

COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC - PHASE 6

Reported by: Arcie Gemino

Although stay-at-home restrictions have eased up and limited reopenings have taken place, the corona virus is still evolving and the pandemic isn't close to over yet. There are still social challenges to overcome, logistics to sort out and routines to adjust. Despite the turmoil and uncertainties we've faced in the last 5 months, most of us have remained resilient in our resolve to get through these difficulties.

This is the last phase of my report and the last to publish. In the period I've rounded up heartwarming chronicles of humanity, I've seen more positive energies put forth by many to share their feel good stories to help us see and help us spread the light. Here are the last round of these stories:

FILAMCCO, FILAMCCO FOUNDATION – Spearheaded once again by FILAMCCO Foundation president, **Tess Porcalla** with the able support of FILAMCCO president **Wilmar Suan**, the duo team along with their members have approved the amount of \$1,000.00 monetary donation to the Vincents' Help Project to various cities in the Philippines under the guidance and direction of the St. Vincent de Paul priests. The group's inspiration stems from local donors and friends and now includes the FILAMCCO Foundation from Michigan.

The program COVID was launched in March. The acronym stands for **Charity Over Virus Indifference and Despair**. The program is housed in the Adamson University under the auspices of the administration, faculty and parishioners. The general community quarantine has rendered hundreds to become jobless pushing the charity to disperse the daily distribution of hot meals and weekly distribution of relief goods to hundreds of street dwellers in San Marcelino. It has been extended to include Rizal, Laguna Bulacan and the adopted community of Payatas who have likewise benefited from this humanitarian project.

To date, close to 3 million pesos had been collected and spent towards this cause. As long as the pandemic continues to evolve, the need for more donations will continue to grow in order to sustain the program.

The pandemic tested the charity's resolve and strengthened its faith. Its inspiration solely comes from St. Vincent de Paul's very own words: "Charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity".

PHILIPPINE AMERICAN ECUMENICAL CHURCH USA (PAECUSA) – Through the organization's president **Dr. Alfredo dela Paz** and his wife **Liza**, members of the church group trekked to the World Medical Relief in its headquarters in Southfield to help process hand sanitizers. They were able to pack 5,000 bottles of hand sanitizers for distribution to their designated beneficiaries in need of this preventive gadget. These church group and others from various groups and organizations have regularly volunteered their services to sort out medical goods and other supplies shipped to different areas of the world.

WORLD MEDICAL RELIEF – (WMR) – Under the long time direction of CEO/President **Dr. George Samson**, the WMR's mission to assist the medically impoverished on local, national and international levels had grown in greater demand as a result of the increasing need to alleviate human suffering brought by the pandemic . WMR collects financial donations, medical, dental and lab items and distributes these commodities to help relieve human suffering.

More recently, this charitable organization , in addition to its resolve to help with covid-19 related demands, came to the rescue of the neighborhood of Beirut, Lebanon who suffered a severe devastation caused by a deadly explosion of tons of ammonium nitrates left unattended in a warehouse for 6 years . The explosion killed 178 innocent victims, injured thousands and displaced more than 300, 000 residents from their homes. PACCM and NANAY president **Becky Tungol** went to WMR to survey the need for help. She provided the attached picture depicting the horrible aftermath of the tragedy .WMR continues to face the demand for assistance brought about by the double desolation that struck this country.

FILIPINO STUDENT SOCIETY – (FILSOC– WSU) – This organization of Filipino students of Wayne State University had a long affiliation with FILAMCCO, having been a member of the umbrella and having been proactive in their involvement with the Filipino community. At the onset of lockdown, Co-presidents **Jake Gonzales** and **David Daher** put on a joint initiative to make facial coverings they gave frontliners in various areas as well as other people who needed masks. With the able help of their parents they were able to sew very attractive and colorful masks. The organization's Co-creative Director **Din Pastrana** also took on the same task of mask sewing. All the students and parents mentioned in this story were pretty much involved in the planning, execution and distribution of this facial covering project.

MICHIGAN CIRCULO PAMPANGUENO (MCP) – If there's a small project planner and executor token to give away to the person who held the most covid initiatives on a mini-scale, it would be MCP president **Dennis Gosioco**. Some of the endeavors may have been small acts of kindness but indeed carried with relentless intent to keep going every month to reach out. There may have been 6 or 7 of these tasks accomplished. Of course this is not to preclude many other story contributors who have done as much or perhaps larger scale enterprises.

This time he provided appreciation meals to one of the Detroit's Firehouse Stations that Paramedics and First Responders truly enjoyed. He did the same to the Henry Ford Hospital's Emergency Day Staff. As a final gesture, MCP gave monetary donation to the FILAMCCO Foundation to aid in its continuing efforts to help with humanitarian projects. Dennis and the Pampanguenos in Michigan held a considerable stint of meal provisions for essential workers.

UST MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION In AMERICA (USTMAAM)– Briefly reported by **Dr. Stella Evangelista**, this organization of doctors in the US and its various chapters and Classes joined hands with USTMAA Philippines' project "Tomasino Laban sa COVID –19" (TLC–19) by providing financial contributions for PPE supplies for frontliners.

MAPLE MANOR REHAB CENTER – This was an early story during the pandemic outbreak worth covering so I've included it in this last phase of my report. Many of us may have viewed this news featured in the WXYZ Channel 7 sometime in the early part of summer. For those who have not, here's the story. Maple Manor in Novi is a nursing home owned and operated by **Drs. Jose and Stella Evangelista and family**. The facility received a big shout out for making the center free of the corona virus. The rehab is not a typical nursing home in that it accommodates all kinds of patients including those with cancer, heart failure, COPD, the elderly and even those on ventilators.

At the onset, the Evangelistas established early health protocols and followed the guidelines set up by CDC to ensure safety at the rehab. They made their staff strictly enforce and follow the rules of wearing facial coverings, social distancing, temperature checks and not allowing visitors. The staff members were well trained and put their health education and knowledge of the covid virus to daily use which greatly helped boost up the morale of everyone in the facility. While most nursing facilities have reported loss of lives due to covid, Maple Manor kept its resolve to keep its staff and patient safe in these catastrophic times, an act they were applauded for.

GUADA ESTRADA – On her own personal accord, **Guada Estrada** with the assistance of her son **Dr. Joseph (Jojo) Estrada**, thought of a small act of kindness which was appropriate to help senior citizens. They purchased boxes of fresh vegetables to give the elderly folks. All throughout this giving season of the pandemic, food had been the most welcome donation to many. Vegetables in particular are healthy choices and this is the reason why the Estradas selected this specific food item to nourish the health needs of the elderly. Guada and Jojo made a trip to PACCM to deliver the merchandise to **Becky Tungol** who had been the principal distributor of most goods intended for seniors.

IN CONCLUSION: As I wrap up my final report I would like to thank and applaud the many organizations and individuals who have sent their heartwarming stories of love, courage and devotion to make the lives of those affected by the pandemic in our local

community and beyond a lot better by their acts of kindness. I'd also like to thank those who have sent monetary donations to the FILAMCCO Foundation to help fund its Covid projects. Donors names had been previously published. If you have recently sent donations, email me for acknowledgement of your support. May God continue to bless you for every bit of generosity and support you have so unselfishly given in these critical times of our lives.

WELL-DESERVED APPLAUSE AND SINCERE EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED STORIES TO THE PUBLICATION OF 6 PANDEMIC REPORTS:

ORGANIZATIONS/OTHER

Accelerated Homecare Services (ACHS)
Ang Bisaya of Michigan (ABM)
Auxiliary to PNAM (APMAM)
Boholanon Sa Michigan (BOSAMI)
Brownstown Lyons Club (BLC)
Bukas Loob Sa Diyos (BLD)
Downriver Filipino American association (DFAA)
Far Eastern & American Nurses Allied Professional Association (FANA)
Fast D' Hoops
Filipinas Store
Filipino American Student Association of U M (FASA)
Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS)
Filipino American Community Council of Michigan (FILAMCCO)
Filipino Student Society of WSU (FILSOC)
Kahirup of Michigan
Kapamilya Club (KAPA of EMU)
Kiwanis Club of Cosmopolitan Detroit (KCCD)
Kiwanis Club of Metro North troy (KMNT)
Maple Manor Rehab Center
Michigan Circulo Pampangueno (MCP)
National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth, Inc. (NANAY)
National Federation of Filipino American Association (NAFFAA)
Philippine American Community Center of Michigan – (PACCM)
Philippine American Ecumenical Church USA (PAECUSA)
Philippine American Foundation, Inc. (PAFI)
Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET)
Philippine Medical association of Michigan (PMAM)
Philippines Nurses Association of Michigan (PNAM)

Salvation Army
UP Alumni Association of Michigan (UPAAM)
UST Medical Association of Michigan (USTMAAM)
UST Nurses Association of Michigan (USTNAAM)
World Medical Relief, Inc. (WMR)

INDIVIDUALS

Dr. Ernie Mac
Ryan and Julie Rosario
Ruth Rush and family
Lulu Rodriguez
Phil and Betsy Vincenzetti
Vance and Imelda Hum
Tess Tchou
Pinky Lacap
Dennis and Lolita Gosioco
Jeff and LenLen Jenks
Dr. Buddy Ostrea
Rene Lanzanas
Raul and Nora Perez
Guada Estrada
Menchu Concepcion
Flor Penner
Ceasar Sumanting
Lavinia Mateo
Connie Sumalde

FINAL NOTE: If you wish to submit covid news articles and pictures beyond this publication, send them to me and I'll publish them through any of the following channels:

PACCM Website, FILAMCCO Organizational List serve or FilStar News

Send them to: arciegemino1113@yahoo.com