



# BALITAAN

Newsletter 78

Spring 2024

## Letter from the President

*By Justin Tabor, PCAFPD  
President*

Just about a year ago, about 100 people gathered at the Philippine Embassy here in Washington D.C. to celebrate the 40th anniversary of PCAFPD. Planning that event, with the help of an amazing team, while simultaneously transitioning into my new position as PCAFPD's President, was certainly an exercise in multitasking. Like my service in the Peace Corps, the first 12 months have made me learn and grow, build new relationships, and interact with inspiring and dedicated people. I'd like to share some of our major accomplishments from last year and give you a sense of what to expect in the future.

Thanks to the efforts of board members Nick Spalt and Qadria Naji, our social media presence is stronger than ever before. This has paid greatest dividends in our scholarship program, which received over 200 applications this year, an alltime high.

The Ituloy Team and Ricardo Espitia stepped up to screen and organize all these applications for review and scoring by the Board. The field was competitive, and final selections were difficult, so I'm

sure this latest batch of scholars will accomplish great things. Behind the scenes, the Board has continued its commitment to the scholarship program by ensuring that living allowances, mental health support, and technology are available to our scholars. We continue to balance the financing of a meaningful number of scholars with the rising costs of fully supporting a successful course of study. Your continued donations are what make this possible.

We are also very proud of the work that the Ituloy Team has done over the last year to finalize the paperwork to establish themselves as an official nonprofit organization in the Philippines. We extend our appreciation to Sir Roland and Sir Eco for the leadership and tenacity they demonstrated in shepherding that multi-year process. In January we hosted our first PCAFPD global call, which saw the Ituloy Team and U.S. Board come together to discuss processes and share ideas for the future. We expect that a more formalized Ituloy team will enhance our operations.

With applications way up and a new working relationship developing with the Ituloy Team, one of the key goals for PCAFPD is to continue to use technology to make our operations more efficient.



**"It was really a privilege to be part of this program." Lyncel Desoyo, PCAFPD Graduated Class of 2017**

In 2024 we are launching a new application platform that will be fully online. This will make it easier and faster for applicants to apply, and for us to review their materials.

The Ituloy Team's new organizational status allows them to harness more powerful banking tools that will make disseminating scholarship funds significantly easier.

We will continue to present our RPCV community with new opportunities to give their gifts via online tools. You may have seen our digital spring appeal email that circulated in March. Switching one of our mailings to a digital format helps lower our carbon footprint and reduces our operating costs, which puts those funds back towards supporting scholars.

Finally, in 2025 we will welcome the first set of RPCVs back home since the pandemic. Also, Peace Corps Philippines recently welcomed a new Country Director, Marguerite Roy, to the team. I had the chance to meet with Marguerite, who is very supportive of our efforts in the Philippines. The Board is working on new ways to engage PCVs while in service and as they return home so that our base can grow and continue the work of PCAFPD far into the future.

I am excited to see what the next year brings. I am so thankful for the team of people who dedicate themselves to this endeavor. Whether you are giving of your time, your money, or your skills I hope you continue to find PCAFPD an organization worth supporting.

*Justin Tabor*



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Do you want to contribute to Philippines Development?  
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**Consider joining the  
PCAFPD Board of Directors!**



We are actively recruiting RPCVs to assist with our grants, PCV relations, marketing, and finances. Email [pcafpd@gmail.com](mailto:pcafpd@gmail.com) to get involved!

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**Join the Bayanihan Legacy Circle**

Have you designated PCAFPD as a beneficiary of an IRA or stipulated a bequest to PCAFPD in a will or trust?  
If so, we'd like to know.

The Bayanihan Legacy Circle recognizes those of you who plan to support the work of PCAFPD beyond your lifetime.

Members of the Legacy Circle will be eligible for special benefits and will be listed on our website and in publications as appropriate.

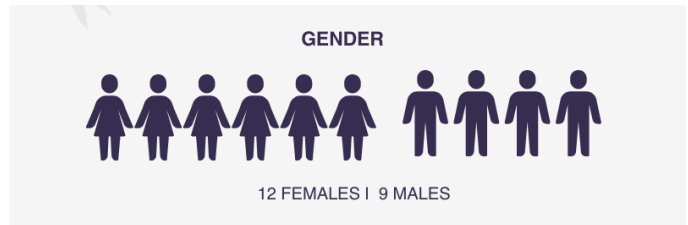
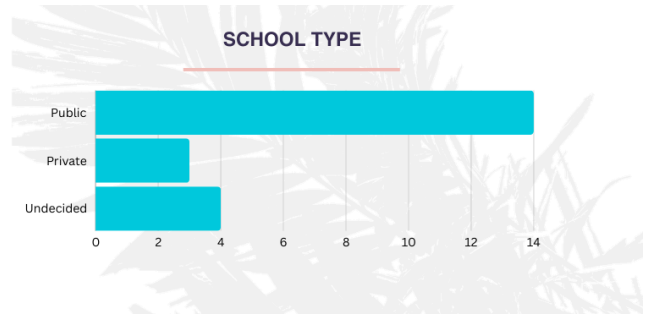
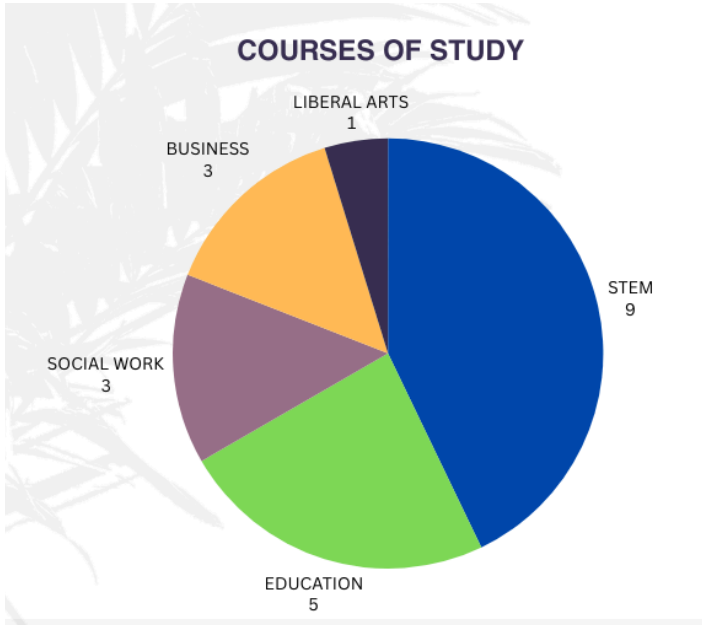
Send an email to us at [pcafpd@gmail.com](mailto:pcafpd@gmail.com) or snail mail us at P.O. Box 100144, Arlington Virginia 22210 to let us know of your plans or to seek more information. Maraming Salamat!

**Thank you to our Legacy Circle Members:**

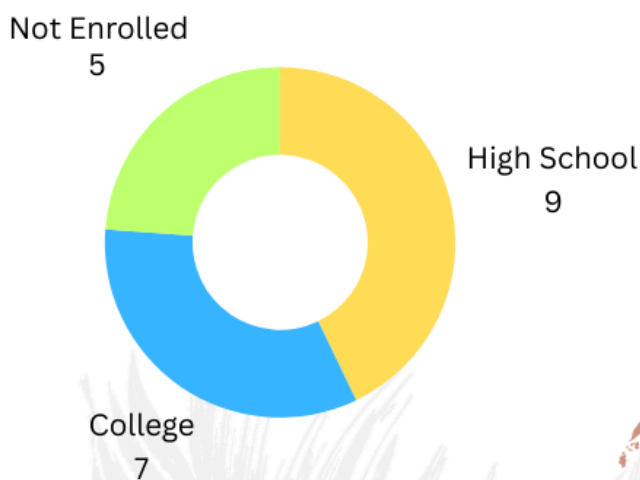
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- Mark Horowitz, Quezon 1965-67
- Lee and Kay Jones, Isabela 1962-67
- Dee Teodoro, Cotabato 1964-66
- Rick Zemlin, Davao del Sur 1981-83

# The 2024 Scholar Class

We have had another successful application review period and are excited to offer 21 applicants a PCAFPD Scholarship for the coming 2024 school year! Check back in our fall newsletter to meet our Scholars. In this issue we break down the numbers to give a snapshot of our incoming 2024 scholar class.



## ENROLLMENT STATUS



## LOCATION



## Grant Program Update

*By Justin Tabor, PCAFPD Grant Manager (and President)*

As the 2023 grant cycle comes to a close, we are excited to reflect on the third year of our PCAFPD Human Development Grant pilot project. For 2023 the group decided to support four projects:

- Digital literacy education with Learning without Borders
- Environmental education with People and the Sea
- Leadership development in Bicol with the Bicolano Young Leaders Congress (BYLC)
- Professional development for Alain Meneses

When we conceived of the Human Development Grant, we designed it with the intention to be very flexible, so that formal groups, informal groups, and individuals could apply for funding. The 2023 grantees represent this vision.

Our individual grantee, Alain Meneses, has been a stellar example of how supporting one person's development can have impacts on many others. In his work as a psychiatric social worker at a busy hospital in Quezon City, Alain works with over 3000 patients a year. Alain has used his grant funds to attend an intensive online training course in Clinical Traumatology to help him better support his patients. Alain also requested some online mentoring, and PCAFPD was able to connect him with RPCV Annalisa Blackham, also a social worker, for additional support in his work.

Applications for the 2024 grant cycle closed on May 31, 2024. I was fortunate enough to speak to the current group of PCVs and their counterparts during their Project, Design, and Management (PDM) training to

encourage them to apply. While I am hopeful that in 2024 we can support a project that is associated with a Volunteer, our past successes give me confidence that the new grantees are going to be wonderful.

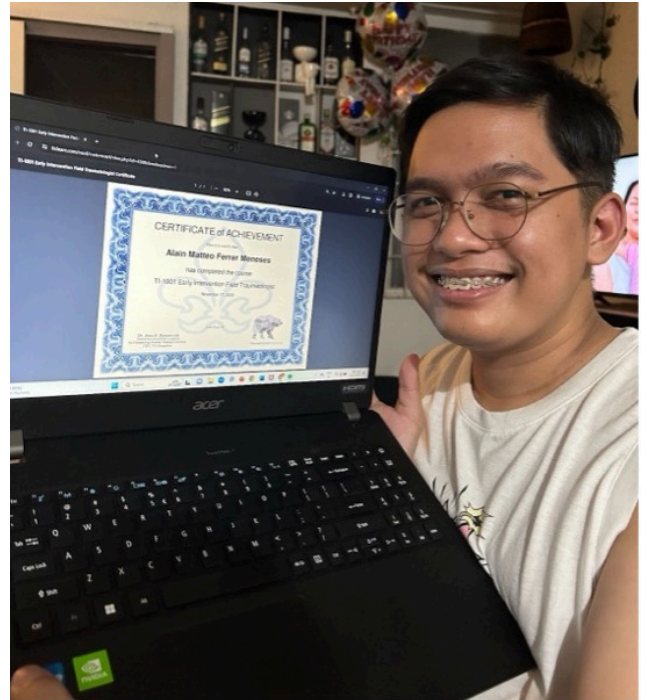


Photo: Grantee Alain Meneses poses with his new certificate in Clinical Traumatology.

## 2023 Financial Update

*Data provided by Mike Ollinger, PCAFPD Treasurer and text by Paul Aleckson, PCAFPD Board Member*

Thank you to all our donors who helped make the PCAFPD's 40th year a financial success. We were able to support over 100 scholars and make three grants because of your generosity. In 2023, we collected donations of \$83,193, which was up \$16,961 from 2022. We are happy to report that overhead expenses, mostly from mailing the newsletters and the embassy event, stayed low, at 13% of donations. Thank you for your continued support and let's make 2024 another successful year!



# Scholar Essays

## **An Interminable Story**

*Princess Ara Nonog is pursuing a B.S. in Civil Engineering at Universidad de Dagupan*

Another bunch of experiences from a worthwhile semester has passed, and it surely did teach me peculiar and unforgettable learnings that are worth the sacrifices, laughter, efforts, challenges, tears, sweat, determination, and perseverance. This leads to luminous goals and plans ahead. One is to give back to the community, to lend a hand for the things that can encourage and inspire those who are also taking up space for an incredible journey and an incomparable future ahead.

At the start of our second semester, everything just felt like a new beginning. It was a roller coaster experience way back in the first semester, and I can say that the second semester was smooth yet challenging. One of the remarkable experiences I had was in our surveying class. It has a laboratory, and we're doing fieldwork. It was amazing to do such fieldwork.

During our final examination in this subject, I just enjoyed solving it, as it consists of 70 items. I remember I was teary-eyed when I knew I passed, given that it was quite hard because it has a lot of topics that are kind of not that related to each other. One more experience that's been remarkable was how I learned how to operate AutoCAD (computer-aided design) and how to create a floor plan for houses, etc. Also, I learned how to create 3D structures like buildings and such. Moreover, last February, our school celebrated its 99th founding anniversary, and our department, the College of Engineering and Architecture, won the Hataw-Sayaw Competition. We also had a fun run as part of the activities.

Lastly, I was nervous that I might not pass our Differential Equation subject because I

admit that I was challenged by its topics.

As I have read, there are many examples of real-world applications of differential equations, including modeling population growth, predicting weather patterns, designing electrical circuits, and analyzing the spread of diseases. I believe that solving different problems is one of my driving forces to be able to apply what I've learned to real-life applications. Gratefully, I passed it, and I was quite shocked when I knew it. Our subjects have different levels of difficulty, and I believe that to be able to surpass all of them, I just need to do my part, putting in my best effort.

All things considered, my college journey was once an empty page of paper, now filled with different challenges, mixed emotions, and hopes that I believe are a reflection of how I manage to be in this state now, standing still, and this would not be possible without the guidance of the Creator above, my PCAFPD family, all of the people behind it, my family and friends, and all other people who inspire me to continue striving for a significant adventure with an elucidatory future ahead. I am immensely grateful for adding and turning more pages to a story that's far from perfect but is always hopeful and open to learning about what will come next.



Photo: Princess Ara Nunong conducting field work for her surveying class.



**Genesis Galap,  
PCAFPD Graduated  
Class of 2013**

**“[PCAFPD has] meant my Professional being. It gave me tools to become better than who I could have been without it. PCAFPD is my light in the dark.”**

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**Support Beyond Money**

*James Bagarinao is pursuing a B.S. in Industrial Technology, major in Computer Technology, at Negros Oriental State University - Bayawan Santa Catalina Campus*

First of all, I want to say a big thank you to the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation’s Philippine Development Scholarship for making a big difference in my college journey. This scholarship has really changed things for me in both my studies and my personal life.

In college, dealing with challenges, the allowance I get from the scholarship is really important. It’s not just money; it’s like a helping hand that makes my student’s life easier. Being a college student comes with lots of costs, and this support lets me concentrate on my studies without worrying too much about money. It helps with my everyday activities, projects, and things like our college uniform, t-shirt, and polo—stuff I wouldn’t be able to buy without this assistance.

Getting around can be expensive, but

thanks to the Peace Corps Scholarship, I don’t have to stress about it. The allowance they give also helps with my commuting expenses, making it easier for me to be fully involved in my studies and other college activities. And about the laptop they gave me—it’s great! As an IT student, having a good laptop is really important. It’s not just for my classes but also for doing research, coding, and working on projects. Without the laptop, it’s impossible to imagine doing my coursework, research, coding, and projects efficiently. It has become a really important tool for my schoolwork, and I’m really grateful for that.

Being part of the scholarship has made my time in college really enjoyable. Even though we didn’t win the festival, it taught me how important it is to work together and made our school livelier.

Joining the dancing group brought me happiness and helped me learn to be creative, disciplined, and work as a team. Also, being a CTS officer for our college allowed me to help improve our academic environment. These experiences, along with the support of the scholarship, made my college journey more fun and taught me important things. I’m really thankful for the chance to be part of it all.

In short, the support from the Peace Corps Scholarship goes beyond just money. It feels like they’ve invested in my education and future. It feels like they’ve actively helped shape my time in college. I’m really thankful for the chances this scholarship has given me, and I’m committed to making the most of this support as I continue my college journey. This journey, full of experiences in festivals, dancing groups, and college leadership roles, happened because of the unwavering help from the Peace Corps Scholarship. Looking forward, I promise to use this support fully and say a big thanks to the Peace Corps Scholarship for being a great opportunity in my education.

## **Senior Year Reflection**

*Ronalyn Iligan is pursuing a B.S. in Computer Sciences at Negros Oriental State University, Main Campus*

I still clearly remember my first day as a new, nervous, and excited college freshman four years ago. Before I knew it, four years of college had gone by. Now in my last year studying computer science, I look back on my rewarding yet difficult journey with deep appreciation. This senior year has been the most demanding yet, getting me ready for professional life after I graduate.

My first big milestone this first semester was completing a four-month internship at INFOCOM, a company that provides services to other businesses. As an IT support intern, I gained priceless hands-on experience using my academic knowledge in a real workplace. My thoughtful seniors mentored me, and I connected with fellow interns from various schools. I felt a strong sense of satisfaction in solving issues and helping staff with tech support tickets. Beyond improving my technical skills, this internship grew my confidence and ability to work with others tremendously.

Returning to campus, I immediately started working on the intimidating thesis project. My loyal thesis partner has been by my side since high school, and I'm blessed to have her as a supportive friend to do research with. We overcame each thesis deadline one step at a time, communicating clearly and dividing tasks based on our strengths. After successfully presenting our initial thesis results recently, I'm confident we'll complete this undertaking well before graduation.

I'm also fortunate to the caring classmates who have become like family after four years together. We motivate each other when assignments feel overwhelming, celebrate victories big and small, and make plenty of memories during study breaks. My world expanded thanks to new friendships formed through late-night project meetings and campus social events over the years. I'm a more well-rounded person because of it.

Indeed, life's journeys involve people as much as accomplishments. All those who contributed to my growth along the way deserve credit for this resilient and brave senior student standing before my instructors today. Past difficulties that once upset me no longer cause the same doubt or stress. Each challenge only made my determination and perspective stronger. My relatives, friends near and far, PCAFPD family, classmates, instructors, and most especially God Almighty form a sturdy foundation supporting me as I am close to finishing this chapter. It takes a village of support, lessons, hardship, and triumph to reach this far. I couldn't have done it alone and I will be forever grateful to every individual involved in this beautiful journey.



Photo: Ronalyn Iligan working on assignments with classmates.

## 2022 Lakan/Lakambini Honor Roll

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 2023. Salamat po!

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Many thanks to those listed below who made gifts to PCAFPD between Oct 2023 and April 2024. IHO and IMO are gifts In Honor Of or In Memory Of the person or group indicated.

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