-Americans than in non-Hispanic-Caucasians, she added.

A 2004 University of California San Diego (UCSD) Filipino Women's Health Study found that Filipino women had over three times the prevalence of type 2 diabetes than white women of similar age.

UCLA Associate Professor Gilbert Gee said that it is common knowledge that the rate of obesity in the Filipino-American community is high.

Gee said that if the parents are overweight, there's a strong likelihood the children are too.

"Kids tend to eat what their parents provide for them," said Gee.

Experts said in addition to poor eating habits, other factors as to why more Asian-American children are at risk of being obese is that children tend to stay in front of the computer more and Asian parents are less likely to encourage their children to participate in sporting activity.

Based on the US Department of Education, only 39 percent of tenth-grade Asian boys participated in after-school sports, the lowest participation rate of any ethnic group. Similarly, only 34 percent of tenth-grade Asian girls participated in sports, second only to Hispanic girls at 32 percent.

"We know that Asian parents want their children to focus on their studies," said Chen. "But there's research that suggests being active in sports can stimulate the brain so it's actually better if kids join sporting activities."

Experts say that it's important for the public to recognize that this is an issue affecting children all over the world and Asians are definitely not immune to it.

Gail Kong, president and executive director of the Asian Pacific Fund, echoed the importance of the findings at the obesity conference.

"We want to help Asian parents learn about the serious health problems their children will face if they don't change some of their daily habits," she said.

Philippine Tatler Invites Loida Nicolas Lewis to Grace Cover

THE Philippines' top society magazine *Philippine Tatler* invited Mrs. Loida Nicolas Lewis to be the cover story of their charity issue this June.

"We are elated to have Mrs. Lewis on our cover. She epitomizes glamour and grace; charisma and charity; ideals and influence. Most importantly, she never forgets to share her blessings. That is why she's the perfect cover story for our charity issue," said Anton San Diego, *Tatler's* Editor-in-Chief

In the article, Loida talks about school she built in the province of Sorsogon. The Lewis College was intended to be an option to families who couldn't afford to send their children to Legaspi or Manila, but wanted quality education. TLC has the lowest college unit cost in the country, and expects an enrollment of 1,000 elementary, high school and college students this school year. "I really want to be known as the school where our graduates are an influence of good wherever they are, well prepared in skills and as communicators. It is mandatory they have to speak English—it's the *lingua franca* of the 21st century. It does not make them less Filipino, just



more like global citizens."

Offering courses in Business Administration specializing in Entrepreneurship, Information Technology, Financial Accounting, the school encourages and teaches entrepreneurial thinking and skills. "Education is the key to leaving poverty," emphasized Lewis.

Dressed in chic, contemporary suits by Escada and St. John, and a well-cut purple terno by JC Buendia, the shoot took place at the grand Goldenberg Mansion which holds gold valuable enough to pay off national debt. The 12-page feature was

written by Vicki De Leon, photographed by Frank Hoefsmid and features a special appearance by Loida's mother-in-law, Carolyn Fugett.

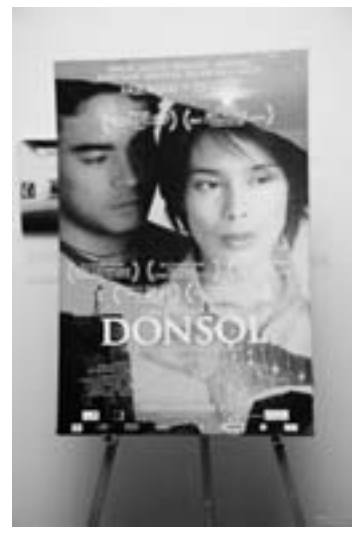
The *Tatler*, known as the premier British society and aristocratic magazine, was founded in 1709 in England and currently has 15 editions around the world including the *British Tatler*, *Irish Tatler*, *Hong Kong Tatler*, *Shanghai Tatler*, *Thailand Tatler*, *Singapore Tatler*, *Taiwan Tatler* and *Russian Tatler*.

For an online preview of the issue, please visit www.philtatler.com

Filipina Golfers Feel Honored by Award



HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND—Filipino professional golfers Jennifer Rosales and Dorothy Delasin beam with pride following awarding ceremonies for the "Golden Cultural Heritage Award" by Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy C. Gaa at the sidelines of the McDonald's LPGA Championship here. Philippine flags were pinned on Rosales and Delasin and certificates were given by Ambassador Gaa in recognition of their "outstanding and meritorious contributions to raising awareness of and deepening appreciation for the Philippines, her culture and her peoples through excellence at the highest level of professional golf." The recognition is part of the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC's month-long commemoration of the 111th Anniversary of Philippine Independence which highlights the achievements of Filipinos and Filipino Americans. Rosales and Delasin won the 2008 Women's World Cup of Golf in South Africa. The awarding was covered by LPGA.com.



Indiobravo Film Festival has well-attended launch



NEW YORK CITY—The Indiobravo Film Foundation successfully launched the first annual Indiobravo Filipino Film Festival, a showcase of the best new Filipino films, at New York's prestigious Museum of Modern Art on Thursday, June 11. A mixed audience of Filipinos and Americans enthusiastically packed the 400-seat MOMA Theater for the screenings of Opening Night selections *Baler* and *100*.

Among the personalities that graced the Opening Night are noted philanthropist Loida Nicolas Lewis, Mrs. Virginia Davide (wife of Ambassador Hilario Davide), CBS Anchor Hazel Sanchez, actors Mylene Dizon and Paolo Paraiso, Chris Martinez (Director, *100*), Mark Meily (Director, *Baler*), Francis Pasion (Director, *Jay*), Mark V. Reyes, (Director, *God Only Knows* (short film), Joseph Jerome T. Francia, (OIC & Head of Operations of GMA International) and Christine Dayrit (Board Member, Film Development Council of the Philippines). Representatives from the Philippine Consulate in New York, the Philippine Independence Day Committee and the Philippine Department of Tourism were also in attendance. Film industry professionals made an appearance at an afterparty at Nikki Beach in midtown Manhattan.

Screenings followed Friday through Sunday, June 12-14 at

the Visual Arts Theater in Chelsea. Timed to coincide with celebrations of Philippine Independence Day (June 12), the festival features 15 internationally acclaimed Filipino features as well as 11 short films. Headlining the lineup is *Baler*, an epic historical romance which swept awards at the 2008 Metro Manila Film Festival. Set against the backdrop of the Philippines' struggle for independence in 1898, *Baler* stars Jericho Rosales, Anne Curtis and Phillip Salvador.

The second opening night feature *100*, won audience and best film awards at festivals in Pusan, Korea and Vesoul, France. Mylene Dizon plays a beautiful, hard-driving executive who, discovering she has 100 days to live, crams as much adventure and instant gratification as she can into what's left of her life. Shortly after its US East Coast premiere on Thursday, *100* received glowing reviews online from American critics.

Two of the crowd favorites include the critically-acclaimed Centerpiece Film, *Tirador* (Sling-shot) by 2009 Cannes Best Direc-



'100' star Mylene Dizon at the Indiobravo Filipino Film Festival
AJ contributed photos by Ernie Peña

tor Brillante Mendoza and reality TV satire *Jay* which closed the festival, while *Confessional*, the biting mockumentary set amid the *Sinulog* mardi gras in Cebu, and *Yanggaw*, a horror-drama set in Bacolod, emerged as word-of-mouth hits.

IndioBravo Film Festival in partnership with GMA Pinoy TV (www.gmapinoytv.com) and GMA Life TV (www.gmapinoytv.com) in cooperation with Asian Journal, Hyphen Magazine, Planet Philippines, Stir.ph, and Film Development Council of the Philippines.



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