

Balitaan

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The Next Generation Steps Up

By: Paul Aleckson, PCAFPD President

PCVs often rise to the occasion. They get called upon to do things or speak about subjects with little preparation. It's part of the experience. Our scholars are no different, rising to the demands of college when coming from poor families and other challenging situations. Thus, it may come as no surprise that RPCVs and college graduates from the PCAFPD's scholarships have started rising to the occasion to ensure the foundation's work will continue. And, as the new President since March, I will do everything I can to rise to the occasion and ensure the life changing work of the foundation that has led to over 200 college degrees since 1983 can continue for decades to come. I say this seeing just how dedicated to the task the newest contributors are.

In the US, a new core of RPCVs have stepped up to take over the Foundation's communications, donation tracking, the role of Secretary, and supporting the Treasurer. They have brought a sense of energy and determination to their work. They have also brought skills to help streamline some tasks like tracking donations and sending donation acknowledgments.

For many years, the foundation has grappled with the existential question of how to replace the irreplaceable VP of Philippines Operations Roland de Jesus, who has been bookkeeper, banker, and mentor for the foundation and scholars since taking over from his father in 1994. Today, Roland is first among equals on the 7 person Ituloy ("continue") team. His stated goal is to train the team so that

everyone is interchangeable. It is not a small task, but one that he and the team are fully committed to seeing succeed, a commitment that was evident when I spent two days with the team in Manila in March.

The Foundation is on a firm footing to continue its life changing work. We couldn't be happier to see the same students we supported step up and help administer the scholarships in the Philippines. Such selflessness speaks to the type of people to whom we award scholarships and to the value of the scholarships. Nobody understands the value more than these scholars and they are determined to help the Foundation thrive. In the US, we have a good core of new people working hard. More help is welcome as we continue re-invigorating the Board with fresh ideas and energy. You can rest assured your generous support is being matched by generous gifts of time to help make the most of your donations and have the maximum impact on the lives of deserving students in the country we continue to serve.



Ituloy Team Members: Jessa Escame, Hannah Catiis, Roland de Jesus, Ning de Jesus, Karl Vincent Soriano; Not pictured: Jody Cestina, Mary Antoniette Estabaya

PEACE CORPS CONNECT 2017

Sarah McMeans represented PCAFPD at NPCA Peace Corps Connect 2017 in Denver this August and has shared this report on those meetings.

I represented PCAFPD at the *Affiliate Group Network* Annual Meeting on Friday. Among the topics discussed were: 1) the NPCA's Community Building Platform developed by Ella Dowell, NPCA's Community Technology Systems Coordinator; and 2) an offer to affiliate groups to use NPCA's Zoom account to host board meetings, strategic planning sessions and webinars. Details about these programs, and other services offered by the Affiliate Group Network can be found at www.peacecorpsconnect.org. Look for Affiliate Group News under the Community tab.

A highlight of Peace Corps Connect this year was *Partnering for Prosperity*, the first annual social entrepreneurship competition, which was hosted by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Colorado. The competition highlighted work in the Peace Corps community that exemplifies partnership and collaboration, and impacts the world around us. The *Friends of ENCA Farm*, founded by Philippines RPCV and PCAFPD supporter **Sherry Manning** (Benguet 2006-08), won the Judges Award (see next article). The Audience Award went to another applicant, *Bokk Baby*, an e-commerce social enterprise founded by two RPCVs who served in Senegal, that retails sustainably made baby apparel, blankets, and signature gift boxes. The gift boxes come with a return shipping labels, so parents can donate gently used baby clothes and blankets back to the sellers. The donated items will be packaged and distributed to new mothers in rural Senegal.

Breakout sessions covered topics such as: advocacy to protect Peace Corps funding, global education, immigration policy, running for political office, and meeting challenges in specific countries such as preventing and treating fistula in Malawi, literacy in Liberia, Peace Corps Response projects, Peace Corps storytelling, and support of refugees. Other sessions focused on Peace Corps partnerships with Rotary International and working with World Affairs Councils or Global Ties U.S.

On Saturday afternoon, the *Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award* was given to Siotame Drew Havea of Tonga, and a reception was held in his honor that evening. Sunday morning was devoted to the presentation of other awards – the *Peace Corps Writers Awards*, the *Loret Ruppe Award for Outstanding Community Service*,

presented to First Coast Returned Peace Corps Volunteers; the *Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Services*, presented to Kelly Callahan; the *Advocate of the Year Award*, presented to Suzanne Smith; and, awards of USC MBA Scholarships to two RPCVs. There was a conversation between NPCA President & CEO Glenn Blumhorst and Acting Peace Corps Director Sheila Crowley, and another featuring former Peace Corps Directors Nicolas Craw, who served under Nixon during Watergate, and Mark Schneider, who served under Clinton during the impeachment crisis.

Peace Corps Connect 2018 will be held from August 24 thru 26 at Shawnee on Delaware, in the Poconos. The theme will be Health & Wellness and outdoor activities will be featured.

Sherry Manning & Enca Farm Take the Prize

RPCVs of Colorado not only hosted an outstanding Peace Corps Connect this year, but established a competition for social entrepreneurship projects that exemplified partnership, collaboration and impacts on our world. Six finalists presented their projects at Connect with our own Sherry Manning representing Friends of Enca Farm and taking the Judge's Choice Award.

Sherry's presentation focused on the importance of smallholder farmers to food sustainability and the farmers' need to have access to their own 100% organic seeds to ensure this sustainability as well as improve crop diversity and usage of environmentally friendly methods. This spring Enca Farm and the Benguet Association of Seed Savers (BASS), partnered with the Municipal Agriculture Office of Tublay to establish a unique seed library that will help these farmers move away from expensive, synthetic, treated, and non-organic seeds and establish lines of locally grown, regionally adapted organic seeds. The \$3,300 prize will be used to help Enca and BASS in the start-up phase of



Sherry (left) accepts award on behalf of Enca farm.

a farmer owned and operated seed business. Read more about Sherry's work with Enca and BASS at <https://encaorganicfarm.com>

Overcoming Challenges

Arlis Dario *has just graduated with a BS in Applied Statistics from Benguet State University.*



I will start my essay with a quote, "Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful".

This final semester of my college life has just ended. It was full of challenges that made me give all of my time, patience, perseverance, knowledge and skills. It also made me utilize all the things I've learned from the past semesters.

In my Philippine History subject, I learned that if we know the reasons behind small events that led to a current situation, then we may be able to solve that particular situation. History indeed was a very interesting subject that made me realize the value of the past. I also took my other subjects smoothly since I was able to manage my time properly in doing simultaneous requirements.

My undergraduate thesis about dengue incidences in Cordillera Administrative Region was the most challenging assignment of my academic career. It absorbed most of my time, required immense dedication and a lot of independent research. But then, my thesis was an opportunity to take everything I've learned over the past years of my academic career and apply it in one grand project. Furthermore, the confidence I've gained from my previous experiences helped me defend my research well and that was one of the great accomplishments I've done. All the challenges and hardships I have encountered were all paid off when I was awarded as an academic achiever.

I'm finally a graduating student and this success was obtained through hard work, perseverance, learning, sacrifice, and most of all, the love and

support of those people whom I value. I sincerely appreciate the presence of all my friends and family who were always, and will always be, there to help me get through some of the hardest times of my life. The support from the PCAFPD family was also one of the greatest blessings in my life. I am truly inspired how the PCAFPD family has transformed lives through untiring support and its mission to share what they have with others. May you be blessed with all the graces you deserve. Thank you for your help and your kindness will always be remembered and cherished.

[Editor's Note] *Christian Pagaduan's essay is an inspiring example of perseverance and boundless hope following an unbelievable family tragedy. For all our scholars, PCAFPD would like you to know that we are always there for you – to cheer you in your achievements and triumphs, or to support you in times of stress or trauma.*

Surviving & Moving Forward

Christian Pagaduan *started at Tarlac State as a Julia Campbell Scholar in 2012, left in 2015, and will now finish his student teaching.*

Having support coming from you, Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD), for more than 3 years has been a big opportunity. It is a blessing coming from the Lord to be one of your scholars. Before, I was studying at the Tarlac Agricultural University. My college life there was full of excitement and happiness but beyond those feelings, there were a lot of trials and difficult moments as well as other problems that I encountered.

Also, we have experienced problems in my family. My father has contributed to most of my stress which has affected my ability to focus on my studies. I took absences just to guard my family from my father, most especially for my little sister, because my father would hurt them all when he got drunk and took drugs. I asked my mother what is the best thing to do for my father because I had little patience left and I wanted him to be put in rehab in our municipality. Then I thought that if I do that for him, my family would suffer because they are depending on my father's income so I decided to be patient for the moment. Then, President Rodrigo Duterte won the Presidential position in the 2016

election and we all know that he hates drugs, especially the users and pushers, for this is one of his platforms and advocacies. Yes, I admit that my father is a user but I am not tolerating that, instead I always tell him to stop his habit but he is not listening to us. We also told him about the people who were killed because of involvement in drugs.

Last July, my father was a victim of the “Oplan-Tokhang” in Camiling and they killed him in front of our house. I was there that time and I was very nervous and thinking of my family’s safety. My family and I thought before that the killings in the news were hard to believe but when it happened to my father, we were shocked and afraid of the bloody thing that happened. I stopped studying and didn’t know if I could go to college and finish my course even though I had only one semester left to finish. I was hopeless and down at that time in my life.

I am very thankful to Rehoboth because they taught me to trust God always, to hold His promises, to believe in Him and to pray unto Him and ask for help and guidance in my daily life. Still, I am holding the promise of God to me in Jeremiah 29:11 that He has a plan for me, “plans to prosper and not to harm & plans to give me hope and a future.” To show their love and support, my family at Rehoboth came to my father’s burial. After the burial, I decided to volunteer at Rehoboth while waiting for opportunities. I was one of their volunteer staff and I did cooking, caring for the children, as well as tutoring and helping the little boys with their assignments and projects. Then a big event happened at Rehoboth, the celebration of our 35th Anniversary, and we had more than ten visitors from the United Kingdom and I met all of them. Unexpectedly, one of the group members asked me if I had already graduated. I answered not yet and I told them about the reason why I stopped my education. They were touched by my story and they promised to pay for my last semester of college at Camiling College. I was happy and felt very blessed when they told me about that.

Now, I have finished my last semester at college and I am worrying about my practice teaching this coming June. So, I prayed to our loving God about it

and kept on trusting Him until one day Ate Amy told me about the PCAFPD scholarship and I was happy and shocked when I heard that you’re going to support me once again for my practice teaching. It’s a big blessing and opportunity to be back with your respected Foundation. I will promise that I will do my very best in my practice teaching, to inspire, to aspire, and to teach my future students whom I will handle. Once again, thank you very much for accepting me in your Foundation. God Bless You All.

A Triumphant Year

Renz Marion Medice is studying civil engineering at University of Santo Thomas and is sponsored by **Filipino American Spirit (FAS)**.



Research here, projects there, requirements everywhere. This is how I describe my first year in an engineering school. It’s not quite easy. Hundreds of assignments, tons of research, plus quizzes and exams; truly spending a day was not enough to finish all of these. It’s so ludicrous that I have trusted my stock knowledge to pass some of my examinations. I just can’t believe how I did that. What I know is that I have stock but don’t have knowledge. (Joke). However, I know God was the one who let me pass these endeavors. Right now, I just can’t imagine how I finished those gigantic and mountain-like requirements that made my every single day stressed and pressurized. I just can’t imagine my professors, of how I dealt with them. I know God was behind me. And if there’s anybody whom I should be thankful for, that’s Him.

Undeniably, there are some unhelpful professors in college. They are the profs who give exams without even teaching the lessons. They are there when examination weeks begin but they are “missing” when students are needy to understand lessons. They don’t like to commit to us. However, I am very thankful because I have learned one thing from them. They made me realize the essence and

importance of “self-study”. Yes, I have done almost all the ways to study the lessons on my own. I have skimmed several sites on the internet and watched all the videos relative to my field. “Lintik na Rigid Bodies to, mamamaster ko rin to. HAHAAAAHA”

But could I forget to thank the PCAFPD Family? The reason why I’m here and still have the chance to study engineering? No. I won’t forget you; the ones who accepted me and treat me as a family member. You’re the reason why I am still inspired to study, not because I am afraid to fail you, but because I am eager to give you an inspiration that someday you’ll be proud of me because of my academic and community achievements. Thank you very much - not just for the financial but most especially for the love and moral support. Although we weren’t seeing each other daily, I can feel your love and care. I can feel your sincerity to help me achieve my dreams. Mam, Sir, I’ve been honored as the “Top Performing Student” in our College of Engineering. I am humbly sharing this blessing with you. I cannot do this without you. Thank you for the support. Lastly, thank you again to our God who helped me pass every second of my life. He gifted me this triumphant year full of lessons. Glory always be unto Him.

Challenges Met and Grateful

Rigsson Lagonera

Graduated from University of Northern Philippines.

Looking back to my first day in college I never thought I could do it. Now looking at this present me, I can’t believe I am now a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Communication and this is the result of my great but not totally great job, let’s just say I did all the best I could just to reach this goal of mine. I am half happy and half sad. You might be really curious right now so I am telling you why, here’s my story.

First year College: I wasn’t good and I almost dropped and lost my scholarship that you offered me. But I realized this is not the end, I should make way. Good thing I have exact 1 year allowed by the



PCAFPD scholarship to change my course. I was an Information Technology student and shifted to BA Communication.

Second Year College: I’ve become an irregular student of Bachelor of Arts in Communication. My parents couldn’t support me anymore financially because we really are very poor kind of Filipino people. No offense but the CLE given by the scholarship wasn’t enough because you will only be given once every semester 5-6k. But it’s only a CLE anyway and I can’t blame anyone but for a student like me, I will always be thankful because once per semester is better than nothing. After several months I used the CLE given to me by the scholarship, so I tried applying for a part time job which is catering and sometimes me and my classmates join film making competitions, sometimes we’re lucky and sometimes not.

Third Year College: I was slowly getting used to my talent, ever since the first film we made when I was a second year high school student I could see that I had a talent in being a cinematographer and as a film editor. Some of our films that we submitted for contests won best in cinematography so I think I can tell. My part time job is still where I get my allowance. But it’s still not enough, as a student and in need for additional cash for my allowance we started accepting a marriage or debut cover jobs. We used our little fresh talents and what we learned in school, so we managed to successfully finish a marriage and we earned 25,000 pesos for filming it.

Fourth year college: all struggles are in here, I can’t have a part time job anymore because we have to focus on thesis in some major subjects. Good thing I have earnings so I used all my earnings on finishing my thesis. Now I am half happy because I graduated and half sad because I will miss college life and what’s worst is I am not living anymore with my parents because we had a fight so this day I’m writing this last essay for PCAFPD and I want to say thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to be in college. Now I am currently looking for a job so that I can manage to help myself financially. I hope you wouldn’t stop helping others like me, I wish you more power and God bless all the people behind the PCAFPD.

My Graduation Day

Samuel Mitre graduated from Western Palawan University with a degree in Education

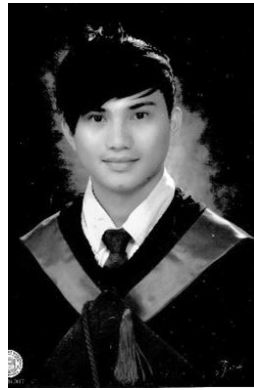
It's been four years that I was longing for this moment and this is it "My graduation day" has finally come. I did not notice that two hours already passed, perhaps I was so happy seeing my mother getting nervous waiting the master of ceremony to call my name to receive my diploma. I was overwhelmed that many things happened on my graduation day. I still remember the tarpaulin made by my church mate to greet me and most especially having a big occasion in our house as my father's gift to me on my special day.

Way back on my last year as a college student, I considered it as the remarkable year of my college life since I encountered my 350 beloved students. My experience with my students shaped me a lot in my attitudes, character, and perspectives. I realized that teaching is not just a job to teach young generation but a calling to inspire them, influence them, love them, understand them in such a way that shapes them to be a better individual than I am, because a great teacher produces a student that much more greater than them.

Honestly many times I decided to give up and stop, I lost inspiration, I was discouraged, and lost a reason to continue but then, I realized that is such a foolish act which is in the end I will regret.

As a result of my hard labor I was considered as Most Outstanding Student Teacher. Actually during my Final Demonstration teaching my mother personally attended and watched me together with the six panel members, so I was challenged because I won't let myself down in front of my mother and I don't want her to see me fail but be proud of her son.

Now that I already graduated I was so happy because finally I can say good bye to all my stressful and exhausting days. It is now the right



time for me to open new doors that will introduce me in a new avenue of success.

I just want to extend my deepest gratitude to my beloved scholarship PCAFPD. I know that without your generosity it is impossible for me to achieve and materialize my dreams. Thank you and Godspeed!

Peace Corps Philippines New Approaches & Initiatives

PCV leader Nicholas Koen & Maureen Carroll have collaborated on this article.

There is always something new happening in the world of Peace Corps, and Peace Corps Philippines is leading the way in some of that innovation. In 2007, focus shifted to three main sectors: Education; Children, Youth and Family (**CYF**); and Coastal Resource Management (**CRM**); several special projects have become major annual initiatives and PC Response has expanded.

The education sector works closely with the Department of Education (DepEd) and various state universities and colleges to support national development goals. The sector aims to improve English language proficiency and teaching, raise academic performance of students, and increase school community participation. Peace Corps Volunteers co-teach with the DepEd teachers in both elementary and secondary schools with specific focus on literacy and implementation of K-12 basic education. Meanwhile, PCVs at the tertiary level co-teach English communication courses.

The CYF sector assists the disadvantaged and most vulnerable Filipino children, youth and families. PCVs work closely with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in implementing the National Government's flagship project on poverty alleviation. Major programs are the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), the Expanded Students Grant-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGPPA), programs under DSWD-managed regional shelters, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Local Government Units (LGUs).



In the 4Ps program, Volunteers facilitate youth developmental sessions for the children of the poorest families and empower high school age youth who are prone to dropping out of school and recruitment for trafficking and child labor. With ESGPPA, volunteers work with disenfranchised college students who often deal with difficult situations both at school and at home. The DSWD-managed regional shelters serve children, women and youth. Volunteers at these shelters provide rehabilitation and therapeutic services. At NGOs, PCVs help by doing outreach and advocacy work on issues such as human trafficking and HIV/AIDS. At LGUs, Volunteers assist by implementing various social welfare programs such as organizing Out-of-School Youth (OSY), alternative livelihoods for women, and diversion programs for youth in conflict with the law.

CRM volunteers engage local organizations and government units around the country to address the growing threat to our natural environment. This project aims to promote the protection and restoration of coastal areas where environmental damage threatens the food security and livelihood of local people. These volunteers are faced with the unique challenges of advocating for communities to discontinue destructive fishing practices and to encourage proper waste management techniques. Volunteers work with local government and other organizations to restore degraded coastal and marine habitats, plan and host environmental camps and clubs, develop educational materials and assist in the formulation of conservation policies and reforms.

Special Projects: Changes to **Peace Corps Response** have provided opportunities to give additional support to Filipino organizations that have identified issues and created specific assignments for volunteers. Due to the often technically advanced nature of the assignments, mid or late career professionals, embark on short-term assignments to support strategic areas of the Philippine development agenda, which include disaster

preparedness, youth development, HIV/AIDS prevention, environment and organizational development, among others.

Padayon Mindanao is a USAID funded project that was launched in October of 2012 and is implemented by Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. The goals are to promote peace and stability in Mindanao through empowering local educators and youth leaders. Safety and security concerns prevent PCVs from working in Mindanao, so Peace Corps and PCVs host professional development and leadership events and trainings for Mindanao teachers and youth who travel to other islands in the Visayas to participate.

Outside of their ordinary duties, there are a variety of secondary projects that PCVs can implement to aid their communities. A few of the most popular include Special Olympics; nature field trips and summer environmental camps; and **Camp GLOW** and **Camp BRO**.

GLOW, (Girls Leading Our World) focuses on building peer relationships, self-esteem, awareness of gender stereotypes and their harms, knowledge about gender inequality, and creating safe spaces for discussing sex education. The goal is to empower young women by breaking down gender stereotypes and building self-confidence. GLOW activities nudge girls and women to throw away their “I CAN’T”s and start to think in CANs and WILLs.

BRO, (Boys Respecting Others) was designed as an offshoot from GLOW. It covers many of the same topics as GLOW, but targets boys, teaching them to be advocates for equality and respect. BRO topics include: gender stereotypes and their harms, gender identity and sexual orientation, gender inequality, sexual assault and harassment, sexual consent, adolescent/sexual health, and how to be an ally and advocate for all people who suffer from discrimination and inequality. Like GLOW, many of the topics are rarely discussed in the Philippines, so this camp gives boys the opportunity to discuss issues unique to their gender without the fear of judgment or discrimination.

Board Award

PCAFPD Vice-President Stephen Dienstfrey presents a book to Sarah McMeans as thanks for her many years on the Board, especially for years maintaining the donor database and editing the Balitaan.



Contributions from our generous supporters. Many thanks to those listed below who made gifts to PCAFPD between April and September 30, 2017. Plus (+) identifies those who made more than one contribution since our last report. IHO and IMO are gifts In Honor of or In Memory of the person or group indicated.

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¹ Matched by Ford Foundation

² IHO all Group 2 PCVs

³ IMO Judy Wickman Leones

⁴ IHO David A. Bates

⁶ IHO Victoria Suyo, Group

⁷ IMO Rachel Singer, Leone Castillo, Ted Grossman

⁸ IMO Jim McMullen, Rich Friedman, Richard Grossman

⁹ IHO Ron Peters

¹⁰ IMO Judy Hill

¹¹ Part of Bill Foye Scholarship

¹² IHO Group 21's 50th Anniversary Reunion

¹³ IHO Maureen Carroll

¹⁴ IHO Sarah McMeans

¹⁵ IHO Maureen Carroll

¹⁶ IMO his parents John & Agnes Kramer

¹⁷ IMO Rachel Singer

¹⁸ IMO VV

¹⁹ IHO Peter Bradley

²⁰ Ron & Lilia Peters scholarship

²¹ IMO Larry Fuchs

²² Maggie Purves Fund, Oregon

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²³ IMO Judy Hill & Leone Castillo

²⁴ IMO Laurence Foley

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— We note the passing of some who have served —

Constance (Riemer) Forster, 78, of Washington, DC, lost her battle with cancer in April, surrounded by her husband Tom and many family members. Connie served as a teacher in Baroy, Mindanao (1962-64), then spent a 25 year career in the Dept. of Health and Human Services as well as volunteering with many community organizations.

Ann Elizabeth Smith, 71, of New Hampshire, served four years in Peace Corps in Zamboanga. She passed away in August.

Frank Wanning, 76, died at home in Maine in July. After serving in Mindanao with his wife, Christine, he went on to the State Department and later became an international sugar trader. He leaves his wife, five children, two grandchildren and a sister.

Lorraine Shedlick, of Washington, DC, succumbed to a long illness in August. Lorraine worked as a nurse at Peace Corps in Manila. She was also a writer and as the wife of a career foreign service officer she also edited the Manila Embassy Women's Club newsletter.

Motivated to Learn

Usria Mamasaunda is a first year student at **Davao Central College**

So I'm done with my first year of college. Time flies pretty quick. I have some more insight on differences of college and high school. I have also learned something along the way.

The difference in college, the biggest and sometimes most overwhelming difference in college, is that you are solely responsible for your own education. And sure you should be responsible in high school however, college is a different level. One doesn't necessarily have to get a college degree, but it is ultimately your decision to attend school. For me, I am taking up BSED major in English.

This semester, I have joined and attended some activities like the community service of the National Service Training Program, where we are gathered by our professor to separate the garbage in reuse, recycle, reduce materials. Even though we're tired fixing it, it's so much fun in cleaning especially as you are uniting with others, and I know it will help me to be more responsible to our surroundings and I know that I help the community to become more beautiful and clean.

²⁵ IMO Pedro Arbiso

²⁸ IMO Wally Allen, RPCV

²⁹ IMO Beloved Daughter

²⁶ IMO Dick Irish, RPCV 62-64

61-63

Aayela

²⁷ INO City of Cansilayan

³⁰ Carolyn E. Wylie, Phils.I

I also attended the activity where our department competed with other schools. I just cheered and gave my best to conquer the championship, but even though we didn't get the 1st place, at least we were close to it, and we are still proud of representing the Davao Central College.

My goals for this coming school year are, first, I should be motivated to learn and focus on finishing my studies. Second, I want to progress my time management. I'm going to sacrifice a lot of time, which I'm more than willing to do.

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