

FACES Today

MAY 2020

A monthly electronic newsletter of the
Filipino-American Community & Development Center of Ocean County Inc.
2014 Bayaning Pilipino Awardee

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT **Gabriella Payumo**



I'm Gabriella Payumo. My parents are Dr. Gene Louie and Maryann Payumo, and I am the eldest of my three siblings (Joseph, 14 years old, Emma, 4 years old). I recently turned 21 earlier this month. It may seem like ages ago for me, but I was a proud member of FACES. I graduated from Toms River's St. Joseph Grade School and Donovan Catholic High School. Currently, I'm in my third year at Rutgers University, and I'm double majoring in Psychology and Exercise Science. Last fall, I became a sister of Sigma Kappa and had recently joined a new organization called the Coalition for Women of Color. I've been an active member of my school's Filipino organization, Rutgers Association of Philippine Students (RAPS) since my freshman year. This past school year, I acted as one of RAPS' Cultural Dance Troupe Coordinators. As RCDT coord, I choreographed traditional Filipino dances such as the Tinikling and Pandanggo Sa Ilaw, but with a modern twist to it. We performed at many Rutgers events, including our most recent event, Battle of the Barrios. This event showcases skits made

by Filipino student organizations from colleges in the NJ/NY area that highlights relevant issues. My organization placed 2nd this year, and I'm very proud to have played a part in making it all happen.

.....continue from Member Spotlight – Gabriella Payumo

The COVID-19 Pandemic has hit everyone globally by storm. The effects it has had on me personally are minor compared to others, but everyone, including myself, has experienced some level of emotional discomfort and psychological burden in dealing with this virus. From a college student's perspective, the transition from in-person classes while living on campus to taking classes online at home has been quite challenging. While most of my professors have empathized with the students and have been very accommodating, online learning is simply not an easy adjustment. I miss my roommate and friends, who I would see nearly every day. I miss my RCDT members, with whom I've formed a familial bond. I miss my sorority sisters, who never fail to uplift and support my soul. I even miss working at Starbucks and on the Starbucks truck during peak hours, which could at times, get very busy. However, I've been trying to make do with what I have in front of me and managing the stresses as best as I could. Fortunately, the unconditional support of my parents and the endearing love of my siblings have been an immeasurable help.

Today's technology has also been a valuable tool as I'm still able to talk with my friends through FaceTime as well as having Netflix parties. I've gotten the chance to cook the meals I've always wanted to make which, believe it or not, actually resulted in a happier and heavier wallet. I've also sent and received touchingly sweet letters and note cards by mail to and from my sorority sisters. I understand it is a very simple deed, yet those handwritten words seem to make the messages more sincere, therapeutic and intimate. It differs tremendously from texting which can sometimes be misconstrued and misunderstood. I think I will write letters more often to my loved ones. I highly encourage everyone to try it.

Another silver lining that came to fruition during this awful time was seeing how people come together to help in some way. Despite the difficulties of our state's lockdown, it also gave me the time to give back to my community. As I try to manage my time with schoolwork, I devote some of my free time constructing masks with my mother to be donated to our frontliners and essential workers. Being part of the PPE Brigade, a term coined by Tita Janet Tumaliuan, MD, has been an enriching experience to say the least. They are a group of the most talented, generous and intelligent individuals. They have selflessly given countless hours of their time to making face masks, face shields, ear savers and head caps. Although I've received many thanks from many people, I don't consider myself deserving of the accolades. I was always taught, through the voices of my mom, my Lola Cely (Deauna) and my Lola Lina (Payumo), that as a decent human being, we are supposed to help one another especially in times of crisis and sorrow. It is important to acknowledge the real heroes and thank every frontline worker who treats COVID patients as they isolate themselves from their families.

Thank you to all the essential workers, such as those working in the janitorial industry, grocery stores, postal delivery services and many others. I can't imagine how difficult this is for you. We should also remember those thousands of lives we lost from this virus, and also to the millions of people who are financially affected. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.



From the Editor

Jamie Mariano

Governor Murphy: Schools Remain Closed for the Year

Remote learning was a new concept for the majority of students across the country when school buildings shut their doors in March. Many teachers and parents have had to learn how to navigate Zoom, Google Classroom, and other virtual learning platforms. What was intended to be a temporary fix to safeguard children and staff during the pandemic is now the new normal for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year.

Teachers have stepped up to the plate and created fun and exciting ways to keep their students motivated. Parents have taken on a whole new level of multi-tasking as they are now co-teachers on top of working their full-time jobs. Some parents are teachers also, having to teach their own students while keeping their kids on task with their school work.

This is the first time President Trump has led a country during a pandemic. This is the first time that school superintendents ordered every child to stay at home. This is the first time that parents have had to speak to their kids' teachers outside of conferences, Back-to-School Night, and the occasional phone call home for misbehavior or a praise report.

As a mother of three who maintains social media contact with other parents in my school district, I have realized something through all of this: out of everyone who has been affected by this new way of life, the ones who have taken the transition in stride, complained the least, and showed the most resilience, flexibility, understanding, and grace, have been our children. Although there are some bumps in the road, meltdowns, tantrums, and just plain laziness, they show up every day with zero absences, sitting at their desk, whether they like or not, to do the work they are responsible for completing.

Meanwhile, adults around the country are complaining because they cannot go to a beach for some rest and relaxation. They are calling into their favorite restaurants and cursing them for letting their phone ring endlessly. Our kids, who have very little power to change what is happening to them, are navigating this whole new world better than most adults.

Kids are used to following rules every day in school. If a rule is broken, there are consequences. They know if they step out of line or try to challenge authority, there are repercussions. At the end of the day, they know it is better to concentrate on their school work instead of trying to question rules that are put in place to keep them safe. One of my kids said it best: "Why can't people do what they are supposed to do so that this can be over?"

Praise for the PPE Brigade

by Sandra Bacani

When I was asked if I wanted to volunteer for the PPE Brigade, I was in the process of looking for fabrics. I wanted to make a mask because I know it had been on the news that the front-liners lacked PPE in the hospital. As a former ICU nurse myself, I kind of felt it was the least that I could do. Since I help my husband in the office, I tried to do them after work, usually about 2-3 hours per day. Occasionally, some days up to 6 hours. It's a therapy to me on these days.

To keep the PPE Brigade in touch with each other, there is a PPE Brigade group text. Here we exchanged ideas, shared who needed what materials, special Cricut machine, Serger sewing machines and etc. It really became the source of information for all the volunteers. In that respect, all of us became efficient because people that have special capabilities were delegated to a certain task. We have a master at making ties, someone talented in cutting the Halyard fabric, an earsaver maker, a pickup and delivery person, and a face shield expert. We share tips, creativity, and resources with the group. The PPE Brigade is made up of a retired surgeon, a retired pediatrician, people who learned to sew for the first time, those who learned how to make a face shield. This is truly a group effort.

Aside from the disruption in our daily routine and work, the pandemic affected us in a very personal way. We lost my son's godfather and his daughter (my godchild) of COVID19. He was a nurse at Beth Israel in Newark. They died 9 days apart and during their hospitalization, it was really hard. Sewing, and sometimes baking, was actually therapy for me. It has been therapy to many of us volunteers. As we became more involved in this, it became a family project for many of us in the brigade. Our kids and spouses are also involved.

To all the PPE volunteers, it's been both a pleasure and a privilege to work with all of you. Great job: everybody's enthusiasm to help is contagious.

To the frontliners' families, you are so blessed. Thank you for sharing your family members' talent. Support them any way you can. The forced isolation has turned our lives upside down, but let's take this time to reflect on what matters most in our lives. The importance of our faith, our family and friends. A friend sent me a message when I was so down: "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will shine." This too shall pass and we will all be better in the end.





Attitude Adjustment

CLOSER OR CRAZIER

by **Ferlie Almonte** *Motivational Speaker, Author, Resilience & Confidence Coach*

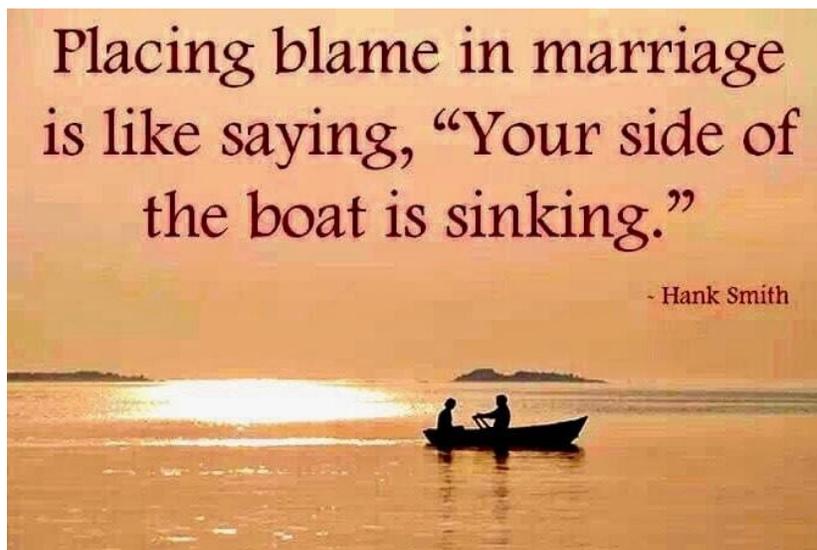
Covid-19 took us all by surprise and shook the way we live. The world changed right before our eyes. This pandemic awakened in so many of us our value system. We saw our own mortality flash before our eyes as we begin to sadly lose our own loved ones, friends and colleagues. Job losses are rising every single day. Along with the rise of these heartbreaking collateral losses due to Covid-19, are the fears, anxiety and stress levels of people harshly affected by it. Family dynamics continue to get more challenging to maintain positive environments as the mounting pressure of bringing in steady income and keeping everyone happy and entertained in closed quarters continue after eight weeks and counting.

In the beginning, family members had a different mindset. Despite the interruption in the regular way we live, getting the kids to school, go to work, dine out and keep a healthy social calendar, we initially welcomed and appreciated the chance to reconnect and share new moments to bond with our parents, siblings and other relatives. It was fun in the beginning. We found new ways to create cool moments and lovely memories. Then, reality set in that parents had to homeschool their own children. Kids were noisy, messy, bored and out of control. Parents have to work from home, and the distraction from the chaos became intolerable. Privacy and "me time" soon became a luxury we had to give up for love of our family. But to some, it eats them up inside. Resentment and frustration replaced joy and peace. Cheating and divorcing spouses quickly got into each other's skin being stuck together at home that spiked cases of Domestic Violence.

We had a level of freedom that we now realize we took for granted. Majority of us were mandated to quarantine, close businesses and stay home unless your need to be out is related to being a healthcare or essential frontline work. Even those who fall under this category had to keep distance from their own family members at home as precaution of the spread of a vicious virus that could sneak up on many asymptomatic carriers. Mother's Day came. That somehow redefined Love. While it was preached that the best present we can give our elderly parents is our time and presence, Covid-19 flipped it to the best gift we can give to them is to stay away and keep distance to save them from contracting the virus that we may inadvertently pass to them.

Placing blame in marriage
is like saying, "Your side of
the boat is sinking."

- Hank Smith



.....continue from Closer or Crazier by Ferlie Almonte

These are just a few situations that describe what can happen inside our homes. This pandemic brought out the best, as well as the worst in people. It takes extraordinary love, patience and understanding to stick through this tough crisis we all have to face. We all need a break. We all pray to once again live our lives differently. WE WERE ALL TRANSFORMED whether we admit it or not. We were called upon to be resilient, strong, faithful, hopeful, unified and loving.

It takes Extraordinary and Unconditional Love for us TO BE INVINCIBLE in fighting this Invisible Enemy.

Let us remember: WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME TEAM, starting with our families. Now more than ever, we need to rise above this AS ONE. Bruised, but not broken.

Ferlie Almonte is also the host of WebTV shows, Faces of Resilience and The "D" Word (show on how Resilience through Divorce, Death, Disability and Deceit can lead to Dazzling Destinies, as well as KLVW-TV show, New Beginnings. Ferlie is a Motivational Speaker, Inspirational Entertainer, Life Coach and International Best Selling Author. For more info, visit FerlieAlmonte.com)

Liham sa Kaibigang Frontliner

Ni Sisa Batongbacal

Nakita ko ang post mo kagabi
Sa *facebook*, bakas pa ang marka
Ng N95 sa iyong ilong at pisngi;
Sa likod mo'y nakahiga sa lapag
Ang mga kasama sa *duty*,
Sa ospital na sabi mo ay maraming kritikal,
Mga nasawi, matatandang pasyente.

Tatlong araw pa lamang ang mensahe mo,
Positive sa *covid* ang lima sa *medical team*
Sa *emergency unit* ng ospital, palakasan
Na lamang ng resistensya sabi mo,
Para patuloy na kayanin ang trabaho,
Lalo't para-paraan lamang ang lahat
Sa paghanap ng sariling proteksyon—
Face masks, face shields, gloves, goggles,
Gowns, head covers, shoe covers, hazmat suits,
Na sa simula pa'y hinintay na ninyo
Mula sa pamahalaan, ngunit hindi dumarating.

Lahat tayo ay nadudurog ang puso
Sa bawat duktur, nars, teknisyen sa laboratoryo,
At iba pang bayaning *frontliners* na ginapi
Ng pandemya, namatay sa pag-iisa sa silid;
Wala ang malalapit na pamilya at kaibigan
Walang huling habilin ng pagmamahal
Na maari pang ipadama sa huling singhap at sulyap
Bago ang pagkapatid ng kanilang hininga;
Kaya ingatan ninyo ang inyong sarili.

Isa kayo sa dahilan kung bakit makapangingibabaw
Sa pandemyang ito ang sangkatauhan.
Salamat sa sakripisyo, mga araw ng pananabik
Sa mga anak na hindi na nayayakap ng matagal,
Sa kabiyak o magulang na hindi mahagkan kahit saglit,
Sa sariling tahananang nalimot na ang amoy at init ,
Sa mga halaman, sa hamog ng umaga sa hardin,
Sa alagang pusa o asong hindi na makalaro sa
paggising,
Sa mga okasyong lumipas na, para muling bawiin
Sa araw ng iyong pag-uwi.
Ginagamot ninyo ang subyang ng takot sa aming dibdib
Upang patuloy kaming manalig, umasam ng ligtas na
daigdig.

Mayo 14, 2020

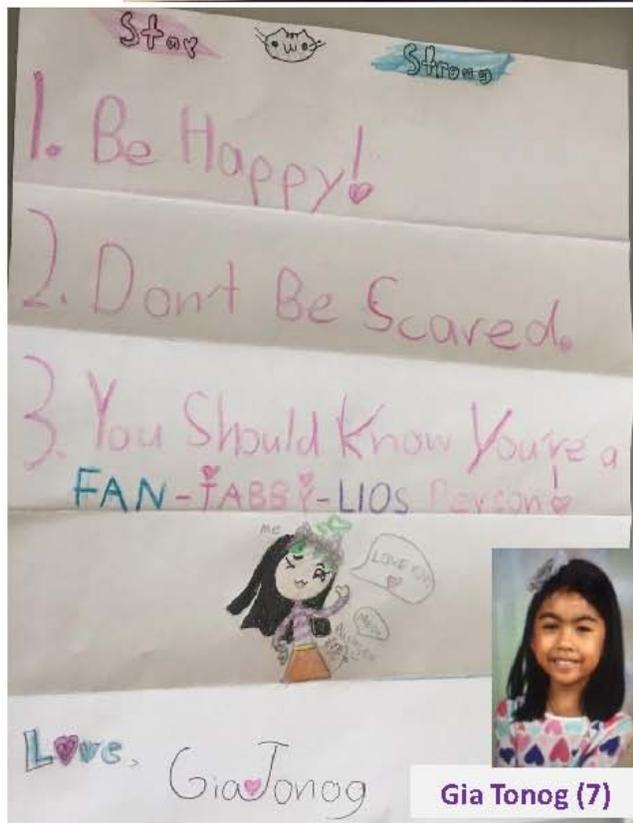
FACES' Kids Send Letters to Our Senior Citizens of Toms River

The Toms River Police Department asked the community to write letters or draw pictures and deliver them to one of the 30,000 senior citizens in the community of Toms River who may be struggling with sadness from the social distancing necessary to fight the corona virus pandemic. Because of possible germ transmission, they cannot accept paper submissions and some of our FACES kids and their parents emailed letters to the Toms River Police. They printed out these letters along with a meal and were delivered last April 27th through a delivery task force comprised of volunteers from the Toms River Senior Center, firefighters, police officers and first responders.

Thank you Teacher Christine Laugico for your recommending this activity for FACES.



Matthew Villanueva (10)



Gia Tonog (7)



Julianna Suobiron (10)



We are proud and grateful to our FACES' kids for accepting the Earth Day Challenge.



Gregory Alcid (11)

Planted seeds in an empty egg shell carton.



Gillian Alcid (10)

Reused/recycled a spaghetti sauce jar into a pencil holder, decorated with paint and candy wrappers to look like Earth at night...



Grace Alcid (7)

Toilet paper roll turned into artwork.



Alexander Babuschak (11)

"My poster for Earth Day is a symbol of our earth with a symbol for us to recycle. I believe it is important for us as custodians of our earth to reuse and recycle. In doing this, we lessen the pollution in our land and water."



We are proud and grateful to our FACES' kids for accepting the Earth Day Challenge.



Emma D Payumo (4)



Joseph D Payumo (14)

We pledge to reduce plastic waste by using reusable bags whenever we shop!"



**Julianna Suobiron
(10)**

"We have to do our part to not litter and pick up the garbage even if its not yours."



**Julianna Suobiron and
Jarod Suobiron (7)
Picking up litter in our community for
Earth day.**



We are proud and grateful to our **FACES'** kids for accepting the Earth Day Challenge.



Gia Tonog (7)
Bird feeder

Applied peanut butter and grains of rice on recycled cardboard, yarn and chopsticks.



Matthew Villanueva (10)
Windowsill garden
Planted Avocados, Daffodils and an acorn.



Jamari Valmon (9), Elyus Valmon (8), Akemi Valmon (6)

We went camping in the backyard with our mom on April 25th. Camping is a fun way to reduce energy consumption. We made a campfire to cook our dinner (hot dogs, s'mores, fish, and veggies), so we did not need to use the gas or electricity from the house. We used wood and sticks we found to build the fire. Being outdoors brought us closer to nature, even though it was just our backyard!





We are proud and grateful to our
FACES' kids for accepting the
Earth Day Challenge!



Janna Andrea Yambao (9)

"Nature's Sunrise"

Depicts a sunrise at a lake where
there are trees and mountains.



John Matthew Yambao (8)

"Nature's Home"

Shows the Earth and its wonders, as
it orbits around in space.

**Philippine Consulate General of New York invites everyone to the
"Kwentuhang Pambata"**

Learn Filipino Language through Storytelling

May 22, 2020, 8PM with Jamie Mariano as our storyteller!

**Don't miss it and look for the FB page of the Philippine Consulate
General of New York!**

Maligayang Araw ng mga Ina!





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