

# Balitaan

Newsletter 66, Spring 2018 [www.rpcvphilippines.org](http://www.rpcvphilippines.org) [pcafpd@gmail.com](mailto:pcafpd@gmail.com) P.O. Box 100114, Arlington, VA 22210

## Celebrating 35 Years

By: Paul Aleckson, PCAFPD President

What can happen in 35 years? Well, in the Philippines, students can complete innumerable group projects, pass thousands of exams, and tame many “terror teachers.” In the US, RPCVs can give thousands of person hours running a foundation, and generous donors like you can donate hundreds of thousands of dollars. The result: 211 graduates and counting.

The PCAFPD turns 35 this year. From a small start in 1983 by RPCVs who wanted to create a way to continue to serve and stay connected with the Philippines, to today, where donors grow ever more generous and the next generation of leaders is moving the Foundation forward, the Foundation has made a tremendous difference in the lives of hundreds of families. Three students made up the first group selected to continue their education thanks to the PCAFPD. This year, 16 students will start receiving support from the PCAFPD. They will join 27 students currently studying hard to join our growing list of graduates.

The home provinces of the students we support are as varied as the places PCVs have served. The students have come from 54 different provinces with Sorsogon (17), Negros Oriental (15), Leyte (14), Batangas (14), and Ifugao (13) leading the way. Students have pursued diverse majors, with many students studying engineering, social work, and IT.

However, the most common course has been education, with over 60 degrees granted.

The Foundation continues its work thanks to RPCVs giving their time to serve on the Board and you, our generous donors. Last year, we raised over \$70,000, one of our best years ever. We’d love to top that number this year so we can award even more scholarships, but we’d also like to increase the number of donors. So please nudge the friends with whom you served to donate. \$35 would be a great first donation.

I end with a fond farewell. We must extend our gratitude to Steve Dienstfrey for serving on the PCAFPD board for over twelve years. He kept our books in line as Treasurer from March 2008 until he stepped up to be the President for a year in March of 2016. A pleasure to work with, he has been a tireless volunteer in helping the foundation send deserving students to college. We thank him for all he has done.

**Was your mail donation to PCAFPD returned? If so, please re-send!**

We are investigating the closure of the PO Box with the post office and apologize for the inconvenience. **The PCAFPD Box is now OPEN.** We count on all of our contributors to support our scholars!

## PEACE CORPS CONNECT 2018

Reconnect. Relax. Recharge. That is the theme for this year's Peace Corps Connect conference, National Peace Corps Association's annual gathering of the Peace Corps community. This year's gathering will be August 23 – 25, 2018, in Shawnee, PA. For more information and to register, visit their website at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org). (And note that discounted tickets are available for those willing to volunteer a few hours at the conference!)

### SCHOLAR ESSAYS

#### Living Her Dreams

***Jonalyn Hallaman graduated in 2017 with a BS in Education from Saint Louis University.***

Good day. I am Jonalyn A. Hallaman, a Licensed Professional Teacher who graduated at Saint Louis University Baguio City. I was the 16 year old high school student that you helped to achieve her dreams. Words are not enough to express my warmest thanks to the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development. In my heart, I am sincerely honored to be one of the lucky scholars. I am really grateful to have this chance to express my deepest gratitude. You became the instrument for me to do the things I want to do for our country. Teaching is really part of my dreams, and for sure if not because of PCAFPD I would not be able to achieve it. Today, as I am practicing my profession I really feel thankful that I had the opportunity to finish my degree.

I was in fourth year high school when I met Ms. Laura Summers. She was the bridge for me to have a scholarship grant for my college. I just want to extend my warmest gratitude to her. Someday I hope to meet her again. (I will surely work hard to make it happen!)



The final semester of my college life was very challenging actually. I really strive to become strong physically, emotionally and financially. When I feel down, I just prayed to God. He never failed to reach and comfort me. He is the one who provided everything, especially the courage that I needed for my final demonstration. After every demonstration, I really listened to the recommendations and appreciations of my Supervising Instructor. Though my scores were low, I really feel happy because every lesson that I taught, I learned ways on how to deal with the different types of learners. I learned some techniques for me to be the best teacher. I motivate myself by thinking, "It's not all about the number of your score, but about the number of the lessons you learned."

My achievements demand a lot of enthusiasm. As a professional, you need to act professionally at all times especially when students are looking to you as their model. With this I realized the importance of education, and PCAFPD is very active in helping young Filipinos to achieve their goals through education. I really hope that someday I will be a part of this Organization. If God could permit, I really want also to help these young Filipinos in any kind.

To Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development, I really thank you for your help and guidance. Thank you for showing me the way to success. Thank you for being part of my life. May God continuously bless PCAFPD.

#### Life Lessons in UP

***Kate Louise G. Ariate is a 2018 graduate with a BS in Agriculture from University of the Philippines Los Baños.***

Never have I thought that this day will finally come when I'm writing my final essay for the scholarship after several years of almost losing it all. It has been a long journey but nothing can compare to what I've learned inside.

At the beginning, I found myself as a lost lamb scared for independence because for the first time I'll be 6 months away without parents and without

the comfort of a home. Little did I know, that I'll be able to find a home away from home. Through my stay at Los Baños, I never really identified myself as a true blue Iska. After being admitted, it never gave me the confidence that finally I'm enrolled at the university of my dreams. Fear and the need to prove myself were the constant feeling during my stay.

There were days when I was my worst enemy. College was never easy, finances were hard, the academics were hard, surrounding yourself with the right people was hard, and even finding the legitimate motivation was hard. Nonetheless, the whole experience let me grow even if it meant falling several times – the most important thing anyway is finding my way up and learning something out of it. As much as I am ashamed to admit, I learned this lesson in the worst way possible after having two consecutive dismissals. At that time, my vision for the future was blurred. I was hanging by a thread. I was scared that I might never be admitted again and that I'd have to just settle for a life that's easier because I can't keep up with the university's academic standards. It was also the time when I was almost considering the idea that maybe UP was never meant for me, but my friends believed otherwise. They told me to appeal and try again. And if I hadn't, I wouldn't be where I am at today. Because of that, I'm very grateful for my college friends for being the best influence in my life.

My life took a different turn after that. I was sure that I needed a change – a fresh start to start strong. And that's when I decided to shift into a different degree course. A BS in Agriculture is not very far from a BS in Agricultural Biotechnology, but this time I am able to envision a future in this field, something that was never present in my previous course.

Several semesters have passed, and as I write this I couldn't help but feel overwhelmed at all the struggles conquered and lessons learned. Entering UP was never easy, otherwise no one will aim for excellence, but it teaches its students a valuable lesson on persistence and determination. The university is tailored to mold its students to fight the

social current and find a way to shine among the rest.

My journey is not just for myself but for everyone behind my story who helped me patch the pieces of this chapter. I am grateful for my parents for their unconditional support despite my shortcomings because without them I would not be able to finish this fight. I am also grateful for all the people I've met in college who taught me a lesson or made me believe in the kindness of this world. Above all, I'm most grateful for the scholarship for always having faith in me even when I lost faith in myself. If it were not for the countless chances granted to me, I wouldn't be able to finish at all. I hope that the scholarship continues to bring dreams of less privileged students like me into a reality and I hope one day I can pay the scholarship forward. After all, I owe my triumph to PCAFPD.

## **Igniting a Desire**

***Roperto Villapaz is a current scholar pursuing a BS in Civil Engineering at Cavite State University.***

"All is well, I'm going to graduate soon." This is my mantra every time my studies stress me out. In one and a half years I'll be finished with my studies, and the lectures are becoming harder. I learned lots of things during the first semester of my fourth year, and these things nurtured my skills and my personality as well. Almost all our subjects have an inclusive laboratory course. In the field of engineering, a student applies what he/she learns inside the classroom in a laboratory setting; both the student's theoretical and hands-on skills are enhanced. Through these laboratory exercises, I'm starting to feel that I'm almost there, but I have to endure all the laboratory reports required in every laboratory exercise. This semester also taught me the value of time. I had to improve my time management skills so that I may be able to finish all the tasks I had to do. Every second truly counts, so there were nights that I had to burn the midnight oil. There were times that I had to choose between sleep and study, and I had to choose the latter or else I would fail my exams.

The previous semester was not a no-brainer for me, especially as I am a working student. I found it harder to manage my time and I had to exert more effort. As the days passed by, I had more reasons to pursue my goal. I believe that all my sacrifices will soon be rewarded.

I will never forget to extend my gratitude to PCAFPD, which supports me in my studies. Not only does it provide my financial needs, but it also motivated me to work harder. I admire the people behind this organization because of their love for the Filipinos. Nationality is and will never be a barrier for them to help the country's improvement. This foundation ignited a desire in me to utilize what I learned in school to help my fellow countrymen. I hope my course and my future career will help me in providing shelter for my fellow Filipinos.

As mentioned by a speaker during our Civil Engineering Week 2017, "Why do you desire to be an engineer? Use this field to glorify God and desire to be God's engineer." I believe that I will soon overcome all the challenges in my studies because the Lord, who provides extraordinary wisdom, is with me, together with the people who support me and trust in my abilities. I will show the world that education is the key towards the country's success.

## To Be a Graduating Student

***Fritz Xenon Cabugao is a 2018 graduate with a BS in Electronic Communications Engineering at the University of St. Louis Tuguegarao.***

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."— Thomas A. Edison. I am in the point in my life as a student where I can be called "Graduating" or "Fifth year student". These two are different in such a way that when you call me "Graduating", it is very sure that I will graduate, but when you say the second one, I can still fail in my



subjects if I didn't do my best and not be able to graduate. I've been studying for almost twelve and a half years starting nursery and this is not the time to mess up the things I've built for myself. I have built my foundation stronger as the year goes by so no one can stop me from achieving my dreams. I am deserving to be called a "graduating student." This semester we have 7 subjects and I focused on the subjects Thesis 1 and Review 1.

Thesis is one of the important requirements in our fifth year – without this you will not be able to graduate. Our research is about developing a device which will control mosquitoes. We are five in our group and I am the one who thinks for our project. Tireless days and sleepless nights, that is the feeling we got this semester to finish our paper and be able to defend our project last December. As we presented our project I was so nervous that sometimes I forgot what I should say, and when the panelists ask questions we bravely answered their questions, and in the end made corrections and recommendations in our paper and we thank God it was approved and it will be continued to Thesis 2. All the efforts we have done paid off.

Review 1 is the preparation for our incoming ECE board exam. Review Centers come to our university to review the subjects that we needed to learn. I prepared myself by recalling the topics we have learned for the past 4 years. I'm not so good in retaining the lessons that we took, so for me to be able to remember them, I made a schedule every week for my self-review. ECE board exam is the hardest board exam in engineering. I should be serious with this because I want to be a top-notch in our university.

With the 4.5 years here in this university, I realize that I cannot survive this far without family, cousins, friends, and classmate who keeps motivating me and give advice that help me to endure and be more focused in my studies. And a big thanks to PCAFPD which supports me in my financial needs. Without this, I may not be able to buy my school supplies, books, and expenses for my projects and requirements.



It's an exciting yet challenging semester. I have encountered difficulties last semester but we cannot escape these. The only way to overcome this is to have courage, hope, faith in God, perseverance, trust in myself and to never give up. I will study smarter and finish this course because I know that my coursework in ECE will contribute much in our country. I can apply what I have learned here in the development of our country. I'm still not ready to face the real world after I graduate but whatever happens, I let Him be the one to guide me always for any actions I will do in the future.

### **With a Heart Willing to Serve**

***Yusria Mamasaunda is pursuing a BS in Secondary Education at Davao Central College.***

Finally I'm going to go to the next journey of my life. Schooling for me is not easy especially when I started my second semester in this school year. I really had to adjust to my surroundings. I've encountered different struggles yet am successful. I also experienced a terror teacher and encountered difficulties, but because I'm looking forward to my studies I will never give up because it is my goal to finish my study whatever may come.

I experienced also helping others when our community conducted a community service at Ma'a River side and at Talomo area with my family and friends. We help the people who need food and



*Scholar Yusria M. volunteers to hand out water and supplies to those affected by heavy flooding.*

clothes. We gave them relief goods, because they experienced flooding during a heavy rain. It was a pleasure to help them

because helping others is one way of showing care and love. We really enjoyed helping others even though we don't

have enough money but we help them because our heart is willing to serve. Money is not important when you see happiness on the face of those people.

These experiences teach me a lot – what is the importance of life, schooling and being a good person. And I am thankful to ALLAH for enlightening my mind and giving me knowledge and wisdom.

### **RPCV Connections**

***RPCV Cathy Garman (Camarines Sur, 1978-81) takes an annual trip back to the Philippines and stays with her host family. They have shared many adventures together. Cathy recounts her most recent trip here.***

#### **Rice Terraces, Caves and More!**

A “wonder of the world” are the spectacular Banaue rice terraces – which I saw in 1980 with my parents when they spent a couple of weeks visiting their crazy daughter who was living her dream in the Peace Corps. In 2018, I returned with my adopted sister and other members of my Filipino family (8 total). Surprisingly, none of them had ever been – or perhaps not so surprising, since it's quite a trek and for us in America, we often don't tour our own country. In 1980, the roads were of hard dirt, houses were scattered and very primitive and we saw many dressed in native dress. As for the terraces, they were bathed in a brilliant May sun. In 2018, the roads were paved, and while it's still a poor area, much progress had been made; we saw no one in native dress and the only Ifugao huts were at tourist “resorts.” Banaue itself was engulfed in a February rainy fog – though the views were still magnificent.

Our journey started in Bicol, departing in our rental van (with 2 drivers) on a Monday at 1pm and arriving at our final destination of Sagada at 10am (Tuesday)... almost the same amount of time it takes me to fly from Boston to Manila! We stayed all together in a lodge in a dorm style room and after settling in, we went on a cave “tour” –more like a

spelunking adventure! Lanterns were our only source of light. Once down inside the cave, we removed our footwear, going barefoot, our feet gripping much better than shoes on the slimy rocks! We crawled through narrow low passages, waded through water, and shimmied along rock walls; it was a bit scary but our two guides were wonderful – we even used them like “rocks” standing on their hands, feet, thighs or shoulders for an extra boost!

Our Sagada adventure continued with an early morning excursion to the Sea of Clouds. I’m always amazed at how Filipinos keep their ancient vehicles operating – but even the trusty old 4-wheel drive we took couldn’t make it up an extremely muddy hilly road so we walked the final bit to the top, arriving just after sunrise. The mountains floating in a Sea of Clouds was awesome! Returning to Sagada, some of us rode standing up in the back of the truck– not something we could do in the States (except maybe on a farm)! Then on to the Echo Valley to see the famous and quite unusual hanging coffins (it is an ancient traditional Ifugao burial practice). Being quite chilly on our last night, the log cabin style restaurant had a glowing fire in its fireplace. The long drive home began at 7am Thursday, with stops along the way for now sunny views of the Sagada terraces (mostly for growing vegetables, not rice), and at the Highest Point (along the Philippine highway system). Two of our companions ate balut (half-formed chick – yuck) for a snack. We arrived home early on Friday morning.... exhausted but excited by our grand adventure!

## Donate with Ease Online

Tired of writing checks? Set up an automatic payment through Network for Good and let your donation take care of itself. Choose a one-time or recurring donation. Get started by going online to [www.rpcvphilippines.org](http://www.rpcvphilippines.org) and click DONATE, then Network for Good.

## Smiles for Smiles

Are you an Amazon enthusiast? Do you enjoy supporting Filipino college students? Your normal spending habits on Amazon can support students through contributions to PCAFPD. Amazon Smile is a feature on Amazon’s shopping portal that donates a portion of your purchase to an organization of your choice! Signing up is easy:

1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. Sign into your amazon account
3. Select PCAFPD as your contributing organization
4. Make purchases as you normally would.

At checkout, a portion of the purchase is automatically donated to PCAFPD.

*“Once I found out about Amazon Smile I got myself, and my entire family to start using it. After one year the money that was donated on everyday purchases helped provide school supplies to a scholar. Just for making a purchase we were already going to make!” – Ricardo, Batch 273*

Don’t let your purchases go unclaimed! Sign up for Amazon Smile and select PCAFPD as your contributing organization today!

## ~ Congratulations to our 2018 Graduates! ~

Jefferson Alcantara – BS Education

Kate Ariate – BS Agriculture

Fritz Xenon Cabugao – BS in Electronic Communication Engineering

Marisol Camalia – BA in Social Work

Jamila Catuyo – BS in Education

Aisa Flavier – BA in Social Work

Michael Malate – BS in Industrial Engineering

Maria Mikio Ozawa – BS in Accountancy

Hector Philippie Plame – BS in Secondary Education

Erczon Realino – BS in Education

Jeben Taob – BS in Education

## **We note the passing of some who have served**

**M. Deane Wylie**, a Group I Volunteer, who served as a Board member and PCAFPD newsletter editor for a number of years, passed away in Riverside California on January 30 after a brief illness. Deane had enjoyed a long career in journalism in California after an early stint on Peace Corps staff and with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome Italy. Deane was married to a fellow Volunteer Carolyn Ekdahl, who preceded him in death.

**Edward (Ed) Slevin** passed away on January 18 of this year, succumbing to complications of influenza and years of deterioration from the muscle-wasting disease Inclusion Body Myositis. Ed was a longtime political advisor who served in various Peace Corps official capacities. He was Country Director in the Philippines in the mid-80's and also served as a Regional and Associate Director. He wrote a memoir "Twenty-five Years in Peace Corps-Twenty-Five Years in Politics." Ed was a regular PCAFPD supporter.

### **Loss of Staunch PCAFPD Supporter—Lilia Estipona Peters**



Lilia Peters never became a Board member herself, but she was a major contributor to the well-being of PCAFPD. Lilia passed away in December 2017. A native of Gubat, Sorsogon, Lilia married Group 1 RPCV Ron Peters in 1966 in Chicago. The two met briefly during his Peace Corps tour and reunited when she came to the US to pursue a career in nursing. They married, had two children and settled in Urbana, Illinois in 1976 where Ron was a professor at University of Champaign-Urbana. Lilia enjoyed a long career in the health field, culminating post-retirement as the county tuberculosis coordinator. As her obituary stated, "while short in stature, she was a giant in her community" as well as in her professional life, playing leadership roles in numerous cultural and religious organizations.

When Ron joined the Board of PCAFPD, we enjoyed the benefits of a "two-for-one" appointment. Lilia was a shameless promotor of the program, turning many of her life milestones (anniversaries, special birthdays, etc.) into fundraising for the scholarships. She and Ron took on the task of organizing all of the paper work associated with the annual scholar selection process, and they drove to Washington each January to participate in the selection with Lilia ensuring the availability of favorite Filipino goodies to sustain us through the long day. When she and Ron travelled to the Philippines, they always arranged to meet with scholars and with our VP Roland De Jesus.

Lilia's high standing in all of her relationships is evidenced by a recent tribute in her memory. Lilia graduated from the De Ocampo College of Nursing in Manila in 1961, a school which has since closed down. Her classmates have notified us that they intend to establish a PCAFPD scholarship in Lilia's name in the 2019-2020 school year. The PCAFPD Board has already designated one of the 2018-2019 scholarships to honor her legacy.

## Contributions from our generous supporters:

### 2017 Lakan / Lakambini Honor Roll

In the Philippines, Lakan (M) and Lakambini (F) refer to those who have reached the highest level in the endeavor they have undertaken. Thus we express our sincere gratitude for our 2017 contributors donating \$500 or more.

Paul Aleckson<sup>1</sup>  
Orlando Banogon<sup>2</sup>  
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Jay Litt

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Charles Schwartz  
M. Ann Snuggs  
Tim & Eden Stewart  
Sue Louise Ward

Many thanks to those listed below who made gifts to PCAFPD between October 2017 and March 31, 2018. IHO and IMO are gifts In Honor of or In Memory of the person or group indicated.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul's work donation matching

<sup>2</sup> IMO Patricia Biddle Bangon, Negros Oriental 1966-1969

<sup>3</sup> IHO David Bates, GP 16 PACD

<sup>4</sup> Recommended by Joseph Higdon and Ellen Sudow

<sup>5</sup> IMO My partner, Patricia Cook

<sup>6</sup> Donation Matching Program

<sup>7</sup> Bill Foye Philippines Scholarship Fund

<sup>8</sup> IMO Dr. Ed Adriano

<sup>9</sup> IMO VV

<sup>10</sup> IMO George Howard

<sup>11</sup> Given through Fidelity Charitable: The Eric and Pamela Melby Fund.

<sup>12</sup> Maggie Purves Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation

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<sup>14</sup> IMO John Scott- Banaue Mt. Province 1989-1990

<sup>15</sup> IMO Patricia Biddle Bangon, Negros Oriental 1966-1969

<sup>16</sup> IHO Julia Campbell & Laurence Foley

<sup>17</sup> IMO Patty Wernert and Derek Hulse

<sup>18</sup> For my scholar Victor Awasen

<sup>19</sup> IHO David Bates, Gp 16 PACD

<sup>20</sup> IHO Carol Cespedes

<sup>21</sup> IMO Boni and Sening Garcia

<sup>22</sup> IHO Carol Radomski

<sup>23</sup> IMO Sister Aniceta B. Abion, a.c.t.

<sup>24</sup> IMO Lilia Peters

<sup>25</sup> IHO Group XXIV

<sup>26</sup> IMO My partner, Patricia Cook



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<sup>27</sup> IMO Joe Sperrazza

<sup>28</sup> IMO Dr. Ed Adriano

<sup>29</sup> IMO Phillip Hiller

<sup>30</sup> IHO Group 21's 50th Anniversary Reunion

<sup>31</sup> IMO Alice Waters Spring

<sup>32</sup> IMO Paul Lampert- Tacloban City, Leyte

<sup>33</sup> IHO Jen Lang

<sup>34</sup> IHO Rachel Singer

<sup>35</sup> IMO Paul Lampert- Leyte

<sup>36</sup> IMO George Howard

<sup>37</sup> IMO Dr. George Vitenbo

<sup>38</sup> Given through Fidelity Charitable: The Eric and Pamela Melby Fund.

<sup>39</sup> IMO Lauence Foley

<sup>40</sup> IHO Margie Pfanruch

<sup>41</sup> IMO Lilia Peters

<sup>42</sup> IMO Richard C. Schoonover (beloved spouse)

<sup>43</sup> IMO Lilia Peters

<sup>44</sup> IMO Tom Ackeret

<sup>45</sup> IHO Maureen Carroll and Joe Higdon

<sup>46</sup> IMO Carolyn E. Wylie, Phils.I

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