

FCDC TODAY

Filipino-American Community & Development Center of
Ocean County Inc.

2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee

Member Spotlight - Simeon "Jun" Ortega

by Jared Babuschak

Simeon "Jun" Ortega Jr., or Papa Jun as he is most commonly called, was born on February 19, 1936 in Nasugbu, Batangas. He is the sixth of eleven children born to Simeon Sr. and Trinidad Ortega. In the 1950s, while in high school, Jun's very first job was a shoeshiner. He then went on to study business and administration in commerce at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, and then found work in the insurance business. He was a treasurer and board member of ICP in the '60s before going on to create two insurance agencies of his own known as JELCA in the '70s and JEM in the '80s.



On March 3, 1957, Jun married the love of his life, Ofelia (most commonly known as Mama Ofie) in San Bartolome Church in Malabon, Metro Manila.

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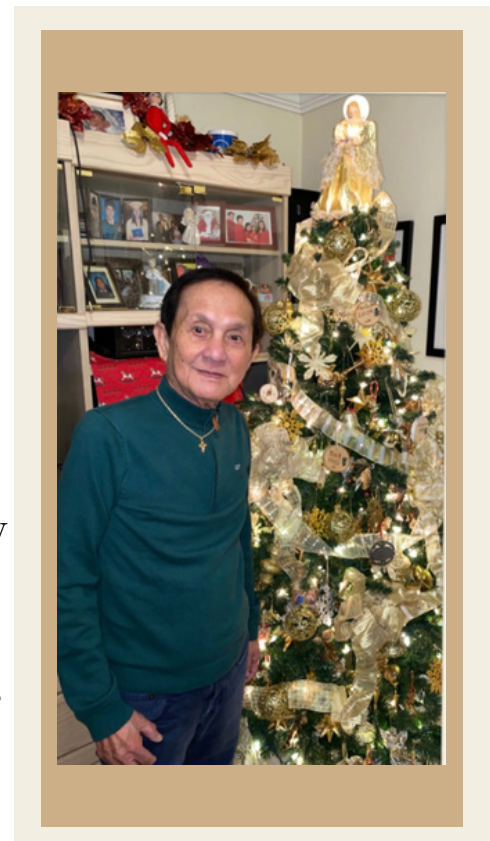
They had a big, beautiful wedding with more than a hundred guests, which was followed by a reception in Ofie's hometown, Navotas, Metro Manila. Jun is the proud father of three daughters - Joji, Jean and Jo-Anne. Jun has six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, with the youngest just born on April 8th, 2021. Due to the pandemic, Jun has yet to meet his youngest great-grandchild, but is excited to meet him when he is able! Jun says he is very lucky to be alive to have met all of his great-grandchildren (so far!) and to be part of their lives.



In 1985, Jun and Ofie moved from the Philippines to Toms River, NJ. A fun fact about Jun is that he legally changed his name to Jun when he became a US citizen in 1990. Because Jun had such a great love of food and cooking, he was inspired to open up the very first Fil-Am grocery store in Toms River, La Cocina Filipina, and later on opened up a restaurant catering business known as Manila Cuisine. They served many classic Filipino dishes, and his restaurant was universally loved by Fil-Ams in the area. Later in his life, Jun got to pursue another love of his: driving. He became a chauffeur to many in the area, and enjoyed conversing with his customers about their lives. Now that Jun has retired, he enjoys cooking for his family, playing mahjong, and shopping!



When asked about the secret to living a long and happy life, Jun says that you should try to stay young at heart. Those who know him can tell you that even to this day he is very easygoing, funny, stylish, and youthful. Jun is always happiest when he is surrounded by his family and friends, which is why Christmas is his favorite time of year. Jun is the type of person who loves to give, and wants to share the blessings God gave him with others. He is so thankful to everyone he has met since moving to Toms River, and is glad to call them all his friends.





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Jamie Mariano

As we are now in the middle of spring and approaching summer; the promise of a better and more "normal" way of living seems to be on the horizon. Whether not you choose to vaccinate, Covid restrictions are becoming less rigid, and allowing us to be able to fellowship, gather, and visit loved ones again. More schools are meeting five days a week, some have switched to a full-time schedule.

This is a reminder that the night always ends, joy comes in the morning, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. All politics aside, there is a reason to be hopeful now more than ever that we are going to be back to our regular routine in God's perfect timing. As we move forward, let us remember to keep those we have lost along the way, as well as their loved ones, in our thoughts and prayers. May we continue to be the giving community that we are, and help our friends and neighbors who are fighting Covid, fighting other illnesses, struggling financially, and enduring other battles too long to list.

For the many, many years that my family and I have been a part of FCDC and residents of Ocean County, I have never been more impressed by the resilience, the selfless acts of kindness toward others, and the steadfast faith in God and His provisions.

As always, thank you to all of our frontline workers, first responders, essential employees, and volunteers who have endlessly sacrificed, risked your lives, and continue to do so with dignity, strength, and a fighting spirit. God bless you all for your inspiration, for your help, and for your leadership!





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Jasmine Alcid

Coming to America was a goal of mine several years ago. I had the vision of a better life, great people and overflowing opportunities. I thought it was a place where I could feel safe and successful. However, over the years that I have been in this country, I realized that my

initial impression was a dream. Everywhere I went, there was always a balance of things - safety versus danger, love versus hate, success versus failure. And that is what's true about life.

The recent news of Anti-Asian hate crimes has got us all on edge. Some of us don't even want to go out and become a target of angry and ignorant attackers. It broke our hearts when we heard of Filipinos and other Asians being attacked in New York and other cities. Why would people commit these senseless acts? Is this letting their own frustrations boil over and then projecting their anger to Asians?

Now that we're slowly going back to in-person events, whether outdoors or indoors, we have to always be watchful and observant of our surroundings. We have to make sure that we can help prevent these crimes. Living in fear is something I didn't think was synonymous with living in America. If you see a crime against anyone, especially our Filipino community, we have to stand up and say something. Who knows, we might be able to prevent a crime by getting the attention of the attacker. Gather people around you while doing this, the more the better. There is power in numbers.

A lot of racist acts stem from ignorance. A lack of understanding that fuels fear of unfamiliar cultures. What we have to do as Filipino-Americans is promote ourselves by being good citizens, being kind to others, doing our jobs well, and most importantly educating those around us about our culture. FCDC's cultural events help promote us in our community, so it's important for everyone to participate.

Chances are each of us have or will face racism in our life time. It is important to be aware of this and to avoid "sweeping it under the rug". Take opportunities to teach fellow Americans about our culture. We can help make our country more tolerant for our kids.



NEW

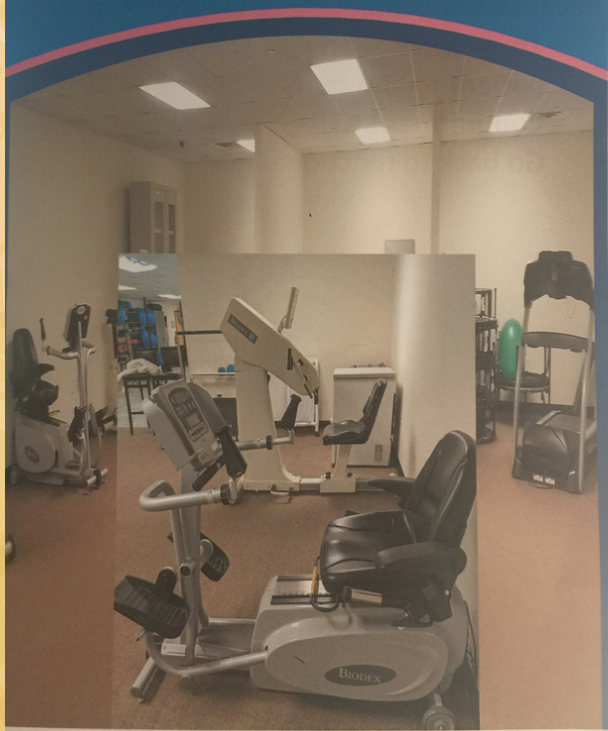
BUSINESS FEATURE: ALL OUT HOME PHYSICAL THERAPY

"I think I am a very persistent person and I believe that if I want to reach a certain goal, I gotta really work hard on it, no matter how hard it takes. I accept challenges in life and face it as a friend. I am not a procrastinator. For me time is gold, "Why wait if you can do it now?" I better do it now and face the challenges than live my entire life regretful of the things that I didn't give a shot. Putting a business is a gamble, but we got to try it because it's either we lose or win. We will never know unless we try." - **Mary Grace Roldan-Torretti**



All Out Home Physical Therapy

732-703-6411



With 15 years of experience as a physical therapist in a variety of facilities throughout Ocean and Monmouth counties, Mary Grace Roldan-Torretti, PT, DPT, has recently opened her own business, All Out Home Physical Therapy in Toms River. All Out Home Physical Therapy provides treatment for geriatric and younger patients with problems in musculoskeletal, neurological, balance (vertigo), joint replacement, sports injury, gait training and posture. They use strengthening exercises, stretching, mobilization, deep tissue massage, traction, strain counterstrain, Muscle energy technique, application of kinesio tape, and other techniques. Their treatment also includes TENS, Therapeutic Ultrasound, light therapy, cold/heat pack, and Nintendo Wii for balance and other variety procedures.

Grace's goal for her business is to be able to help people in need of therapy. She says that "physical therapy helps people to regain their quality of life and quality time with their family and friends, to go out and enjoy their life without having pain, be able to walk again, be able to go back to their daily routine."

Through the success of her business, Grace also hopes to help her friends and family in the Philippines come to the United States and fulfill their dreams of working as physical therapists, and with support from organizations such as FCDC, she envisions this happening in the near future.

Born in Quezon City, before coming to the United States, Grace was a medical representative for Sanofi Synthelabo and Innovex, an outsource of GlaxoSmithKline.

Grace received her Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy in 1994 from Ago Medical and Educational Centre in Legazpi City, Albay, Philippines. She earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy from Utica College in New York, in 2016.

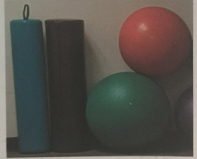
When she is not working, Grace enjoys volleyball and planning large charity events. Besides last year, due to Covid, she has planned annual events such as the Sports Fest for healthcare workers and their families, as well as Christmas parties also for healthcare workers and their families.

Grace says she still believes in Bayanihan, "a beautiful culture that we can pass to our children and our children's children."

Congratulations and God bless Grace on her new business!

All out Home Physical Therapy

Because our goal:
To educate, motivate and inspire the patient to aim for healthier life.
Commitment to high quality care
Go back to functional mobility



Contact us:
Address: # 20 Hospital Drive,
Suite 23 Toms River 08755
Telephone: 732.703.6411
Fax 928.441.4007
Email: aohpt@outlook.com

Mary Grace Roldan PT, DPT

F.A.C.E.S. Barkada

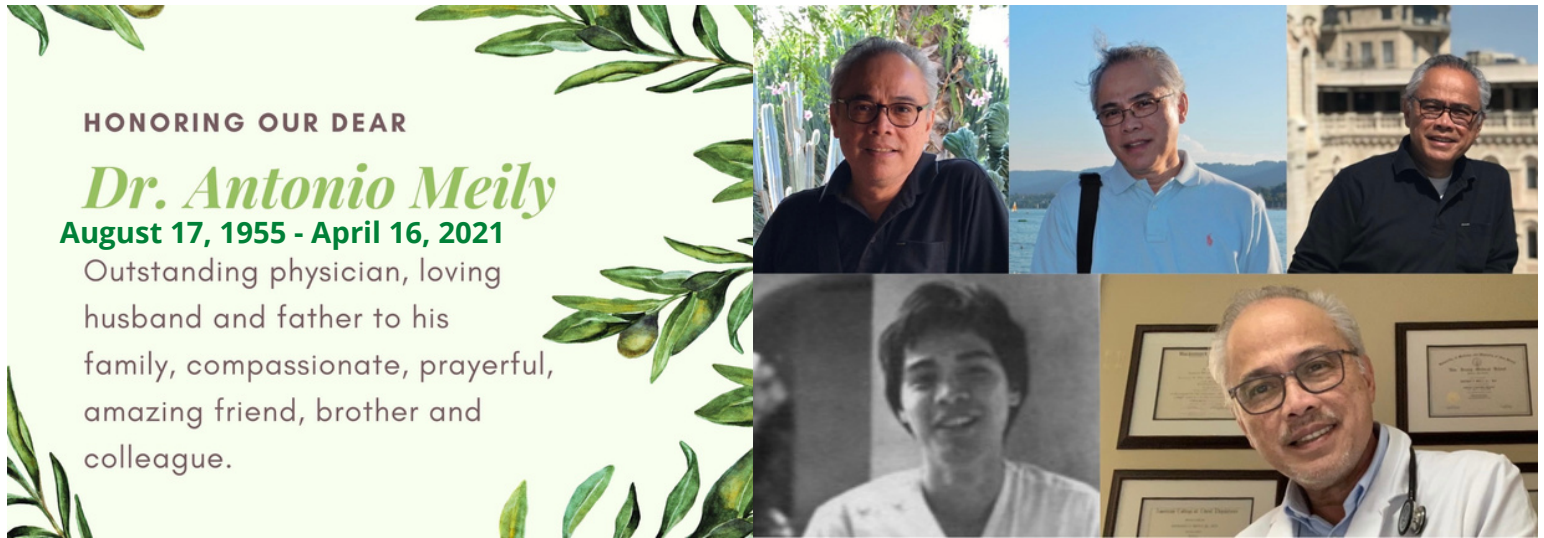
Filipino-American Cultural Enrichment Studies

If you are in middle school or in high school, we want you to be part of FACES Barkada.
Learn our culture, meet new friends, make a difference in the community, be part of exciting projects to help you build your confidence and take part in leadership roles.
Volunteer hours may be eligible for community service.

Just email us at fcdcteam@gmail.com



Virtual Zoom meeting last April 15, 2021



Tribute from Dr. Jose Ramon Suatengco at the prayer novena

Tonight we say goodbye to Tony or Chi chi. Our personal condolences to Lucy, Nikki and Teri.

I have the privilege of knowing Chi chi as a colleague, friend and as his physician . He is loved by his patients for his dedication and expertise, respected and admired by his colleagues and counted on as a great friend. During his last hospitalization , I was able to see Chi chi for the last time . He uttered “Mon, the pain is so bad”. We said our goodbyes and I knew that he was looking to find comfort and peace . He was ready to go and meet his maker.

Chi chi is a great man- he knew his priorities. His Faith was strong and was confident in his love for God ; he loved his family so dearly and many times would proudly talk about his 2 daughters , Nicky and Terry. We all know, of course about Lucy, the love of his life. And of course , his dedication to his patients and the practice of medicine. Medicine was his passion. He made the extra effort to care for his patients. I admired that in him.

Last night, I looked at our text thread over the years. Many times we shared thoughts and our personal insight. Chi chi was a great writer and it showed me who he really was-passionate, dedicated , God fearing and a loving family man.

Allow me to share a letter he wrote meant for his Med. school classmates which he asked me to read.

GRATITUDE

November 19, 2020

This day, exactly 10 years ago was when I was diagnosed with colon cancer . Surgery followed shortly. Started out a Stage 3-C and nearly 2 years ago, a Stage 4. Though my treatment is deemed palliative , I am still very much around and doing reasonably well.

I have since early on -permanently deleted the “what ifs” of my past and focus on today and inch my way to my tomorrows. I don't look at the sobering statistics and survival rates and regard them as mere numbers .

Yes, my easy access to the best resources, latest treatment protocols available and actively participating in my treatment plans and decision making have been a very significant help.

I am able to function well despite my treatments along with the many side effects ...some permanent and which now have been part of my normal.

Though I have slowed down quite a bit towards retirement , it has been a blessing to still practice our beloved profession . It continues to be humbling ...to counsel and treat a good number of cancer patients...like myself , some better and some not as lucky . A number of my patients who know about my illness openly pray and have offerings for my healing ...Difficult it was initially to hold back my emotions then , I would weep in private. I continue to offer my own prayers for them...a practice and way of life that have been ingrained in me since our clinical rotations at the PGH.

So dear classmates on this anniversary day of sorts, my small family and I thank you so very much for being around since the beginning ...supporting , uplifting , offering prayers, hope and endless good wishes. With head bowed, I give my thanks and praise to our Almighty God and Maker. This, through the intercession of Mother Mary and my favorite Saints. Prayers and an ever stronger faith will carry me through .He is in charge. His will be done. He is the Healer. Thank you Class 81!!!will be seeing you all at the next reunion .

Chichi

Chi chi was diagnosed Nov 19, 2010 with Colon Cancer. It was difficult giving him the news. He fought hard all the years. In response to his letter above , I said-“Thank you for sharing as you truly are an inspiration and reminder how we should love life and not only live life. Be well and safe my friend. Our journey continues. Let's add meaning and make it count. “

His journey on earth has ended. He is now with the angels and saints . I will miss him dearly.



*Tribute from Dr. Jocelyn Bautista
at the prayer novena*

Good evening everyone. Unfortunately, I did not have the pleasure of knowing Tony that well, but I can assure you that he was well loved by those that knew him. He was always so generous with his time and talent and no one could ever match his finesse and his ability to talk to anyone, no matter who they were. He had that personality that made one feel comfortable. He was filled with humor, and I know that he used his ability to make people laugh as part of his healing regimen. He will truly be missed and we know that he will likely charm everyone he meets in heaven.

To Lucy and his children, I cannot express how saddened we are about his passing but please know that the Filipino-American Medical Society (FAMS) community will always be here for you and your family. While we had hoped that Tony could still be with us today, we are comforted by the fact that he is now at peace. God bless everyone and Good night.



FCDC PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO GET VACCINES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Rica Tonog

FCDC once again adhered to the call for help from the seniors who do not know how to get their vaccines. They have been dialing the same busy phone line for hours, not knowledgeable at all in computers, or may not have access to a computer or the internet. With the demand for the vaccine getting further ahead with the supply, COVID vaccine appointments can be a challenge for our senior community. They are the high priority and high risk groups that need to be vaccinated.



We are thankful for the kind efforts of our Chairman of the Board, Dr. Jose Ramon Suatengco, who started this project to help our seniors in need. Dr. Suatengco asked for help from a few members of FCDC to join him in helping our seniors gain access to the vaccine. Last Feb. 19, 2021, Dr. Suatengco asked one of his patients if he already got his vaccine. The patient shared how helpless he was in getting one. From a single patient of his, we were able to reach up to forty (40) seniors and members of our organization who needed help to get vaccinated.

We are grateful for our FACES moms, Dr. Angela Umali-Pamintuan, nurses Cristeta Benter and Cathy Suobiron, for assisting seniors, friends and family members of FCDC in our community to get a schedule for an appointment. Working as a team, Jasmine Alcid, FCDC's President and Maryann Payumo, FCDC's Vice President, worked tirelessly registering seniors in our community through various health systems and with the Ocean County Health Department.

Here are some of the seniors that we were able to help. We are blessed to have FCDC as a platform to help and reach out to our community.

"Grateful to Dr. Suatengco and everyone who helped me register for my vaccine. People like you are fighting so hard to get me vaccinated. Thank you very much." - John N.

"I was told to call a facility in Lakewood to call for an appointment and I was lucky that I was able to get vaccinated. Thank you FCDC and Dr. Suatengco!" - Michael C.

"We have been waiting for months to have our vaccines but we could not get it. Thank you for helping us out and we appreciate all your help." - Ron M.

Panawagan sa mga Kabataan

Ni Sisa Batongbacal

Maaari kayang humingi ng inyong Panahon? Saglit lamang na bumitiw Sa kuneksyon, sandaling pag-iwan sa birtwal na daigdig:

Hanga ako sa husay nyo sa teknolohiya, Nagbabasa, naglalaro, nagkukwenta Sumasagot sa sangkatutak Na tawag at mensahe, nang nag-iisa O ang kasama'y kisap lamang Ng pwersang dala ng kable at kuryente.

Bilib ako sa inyong talinong tipunin Ang kaalaman mula sa web, minsan Sa paraang copy paste, o sadyang Sa malalayang utak, kayang isilid Ang aklatan hindi lamang sa memory Ng android o laptops, kundi maging Sa kakayahang maging siyentista, Magpaliwanag sa anumang usapin Mula sa pagkisaw ng butete sa tubig Hanggang sa bilang ng mga bulalakaw Na dumadaan sa himpapawid.

Subalit ang lubos kong kinasasabikan, Supling ng sumisilay na kinabukasan, Ay ang tungkuling hindi ninyo matatakanan, Na kayo—sa panahon nang kayo— ang renda Sa nahuhubog na kultura at pananaw, Sa anyo ng kabuhayan at relasyong panlipunan, Sa pamamahala ng pambayang kaayusan; Nawa'y pasulungin ninyo sa higit na patas, Ang daigdig, sa granahe ng inyong Pagkabihasa sa teknolohiya at syensya, Hindi sa inyong pribadong birtwal na sentido, Kundi sa higit na malayang ugnayan Ng mga tao, umiinog sa pintig Ng mamamahin ninyong mundo.

Abril 27, 2021



Thursday, 6:00 PM
VIRTUAL EVENT



"FUN AND FORGOTTEN FACTS ABOUT PHILIPPINE CULTURE"

SPEAKER: JAMIE MARIANO

IN CELEBRATION OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH FOR THE MONTH OF MAY, WE HAVE COLLABORATED THIS EXCITING PROJECT WITH THE OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY. OPEN TO ALL TEENS AND ADULTS.

TO REGISTER:

[HTTP://THEOCEANCOUNTYLIBRARY.ORG/](http://theoceancountylibrary.org/)
UNDER THE EVENTS & NEWS HEADING AND SCROLL TO CALENDAR OF EVENTS.





ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY PATIO

by: **FERLIE ALMONTE**

Life Coach, Author, Motivational Speaker

We, oftentimes, do not see them. But many powerful life lessons are being taught to us in the most unlikely places or circumstances. Do we choose to be blind from seeing these teachable moments as they unfold before our eyes? Or do we simply take things for granted that we miss many messages being sent our way?

Of all places, our sweet journey of unexpected little miracles came from a home improvement project. We bought our humble condo almost four years ago today, but never enjoyed our patio. It was an eyesore. It was a horrible patchwork of a small cemented area, bricks so sparse and unevenly placed, and several square feet of useless space of dirt and dead unsightly overgrown bushes. It was uninviting to see and be at. We thought of having it cleaned and paved so we can invite family and friends for a barbeque. We got a quote last year. At the same time, my vision started to blur because of cataracts. I needed surgery on both eyes but our insurance does not cover the type of lens implant that works best for my needs, Patio or Eye Surgery? No contest. I have a healthy, beautiful vision now.

Then at the end of winter this year, our blessing started to manifest. A ridiculously priced awesome piece of furniture advertised on fb marketplace led us to a gorgeous home where I noticed a pallet of pavers sitting on their driveway, I asked if the owner would sell it to me. Hey! it never hurts to ask, right? Useless to her now, she sold them to me at a price too hard to pass up. Brick by brick, my spouse and I picked and transported all 600 pavers in our SUV.

That began our unplanned patio remodelling. We called a landscaper who was willing to work with the pavers we just got. Then, we started to plan and got a permit from the homeowners' association. Oooops! we had a hurdle. Desperately holding on to our tight budget, we were told we could not do the shortcut of paving over the existing concrete slab. It needed to be demolished and removed. \$500 more was added to our bill. In hindsight, I said to myself, "To do things right, we need to let go of what hinders the right way of building our dreams. I watched the workers use a huge chisel to break the cement slab. They pounded hard on the stubborn slab. It was loud, and it sounded scary. There was dust and debris everywhere, they were focused and relentless. And I held on to my vision of a serene place steadfastly, trusting those who committed to build it with me. It was a lot of work, but it laid a lovely even ground that served as a blank canvas of gravel. My clean slate to design and build my dream. I stared at the black, packed, levelled gravel. Even that was prettier than what mess we started with. Being budget sensitive, he suggested reusing the hundreds of bricks from our patio and just power wash them. He laid them as borders. The second layer used were the new pavers. We did not have enough. We needed to tweak our blueprint. Our contractor suggested adding another pattern for our centerpiece. We were open to listening for guidance from the expert. So, with a leap of faith, we followed the vision he saw for us. And the result was spectacular! Our patio looked like no one else's courtyard in our village.

Ours looked like an area rug! Unique, bold and with A Story of Resilience and Magnificent Transformation. We were in awe of the surprising result. Our neighbors loved it. Six other homeowners were inspired to change their sacred spaces and followed our lead to create a little patio masterpieces. I coined a new name for my landscaper, "The Michaelangelo of Patio." We now have a growing village of happy homeowners with beautifully transformed patios that serve their needs and bring them a blissful private outdoor sanctuary.

As I reflect and watch the whole process of remodelling our patio, I also began to see how it ties in with my life...or with the lives of many others.. Think of our lives like our old, tired patios. So many aspects of it are there~ the dirt, the slab, the broken, discolored and some, still usable bricks. We have stuff in our lives that we no longer desire, they are outdated, they do not bring us joy. There are some parts, too, that can be saved, but need a new place where they can serve and shine again, We want change. We declare what we want and the universe conspire. Just like that pallet of pavers that unexpectedly manifested! The contractor is like a Life Coach. They provide guidance. They help us build the vision that meets our needs and desires. The dream requires investment of time, money and belief. The transformation could be noisy, messy and could require many decisions to be made as we go through the process. Tearing apart and disposing of what we no longer need is like chiselling the part of us that is no longer a representation of who we are and want to be. We trust our coach. We jump in and immerse ourselves in the project. We begin to feel free and relieved. We smile. We begin to see possibilities. Now, we can begin to decorate our patio based on how we want to feel when we are in it, and imagine who we want to spend time with in our new magical place. The patio of our lives does not have to be huge to be glorious and gorgeous. They just need to feel a place where you can feel home with ourselves, and the promises they bring.

It is time for you to blossom in a place where you will feel your heart nurtured, your heart safe and your spirit alive with possibilities.

For more inspiring messages, visit FerlieAlmonte.com or follow @ferliealmonte on social media





Sow • Root • Grow • Branch

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Filipino-American Community & Development Center

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Jamie Mariano at
jamiefcdctoday@gmail.com

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AOH PHYSICAL THERAPY
All Out Home Physical Therapy



Mary Grace Roldan
Physical Therapist, DPT
gracyroo0428@gmail.com
(732) 703-6411
Fax: 928.441.4007
20 Hospital Dr. Suite 23 B
Toms River, NJ 08753

OSCAR T. ORTIZ, M.D.
RONALD B. VILLANUEVA, M.D.
FRANCISCO D. CRUZ, M.D.

1163 ROUTE 37 WEST • SUITE A-1
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755
732-736-1000 • FAX 732-736-8811

Atlantic
printing
& design

467 Lakehurst Rd, Toms River, NJ 08755
732.557.9600 | 732.557.9601 (f)
775 North Main St, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609.597.2727 | 609.597.3715 (f)
info@apadnj.com | www.apadnj.com



OLIVIA ORTIZ, M.D.
EVELYN TIU, M.D.

1163 ROUTE 37 WEST, SUITE A-1
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753
732-505-4007 • FAX 732-736-8811



**Allergy &
Asthma Center
of Lacey, LLC**

Janet Ang Tumaliuan, M.D.

Board Certified, American Board of Allergy & Immunology

606 LACEY ROAD
FORKED RIVER, NJ 08731
609-693-6464

525 ROUTE 70, SUITE 3C
BRICK, NJ 08724
732-370-8006

ALBERTO, ALBERTO, GABRIEL & JIMENEZ
MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, P.A.
INTERNAL MEDICINE AND DIAGNOSTIC DIVISION

RENATO D. ALBERTO, M.D. • FRISCOLLA M. ALBERTO, M.D.
TIMOTHY C. GABRIEL, M.D. • MARTIN Z. JIMENEZ, M.D. • VIRGILIO R. MARINAS, M.D.
MELUSSA M. ALBERTO-SLUGLIN, MGR. • SHEILA M. ALBERTO-SOARES, M.D.
25 MOLE ROAD • SUITES A 1 TO A4 • TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY 08755
TELEPHONE: 732.240.0404 • FAX: 732.244.3555



New & Renewal of FCDC Family Memberships

China McPartlin & family

Jona Tejada-Chong & family

Mary Grace Roldan-Torretti & family

Patricia Belocura & family

Fred Mariano & family

Teresita Vea & family



**Come
join
us!**

If you wish to be a member of FCDC or need to renew your membership.

Kindly visit our website **www.fcdcnj.org** and download

the membership letter. Thank you.