

Balitaan

Newsletter 68, Spring 2019 www.rpcvphilippines.org pcafpd@gmail.com P.O. Box 100114, Arlington, VA 222100

CONGRATS TO OUR NEW SCHOLARS!

By Paul Aleckson, PCAFPD President

Eight students will graduate from college this year, and another 19 undergraduates along with three graduate students will enroll thanks to the support of the PCAFPD and its generous donors like you. Reporting those numbers is a highlight of serving as the PCAFPD's President. Twenty-two new scholars is easily our biggest class yet. Read on to learn why we were able to take on more scholars than usual, but please pause for a moment to reflect on the good your donations are doing.

Your generosity and new policies by the Filipino government led to the rise in scholars. First, the past few years have seen smaller than normal classes because the country added middle school grades 7 and 8 to make it a K-12 system. The move led to fewer high school graduates. Second, the Philippines has implemented free tuition at public universities. On the surface, this news may make the PCAFPD's work sound redundant, but there are important considerations. While the government's investment in its students reduces our costs, some of our scholars attend private universities where the free tuition has no effect. In addition, there is a lot more to college expenses than tuition. Through a contribution to living expenses, fees, uniforms, and other costs, the PCAFPD provides an average of \$350 per year to

each scholar beyond tuition costs. These expenses did not disappear with free tuition and are often an insurmountable hurdle to attending school when a family's annual income is less than \$1,000, as is the case for the majority of our scholars.

On top of accepting more undergraduate scholars, we have expanded our funding of graduate students. For the first time, we accepted students we did not support through their undergraduate studies. Thus, we will have six student scholars pursuing master's degrees on top of 47 undergrads during the 2019-2020 school year.



As we look ahead, the 2019 goal is to increase the number of donors, especially among those RPCVs that served since 2000. Last year, we received over \$69,000 and are happy to have only spent 10.5% on administrative costs (mostly printing & mailing). To strengthen the foundation for the future, we have added several new board members who served in the last 10 years. Now, we need to start growing the

SCHOLAR ESSAYS

Civil Engineering and Tapioca

Jovy Ann Cabaguing is studying civil engineering at Eastern Samar State University, Guian, Samar.

I can describe my first semester in fifth year as a challenging and difficult part for me. The lessons in school are becoming more intense, to the point where I can hardly understand. I know this is just a part of my journey as a graduating student.

During our first two weeks of class I was unable to attend it, because that time we are still completing our 240-hour internship in Rider Levett Bucknall Inc. at Pasig City. I admit it was hard reaching missed classes and covering up quizzes and tests. We really need to make it possible to have almost perfect score during exams but even passing it is hard to make.

This semester we had a subject on Civil Engineering Project which was all about research. We had our pre-oral defense last December. I, together with my co-scholar Alex Pagatpatan are groupmates. Our group research title was "Tapioca Flour as Concrete and Wood Putty Material". Tapioca is defined in our research as "a starch extracted from the cassava root through a process of washing and pulping". Knowing that construction cost is arising nowadays, we suggest to develop a putty material that can be applied in both concrete and wood in more economic way without compromising the quality and also giving more opportunity to the farmers. Since cassava is abundant in our community there is no problem making it as our raw material in our research.

Aside from being a challenging semester this was also one of the busiest. We had three projects on our major subjects, namely Timber, Steel and Geotechnical Engineering II. Each subject we need to design a two-story building that can withstand the loads applied to it and the dimensions of the member that we will identify to be used on the structure.

number of donors among recent RPCVs. We will be more active on Facebook and Instagram, expect to hold events in D.C. and possibly other cities, and one donor has offered to match with \$10 any gift made by a PCV that closed service last year or this year. You can help too by nudging your RPCV friends to give. All in, we can help a student graduate college for less than \$5,000. Hence, many small gifts can go a long way in changing lives.

Thanks to a Hong Kong business trip, I was able to swing through Manila on May 4 and meet with the Ituloy team. They are working as hard as ever to help our scholars succeed. In April, they went live with the Oracle Netsuite software you read about in the last Balitaan. They are still working to get all eight members fully trained on it; the progress is encouraging, and the software will save them time in the long run. With the exception of long-time board member and VP for Philippines Operations, Roland De Jesus, all the Ituloy team members are scholars we put through college. Their commitment to the foundation and helping more students attend college is absolute, even to the point of refusing reimbursement for cell phone load used and other small expenses. It is impossible to not be impressed and inspired by the team members.

On the board front, Ron Peters stepped down from the board after years of invaluable service, most notably reviewing and prepping all applications before our annual selection meeting. We cannot thank him enough for all he has done for the foundation and our scholars. We are very happy to report that Blake Van Fleteren was elected to the board in April. Blake served in Negros Occidental from 2010-2012. It's great to have Blake and his energy helping out. He has taken over the webmaster role and is helping increase our social media presence. Look for more scholar pictures and videos of our graduates soon.

It is up to us to decide if it is industrial, commercial or residential, as for me I prefer the latter. On working on our projects we need to have a lot of patience. The computation process involves trial and error, and sometimes you'll get upset whenever the size you assumed compare to the required resulted fail. In the end you need to recompute and start from the beginning. But after recomputing and finally arriving at the desired result is a feeling of fulfillment.

The day before our enrolment we are visited by the owner of Gillesania Engineering Review and Training Center in Cebu. I was really inspired by his achievements and dedication on his career. In our school mostly the engineers are a product of his review center. This motivates me that no matter how hard it may be, I will be a licensed civil engineer. I may stumble and fall, still I will rise because I have God and the people who believed in me, that includes you my PCAFPD family.

A Lion in the Jungle

Dexter Gomangan is studying accountancy at St. Mary's University, Nueva Vizcaya.



Studying in a new school with new teachers, new classmates and new environment is quite challenging. During the past few weeks, I tried to fit in and leave my comfort

zone stepping out from the box of normality. College life is somewhat different than high school wherein I need to stay strong and independent facing life's problem outside my home. I became the lion living alone on my own jungle remaining to be strong while chasing my dreams living away from my family. Thus, I survived the 5 months academic year of the semester fantastically. I remained determined to become an Accountant someday despite the hardships and numerous sleepless nights I encountered. Indeed, Accountancy profession isn't a joke to play with.

I started the semester with background knowledge about the course I took (BS in Accountancy), thanks to Senior High School. I shed drops of tears prior to low scores during quizzes and the lessons I can't understand. Dealing with failed scores is really hard for me to do. Hence, I tried to be strong, to be positive, to look at things and be grateful no matter how low my scores are. I also experienced full of stress lately because of the endless requirements I needed to pass, the long quizzes and difficult essays to finish, day after day I am into horrific challenges. Nonetheless, I had the courage to finish all the requirements whether it be late or incomplete. The best thing is I did my very best to finish them in just a short period of time. There I should say, I can handle things under pressure.

I also had the chance to reach out to my schoolmates giving them pieces of advice when they need it. I joined the Marian Peer Counselor Organization, a group of Marian (SMU students) helping hand in hand to reach out the heart of other Marian students through friendly talks when they needed a friend to talk to. Last November 2018, I am one of the successful members that became an official facilitator of the Marian Community. I was also appointed to become a class representative in Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (JPPIA), an organization wherein all Accountancy students are united in planning for future benefits of every Accountancy aspiring students.

The whole semester helped me a lot to be more mature in dealing with life's problem, to be positive no matter how poor my grades are, to be strong and be consistent no matter how life brings me down. I can say that, I am the lion of my own jungle. I am the king of my own dream. With the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD) Scholarship, I will be a Certified Public Accountant after 5 years. With God, I can do things beyond what I can.

Into the Woods

Jennalyn Basco is studying psychology at Bataan Peninsula State University.



Entering the gates towards college life has put this young lady in the midst of confusion as different faces arrive while wandering through the bushes of an unfamiliar home— Bataan Peninsula State University Balanga

Campus. Her heart skips a beat for all she knows, it is never going to be the same as high school life offers...again.

Independence haunts my deepest fear as I took a step from the outside of the room. Silence bounds the atmosphere and I knew, it would not be an easy task for an introvert one to gain friends and companions at that particular moment of time. However, I thank God that I was inside the room of future Psychologists who do well in socializing; and in fact, I have fifty-two siblings in my new home, today.

Moreover, joining various activities and extra-curricular have made my first semester days interesting. In relation to this, with my lucky pen, I took courage to join the “Malikhaing Pagsulat ng Sanaysay” contest during the celebration of Buwan ng Wika wherein unexpectedly, I won the first place against my seniors and colleagues. Gratefully, my parents were surprised when I took out the large medal and certificate from my bag. Also, poetry-writing contest has captured my passionate heart last Mental Health Awareness celebration month. I never knew I won not until my classmates kept on greeting me with huge “Congratulations”. With the title “The Abstraction of Faith”, I have seen my work posted on the Psychological Society’s site and saw my name on the second place spot. In connection with the said celebration, I became one of the participants during the Mental Health Talk and Mental Health March. Indeed, these activities created an

impact on my perspective, such that mental health really does matter.

Furthermore, as an aspiring young campus journalist, I sent an application form to the BPSU-BC’s official student publication: The Defender. Luckily, with series of written examinations, on-the-spot-contest, and interview, I am so much blessed to be chosen as one of their writers. As a matter of fact, I have written numbers of poems and feature articles for TD.

With regards to my academic standing, I shall say that I did the best I can for the past semester. There were sleepless nights due to numerous quizzes and examinations, movie reviews, laboratory reports and research papers. In fact, I experienced reviewing for more than six hours as preparation for our Microbiology midterm examination, and as I memorize every single term, tears would fell from my eyes for I know, passing such five-unit subject would not be at ease. This subject was probably the most challenging one, as I have to study the whole chapter for a quiz every single day. Getting high scores from strict professors was never easy despite of the fact that I have put my fullest effort on the particular task; however, I knew it would literally be paid off.

It has been approximately five months since the day of maturity started to alter my perspective and point of view about education. This has brought me into realization of an important thing—that college itself isn’t about competition; rather, it is about doing the best we can to survive, not for anybody else, but for ourselves.

Entering the gates towards college life is like wandering in the midst of the woods. You will come to discover many things; but more importantly, it is yourself you have to find. Such journey would not be possible without the generous hands of good people, thus, I will always give my profound gratitude to PCAFPD for bringing youths’ ambition in the realm of reality.

Being Mary Poppins

Yusria Mamasaunda is attending Rasay-Davao Central College.

This semester was a great experience for me because it shaped me to whom I am today. It helps me to discover myself, I learn new things every day. This semester I found myself busy with so many activities.

I experienced my first demonstration in Rasay-Davao Central College, because it's my first demonstration I felt nervous, I doubt myself if I can do it. I felt pressured because they expected a lot of me. The teacher give me little time to study my lesson, I have no time to prepare myself and my materials. But because of my determination I did my best to be presentable in front of the students and the teacher. When I'm in front of the class I did not know what is my feeling that day, all emotions are all mixed, nervous, excited, happy, pressured. But when I start my topic and continue the discussion the students are actively participating in my Demonstration. My nervousness is gone and my demonstration goes well. Those days I realized that teaching is great, when I saw the students appreciate my efforts. I'm also glad of the comment of the Observer (Teacher) she said that I'm good for a first timer in demo teaching. And it makes me boost my confidence. In



November we had an exhibit for the English and American Literature where we portray some characters from a book and I pick Mary Poppins. When I portray Mary Poppins the teacher said that I have portrayed well the character that assign to me. I also attend in speech choir in

our CELA Day and we got the first place. And also in our Foundation Day we attend the speech choir and we got the 2nd placer.

This semester helps me to boost my confidence in attending some activities also I learn on how to manage my time, because we need to observe in another school for our FS (field study) we need 15 hours to complete: my problem that time was there are many holidays, but because I manage my time I pass the project in time. Also I learn this semester to have strategies how to pass the subjects in time. This semester also I experience many trials that I doubt myself if I can continue, I feel like giving up but because of my determination to help my family and I want to share my knowledge someday, I will give my best to finish what I've started. It is just a trial in pursuing my dreams. If I let myself down I will not achieve my goals.

PCAFPD SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Scholar Alum Rico Ancog wins the National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines (NAST, PHL) **2019 Outstanding Young Scientist Award** in the field



of Environmental Economics. PCAFPD supported Rico's undergraduate and graduate studies. He graduated in 2004 and 2006, and is now a highly respected professor in the School of Environment Science and Management at the University of the Philippines Los

Banos. The awarding ceremony will be on July 11, 2019 at the Edsa Shangri-La Manila, Ortigas, Mandaluyong City. As an OYS awardee Dr Ancog will receive a trophy and a cash prize of P125,000,000 from NAST PHL. In addition, upon approval of a research proposal, he also will receive a grant of one million pesos from the Department of Science and Technology.

Congratulations Rico on your amazing achievement!

FROM OUR ITULOY TEAM

By Hannah Catiis, Ituloy Team Member (and former PCAFPD scholar), Manila, Philippines.

The Ituloy Team is the Philippines-based team supporting the Foundation and our scholars – “Ituloy” meaning “to continue.”

Being a taciturn and introvert student in college, I was always shy to attend PCAFPD alumni and scholars meet-up events or assemblies. The first (and last while I was a student) that I participated in was in 2014, a year before I graduated. There, I met my co-scholars, and got inspired by the alumni who involve themselves in the Foundation as a way of giving back. This was the initial spark which made me excited to attend meetings, and eventually resulted in me rising up to the challenge of handling scholars and becoming part of the promising Ituloy Team. Not sure of what to do at first, I clung to the Team for advice, tips, and lessons they can give me in managing scholars properly.

Currently on my third batch of PCAFPD scholars, I can say that onboarding the new batch of scholars is always the busiest time of the year. The challenge begins in reaching out to the awardees to let them know of their acceptance. Some awardees can't be reached through their provided mobile number or email, so I must be resourceful in finding ways to contact them. The joy of delivering the good news to an awardee is rewarding on its own. I cannot count how many 'thank you' I've already received from the scholars as well as from their families. Each excited and thrilled 'thank you' represents the hope that the scholarship brings to their lives; the scholarship may have monetary value on its own, but this hope is, and will forever be, priceless.

Working with other Ituloy Team members throughout the year not only developed my ability to manage the scholars, moreover, it helped me establish a rapport with my fellow alumni. My co-members are now more than colleagues, and their friendship and mentorship permeate other aspects of my life. This

made the volunteer work more enjoyable and added a personal attachment to PCAFPD which gradually made me feel at home. Through them I've met other scholars and alumni, making this home

bigger through time and in return wanting other scholars and alumni to feel the belongingness I've felt with these marvelous people.



Reading scholars' essays is an effective way of knowing how they are doing in their studies and in their personal

lives. This is one of my favorite tasks. I marvel how they conquer their own fears, worries, and problems. I love to read how they are having fun in college despite the constant pressure to always do good. So when I am fortunate enough to meet some of them during my travels, I feel like I know part of what they are going through even though that is the first time that we see each other. Their essays serve as veins that connect them not only to the Ituloy Team but also to the Board and the sponsors.

Challenges, too, are part of running the Philippine operations. Some are part of the day-to-day operations, but there are few isolated scholar-related cases too. These predicaments sometime bring me distress, in times of which I would seek the wisdom of Mr. Roland de Jesus to set the right direction of where I am heading. I rely on his 25 years of experience in running the PH operations, and I will always be grateful for the guidance, support, and understanding as I learn. I still have a long way to go in this pursuit; I consider these endeavors as the learning curve that I need to experience in order to grow.

This year, three of the scholars I am supervising will march to get the diploma that they, and their families, have been waiting for. I am proud of their success in their undergraduate education despite the

challenges that life throws at them, and I can't wait to see them in their graduation toga. The Ituloy Team takes part in their rejoicing, and although we have not (yet) met them in person, seeing them complete college adds inspiration for us to do better. Being once in their position, I know how much it means to live the dream of earning one's degree, with the help of the people around us, and of the donors who generously shared their blessings with us.

From the first time in 2016 that I formally involved myself in the Foundation, I feel no regret in spending time working for its cause. As years go by, I feel more inspired, and I take pride in my responsibilities from onboarding the scholars, to collecting their grades and essays every semester, to providing them advice whenever I can. At the same time, I am humbled in this opportunity to serve my fellow Filipinos. I wish to thank all of the people behind the Foundation – the donors, the Board, my teammates: Roland, Jessa, Aries, KV, Tonet and Jody – for the three wonderful years as part of this team working with the scholars and investing today for a more secured future for them and their families.

Follow us on social media!

Instagram: @rpcv_Philippines

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Congrats to our Graduates!

Jovy Ann Kindy Cabaguing, BS in Civil Engineering; Walid Deporos, BS in Secondary Education; Richie Esparaguerra, BS in Electrical Engineering; Donnielyn Gamutan, BS in Business Administration; Kimberly Jacinto, BS in Financial Management; Alex Y Pagatpatan, BS in Engineering; Roxanne Reyes, BS in Psychology; and Roperto Villapaz, BS in Civil Engineering.

2018 Lakan/Lakambini Honor Role

Lakan (m) and Lakambini (f) are used in the Philippines to refer to those who have achieved the highest rank in an endeavor. We are using the terms here to express our profound gratitude to our major contributors. Those listed below gave \$500 or more in the calendar year 2018.

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