

Continuing the Tradition of Excellence in Public Service

• 2018 Philippine Presidential Award for Organization Overseas

• 2019 Proclamation from the State of New York Assembly

• 2022 Alab ng Lahi Gawad Parangal sa Natatanging Samahang Pampamayanan from the Philippine Consulate General

KASIKAS

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AFTA to honor service awardees in June

By: Johjoh Demol Jenae

AFTA (Association of Fil-Am Teachers of America) is gearing up for their biennial Service Awards Gala (SAGA) to recognize and honor the contributions of teachers to the profession. The event, which will take place on Saturday, June 17, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Leonard's Palazzo in Great Neck, NY, banners the theme: "Flipping the Switch: Teachers Committed to Changing the Narrative and Illuminating Valiant Students' Performance."

The highlight of the event will be the awarding of the Crystal Apple Service Award, which recognizes teachers who have served the profession for five, ten, fifteen, twenty or more years in the United States.

The AFTA Service Awards Gala is a much-anticipated event in the education community, providing a platform to celebrate and honor the dedication, hard work, and excellence of educators in the United States and abroad. The event will feature various activities, including keynote speeches, musical performances, and networking opportunities for teachers and other education professionals.

AFTA hopes that the event will inspire more individuals to pursue teaching careers and recognize the value of the teaching profession in shaping the future of society.

The Global Teacher Service Award will also be presented to international teachers who have rendered at least five years of teaching service outside the United States. In addition, the T.A.N.G.L.A.W. (Taglay ay Nagniningning sa Galing, Lingkod ay Wagas) Award will be given to teacher-retirees in the U.S. who have made significant contributions to the field.



SAGA 2023
SERVICE AWARDS GALA OF A.F.T.A.
SATURDAY JUNE 17
AT LEONARD'S PALAZZO
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 THE EMBEDDED CRYSTAL APPLE AS



The Board's WALL

'Onward we move, many good things are up ahead...'

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By way of explanation, KASIKAS



Kasikas is a Filipino word that describes a light, delicate sound, much like the rustling of silk or the soft rustle of leaves blowing in the wind. It's a beautiful and unique word that captures a gentle and subtle sound that is often overlooked in our noisy, fast-paced world.

In a society that is filled with constant noise and distractions, it's important to pause and appreciate the simple beauty of kasikas. This delicate sound can be heard in many natural settings, from the rustling of leaves in a forest to the sound of the wind blowing through a field of grass. It's a sound that can bring a sense of peace and tranquility to our hectic lives.

At the same time, kasikas also reminds us of the importance of listening. In our fast-paced world, we often tune out the sounds around us, focusing instead on our phones or other distractions. But by taking the time to listen to the gentle rustling of leaves or the soft rustle of silk, we can reconnect with the world around us and find a sense of peace and calm. Thus, AFTA's activities.

In many ways, kasikas is a symbol of our connection to nature and to each other. It reminds us of the beauty of the world around us and the importance of taking the time to appreciate the simple things in life. So the next time you hear the delicate sound of kasikas, take a moment to pause and listen, let AFTA share with you its purpose through its activities. You might be surprised at the peace and tranquility it brings as we share the same goal of mentoring the world.

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ASSOCIATION OF FIL-AM TEACHERS OF AMERICA, INC.

With its vision that all teachers will have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and be of service to their community, AFTA has consistently implemented its projects and programs for over three decades in the Philippines and the United States and is committed to continue to reach out to the Filipino diaspora and the marginalized communities at large.

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Balikuro Program (since 1993)
BALIKURO, which literally translates to "Return to Teach" is a missionary project of AFTA which brings US based Filipino teachers to the Philippines to share and exchange valuable information, knowledge, experiences, and latest development in different areas of teaching.

Paaralan sa Konsulado (since 1998)
In partnership with the Philippine Consulate General in New York, Paaralan sa Konsulado is an annual summer workshop for Filipino - American children between the ages of 6 to 16 which aims to provide those born and raised in the USA opportunities to learn about their culture and heritage and offer a better understanding of their roots.

Adopt-a-School Project (since 2012)
Every year, AFTA identifies an area in the Philippines where school children need the most support for educational supplies and materials. These are then distributed during summer when the AFTA teacher - volunteers conduct their BALIKURO program.

OTHER PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Professional Development • Books for the Philippines • Tuklas Talino • Adopt-a-Scholar • Gawad Teknolohiya • Pagdiriwang ng Kulturang Filipino • Lakbay AFTA • International Educators' Convention • AFTATalks • AFTAShare • Kaisang Palad

RECOGNITIONS & AWARDS

Doña Teodora Alonzo Award • Ulirang Guro Award • Crystal Apple Service Award • Dangal ng Lahi Award • Tanglaw Award
LEADS Award • PERILAS Award

RECOGNITIONS & AWARDS received by AFTA:

Lingkod sa Kapwa Filipino Presidential Award (2018) • The Assembly State of New York Proclamation as an Outstanding Organization (2019) • Phil. Heritage Center Recognition for Service (2019) • Maharlika Award for Outstanding Organization by Team United Maharlika Foundation, Inc. (2020)
Alab ng Lahi Award for Outstanding Fil-Am Organization (2022)

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The News Room



PSK CORE TEAM: (L-R) Consul General Senen Mangalile, AFTA President Rena Pedaria and PSK Principal Dara Valconcha.

AFTA, PCG to launch 25th 'Paaralan sa Konsulado'

The Philippine Consulate General in New York and AFTA recently held its first planning meeting with Consul General Senen Mangalile and his staff, including Consul Ricarte Abejuela III, to prepare for the 25th Paaralan sa Konsulado (School at the Consulate) event in July 2023. The meeting was attended by Rena Pedaria, AFTA President, Dara Valconcha, PSK Principal, and Kris Ramir, PSK Assistant Principal.

The Paaralan sa Konsulado program, a flagship initiative of the PCG and AFTA, aims to provide Filipino children living abroad with an opportunity to learn the Filipino language, culture, and values. The program has been running for over two decades and has helped Filipino-American children connect with their heritage and identity.

During the planning meeting of the upcoming 25th Paaralan sa Konsulado event, the team reviewed the program's objectives, the curriculum, faculty, and logistics, ensuring that everything is in place to deliver a successful program.



A COURTESY CALL: (L-R) Dr. Lorna Dig Dino, former DepEd Usec for Curriculum and Programs; Dr. Gina Gonong, DepEd Usec for Curriculum and Delivery; Rizalina Labanda, AFTA VP for Teaching and Research; and Dr. Rosalyn Mirasol Gunobgunob, President RAP-Reading Association of the Philippines

AFTA teaches migrants

The Association of Fil-Am Teachers of America (AFTA) recently launched a new initiative under AFTAShare by sharing the organization's expertise with marginalized communities in the United States. As part of this initiative, AFTA partnered with the Migrant Center of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Manhattan, led by Fr. Julian Jagudilla, to hold free English as a Second Language classes for new migrants and refugees at the center.

With the help of the teacher-volunteers, Nick Miraflores and Dr. Rey Garnace, and their assistants Gerry Francisco and Evie Cullen, the program's first two classes were a success,

The classes were designed to help participants improve their English communication skills, which is essential in adapting to their new environment and finding employment opportunities.



ESL TEACHER-VOLUNTEERS: (L-R) Evie Cullen, Gerry Francisco, Nick Miraflores, Rey Garnace.

Balikturo aims 30 for 30th

For the past 30 years, AFTA has worked to provide professional development opportunities for Filipino teachers. The Balikturo program has been a critical part of this effort, providing teachers with access to world-class training and development opportunities.

With the completion of its 30th series of workshops, under the leadership of its vice president for teaching and research, Rizalina Labanda, AFTA looks forward to continuing its commitment to supporting Filipino teachers through professional development.

The organization remains committed to improving the quality of education for Filipino learners and believes that providing teachers with access to quality training and development opportunities is essential to achieving this goal.

The Song, The Soul, The Teacher...

by Johjoh Demol Jenae



THE WERNERS: (L-R) Werner Santiago, Marie Joy Creer Amaro and Lanico Jun Amaro.

From the soaring vocals to the poignant lyrics, "Angels Brought Me Here" and "Araw Gabi" are a testament to the transformative power of music, reminding us that even in our darkest moments, there is always a glimmer of hope waiting to guide us towards a brighter tomorrow. And only "Bajoy" Creer Amaro has the songs' soul...

Marie Joy Creer Amaro, a woman with a name as unique as her personality, has been through a lot in her life. From growing up in a small nipa hut in Lutopan, Toledo City, Cebu to becoming a teacher and a loving wife, Marie has had many experiences that have shaped her into the person she is today. In this feature story, we'll get to know more about Marie's life and her memories of home, school, and love.

Marie's name has a special meaning, not only to her but also to her family. Her first name, Marie, comes from her grandmother's name, Maria. All of her female siblings have the name Maria or Mari in their first names. Her middle name, Joy, was given to her because she was born in December, the month of joy. This shows how Marie's family values their traditions and how they celebrate their family's roots.

Joy's earliest memories of home were from her childhood in Lutopan. Her family's house was small and made of nipa hut, but they were happy and content. They grew fruits and vegetables in their backyard and even grew Ampalaya on their roof. Joy learned to sing by listening to her mom and dad, and her mom said that she learned how to sing when she learned how to talk. They also had a neighbor who had a "sing-along karaoke" that they would visit to sing their favorite songs.

She attended public school all the way from elementary to college. She went to Don Andres Soriano Elementary School and Don Andres Soriano National High School. She then pursued a degree in Education at Cebu Normal University. Marie had amazing teachers and enjoyed her school days. She recalled that her fondest memories were during recess, playing with her friends, and participating in monthly programs that her school held.

She chose to pursue a career in education because it was something she enjoyed even as a child. She used to act like a teacher when she played with her neighbors. She also chose to pursue this career because education at Cebu Normal University was affordable and practical for her family's financial situation.

Joy met her husband, Lanico Jun Amaro, at work in People Support in 2006. They fell in love and got married, and she finds the most rewarding thing about being a wife is being able to take care of her husband and make him feel loved.

When not working, she enjoys singing with her band, The Werners, playing regularly at Amazing Grace in Roosevelt, Queens, New York, every Friday, road tripping with her husband, and watching TV. Her favorite color is blue, her favorite food is grilled pork belly, her favorite song is "Part of that World," and her favorite place to relax is any white sand beach.

Live life like it's your last - Joy

